

London's mayor demands more power

Last week London recovered a modicum of self-government for the first time in fourteen years. In 1986 Margaret Thatcher abolished the Greater London Council with one swing of her handbag, expropriating all its powers to central government or to unaccountable quangos. Since then, by common consent, service provision and coordination between the London boroughs has declined markedly, in some cases to the point of non-existence, and public transport has become either a nightmare or a laughing stock, depending on whether or not one is actually trying to use it when the now daily disaster strikes.

On Monday 3rd July, following May's elections, the new Greater London Authority and London's first ever directly elected mayor with executive

powers, Ken Livingstone, took power. As usual in all such elections, the vast majority of people ignored them, with only the mass media, the luvvies and darlings of the entertainment 'industry' and politicians themselves taking any notice. Unfortunately this meant that *Freedom's* own candidate for mayor (see 'A Mare for London' in *Freedom*, 11th March 2000), Blanche, lost her deposit – although as the best horse in the race we would rather she had left a deposit. Fewer than one third of registered London voters bothered to turn up; everybody else just turned over and went back to sleep. Figures in the press suggest that Livingstone got a mere 700,000 votes in a city of around seven million – and he was by far the most popular candidate! As for the GLA vote, the much publicised London

Socialist Alliance, a broad left-wing group formed to support Livingstone polled fewer votes than the racist British National Party, and the overall turnout was just as derisory.

In our earlier article on this subject we predicted "that one of the first acts, if not *the* first act, of the new London mayor will be to ask for more powers". And guess what? No sooner had the result been announced – and before he had even taken up his post – Ken Livingstone was popping up everywhere in the media, telling anyone who would listen that he wanted more money and more power to decide how to spend it (the mayor's budget is limited to £3.5 billion and has already been allocated by government). And he's already demanding a second term, before he's even begun the first, according to London's *Evening Standard* (3rd July 2000).

The press often alleges that Ken Livingstone is 'a former anarchist'. As far as we are aware, this is complete rubbish and no evidence has ever been offered to substantiate it. But as an incurable politician he is well aware that a certain radical chic will do him no harm in some quarters, and he used to be fond of throwing around anarchist expressions such as 'if voting could change anything, they'd make it illegal'. Since Ken is so keen on spending other people's money, and since he is so fond of anarchist maxims, here's another one for him to employ: 'from each according to their means, to each according to their needs'. So far his various grotesquely wealthy supporters have only thrown their money at the campaign to get him elected. Let them now use their wealth

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London mayor Ken Livingstone and staff outside their new headquarters

anarchist fortnightly

Freedom

Vol. 61 No. 14

15th July 2000

50p

Death Row

On 22nd June the state of Texas executed Gary Graham. Graham was the 221st person executed in Texas since the death penalty was reintroduced. He was, moreover, the 135th to be executed at the whim of Governor George W. Bush, would-be US president. Christopher Hitchens once observed that the two main parties in the US resemble “two costly fused buttocks of the same giant derriere” (in *No-One Left To Lie To*, Verso, 1999) and this is as true for the death penalty as for every other aspect of political life. Executing Graham gave Bush the chance to outflank Democrat Al Gore, much as Bill Clinton had flaunted his anti-liberal credentials in 1992 by rushing from the New Hampshire primary to personally oversee the execution of Rickey Ray Rector, a mental defective who so little understood his fate that he asked his guards to save the remains of his last meal “for later”.

Gary Graham, though, refused to acquiesce to this utilisation of murder as a campaign tool. He fought the state of Texas every step of the way. Graham, as everyone involved in the case was well aware, was entirely innocent of the charges which led to his death. Forensic and identification evidence which would have established his innocence

were not disclosed at his first trial (at which he was defended by a state appointed lawyer whose sole courtroom skill appeared to consist of concealing his drunkenness from the court) and deemed at every subsequent stage of appeal not to have affected the outcome of the trial. Gary Graham fought the state in every court room available to him, and, at his last, he fought physically against the prison guards who came to rob him of his life. “They are murdering me tonight” he shouted as he was tethered to the gurney to receive the lethal injection, “This is nothing more simple than state sanctioned murder in America. They know I am innocent.”

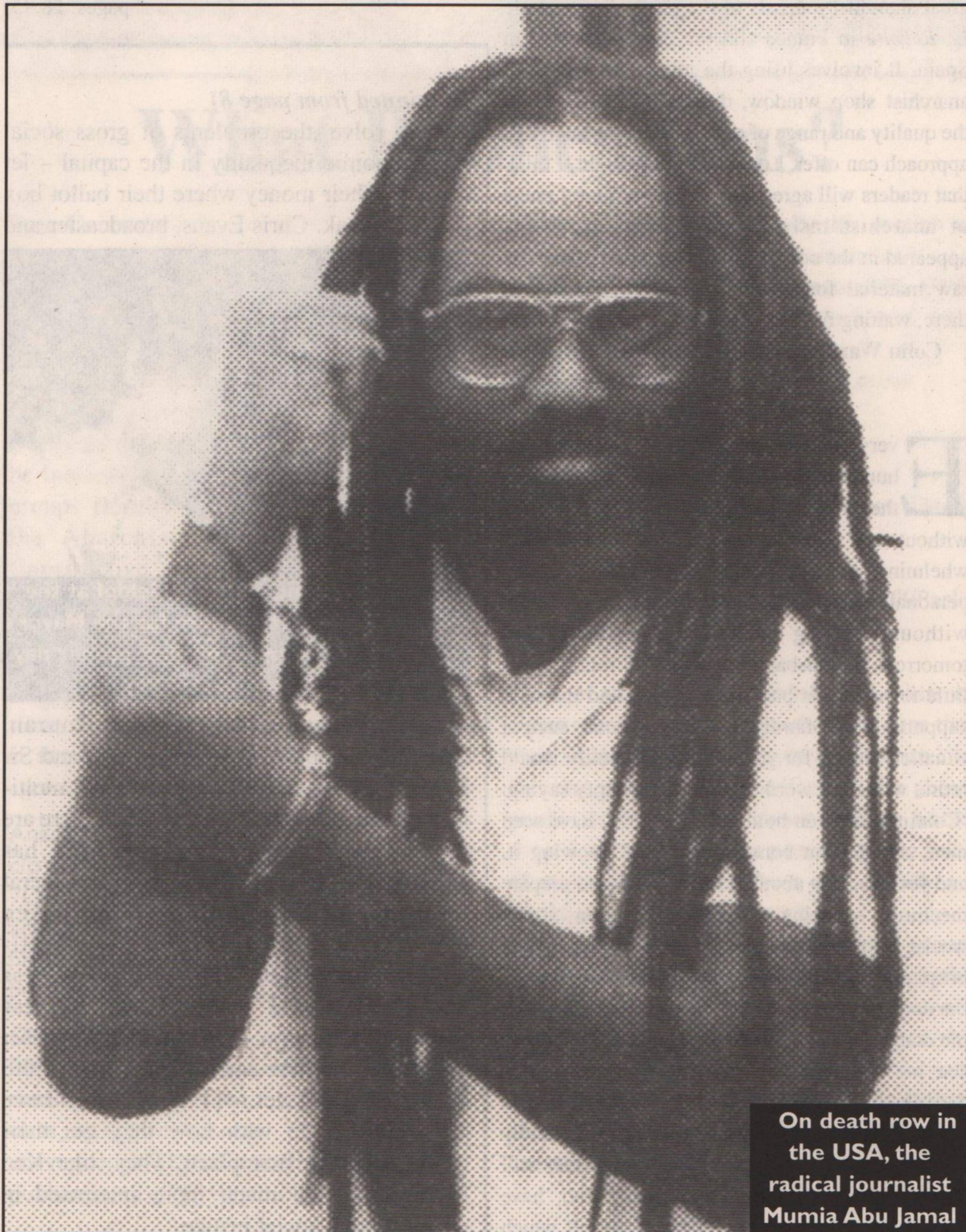
As of 1st September 1999, there are 3,625 men and women on death row in 39 states and jurisdictions. Of these, 43% are black (12% of the national population of the US is black). As Mumia Abu Jamal puts it: “Statistics are often flexible in interpretation, and, like scripture, can be cited for any purpose. Does this mean that African Americans are somehow innocents, subjected to a set up by state officials? Not especially. What it *does* suggest is that the state’s actions, at all stages of the criminal justice system, from booking at the police station to arraignment at the judicial office, pre-trial, trial and sentencing stage before a court,

treats African American defendants with a special vengeance that white defendants are not exposed to” (from *All Things Censored* by Mumia Abu Jamal, Seven Stories Press, 2000). Moreover, as the Baldus study on sentencing in the state of Georgia (cited in the case *McCleskey versus Kemp* 1987) shows: 1) defendants charged with killing white victims are 4.3 times as likely to be sentenced to death as defendants charged with killing blacks; 2) six of every eleven defendants convicted of killing a white person would not have received the death sentence if their victim had been black; and 3) cases involving black defendants and white victims are more likely to result in a death sentence than cases featuring any other racial combination of defendant and victim.

In 1995, Congress voted to end funding for the twenty resource centres which provide counsel for death-sentenced inmates in the later stages of court review, where lawyers are not provided by the various states. William S. McFeely, a professor of Humanities at the University of Georgia, has noted that “it was in 1995, also, that Congress ... launched an assault on the writ of *habeas corpus*, the law’s avenue of appeal to the highest court of the realm [the Anti-terrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act of 1996, limiting appeals, was signed on 24th April 1996]. In the United States, the ‘great writ’ – once sacred to citizens of a democracy, and particularly to its lawyers – has been seen as available for appeal from a sentence both in a state court and in the federal courts. In over 40% of the cases appealed, federal district courts and the courts of appeal have found constitutional errors in the state courts’ proceedings and have reversed death penalty convictions. Despite the constitutional vagaries the lower federal courts so often found in state court decisions, the present Supreme Court, over the last decade, has been determined to establish the primacy of the states and their review processes. In so doing, the highest court of the realm is turning back a movement by its predecessor courts towards a reading of the Fourteenth Amendment that holds that even in such local matters as law enforcement the country’s populace are citizens of a nation as well as a state and protected by federal law” (from *Proximity To Death* by William S. McFeely, Norton, 2000). In pursuit of what McFeely terms the “awful vengeance of the law”, the bipartisan political elite in the US has been prepared to tear up the Constitution and send innocents to their death. Much writing against the death penalty focuses on the potential for injustice, for the murder of innocents, without grasping that it is this capacity for injustice which is, at least in part, the point of the death penalty. The death penalty exists as the ultimate manifestation of the force of the state, and its irrational deployment of that force serves to demonstrate yet further the power of the state over life and death. Max Weber once observed that “without the use of violence

there would be no state” (from ‘Politics as a Vocation’ in *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology*, Oxford University Press, 1958). Weber went on to define the state as “a human institution that successfully claims the monopoly of the legitimate use of physical force within a given territory”. In focusing on the notion of ‘legitimate force’, though, Weber underestimated the extent to which the state (as defender of the property relations which are the essence of capital) relies on its capacity for an excess of force – precisely an illegitimate violence – to render fear as the fulcrum of its rule. As Susan Buck-Morss contends, “modern sovereignties also possess a supralegal or perhaps prelegal form of legitimacy, precisely the wild zone of arbitrary, violent power, and it lies at their very core” (from *Dreamworld and Catastrophe* by Susan Buck-Morss, MIT, 2000). A good many liberals in Britain have looked at the reintroduction of the death penalty in the US and reflected on the seeming barbarity of their Atlantic cousins. The British state, though, while it shuns the death penalty for now, doesn’t balk at the necessary task of extra-judicial slaughter, as and when required. In a period from the beginning of 1980 to November 1982, nineteen people were killed in the north of Ireland by the security forces. None were members of paramilitary organisations and nine were killed by plastic bullets. In none of the incidents were shots fired at the security forces and in only one incident was the victim armed. Within a three week period in 1982 six people were shot dead by RUC undercover squads in the Lurgan/Armagh area – the killings of Sean Burns, Eugene Toman and Gervaise McKerr on 11th November 1982, the killing of Michael Tighe in a hayshed staked out by the RUC, and the slayings of Seamus Grew and Ronnie Carroll in Armagh City. Grew and Carroll were stopped by an unmarked police car. A constable, John Robinson, got out of the car and fired fifteen shots, killing Carroll. He then walked round the car and fired a further four shots into Grew. Between December 1983 and January 1990, thirty-one people were killed by British army undercover units – including the three unarmed IRA members, Mairead Farrell, Danny McCann and Sean Savage, murdered in Gibraltar in March 1988 (for further information on shoot-to-kill policy in the Six Counties, see *The Crowned Harp* by Graham Ellison and Jim Smyth, Pluto, 2000, and for illustration of a similar policy in England see ‘Shooting to Kill’ in *Black Flag*, issue 219). As Buck-Morss makes clear, the claim to the monopoly of violence is the essence of the legitimisation of the liberal-democratic state, and the “non-democratic exercise of violent power” its fundamental prop. The purpose of such violence is the protection not of law, but the monopoly of the right to establish law, “its monopoly of the (violent, physical) power to determine, in the last analysis, what justice

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On death row in the USA, the radical journalist Mumia Abu Jamal

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is." As for Texas, so for London or Armagh.

Mumia Abu Jamal now awaits a hearing in the Federal District Court, to contest the lack of elementary due process in his original trial and his appeals through the Pennsylvania state courts. The judge at Mumia's original trial, Albert Sabo (who is notorious for sentencing more prisoners to death than any other US judge), also heard the first round of Mumia's appeal and ruled that all the original

testimony remained credible, while all the new evidence introduced by the defence was not. (Mumia Abu Jamal was a radical journalist who worked on the national staff of the *Black Panther* newspaper, and went on to become the 'voice of the voiceless' as a radio broadcaster. Mumia was president of the Association of Black Journalists in Philadelphia. Mumia was sentenced to death following his intervention in an incident between his brother, a police officer and another man. Mumia was shot by the officer, and charged with the officer's murder. The defence investigator quit before the trial began because court-allocated funds were exhausted. Neither a ballistics expert nor a pathologist were hired, due to lack of funds. Prosecution claimed that Mumia confessed to the killing of the officer while in hospital. The officer guarding Mumia, though, wrote in his report at the time "The Negro male made no comments". The attending physician denied hearing any confession. Reports of the confession were filed by police officers two months after it allegedly occurred, and only after Mumia had filed police brutality charges. The prosecution claimed ballistics evidence proved Mumia carried out the killing. Mumia carried a .38 for his own protection. The written findings of the medical examiner, which were not produced to the jury, stated that the officer was killed by a .44 calibre weapon. The

police never tested Mumia's gun to see if it had been fired, never tested his hands to see if he had fired a gun, and have 'lost' the bullet fragment removed by the medical examiner. An eye witness who saw the incident and, has testified that Mumia was not the shooter, was intimidated by the police when he reported this and forced to flee Philadelphia. A further witness, who originally testified against Mumia, now admits she did so only because the police threatened her with imprisonment and the loss of her children if she told the truth.)

The US state would love to carry out its sentence of death against Mumia, and hence to silence the 'voice of the voiceless'. An effective movement, based around direct action and civil disobedience, has begun to form across America, in defence of Mumia. A similar campaign exists in the UK. Too few in the anarchist movement, though (and across the left in general), have given their time to the campaign. The threat of execution of Mumia Abu Jamal is a permanent reminder of the "wild zone of arbitrary, violent power" which is the essence of the state. If we do not mobilise to defend Mumia, we cannot claim to effectively oppose the power of the state.

Nick S.

Contact the campaign 'Let Mumia Live' at BM Haven London WC1N 3XX.

COPY DEADLINE

The next issue of Freedom will be dated 29th July, and the last day for copy intended for this issue will be first post on Thursday 20th July.



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).

An Anarchist Newspaper

Socialist newspapers have often a tendency to become mere annals of complaints about existing conditions. The exploitation of the labourers in the mine, the factory, the field is related; the misery and sufferings of the workers during strikes are told in vivid pictures; their helplessness in the struggle against employers is insisted upon; and this succession of hopeless efforts exercises a most depressing influence on the reader ... I thought, on the contrary, that a revolutionary paper must be, above all, a record of those symptoms which everywhere announce the coming of a new era, the germination of new forms of social life, the growing revolt against antiquated institutions. These symptoms should be watched, brought together in their intimate connection, and so grouped as to show to the hesitating minds of the greater number the

invisible and often unconscious support which advanced ideas find everywhere when a revival of thought takes place in society. It is hope, not despair, which makes successful revolutions.

Kropotkin, *Memoirs of a Revolutionist*, (Black Rose Books, 468 pages, £11.99)

The besetting editorial problems of any periodical of a minority movement are parochialism and sectarianism. You, as a curious outsider, pick up a magazine put out by some other minority and find that it is full of references which the uninitiated do not understand, and has a background of in-group feuding in which X is getting at Y over some historical or doctrinal difference which you can't comprehend. *Anarchy* has tried, not always successfully, to avoid this: to take it for granted

that anarchism is in the mainstream of modern social ideas, and to address itself to the outside world rather than to the in-group. This has involved going outside the usual circle of contributors to the anarchist press, and accepting the fact that their opinions are not always 'ideologically correct' even though the general tenor of their contributions is sympathetic. This is the policy which was followed by some of the great anarchist journals of the past – for example *La Révolte* in France and the *Revista Blanca* in Spain. It involves using the journal as a kind of anarchist shop window, displaying to the world the quality and range of goods which the anarchist approach can offer. Looked at in this light, I think that readers will agree that an extraordinary range of anarchist insights and applications have appeared in the course of our hundred issues. The raw material for the individual propagandist is there, waiting for use.

Colin Ward, *A Decade of Anarchy*, (Freedom Press, 280 pages, £5.00)

Every socialist newspaper – and there are hundreds of them in Europe alone – has the same history of years of sacrifice without any hope of reward, and, in the overwhelming majority of cases, even without any personal ambition. I have seen families living without knowing what would be their food tomorrow, the husband boycotted all round in his little town for his part in the paper, and the wife supporting the family by sewing, and such a situation lasting for years, until the family would retire, without a word of reproach, simply saying: 'Continue; we can hold on no more!' I have seen men, dying from consumption, and knowing it, and yet knocking about in snow and fog to prepare meetings, speaking at meetings within a few weeks from death, and only then retiring to the hospital with the words 'Now, friends, I am done; the doctors say I have but a few weeks to live. Tell the comrades that I shall be happy if they come to see me'. I have seen facts which would be described as 'idealisation' if I told them in this place; and the very names of these men, hardly known outside a narrow circle of friends, will soon be forgotten when the friends, too, have passed away. In fact, I don't know myself which

most to admire, the unbounded devotion of these few, or the sum total of petty acts of devotion by the great number. Every quire of a penny paper sold, every meeting, every hundred votes which are won at a socialist election, represent an amount of energy and sacrifices of which no outsider has the faintest idea. And what is now done by socialists has been done in every popular and advanced party, political and religious, in the past. All past progress has been promoted by like men and by a like devotion.

Kropotkin, *Mutual Aid* (Freedom Press, 278 pages, £8.95)

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to help solve the problems of gross social and economic inequality in the capital – let them put their money where their ballot box is, so to speak. Chris Evans, broadcaster and



Ken Livingstone and Bob Geldof at the newly-opened Tate Modern for the Mayor's recent party to mark his first proper day in the job on 3rd July

multi-millionaire, Sir Terence Conran, entrepreneur and multi-millionaire, and Sir Richard Branson, self-publicist and multi-millionaire, to name but a few. Then there are those former opponents whom Ken has appointed to his team: Susan Kramer, Liberal Democrat and multi-millionaire; Steven Norris, Tory car salesman and multi-millionaire – if these people are so selfless that all they want to do is help the less fortunate in London, then why don't they set an example and use some of their millions to do it? The answer, we think, may have something to do with how they got their millions in the first place. They, like Ken Livingstone, are much more interested in power than in social justice.

Alex Comfort Writings against Power and Death

From the early 1940s Alex Comfort was a prolific, combative and innovative writer on pacifism and anarchism. This volume collects all the articles Alex Comfort published in *War Commentary* and *Freedom*, most of his other social and political essays, as well as the most important of his *Peace News* pamphlets. The latter include *Peace and Disobedience*, the finest single statement of his highly individual and original anarchism.

Freedom Press

168 pages

£5.00

Monsieur Bové - oui! anarcho-vegan cuisine - non!

Every few decades France seems to throw up a character who symbolises something significant about what's going on in the world. In 1968 it was 'Danny the Red' who captured the public imagination and set off a series of events - strikes, factory occupations, student unrest, battles in the French boulevards with the CRS - which threw into relief certain technical and economic changes, and had international consequences.

Today it is José Bové, a French sheep farmer who produces Roquefort cheese and who is setting the tone in resistance to globalisation and standardisation. At the end of June he and nine others went to trial, charged jointly with destroying a construction site of a McDonald's restaurant in the southern French town of Millau, in the Tarn valley.

Curiously both 'Danny the Red' and José Bové have professed to be anarchists (though 'Danny' is now some kind of 'Green' politician). Monsieur Bové is more specific - in an interview he has described himself as an *anarcho-syndicalist* and insists his main influences are Bakunin and Kropotkin, the Russian anarchists, and the anarchists of the Spanish Civil War.

Citizen's counter-power

Whatever his political pedigree, José Bové has had a huge international impact. Last month the Spanish newspaper *El Pais* reported that the "syndicalists before the court had declared Millau to be the capital of the struggle against the process of globalisation".

Monsieur Bové himself has told the French President Jacques Chirac and the Prime Minister Lionel Jospin to stop the misconduct of the multi-nationals and end the 'dictadura' of money. José Bové told supporters outside the court that "Millau is the capital of the resistance in Europe, it is the point of departure of a general mobilisation to create a true citizen's counter-power".

When the weekly *Nouvel Observateur* confronted Bové with Jean Glavany, the Minister of Agriculture, Monsieur Glavany claimed that as a socialist he believed in "progress, knowledge and reason". Jean Glavany added: "What do you want? I'm on the left!"

Monsieur Glavany no doubt is an antiquated socialist. Monsieur Bové, according to John Lloyd the *Financial Times* journalist, "is not that kind of left at all". He became a sheep farmer in Larzac, north of Millau, while dodging his national service in 1973. Then he became the leader of a ten-year struggle against the extension of a military camp in Larzac - his philosophy of direct action is based on the victory of that campaign. It became one of the springboards of the small farmers movement of which he is a leader.

Local food not ideological concoctions

Some anarchists around the Riotous Assembly in Manchester have argued that those of us who back José Bové are promoting a form of nationalism - as if preferring French food to 'McMerde' was somehow chauvinistic, evil and Euro-centric.

When challenged some of these libertarian anti-capitalists have proposed we eat an 'anarcho-vegan cuisine'. Having sampled some of this stuff at various conferences and functions on the libertarian left, I think I can safely say that if being an anarchist condemned working people to consume this kind of diet I'd say we couldn't be blamed for joining the nearest branch of the National Front.

Of course, we can all oppose 'Mal-bouffe' and McDonald's junk food. We would also be uneasy about *haute cuisine* - especially



Anarcho-syndicalist José Bové, centre, is surrounded by supporters outside the trial for his part in the destruction of a McDonalds construction site in Millau, southern France

that faction who Gascon cook Pierre Koffmann says "[wish] to disguise [natural] tastes and to replace them with complex artificial flavours of their own fabrication". But 'anarcho-vegan cuisine', it strikes me, is a fanciful ideological concoction in the worst possible taste.

José Bové, the anarcho-syndicalist small farmer, complains about globalisation introducing uniformity and standardisation into our diet. He says that "you are what you eat, where you live and what you do" and he

cries that "we are peasants and citizens, not shareholders, not servile slaves at the mercy of agri-business!" In the north of England Derek Pattison, the traditional anarchist, bemoans the disappearance of the local café with pie and peas, and cheese and onion pie.

Meanwhile the chef Pierre Koffmann in his *Memoirs of Gascony* proclaims the case for 'cuisine du terroir', regional peasant cooking, against the grandiose restaurant tradition. All of these views offer us a clue to an anarchist approach to food and cuisine.

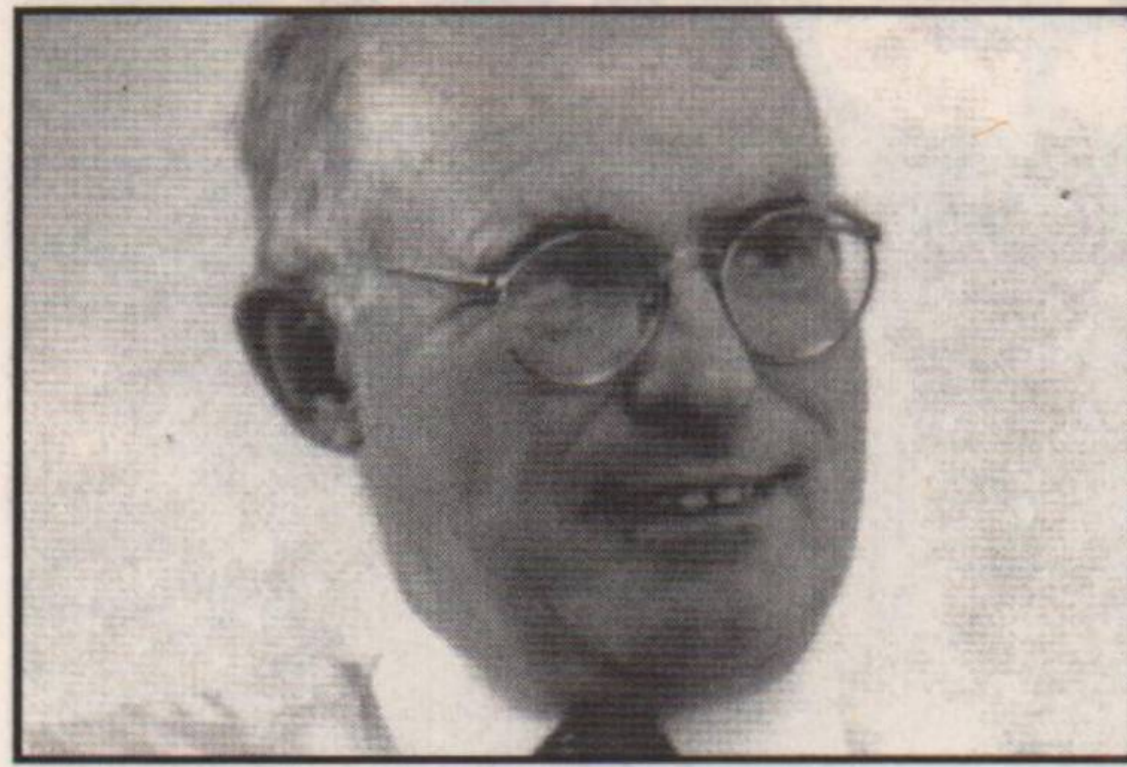
The junk food of McMerde and others, and the artificial ideological 'anarcho-vegan' cuisine are the modern reactions to the grandiose tradition of cuisine. They offer us not a solution, but a diversion. Neither is a grown-up approach to food.

One offers a place to take the naughty child of the working class for a burger and fries, the other is for the clever and precocious children of the middle class at worthy gatherings.

Mack the Knife



The secret privatisation of education



"The Board of Nord Anglia has positioned the company to take advantage of major opportunities in education when they become available to a private sector company."

K.J. McNeany Chairman

Whilst the press devotes acres of coverage to 'Wills at Eton' and 'Why the Bash Street Kids Can't Get into Oxford' they don't seem to have noticed that New Labour is busily engaged in selling off education to the highest bidder. The smart money has already moved in and made a killing, with companies operating in this sector far outstripping the profitability of the rest of the FTSE index (see graph below). Capital Strategies, the corporate finance house which specialises in education, now estimates the privatised education market is worth £1 billion a year! As we go to press, behind closed doors at the Meridien Hotel, Heathrow a major two-day conference promoting this secret privatisation is about to begin.

Money talks

Of course this is just the ranting of an armchair revolutionary, why take my word for what's going on – listen instead to the measured tones of Kevin McNeany, chairman of Nord Anglia Education plc, one of the big companies with their noses in New Labour's trough. "The Company was selected by the Department for Education and Employment to bid for contracts to support, or replace, failing LEAs or to provide management and training services as part of the new policy of introducing Performance Management in schools. Nord Anglia is ideally placed to bid for these and similar education contracts and the Company expects the opportunities to continue, and indeed increase ... The market in Education Services is a fast expanding and exciting one. It represents excellent growth opportunities for the Company" (Company's Annual Report). Rod Aldridge, OBE, chairman of The Capita Group plc, states in his company's annual report that, "the government has made it clear in legislation, best value guidance, education intervention activity and in its messages to local government that it expects the private sector to have a major involvement in providing

services ... The education market is undergoing significant change. Capita intends to play a major role in re-shaping the way in which services are delivered..." Nord Anglia's turnover last year was £62.5 million whilst Capita's educational enterprises netted £55.7 million and there are plenty more porkers in the truffle hunt.

Strategies and consequences

Privatisation strategies are developed by the highly influential Social Market Foundation, established in 1992 by members of the now-defunct Social Democratic Party, including Lord Sainsbury, a leading light of New Labour. Evan Davies, a foundation council member and BBC *Newsnight* journalist, recently revealed their aims in his book, *Public Spending*, which proposed that whilst government should continue to provide funding, all education services should be contracted-out to private companies. Another leading spokesman of the privatisers, James Tooley, recently Director of Education at the Institute of Economic Affairs, promotes their activities with a flawless libertarian critique of state education: "Absolutely the last thing we should want is a monopoly supplier of education opportunities, able to indoctrinate and inflict us with its own world view and values, particularly one, like the state, with monopoly coercive power". Tooley is acutely aware of the danger of state-power but ignores the destructive influence of the market-place. If schools were being liberated from state-control and handed over to co-operatives of pupils, parents and teachers we would have something to celebrate but these sell-offs provide the worst of both worlds. Learners already subject to the National Curriculum, prescriptive examination syllabuses and compulsory attendance face increased discipline and conformity in an effort to demonstrate the 'improved productivity' of new privatised regimes. Typically the first public act of privatised school management is to effect the mass expulsions of 'undesirable' pupils. Social

responsibility ends where profitability begins. When privatisation strikes, teachers are commonly forced to reapply for their jobs and those re-appointed are inevitably given inferior contracts. Parents soon discover that they are left with little effective choice as privatised schools become increasingly selective in their admissions policy, preferring pupils whose academic successes will enhance the schools performance figures and increase its appeal in the market place. Whilst Davies and Tooley may themselves be driven mainly by ideological considerations, profit and greed are the real engines of this privatisation.

Pimping for the privatisers

Although the system was nationalised by Thatcher in 1988 state education in Britain has traditionally been provided by Local Education Authorities who own the school buildings, employ the teachers, supply all the ancillary services from school dinners to insurance and payroll provision and generally manage the whole enterprise. Thatcher's National Curriculum very publicly ended Local Education Authorities' creative involvement with school curricula. New Labour aims to very much less publicly replace Local Education Authorities as providers of this whole range of educational services by commercial service-providers. Determined to avoid the controversy surrounding its privatisations of air-traffic control and the London Underground, New Labour is selling off education piecemeal. Yet stealth does not require sloth, and the pace of privatisation has increased dramatically with government ministers now actively touting for business. The July 2000 meeting at the Meridien Hotel was arranged by the DfEE (Department for Education and Employment) to enable them to bring together representatives from every UK local authority and salesmen from every company on New Labour's approved list of contractors. The DfEE is pimping for the privatisers and using this event for commercial matchmaking. Local Education Authorities that succumb to the sales talk will have, in effect, privatised themselves. When this event ends the campaign continues for the Department for Education and Employment has just committed a further £1.5 million to funding five longer term privatisation promoting projects.

Big bucks for big business

New Labour recently invited bids to provide education services from a whole new raft of companies. Joining old friends like Capita and Nord Anglia on the 'approved list' are Group 4 – the company's experience in managing privatised prisons presumably makes them an ideal candidate to run New Labour's schools. Serco, the company that operates Britain's 'four-minute warning' air defence system and W.S. Atkins, the developer of Britain's first major privatised road scheme were invited to join the gravy train in May. The favoured companies list now also includes KPMG, Arthur Andersen, Lorient, PriceWaterhouseCoopers, Deloitte and Touche, Ernst and Young, CEA, CEM, CfBT, Windsor and Co, Nabarro Nathanson, the Bevan Ashford Consortium and QAA Consultants. CEA secured the juiciest contract when, at the end of 1999, they were given £87 million to run the entire education service previously operated by Islington Council. CEA successfully beat off fierce competition from Nord Anglia to gain the Islington contract. Interestingly the founder of CEA, Brian-Oakley Smith, was previously himself a local authority deputy chief education officer, whilst Nord Anglia's McNeany used to be a senior teacher. The cabal of politicians and businessmen driving the privatised education gravy-train includes many such ex-senior local education authority officers, inspectors and headmasters who have discovered it is more profitable to sell than to serve.

The LEA closing down sale – everything must go!

Nord Anglia may have lost out to CEA on the Islington contract but they had previously pipped them to the post when they became the first ever company to take over an LEAs complete education service, in July 1999. Now LEAs are being privatised at a rate of knots. In March of this year Waltham Forest's education services were awarded to the PPI Group at a cost of £70 million and they will soon be joined by nearby Haringey whose new service provider is yet to be announced. All previous contracts are however likely to be eclipsed by a massive deal to sell off Bradford's education service. This West Yorkshire authority currently manages two hundred schools, more than twice as many as any Local Education Authority (LEA) previously privatised. Privatisations of the educational services of Rochdale, Leeds and Walsall have all been announced in the last month and by the time you read this doubtless more will have been added to this list. In November 1999 education minister Estelle Morris, addressing a conference of the Association of Chief Education Officers in Warwick announced that she expected to see one in seven LEAs privatise their education in the immediate future. By March her aims had become more ambitious and she announced that: "We are moving to a situation where an authority's role is as a facilitator of services, not always as a provider ... Authorities should not be waiting for an inspection or for the DfEE to intervene before looking at whether an outside provider can offer a better service and better value for money." Don't wait to be pushed, join the other lemmings and jump now ...

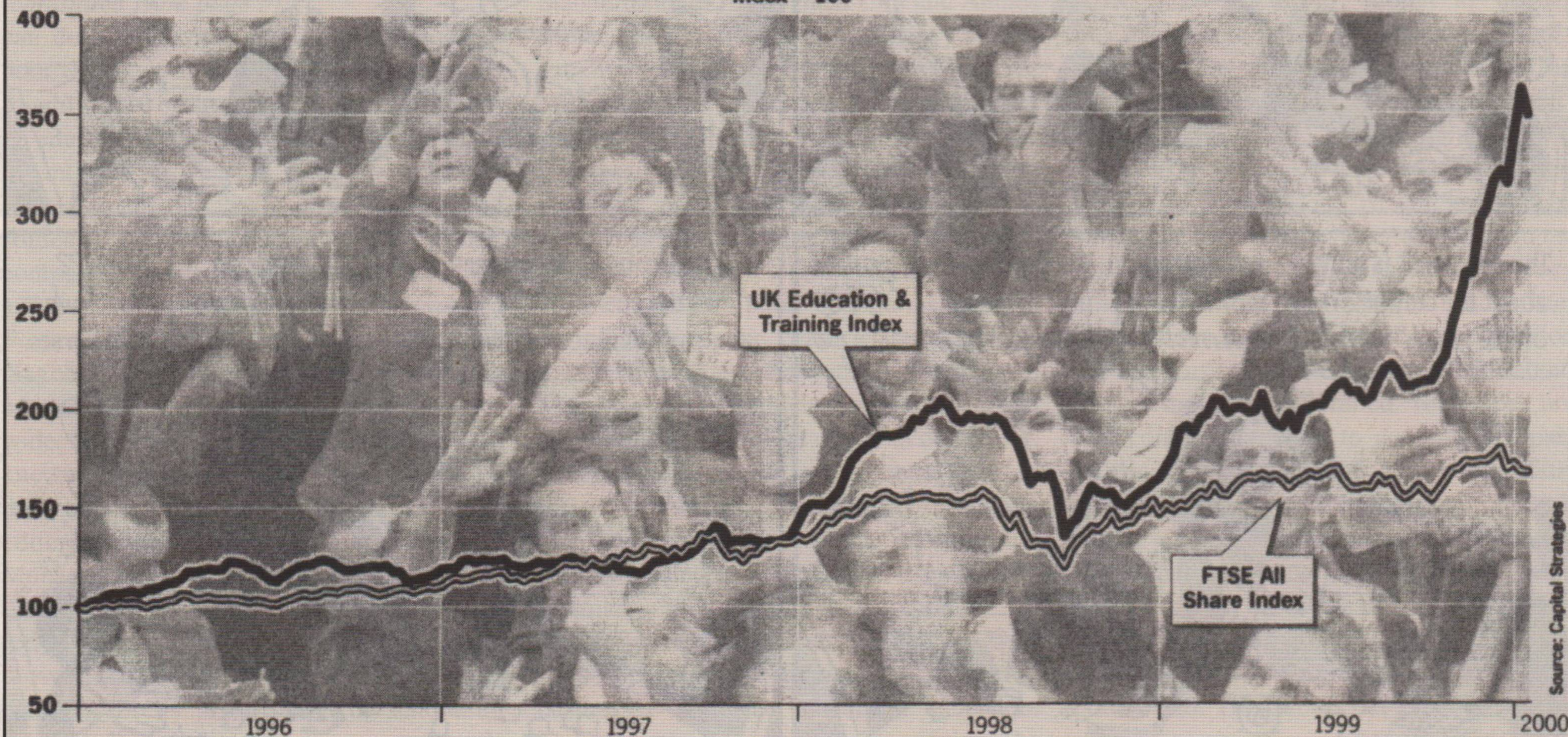
EAZs: an open door for privatisers

The government's Education Action Zones scheme provided an early opportunity for

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(continued from page 4)

LEAs to jump and voluntarily begin handing over their educational responsibilities to big business. The government's EAZ programme document explains that "Education Action Zones provide a dynamic framework within which ... businesses can provide leadership, or management expertise, or enter into radical new contracts to provide services" (ref: EAZMC). Last year twenty five LEAs chose to operate EAZs and threw in their lot

iea **Deloitte & Touche**
 The Institute of Economic Affairs and Deloitte & Touche invite you to attend
The Ninth Annual iea Hayek Memorial Lecture
Reinventing Education: The Road to the Market
 By **Benno C Schmidt Jr**
 Chairman of the Board, Edison Schools
 with commentaries by
The Rt Hon David M Davis MP
 Chairman, Public Accounts Committee
 and
Professor James Tooley
 Department of Education, University of Newcastle
 Tuesday 27th June 2000
 Lecture: 6.30pm - 7.30pm, Reception: 7.30 - 8.30pm
 One Great George Street, London, SW1

with commercial companies in order to each secure £3 million of extra funding. For the second round of its EAZ strategy the government is giving recalcitrant LEAs a shove. It is encouraging groups of local schools and businesses to create zone proposals setting-up commercial contracts whether their LEA approves or not. The current EAZ programme document explicitly states that "it is not a requirement of an application that it must have LEA consent or involvement" (page 7). The whole thrust is to by-pass and destabilise the traditional role of LEAs as providers of a local education service and to divert public money into the pockets of commercial contractors.

Bargains in all departments

Where LEAs have not yet been privatised outright parts of their education service might still have been sold off to niche service providers. Surrey Council, for example, continues to provide a wide range of LEA services, yet one of its schools, King's Manor in Guilford, has nevertheless been privatised. Following an adverse OFSTED (Office for Standards in Education) report in July 1998 it was decided to hand over the school to commercial management. An American company, Edison Schools Inc. was amongst those involved in bidding for the contract along with our old friends, Nord Anglia, but the eventual winner was 3Es Ltd. The founder of 3Es, Stanley Goodchild, was previously Director of Education for Berkshire. The very first state-school in Britain to have been handed over to private management was Rams Episcopal Church of England Primary School, in Hackney, back in September 1998. Rams is now run by a company called CfBT (annual turnover about £50 million). St George's School in Maida Vale, where Philip Lawrence was murdered last year is one of the latest schools to receive the attentions of the privatisers. Nord Anglia was recently engaged to provide a "taskforce to take over the leadership of the school".

Inspectors spot a nice little earner

One of the first educational sectors to undergo privatisation was the OFSTED inspection service. In the current year Nord Anglia alone has secured 220 inspection contracts, each worth up to £25,000 to the company. School meals provision was

another early victim of privatisation with the downgrading of nutritional requirements and the increasing replacement of midday meals by a menu of buns, milkshakes, colas, chips, burgers and sandwiches. Sodexo, one of the biggest players in this area, has just added a £1.2 million contract to serve food to 7,750 Bradford children to its existing contracts to supply 650 other state schools.

New Labour, new contract

New Labour's Private Finance Initiative has provided many lucrative opportunities for big business with more than £1 billion worth of school building, rebuilding and modernisation work having been completed by the private sector since the last general election. A further four hundred schools are currently preparing to take part in the scheme over the next two years. Although the scheme is popular with the treasury it is less popular with the caretakers and cleaners employed by local councils who have found their jobs sold off to private enterprise along with the contracts to service and maintain PFI school buildings.

'No sell-offs' - read my lips!

School land is being as enthusiastically privatised as school buildings. Although New Labour minister Tony Banks stated in December 1997 that "our manifesto commitment is quite clear: we will bring the (previous) Government's policy of forcing schools to sell off playing fields to an end" 97% of projected sell-offs have proceeded without a hitch. The *Times Educational Supplement's* profile of Superhead Mike Booth gives a flavour of the new market-dominated climate in state education: "Mr Booth has followed much of New Labour's prescription for school improvement. The school [Benfield in Newcastle] sold five surplus acres for housing, pocketing more than £1 million for improvements. It won sports college status, made a successful lottery bid for a new sports hall and persuaded Newcastle United football club to sponsor a £385,000 all-weather floodlit pitch. In a room off the new library, adults are taking computer courses in the ICT suite. Two staff are paid with money from the single regeneration budget, due to run out in 2003. Need makes us entrepreneurial," says Mr Booth (*Times Educational Supplement*, 5th May 2000). With new schools built and owned by business and playing fields being sold off for commercial development it is no surprise that schools occupying prime sites are being closed and converted into yuppie flats, despite the vigorous opposition of parents, whose kids consequently have further to travel to attend increasingly overcrowded classes. The former Santley Primary School in Brixton is a typical

INVITATION TO TENDER

The Department for Education and Employment (DfEE) is seeking to appoint contractors for the delivery of the training and assessment for the new model of the National Professional Qualification for Headship (NPQH) which will be the mandatory qualification for headship. The intention is to appoint a contractor to each of the existing ten NPQH regions. Each contractor will need to demonstrate, amongst other criteria, that they can make provision for the training and assessment of at least 400 new candidates each year.

To receive a tender pack, please contact Marlon Leitch by: Telephone: 0171 925 5461 Fax: 0171 925 5967. E-Mail: marlon.leitch@dfee.gov.uk

Potential contractors will wish to request tender packs early as the closing dates for tenders is 31 March 2000.

D/EE
 Department for Education and Employment 6090377(07/0)

example - now converted and renamed the Alpha Building, it has one bedroom flats available for £200,000 and a penthouse for £500,000!

A bung for Big Brother

Providing computer services to schools is another growth area and Xemplar, RM, ICL and Viglen are all big companies profiting from this corner of the market. In the most recent deal RM (previously Research Machines) has just secured a £4.7 million contract to provide computer services to 81 schools in the Scottish Borders. The company's previously awarded Private Finance contract with Dudley included a disturbingly invasive brief with RM's remuneration "linked to such factors as student attainment, the extent of ICT involvement in lessons, as well as teacher attitudes to ICT". RM still has a long way to go to catch Capita whose IT services are now used by 23,000 schools. By the end of this year Capita hope to have developed a system to track truancy and inform parents when children are not in schools, as well as to tap into school timetables, homework schedules and conduct reports - Big Brother will be pleased.

Finest conclusions money can buy

Even educational research institutes have turned from academic co-operation to commercial rivalry. The Curriculum Evaluation and Management Centre (CEMC), in Durham recently dragged the National Foundation for Educational Research, (NFER), before the Advertising Standards Authority for claiming to be "Britain's leading independent educational research organisation". Image is everything in the struggle to secure commercial contracts and it now pays to undermine a rival's claims to be the market leader! Many areas of research have been handed over to 'consultants' with a vested commercial interest in providing the answers sought by their government paymasters. Could anybody have been surprised, for instance, that Capita's report on Haringey's education service recommended that the council be "challenged by an external stakeholder body"? The American based Hay McBer Management Consultancy were given £4 million to discover the characteristics of effective teaching and produced a report identifying levels of performance staff should attain at each career stage, conveniently supporting Blair's favoured performance related pay model of career development. KPMG received about £500,000 for their review of Hackney LEA, which recommended that the education department should be privatised. Thus commercial organisations recommend commercial solutions for all problems, how financially convenient! Official on educational is being increasingly replaced by expensively produced government propaganda pumped out by commercial advertising agencies. The recent £3 million, 'No one forgets a good teacher' nonsense is about to be overtaken by a £10 million contract awarded to the Duck Finn Grubb Waters agency to "build brand awareness of the [Government's] University for Industry".

Education, speculation, privatisation

Privatisation has infected all parts of education. Capita alone is contracted to provide services to 23,000 schools, 500 Further Education and Higher Education establishments and 1.3 million current and ex-teachers but there are hordes of other specialised businesses eagerly introducing crude commercial values into supposedly academic education - McDonald's

NORD ANGLIA
 PARTNERSHIPS IN EDUCATION
PERFORMANCE SYSTEMS
Co-ORDINATOR
School Development and Review Unit
 Salary: £48 - £53k Location: Hackney

In partnership with Hackney Local Education Authority, Nord Anglia Education Plc assumed responsibility for a range of school support services in the Borough in July 1999. This includes the School Improvement Service and the Ethnic Minority Achievement Service effective from April 2000. The contract was the first in the DFEE's intervention initiative. As such, it is high profile and a challenging opportunity for professionals at the forefront of developing education policies and practices.

The service is primarily focused on supporting school effectiveness and raising pupil achievement in Hackney. Nord Anglia is in the process of implementing a radical new structure in the Service, with an emphasis on performance management, consultancy skills and partnership processes. The new spirit and culture of the service aims to improve standards and secure high levels of trust, integrity and competence from our Hackney Stakeholders.

The role of this new post includes:

- Co-ordination and development of a School Development Planning & Self Evaluation framework.
- Developing systems for the analysis of data and judgements on school performance.
- Managing pupil "target setting" processes.
- Developing and overseeing quality assurance arrangements for the Contract Unit.
- Co-ordination and quality assurance of school "assessment" processes.
- Developing and initiating pupil achievement and/or teaching and learning projects/pilots with schools.

You will have senior management experience in schools and a deep understanding of school effectiveness. The ability to lead on school self-review and evaluation is also essential.

The remuneration package also includes competitive holiday entitlement, a pension scheme broadly comparable with the LGPS and a London Weighting Allowance.

Please send letters of application including a comprehensive CV demonstrating how you meet the job role and requirements to Terry Conolly, Nord Anglia Education Plc. Closing date: 12 April 2000.
 Tel: 0206 356 7866. E-mail: hackney@npartnerships.com
 Mail: Nord Anglia Offices, Edith Cavell Building, Enfield Road, London N1 5BA.

Restaurants, Unilever, Walkers Crisps, Toyota and Nat West are just a few of the companies operating through the 'Business in the Community' organisation that have gained access to our children via advertising material posing as free worksheets and posters and staff exchange schemes. These activities form an important part of the softening-up process that has made socialised education so vulnerable to penetration from ruthless commercial enterprises. Cash-strapped schools now tend to gratefully receive any free support no matter how tainted by commercial prejudice. This raises the whole question of the educational value of all this commercialisation. Although big business hasn't yet had much time to prove its mettle, the tarnish is already apparent. Britain's first school to be handed over to a private contractor, Rams Episcopal in Hackney (details above) has now been officially pronounced a failure and will be closed. The country's largest training provider, Spring plc, is currently under investigation by the Serious Fraud Squad. Senior employees of Nord Anglia have recently been accused by the *Times Educational Supplement* (10th September 1999) of misappropriating the intellectual property rights of Bedfordshire Council. Last year the maths teacher-training course run by leading privatiser CBfT was declared a failure by government inspectors whilst the Government itself was severely embarrassed in November when it was revealed that they had awarded the £4 million Hay McBer contract without any semblance of competitive tendering. At the beginning of March this year, one of the county's biggest privatised OFSTED inspection agencies, Salter Baker Associates (Education) Ltd went bust leaving some inspectors owed up to £10,000 in back-pay - so it's not all bad news!

The international dimension

These obvious failures will not slow the pace of privatisation for education globally is under attack by businessmen conscious that public support for shared, non-competitive, non-commercialised education is at an all time low. Rob Reynolds, an American market analyst recently noted that "the business of education, once the province of academics perched in ivory towers, is coming under the purview of the corporations that think they

(continued on page 6)

The '90s: decade of police brutality

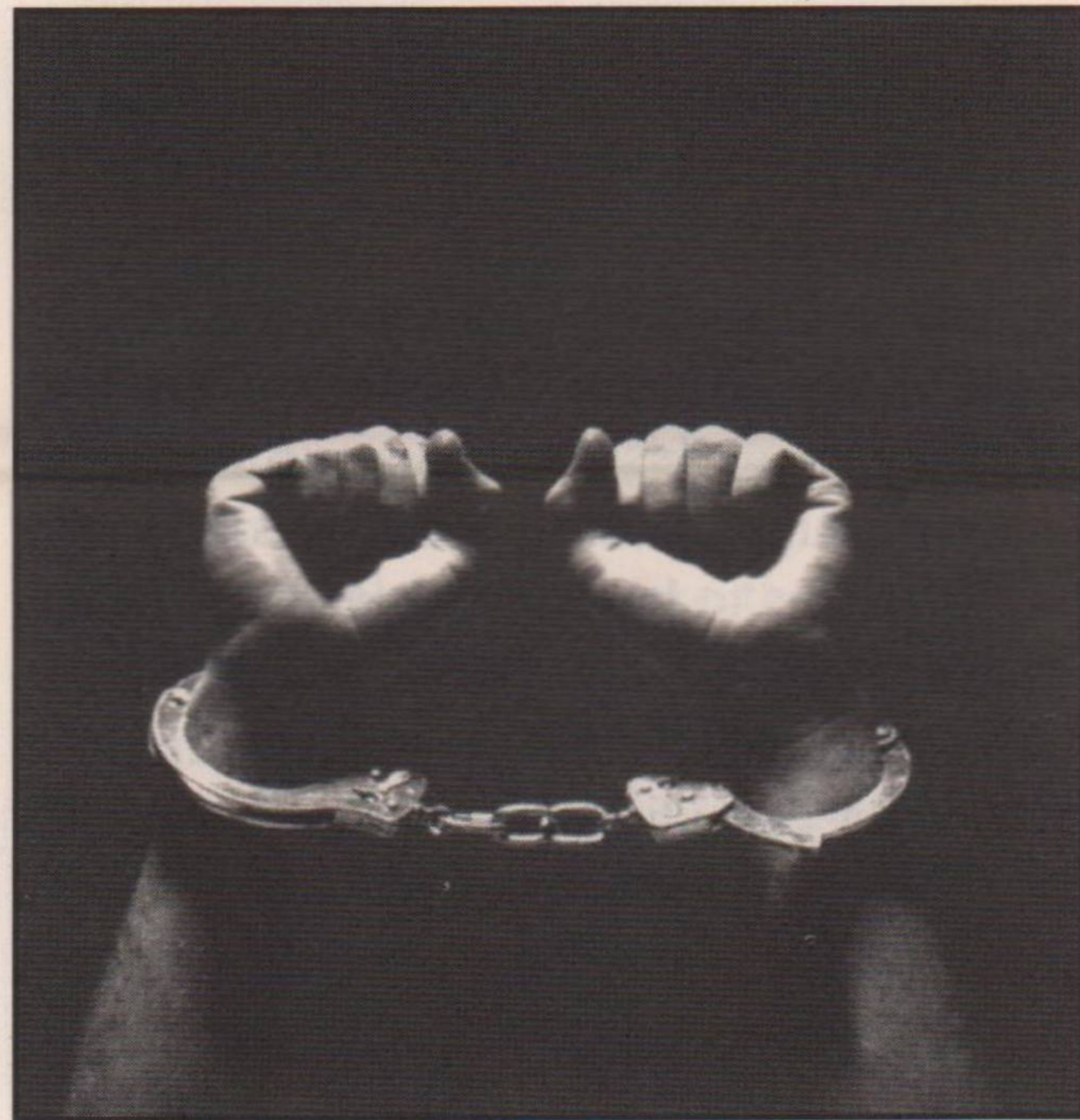
The 1990s will be remembered by many as the beginning of the New Economy, the start of the Internet Age, and as the decade that saw the Cold War crumble as the former Soviet Union split into separate countries and abolished its previous policies. But for many in the United States, it was also a decade of egregious police misconduct. Although US Attorney General Janet Reno admitted in a press conference in April, 1995, that "there is a problem" with excessive use of force by police, much remains to be done to combat this problem. The conduct of the police in the United States, and of the justice system in general, is attracting increasingly critical attention not only from the domestic population, but from the international community as well.

Data on police brutality is hard to come by. Though the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994 charged the US Justice Department with collecting national statistics on complaints of police misconduct, the organisation has failed to comply, according to Amnesty International. Human Rights Watch recently published the report, *Shielded From Justice: Police Brutality and Accountability in the United States*, sampling the conduct of fourteen major city police departments between 1995 and 1998. The results are not so encouraging, and in fact many spokespeople from the analysed police departments "resorted to name-calling and defensiveness" in response to the report, according to Human Rights Watch. This follows a pattern of cover-up and rationalisation by police departments, the report indicates. "Police or public officials greet each new report of brutality with denials or explain that the act was an aberration," the report claims, "while the administrative and criminal systems that should deter these abuses by holding officers accountable instead virtually guarantee them impunity."

Some accounts of police brutality were so sensational that even the media could not help but notice. An overview of the major accounts of police, and justice system, abuse, wrongful death, and travesty follows. This timeline does not mean demean or ignore any cases not here mentioned. Rather, its purpose is to provide a sampling of the major events that were picked up by the media throughout the decade that caused public scepticism to

progress to its current levels (in the interest of continuity, one event from the year 2000 is also noted):

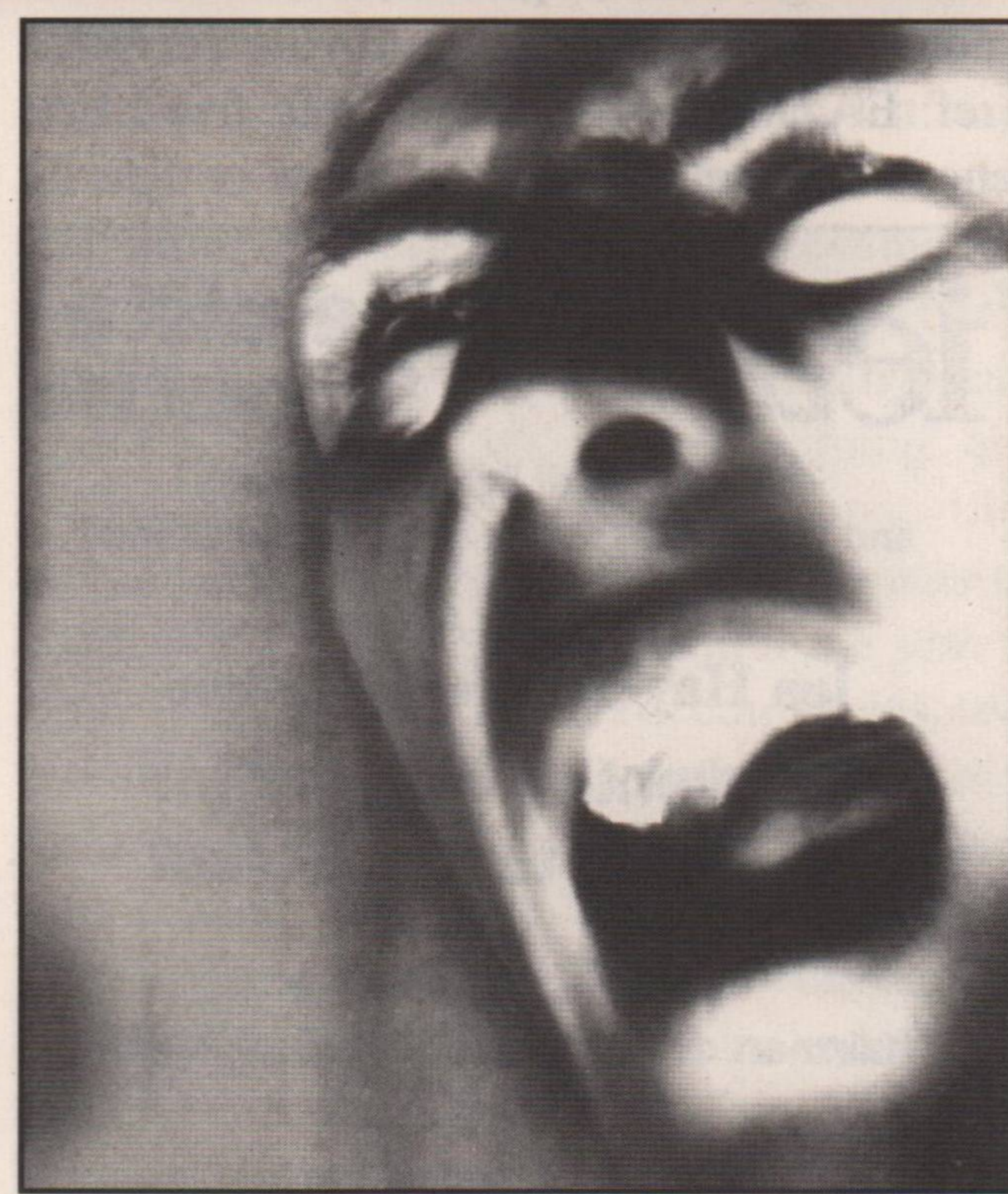
- **March 1991:** Rodney King is beaten with 56 baton strokes, is kicked in the head, torso, and groin, and is stunned with a Taser gun by at least four white officers after a high speed chase. The incident is captured on video. The Christopher Commission report quotes an officer saying "he pissed us off, so I guess he needs an ambulance now ..." over his squad car radio after the beating. The State of California acquits the four white officers.
- **November 1992:** undercover African-American officer Derwin Pannel is shot by three white police officers in New York City. Pannel was making an arrest in plain clothes but was thought to be assaulting someone.
- **June 1993:** thirty year-old African-American Archie Elliott is handcuffed and placed in custody in a police cruiser in Prince George County, Maryland. He is shot at 22 times while cuffed. Officers say he was resisting arrest. Fourteen bullets hit him, killing him.



- **August 1994:** Undercover officer Desmond Robinson is shot five times by white off-duty officer Peter Del Debbio in New York City. Robinson is African-American and is in plain clothes at the time. Del Debbio said he thought Robinson was involved in a crime since he was carrying a gun.
- **October 1995:** Jonny Gammage, cousin of pro football player Ray Seals, is killed by New Jersey police officer John Vojtas during a 'routine' traffic stop. Gammage is

ordered out of his car, when a police officer subdues him after suspecting the Jaguar that Gammage is driving is stolen (the Jaguar was Gammage's). The officer crushes Gammage's trachea, killing him. Officer Vojtas is promoted to Sergeant and is acquitted of murder.

- **June 1996:** African-American Aswan Watson is shot eighteen times while sitting unarmed in a stolen car in Brooklyn. Watson is killed. Officers are acquitted of charges in 1997.
- **July 1996:** 26 year-old African-American Nathaniel Levi Gaines, Jr, a Navy Gulf War veteran, is shot in the back by a New York City police officer. He is unarmed. This same month, 29 year-old Anthony Baez, a man of Puerto Rican descent, is put in a choke-hold and strangled to death by another New York City police officer after Baez allegedly threw a football that hit a patrol car.
- **April 1997:** an African-American woman, Caroline Sue Botticher, is shot and killed after police fire 22 rounds into her vehicle in West Charlotte, North Carolina. She had failed to stop at a police checkpoint. She is unarmed.
- **June 1997:** Geronimo ji Jaga (preferred capitalisation), aka Geronimo Pratt, is released from jail after serving 27 years on a murder conviction that is later overturned. New evidence is found that exonerates him. He is an ex-Black Panther leader and was sentenced to life in 1972.
- **August 1997:** At least four officers are charged with beating and sexually assaulting Haitian immigrant Abner Louima in the Bronx of New York. Officer Justin Volpe is charged with forcing a wooden stick into Louima's rectum.
- **December, 1997:** New York police officers shoot and kill William J. Whitfield III, an African-American man, in a supermarket. He is unarmed. Police say that they thought he was reaching for a gun. Later it is determined that he was reaching for his keys.
- **December 1998:** Tyisha Shene Miller, a 19 year old African-American woman, is killed by Riverside, California, police in a fusillade of 27 bullets as she sits in a state of near unconsciousness in her stranded vehicle. She had had a seizure and the police were called to assist her.



- **February 1999:** immigrant Amadou Diallo is killed in a hail of 41 bullets fired by police outside his Bronx apartment. Diallo is unarmed and is reaching for his wallet when the firing begins. Later, all four officers are acquitted by the state of charges against them.
- **October 1999:** Pennsylvania Governor Tom Ridge signs death warrant for ex-Black Panther and journalist Mumia Abu-Jamal. After coming within two months of facing state execution, Abu-Jamal is granted a stay of execution by a federal judge. Abu-Jamal, a former Black Panther and a journalist, sits on death row to this day.
- **March 2000:** Unarmed security guard Patrick Dorismond is shot to death by an undercover New York City police officer. The officer, in plain clothes, approached Dorismond, wanting to buy drugs.

source BRC-NEWS: Black Radical Congress - General News Articles/Reports

Brian Oliver Sheppard

<bakunin@anarcho.zzn.com>

OBITUARY

Maria Mombiola

"My hope: for a better world, not for the best of worlds."

Maria Mombiola was born on 3rd March 1914 in Saragossa, Spain. With the victory of Franco, Maria was separated from her daughter when she was interned in the French concentration camp in the Tarn. She managed to escape from there, joining her companero Angel in the Maquis. Angel was killed in August 1944 in the Haute Garonne, machine-gunned with three other Spanish members of the CNT when he attempted to blow up a bridge near Ondes.

With the liberation Maria moved to Toulouse and continued the struggle against Franco alongside people like Francisco Sabate, 'El Quico', working with the libertarian youth (FIJL), the AIT, the CNT and groups of autonomous action, and with the archives centre CRAS of which she was elected life president. She gave great support to the young militants of the Iberian liberation movement (MIL), international revolutionary action groups (GARI), to those who had just come out of prison for their activities, and to fugitives. The door was always open at her house to social rebels.

She died on 19th February 1999 and her ashes were thrown into the river Garonne to eventually go to the sea, as was her wish.

Nick Heath

(continued from page 5)

can do a better job - and make a buck to boot. Businesses see profit potential in the roughly \$670 billion the US currently spends on education each year and they see the US's 67 million students as their raw material. Throw in the US SAT scores (so-so) and students' maths and science skills (poor, compared to other industrialised nations), and that's a business opportunity" (*Hoover's Business Network*, 9th May 2000). The same diagnoses and the same prescriptions are advanced by the same businessmen worldwide. New Labour's American links are well known but less well known are the detailed links between New Labour's privatisation of education and schools minister Estelle Morris's visit to the state of Victoria in Australia in May 1999. Victoria is notorious for its 'Education Trust' scheme, which has provoked a storm of protest from Australian teachers for its privatisation of schooling. Michael Barber, head of the government's

Standards and Effectiveness Unit and Anthea Miller, the Teacher Training Agency's chief executive also travelled to Victoria for discussions last year. As Brian Caldwell, professor and dean of education at the University of Melbourne, and leading ideologue of Victoria's privatisers observed "There is an emerging global consensus about what makes a world-class school. This vision transcends party boundaries, as does the pragmatism that characterises strategies to achieve it" (*Times Educational Supplement*, 11th June 1999). Politicians around the world are embracing the forces of global capitalism. Everywhere education is being remodelled to better serve the needs and greeds of businessmen and each advance of the privatisers is eagerly studied and reproduced elsewhere. In February of this year a joint report of the Confederation for British Industry and six sister European organisations outlined businesses' preferred model for education. The report concluded by identifying the

British, New Labour, model as having incorporated most of the business friendly features they consider desirable and an example for the rest of Europe to follow. CBI president Sir Clive Thompson said: "We applaud David Blunkett in pioneering changes in our education system. We still have a long way to go but we believe we are going in the right direction." This increasingly cosy alliance of State and Capital has sinister implications stretching far beyond education yet this particular aspect of the New Labour project may yet be derailed. Blair does not feel confident enough to conduct an open, public privatisation of education. This campaign is covert and cunning and relies on public ignorance for its success. If the Great British public ever twig that their kids' future is passing into the hands of speculators they and their fearless guardians in the national press might yet awake and force a GM-like policy shift. The truth is out there, tell Sid.

Christopher Draper

Land of hope and boozers

Dear Freedom,

A couple of thoughts on Euro 2000. When you start drinking (or smoking, or any social drug taking) you imbibe with your first pints and, without being instructed, the rules of the game.

For me and my bunch the first principle was that you learned to 'hold your drink'. The situation being basically as described by BB, you certainly got pissed, spewed, fell over, but the pride was in minimising the visible effects. From the mid 1950s to the mid 1970s at least, Englishmen were noted (at least by ourselves) for being *able* to hold their drink – as opposed to, say, the Swedes who were

noted for falling off the ferry at Copenhagen begging to be mugged as they had so little practice in drinking at home! For us now, however, the pride resides in *showing* you are drunk, even when by my old habits that's not really the case.

Leaving aside the alcohol contribution therefore, and turning to 'nationalism' (or 'regionalism', 'townism', 'roadism') I take it for granted that evolutionary biology and resulting social structures incline us towards viewing certain places, things, customs as peculiarly our own, and give at least our males an excitement at the thought of some sort of punch-up. It doesn't take 'nationalism' to rouse this. My club, West Ham, have fans with a deserved reputation for being violently allergic to the rest of the country, let alone the world.

Me, I don't consider drunkenness an evil state, or nationalism a swear word. I'm quite happy to hate the French like any true Englishman, or despise the Welsh or decry the Scottish – but this has never, nor will it ever, lead me to take or support any action based on such a fun feeling.

So I consider both problems – the drunkenness and the violence – to be matters of fashion, and fashions can change, nor do we need to follow them. Being human means not having to obey your instincts if it would make anybody sorry.

Paul Campbell

Dear Freedom,

BB comments (1st July 2000) that "it has long been obvious that Englishmen can't handle strong drink in any quantity". Can Englishwomen? Or perhaps Scotsmen, when

they are not being mean, or Black men when they are not being rhythmic? I speak as an individual English person who can't handle strong drink.

DP

If you can't handle strong drink, don't touch it! The point we would like to make, which perhaps might have been better expressed, is that most of the hooligans one sees are white Anglo-Saxon males who have never learned to drink socially, and this is at least partly due to absurd legal restrictions on the sale of alcohol (which were, let it be remembered, originally introduced during the First World War to control the munitions workers). As the law is liberalised public drunkenness decreases, as it did notably in Scotland where de-restriction was tested experimentally a few years ago before being introduced in England.

Paul Campbell is right – football is fun, and drinking is fun, and for some people a punch-up is the spice of life, but remember that if we ever went to war with our football rivals the hooligans on *both* sides would quickly find themselves in the glasshouse.

Editors

Getting better

Dear Freedom,

Your fortnightly paper just gets better and better! One criticism is that you don't try and get your paper read by more people. Perhaps you need to advertise aggressively! Certainly it's a better read (in my humble opinion) than *anything* available from the newsagents.

T. Grantham

Letters like this one certainly encourage us to keep going. Unlike other political papers (but in common with other anarchist papers) *Freedom* is put together on a shoestring budget by a small group of unpaid volunteer workers. We have recently placed a number of advertisements in the political press, and circulation is increasing, but if we had more readers we could produce an even better paper. We wonder if more of our existing readers would consider taking a *bundle* subscription (anything from two copies upwards) and try to interest people they know who might themselves become subscribers. Rates are given on our back page.

Editors

1 in 12 Club

Dear Comrades,

I only gained access to the 20th May issue of *Freedom* yesterday [26th June]. On 22nd April myself and several others prisoners were attacked by riot screws at Long Lartin Prison, and badly beaten up. I am currently being bounced around the country (and Wales, having spent Mayday in an authentic 1840 dungeon in Cardiff) on a punitive 'circuit'. Full details from my campaign [see below].

Anyway, my reason for writing is to correct the misconception in the 'Northern Anarchists in Bradford' piece that the '1 in 12 Club' was named for the one in twelve unemployed people in Bradford at the time it was established. It was actually named for the one in twelve claimants who the DSS reckoned were *fiddling the dole* – something far more radical.

Mark Barnsley
WA 2897, HMP Woodhill,
Milton Keynes, MK4 4DA

e-mail barnsleycampaign@hotmail.com
www.appleonline.net/justiceuk/eddie/mark.html

Please keep sending in your
letters and donations

What Publications?

Dear Comrades,

I've enjoyed reading one of your anarchist classics (Rudolf Rocker's *Anarchism and Anarcho-Syndicalism*) and would be interested in further information about available books, pamphlets, magazines, etc. Also I am aware of the existence of the Anarchist Federation (formerly the ACF) and Class War and would be interested to know about other anarchist groups (locally and nationally), especially the Anarchist Trade Union Network. Constructive criticism of the differences between various groups would also be useful.

Tim Dewhurst

Solidarity Federation (the British section of the International Workers Association)
PO Box 29, SW PDO, Manchester M15 5HW (for details of workers' network and local groups)
manchesterSF@scandrac.demon.co.uk
publication: *Direct Action* (£1.50)

Anarchist Trade Union Network
Box EMAB (ATU), 88 Abbey Street, Derby DE22 3SQ
williamgodwin7@hotmail.com
http://www.geocities.com/CapitolHill/Parliament/2522

Most of these papers publish useful lists of other relevant addresses, and we are sure that they all appreciate constructive criticism. You can also order the latest issue of the above publications from the Freedom Press bookshop if you add first class postage to the price of each one. Freedom Press also publishes a booklist – please send an s.a.e.

We at Freedom Press don't offer a 'group' to join. We direct our publications not to the already converted but to readers who are on the left but who are despairing of the political parties, and we attempt to show in our books and periodicals how the anarchist approach is the only one that makes sense of present-day reality.

Editors

We are sending you details of our publications. The main anarchist 'groups' (by which is meant organisations which anyone who agrees to a set of principles can join) are:

Anarchist Federation
c/o 84b Whitechapel High Street, London E1 7QX
acf@burn.ucsd.edu
http://burn.ucsd.edu/~acf/
publication: *Organise!* (£1.50)

Class War
BM Box 357, London WC1N 3XX (for details of local groups)
class_war@hotmail.com
www.geocities.com/CapitolHill/9482
publication: *Class War* (£1.00)

The Simplicity of Anarchism

The most frightening aspect of anarchism to the regimented mind is the simplicity of the truths it contains. Whilst society is quite prepared to accept the feasibility of planetary flight, alchemy and other things within, and beyond, the realms of logic, the simple possibility of man being self-governing and capable of standing on his own feet – without the aid of political and legal crutches – is regarded as something akin to lunacy, or dangerously fanatical to say the least.

The potential horrors of atomic warfare and the possible obliteration of the human race, although here and there invoking a sundry voice of protestation, is presumably nowhere near as terrifying as the prospect of society being freed from political bondage and given independence to organise its own economy by mutual aid and co-operation.

Government provides its own indictment when it so brazenly presumes the helpless imbecility of its subjects, which it regards as a mass of potential lunatics restrained only by the leash of politics and law. It would seem that without the saving grace of politicians, Bedlam itself would be let loose, and that arson, rape, murder and looting would be the order of the day!

One might be impertinent enough to ask why, then, if people are so incapable of self-restraint they should be deemed sufficiently sane to elect others to control them? Why, for instance, do politicians shout, manoeuvre and contrive to get elected by large majorities if those majorities are such potential lunatics?

The anarchist believes that freedom is what its name implies, and he can't conceive how it is possible to be free and at the same time be governed by others – nor can he see how it is possible to help others to be free by sticking bayonets in their bodies or dropping atom bombs on their homes. He considers himself capable of goodness without religion and of dignity without the aid of law, and whilst he is prepared to give freely and of his best in co-operation with others for the commonweal, he takes exception to administering to the selfishness of drones.

He has no faith in the infallibility of politicians, nor in the wisdom of kings. Whilst he repudiates the necessity of law, he concedes the necessity for order: not the kind of order decreed by politicians and enforced threats, but natural order resulting from the harmonious development of mutual respect within society,

when once freed from political bondage.

There is something radically wrong, he declares, in a system of society that functions and maintains its existence by the impetus of violence and force. He sees nothing praiseworthy in political society which has recourse to periodic wars, or the need of jails, gallows and bludgeons – and it is because he is aware that these brutal weapons are the instruments of every government and State that he works for their destruction.

To him, freedom is something more than mere political claptrap – it is the quintessence of being and living. It gives focus to the ego's expanding universe, and eclipses the power of ignorance and fear. Given the freedom to assert its inherent qualities, he believes humanity capable of solving its own social problems by the simple application of equity and mutual aid.

Unlike the politician, he does not regard dishonesty brutality and avariciousness as natural characteristics of human nature, but as the inevitable consequences of coercion and frustration engendered by artificial law, and he believes that these social evils are best eradicated not by greater penalties and further legislation, but by the free development of the latent forces of solidarity and sympathetic understanding which government and law so ruthlessly suppress.

Freedom will be possible when people understand and desire it – for man can only rule where others subserviently obey. Where none obey, none has power to rule.

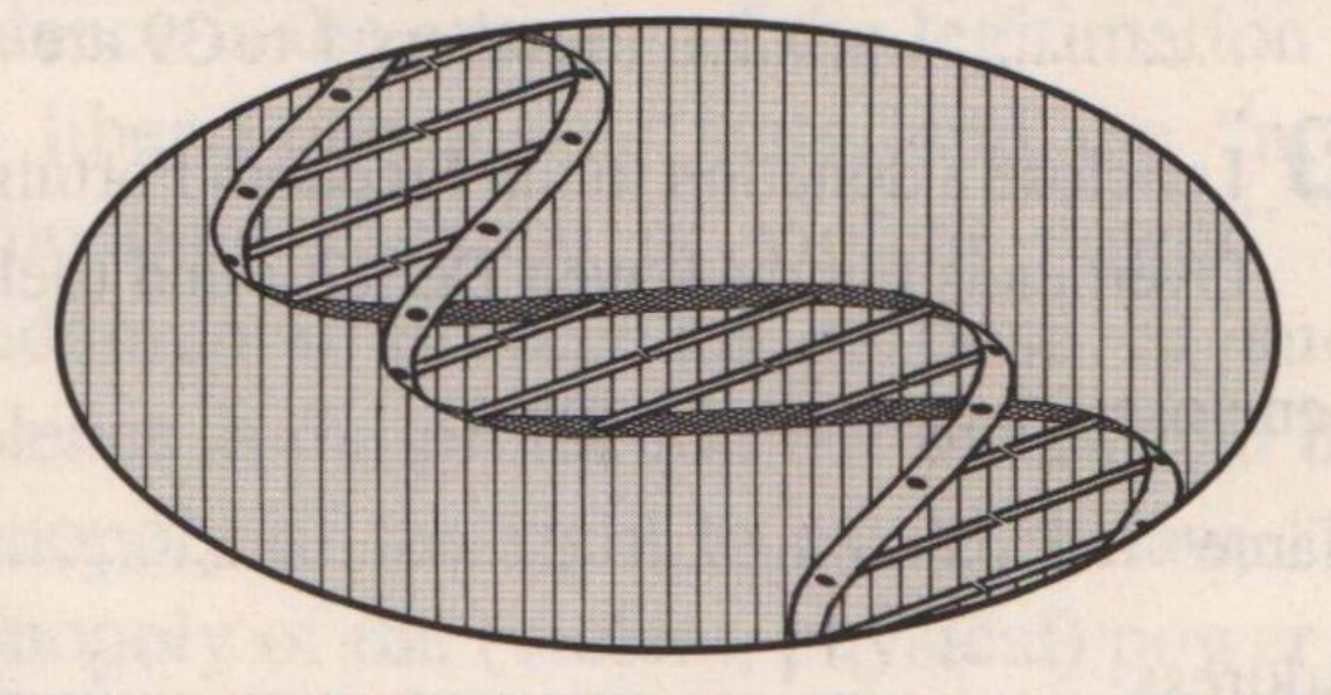
George Nicholson

Number 40 of the anarchist quarterly

The Raven

on

Genetic Modification



96 pages for £3.00 post free worldwide

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

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A non-factional, open discussion group for all anarchists, and those wanting to discuss anarchism, libertarian theory or related issues. The LAF is run on a collective basis, facilitated but unchaired and based on free speech and informal dialogue. Meets Fridays around 8pm to 10pm at Conway Hall, 25 Red Lion Square, London WC1R 4RL (nearest tube Holborn). Admission free but voluntary contribution is suggested to cover cost of room.

— MEETINGS FOR 2000 —

14th July Anarchist debating, and the future of the LAF (open meeting)

21st July Monthly free dialogue (any topic)

28th July Foucault and Anarchy (a debate with video screening)

4th August Anarchy and Counterculture: the 'Beats' and their legacy (a talk with recordings, speaker Steve Ash)

11th August Open Debate: anarchism and socialism, identical or incompatible?

Anyone wanting to give a talk or facilitate a discussion should contact Steve Ash, or any other regular, at a meeting, giving topic and preferred dates. A contact address will be available soon. Monthly free dialogues may be cancelled at short notice and used for scheduled talks if necessary.

LAF@anarchic.co.uk www.trak.to/LAF
Steve Ash for London Anarchist Forum

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e-mail: anarchistage@geocities.com

Renewing the Anarchist Tradition

A conference in Plainfield, Vermont,
from 24th to 27th August 2000

for more info contact either of the co-organisers:

Cindy Milstein, 5641 S. Blackstone Ave.,
Chicago, IL 60637-1898, USA
e-mail: cbmilstein@aol.com

John Petrovato, PO Box 715, Conway,
MA 01341, USA

e-mail: ssimon@shaysnet.com

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Confronting the Foreign Office to mark the tenth anniversary
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for more info contact voices in the wilderness uk,
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Cardiff action/ discussion group

Any readers in the Cardiff area who are
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