

FREEDOM

anarchist fortnightly

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50p

Blackballing and cradle-snatchers

When I was a young lad my mother always tried to keep the *News of the World* out of my reach. In them days the paper used to publish the most scandalous details

from court reports, and she didn't want me corrupted at an early age by evidence of the seedy side of life.

Last week the *News of the World* continued its campaign to name and

shame paedophiles by publishing what has been called a perverts' gallery of child sex offenders. The paper's managing editor, Stuart Kuttner, insisted his paper should not feel defensive, arguing that "we are galvanising public opinion and hoping to develop an important debate". To date there have been several mistaken identities, as the houses of supposed paedophiles have been stoned and innocent hapless men have had to flee gangs of irate women.

An editorial in last week's *News of the World* calls for 'Vigilance not Vigilantes' and claims its campaign against paedophiles "has commanded the attention of the nation". The editor is 31 year old Rebekah Wade, the youngest ever editor of the *News of the World*, who comes from Daresbury in Cheshire. Her former boss says "she is simply a great newspaperwoman" and "she gets terrific stories, promotes them brilliantly and is smart enough to let the rest take care of itself". Her ambition is to become the first female editor of *The Sun*.

Child protection in the modern world

The newspaper has touched a nerve in the nation, and it knows it. The safety of children seems to have gained special significance today, which goes beyond anything before. Between eight and nine in the morning, our roads are cluttered with the vehicles of parents chauffeur-ing their children to school because they fear for their safety if they walked on their own as we did.

Why is this the case? Perhaps it has something to do with the lower birth-rate. Earlier generations looked on the adult as more important than the child. In big families like my grandmother's it was anticipated that one or two kids should die. Today the death of a child is the worst thing we can imagine. In

(continued on page 2)



London children playing cricket in the street in the 1930s.

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Although urging 'vigilance not vigilantes', the *News of the World* insists on ...

Naming and shaming

The cynical *News of the World* campaign to publish the names, pictures and addresses of child sex offenders has been roundly condemned by everyone from the National Association for the Care and Resettlement of Offenders to Anne Widdecombe. The nature of the cynicism at work can best be gleaned from the fact that the same issue which launched the campaign also carried a pin-up of a sixteen year old girl. Moreover the effect of the campaign will be the opposite of that claimed as justification – the protection of children. As Paul Cavadino of NACRO made clear: "experience shows that when paedophiles are publicly identified some of them go to ground, fearing vigilante attacks. They move elsewhere and change their names, making it difficult or impossible for the police to track them. This may in fact increase the risk to children."

It isn't (or shouldn't be) surprising that, following the horrific murder of Sarah Payne, people are concerned at the risk to their children. It isn't surprising either that a Murdoch tabloid should seek to exploit such fears to its own ends. Focusing on stranger danger, though, helps to obscure the more disturbing facts about child sex abuse. Between five and nine children are murdered by strangers every year. The Home Office study *Sex Offending Against Children: Understanding the Risk* reveals that "the majority of perpetrators sexually assault

children known to them, with about 80% of offences taking place in the home of either the offender or the victim." The biggest single category of offender is male relatives.

Nor is it the case that the number of sexual offences against children is spiralling out of control. In the period from 1985-1995, the total number of child sex convictions in England and Wales fell from 5,136 to 3,530 – a fall of 31%. Nor either that paedophiles are repeat offenders. A study that followed up some 4,000 offenders over a 21 year period found that 16% were reconvicted of a child sex offence. (The *News of the World* claims 64% re-offend) A recent probation survey found that 93% of child sex offenders (and 96% of those in probation hostels) did not re-offend while under probation supervision – precisely the supervision the *News of the World* campaign will frustrate. Of sex offenders on probation orders, those participating in treatment programmes had only a 5% re-conviction rate within two years. Contra the *News of the World*, therefore, treatment programmes are effective, and the community supervision orders and the monitoring procedures brought in following the establishment of the sex offenders register do make both the treatment of paedophiles and the protection of children easier. (Forgive me for not being motivated to defend the rights to freedom of movement of paedophiles. To defend the freedom of the powerful over the risk to those without

power, to defend the freedom of paedophiles over the freedom of children to live free of the risk of abuse, is to make of freedom a travesty.)

The key to all this, though, remains the fact that 80% of child sex offences take place within the home, and that Home Office figures suggest that 70% of abusers were themselves once abused. This is what the *News of the World* – those proponents of the traditional family, the defenders of corporal punishment, of section 28, of the 'right to smack' – would seek to conceal; the 'traditional family' they would seek to defend is the primary site of abuse of the child. The notion of the family as a 'haven' doesn't stand up to examination. The family sits at the heart of the reproduction of the labour process – it privatises the need for support, love, solidarity, it provides a means by which labour can be made fit for work again without cost to capital, and it sets up relations of dependency which both force people back into the shackles of the wage relationship, and underpin the form of women's oppression under capital. In its privatisation of the social, the family becomes the site of both child 'neglect' (because the social welfare of the child becomes the responsibility not of society *per se* but of the family alone, regardless of income, etc.) and child abuse (because the child has neither power nor right, whether within the family or without). Moreover, the last twenty years have seen insecurity become the norm across every aspect of our lives – jobs are no longer 'permanent' while our expectations as consumers are ever higher. The family becomes a domain of insecurity, of promises which can never be kept. The American social historian Stephanie Coontz has observed that "the sexual abuse of children is overwhelmingly a family affair, reproducing very old fashioned gender and power relations ... incest and sexual abuse reveal the pathological side to an overtly privatistic approach to the family. The abusive family typically has a rigid boundary between the family and the outside world and a strong belief that a man's power within his family is not subject to outside surveillance or checks. Incestuous fathers and stepfathers tend to be socially isolated and to have an intrafamily orientation" (Stephanie Coontz, *The Way We Never Were*, Basic Books, 1992).

The message from New Labour is that the family should be again our haven from the now-inescapable precariousness of life, yet that combination of ontological insecurity and retreat from social involvement builds the walls behind which abuse takes place. As Coontz puts it, "despite all the difficulty of making generalisations about past families, the historical evidence does suggest that families have been most successful wherever they have built meaningful, solid networks and commitments beyond their own boundaries".

Easy as it is to condemn the *News of the World* campaign, it would be wrong to move from this to passing easy judgement on those who have taken up the paper's call for 'vigilance'. For all the talk in the broadsheets of 'mob law' and 'lynch mobs.' there has been only one reported account of an attack on a suspected paedophile (itself a case of mistaken identity). As Ros Coward observed in *The Guardian* on 1st August 2000, "commentators are using incredibly bigoted language to describe people who might join the *News of the World* campaign, who attack the houses of convicted paedophiles, or who visit the spot where Sarah Payne's body was found ... They are represented as an irrational mass, swayed by prejudice and ignorance ... What is distressing about these clichés is the enormous gulf they reveal between liberal commentators and those whose lives and communities have been shattered by paedophile activity, or, more extremely, a child murder.

What appears to have escaped all notice is that the majority of those who make up the supporters of the *News of the World* campaign and the majority of those on the streets in support of Women Against Violence and Abuse are working class women, the women left behind when the promises of emancipation of 1960s feminism were traded in for book deals and newspaper columns and professorships. Moreover, it would be wrong to assume that the sole basis for their mobilisation is around the issue of 'stranger danger'. The down-sizing and de-skilling of the last decades, and the consequent increase in poverty and what the sociologist Jock Young calls "a feeling of precariousness in those previously secure" led to a "chronic deprivation amongst the poor which gives rise to crime" (Jock Young, *The Exclusive Society*, Sage, 1999). As Young makes clear, "the combination of relative deprivation and individualism is a potent cause of crime in situations where no political solution is possible: it generates crime but it also generates crime of a more internecine and conflictive nature. The working class area, for example, implodes upon itself: neighbours burglarise neighbours, incivilities abound, aggression is widespread." Crime becomes a force rendering working class life yet more insecure. The response of the state, having helped engineer the growth in deprivation and 'chaos of reward,' which triggers any growth in crime, is to make sure that crime becomes only a problem for the poor. Police strategy is one of confinement – making sure that crime is something the poor do to each other. CCTV covers the high streets, but only the boundaries of working class estates. In light of this, therefore (and the problem of anti-working class crime is one the left has turned a conveniently blind eye to for years, caught up with its own lack of social contact with the communities it claims to speak for, (continued on page 2)

DOES REBEKAH WADE LIVE NEAR YOU?



SHAME OF THE NEWS OF THE WORLD (1 VIRGINIA STREET, LONDON E1)

We reproduce this picture from the current issue of *Tribune*

Child murders

Cases of murder of children have called forth in recent time an immense amount of newspaper publicity and sensational newspaper articles. In its turn this publicity has made the question of child murder a subject for everyday conversation and, for many parents, of increased anxiety. Not infrequently this anxiety is then passed on to the children themselves. One child recently told the writer that "strange men strangle little girls" and went on to ask, "What does 'murder' mean?" It transpired that an adult had used this sensational matter as further means of instilling anxiety in order to exact obedience – a process which can be observed every day, and which is productive of most far-reaching harm.

Murder and sexual activities against children must inevitably produce horror and anxiety. But it is clear to an impartial observer that society's reaction to these crimes only consists of these responses in a superficial conventional way. It is easy to see that they sell the newspapers and that the avid way in which they are read tells of other unavowed and less respectable emotions. In brief, the way such murders are read and discussed is not normal. Normal people do not respond to horror and tragedy with half-concealed avidity and superficial comment. The enormous horrors of Belsen and Buchenwald, or Hiroshima and Nagasaki, called forth a similar abnormal response. It is the reaction of people without contact with reality.

If the response of the newspaper readers is superficial and unreal, so also are the remedies put forward. The law, of course, knows only one remedy: the alleged deterrent effect of capital punishment. But the general response to the problem of what to do about child murder is on an even lower level.

An impartial observer – and it needs little knowledge of psychology to recognise that this means one who does not need to project on to the criminal the energy with which he represses his own sadistic impulses – the impartial observer immediately sees that the violation and murder of children is an

extraordinary and abnormal act. It is natural to love and cherish children: it is absolutely foreign to normal human impulses to harm them. Hence it could not be more obvious that people who murder children in this way are mentally abnormal: and it follows that there must be causes and that these can be investigated, that we are dealing with a psycho-pathological problem, and that powerful emotional responses and denunciations are quite out of place. And, let it be added, those who are able to take such an adult view of the problems are exactly these people who react in a normal deep way to the actual tragedy – not those who lasciviously read their newspaper and then fall back into casually lascivious righteousness.

Yet even the reasonable, fairly well-adjusted people who approach the problem in an adult way also show, often enough, an abnormal element in their response. For the problem is of much greater magnitude than that of psychiatric assessment of sadism in individual cases. It does not need a display of statistics to show that child murder is always with us: so many for each five-year period, no doubt with rises and falls due to this or that external influence. And this fact, taken in conjunction with the abnormal response of society generally, indicates clearly enough that there are factors in our society which make abnormal sexual crimes inevitable, if sporadic, events. And it is surely clear enough that the sensational prurient interest these crimes provoke indicates that the impulses which lead on to sadistic crimes exist in virtually everyone.

We cannot today be satisfied with 'explanations' entailing expressions like 'wickedness' unless we extend such abusive condemnation from the emotionally sick criminal to the whole of society, and then move on to the problem of improving our society so that such abnormal impulses shall not be fostered.

Those who are honest with themselves and possess some insight into their own thoughts and actions will not require much argument to convince them that the problems of sexual crime are connected with the sexual repression involved in the frustration of normal sexual impulses in infancy, childhood and youth. The lascivious superficial response, the anxiety, and the quite unsuitable use of such abnormal threats to children all come from the same source. And everybody with a feeling for life knows that this is true.

Yet the same newspaper which denounces in over-righteous terms the child murderer may well carry another article denouncing attempts at sexual enlightenment in schools. It is evident that a radical approach to this problem requires a much clearer grasp of the whole problem of the social role of sexual repression. Still more important is the need for insight into the positive values of a natural living out of the sexual impulses in development.

John Hewetson

This article is taken from *Sexual Freedom for the Young*, first published by Freedom Press in 1951. The complete text, with a new preface by Colin Ward, was reprinted in *The Raven*, no. 4 (1988). This issue also includes the autobiography of the German social revolutionary Johann Most and an account of his trial and imprisonment in London in 1881, articles on computers, criminology, teaching anarchism in geography lessons, Rudolf Rockett's *Anarcho-Syndicalism*, and Donald Roomo on social ecology. *The Raven*, no. 4 is still available at £3 (post free worldwide).

(continued from page 1)

and Robin Hood myths of crime as redistribution of wealth) the mobilisation of large numbers of working class women around the issue of child abuse ought to be seen as a response to the increase in crime and the implosion of working class communities more generally, and, in part, a step towards a solution, rather than a problem in itself.

The isolation and effective redundancy of our own forces needs to be considered honestly at this point. We claim, a good many of us, to speak for an anti-capitalist politics, but it is a politics that means nothing in Harlesden or Anfield, Bexley or Mosside. We have been content for too long with talking to ourselves, and looking askance when those with most to gain from any 'anti-capitalism' committed to something more than mere theatre look elsewhere for answers we've never bothered to begin to provide.

Writing about the earlier campaign against the released paedophile Sidney Cooke, Zygmunt Bauman observed that Cooke represented "an excellent cause to bring together people who seek an outlet for long accumulated anxiety. First, Cooke has a name attached to him; this makes him into a



Hidden under a blanket, police escort the Sarah Payne murder suspect

(continued from page 8)

families of one child, it would be almost impossible to recover from losing it.

Today even working class people would find my free use of the words 'kids' and 'it' in this context offensive. Yet my father and his brothers always referred to each other as 'our kid'.

This kind of obsession with the safety of the child and the taboos that go with it seem to be getting a bit out of proportion. In some areas parents are so afraid they won't let their children play out. And yet, many more children will be killed on the road in traffic accidents this year than will be in any way threatened by paedophiles. But that is seen as an acceptable risk so we carry on driving our cars.

Careers and opportunities

Ms Rebekah Wade is clearly determined to further her own career and become the first female editor of *The Sun* on the back of the campaign against paedophiles in the *News of the World*. Others too may spot opportunities for advancement in the present public frenzy.

As I write, a judge in Manchester is about to sentence a former schoolteacher recently found guilty of indecent assault and gross indecency. Raymond Cullens has been ordered to sign the Sex Offenders Register.

The problem with this case is that Cullens had been jailed in 1992 for two and a half years for indecent assault, when he asked for other cases to be taken into account. He pleaded guilty on that occasion. Those cases were dated 1984, 1990 and 1991.

To this case, said to have taken place in 1986, he pleaded 'not guilty'. The question posed by the defence was why, if he was guilty, did he not ask for this case to be taken into account along with the others in 1992?

The other interesting thing – which may have occurred to the defence team – is that

tangible target, which fishes him out of the pap of ambient fears ... Second, by a happy coincidence Cooke has been placed on a spot where private concerns and public issues meet; more precisely, his case is an alchemical crucible in which love for one's children – a daily experience, routine yet private – can be miraculously substantiated into a public spectacle of solidarity. Cooke has become a gang-plank of sorts, however brittle and provisional, leading out of the prison of privacy. Last but not least, that gang-plank is wide enough to allow a group, perhaps a massive one, escape; each lonely escape is likely to be joined by other people escaping their own private prisons, and a community can be created just by using the same escape route and which will last as long as all feet are on the gang-plank" (Zygmunt Bauman, *In Search of Politics*, Polity, 1999). If we believe we have better answers to the problems thrown up by everyday life in 21st century capitalism than either the *News of the World* or the British National Party, we have a responsibility to argue for them, and not just to ourselves. If we believe each issue thrown up by the politics of daily life – whether it be child abuse, crime or rent increases – can best be understood and thence resisted through an anti-capitalist frame, we have to show in practice how this can be made into effective, transformative politics in the communities who lose the most through the social relations which are the essence of capital. If we want to turn the 'public spectacle of solidarity' in to a real solidarity, a real escape from the 'prison of privacy' then we have to begin to conduct our arguments as debates within, not against, working class communities.

Nick S.

the accuser of Cullens has branched out herself into doing training on a counselling course. We are told by the *Heywood Advertiser* that Cullens' accuser, now aged 22, is busy doing exams and currently works for Victim Support. A teacher who knew of the Cullens case has told *Freedom* that she believes Mr Cullens denial of guilt in this case, both because she can't understand why he didn't ask for this case to be taken into account in 1992 when he confessed to the other assault, and as she feels that this girl's evidence conflicts with the evidence of the other victims.

Hunt the paedophile!

Anarchists will be anxious about the *News of the World*'s 'hunt the paedophile' game. The newspaper boasts that "there are more names and pictures on our internet website" and "we are continually updating our paedophile database".

Some critics claim that the *News of the World*, three weeks ago, had no 'splash' story as a front page lead and so in desperation sent a reporter to fish through the Scout Association files. Even more worrying perhaps are the current calls for a Stalkers Register, particularly in view of the fact that the legislation on stalking was invoked, but not enacted, against those anarchists who photographed those dole bosses who threatened to take away benefits from claimants under the JSA.

Of course the freedom of the child to play out without being molested is vitally important – we don't want to end up like some areas of the USA with private estates guarded by armed security guards. But the overwhelming majority of children murdered in this country each year are killed by a person known to the child. Only a tiny minority are murdered by strangers. At the same time we have perhaps the highest level of child road deaths in Europe – but that's a price worth paying.

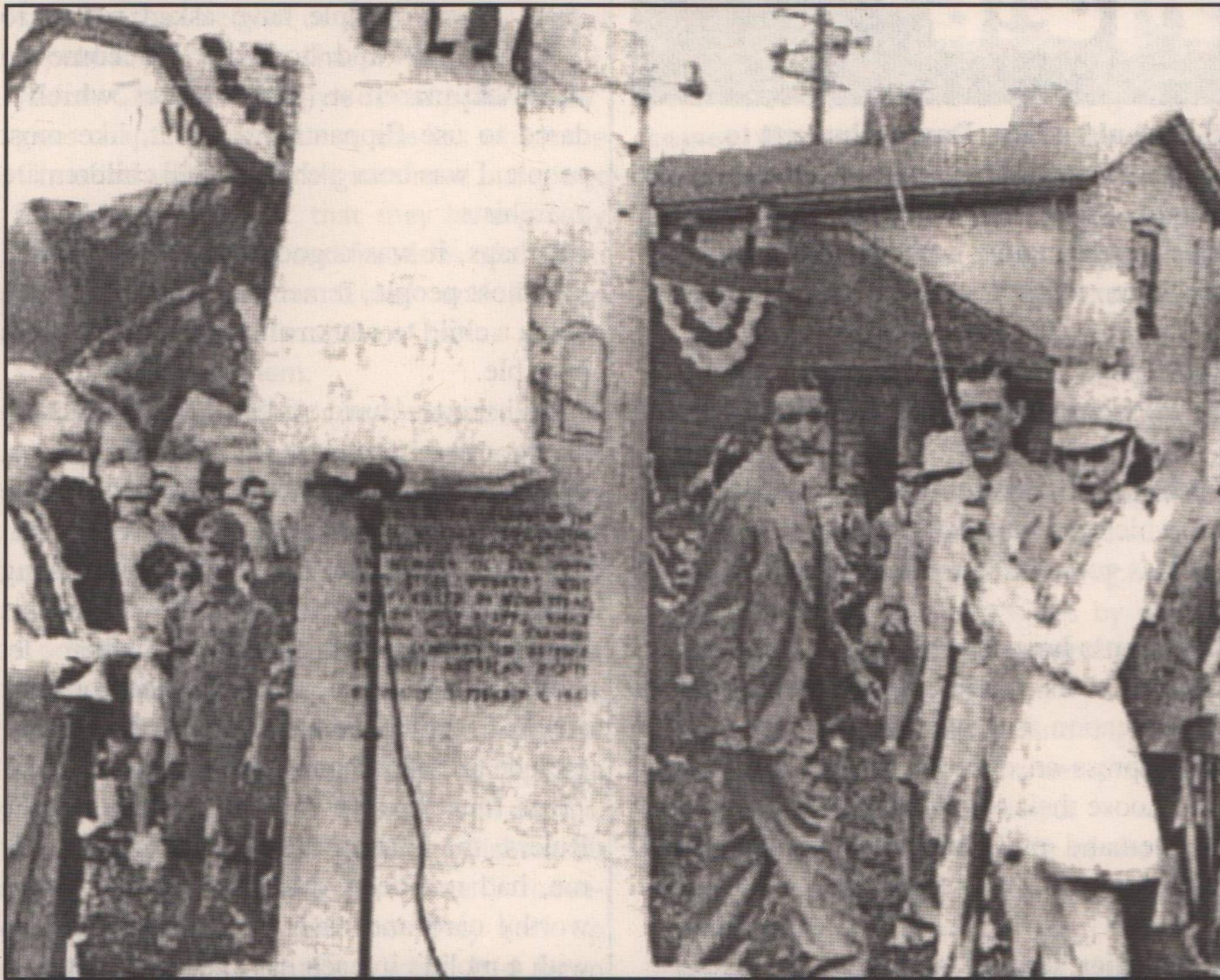
Albert Shore



Some of the floral tributes to Sarah Payne

Remembering the massacred steel workers ...

Flowers for Homestead



The opening of a monument in 1941 near Pittsburgh, USA, to the steel workers killed during the Homestead strike of 1892

Henry Clay Frick (1849-1919) is best known now for the art collection he founded, the subject of a talk at Dulwich Picture Gallery by his great great grand-daughter on 27th July 2000. The Frick Collection was established in his New York mansion with a bequest on his death in 1919.

How easy it is to buy a place in posterity, so long as you can pay the asking price. The stories of the great cultural benefactors – the Fricks, Carnegies and Tates – rarely ask about the origins of their wealth. A history of the Frick collection refers to him only as ‘the Pittsburgh coke and steel industrialist’. A tribute to Andrew Carnegie talks glowingly of ‘the Captain of Industry’, ‘the world’s richest men’ who gave it all away. No mention here of Homestead, Pennsylvania.

But our memories are not for sale. For us Frick will always be remembered for his role in the Homestead strike in 1892 when he employed armed company goons to shoot workers at the Carnegie Steel Company (Andrew Carnegie was conveniently out of the country to avoid getting blood on his own hands).

Was it guilt that made Frick and Carnegie philanthropists? Maybe, but it is their names that are immortalised in galleries and libraries, not the anonymous steel workers who created their wealth and were shot down at Homestead.

It’s a similar story with Dulwich Picture Gallery with its origins in Alleyn’s College of God’s Gift (now Dulwich College). The good burghers of Dulwich may raise a glass to Edward Alleyn (1566-1626), but who drinks to the prostitutes who worked in his brothels on the South Bank? Close to the site of the Bankside stews the latest art gallery, the Tate Modern, bears the name of a sugar magnate, not those who worked on his plantations. Across the road at the old Tate Britain there is no trace of the prisoners who suffered in the Millbank penitentiary on the same site.

Step inside Tate Modern and see some of the work of the 1990s ‘Young British Artists’ cultivated and commissioned by that modern day Frick, Charles Saatchi. Nothing illustrates better how little this wave of artists have to say than their dependence on a man who made his money from, among other things, helping Thatcher stay in power with his advertising.

It’s not just in art that the wealthy patron

and philanthropist is making a comeback. Cash-starved facilities like Lambeth’s Carnegie Library in Herne Hill Road are facing closure at the same time as New Labour is making ‘public services’ like schools and hospitals increasingly dependent on private sector finance.

There are too many monuments to Frick, Tate, Carnegie, Alleyn and all the other assassins and pimps. Since Frick’s memory is going to be invoked on this site next week, we have placed this small memorial to some of those erased from such stories.

Flowers have been placed in memory of those killed by Frick’s gunmen, and in memory too of Alexander ‘Sasha’ Berkman (1870-1936), an anarchist who on 23rd July 1892 shot and wounded Frick in response to the Homestead massacre. Berkman was sentenced to 22 years in prison for wounding one man and died in poverty. Frick was never prosecuted for causing the deaths of many and died rich enough to found an art collection.

As a small gesture in the field of historical memory and forgetting, flowers and a poster with the following text were placed today (21st July 2000) at the entrance to Dulwich Picture Gallery in South London, where a talk on the art collection of Henry Clay Frick has been scheduled. Our aim is not simply to correct the historical record about Frick, but to pose some broader questions about who gets remembered with monuments and who gets erased from history.

We expect our flowers to be removed quickly. If you would like to add your own flowers in the next week, you can place them at Dulwich Picture Gallery, Gallery Road, London SE21 7AD. Alternatively you might wish to send an e-mail to the Frick Collection (rosenau@frick.org) or Dulwich Picture Gallery (info@dulwichpicturegallery.org.uk)

stating that you are remembering those killed by Frick’s Pinkerton men during the Homestead strike of 1892. Let us know if you do anything. We would also be interested in hearing about anything you may have done in relation to monuments, statues, etc.

The picture above shows the opening in 1941 of a monument to the steel workers killed during the Homestead strike of 1892, near Pittsburgh in the USA. The Carnegie Steel Company’s strike breaking operation was headed by Henry Clay Frick. He ordered in armed private soldiers who, on the 5th July 1892, opened fire on strikers killing at least seven workers.

Contact us at: joehill23@hotmail.com

For the history of the Homestead strike: www.geocities.com/pract_history/homestead.html

A tribute to the life, politics and work of Jim Allen

There will be a unique tribute to the life, politics and work of Jim Allen, the Socialist writer from Middleton, on Saturday 7th October in Manchester.

The tribute is being organised by Jim’s family, friends and local trade unionists from TGWU. It will take place at the Cornerhouse Cinema, Manchester, and will combine extracts from Jim’s television and film work with contributions and reminiscences from his family, friends and colleagues, including Ken Loach and Tony Garnett. Tickets for the event will cost £7 (waged) or £5 (unwaged) and will be on sale to the public from the beginning of August. They can be booked on 0161-200 1500

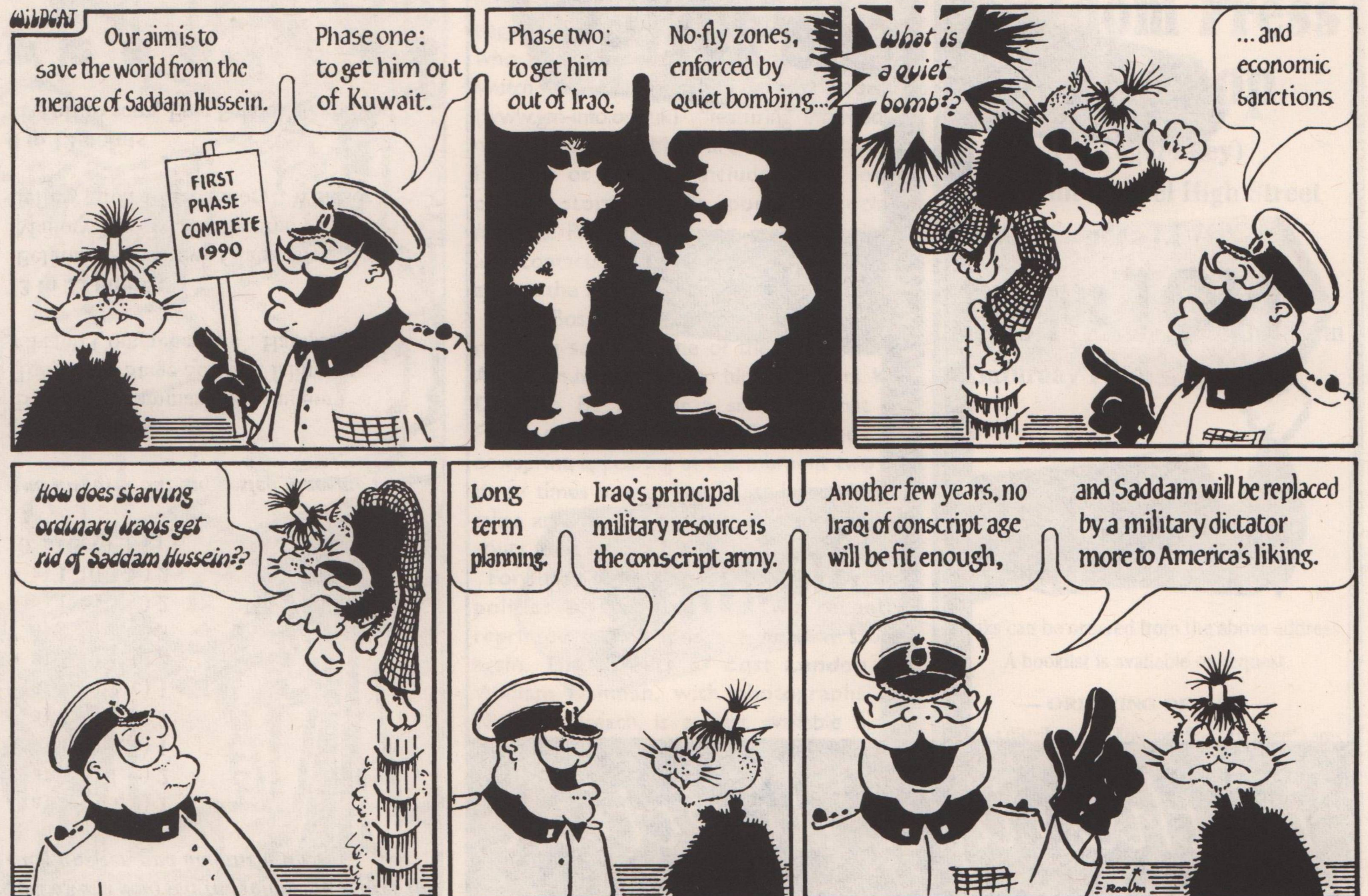
Born into a working class Catholic family in Miles Platting, Manchester in 1926 Jim left school at 13 and by his own admission never read a hardback until the age of 21. After serving in the army and travelling around Europe working casually he became a convinced and life-long Marxist and political activist. During his time as a miner at a Manchester colliery in the late ‘50s he edited the rank and file paper *The Miner*, for which he was blacklisted by the industry. He was

also expelled from the Labour Party in 1962 after attacking Hugh Gaitskell.

He first worked as a writer on *Coronation Street* for eighteen months in the mid ‘60s, before making his name on the BBC with dramas such as *The Lump*, *The Big Flame*, *Days of Hope*, *The Spongers* and *United Kingdom*. He continued his working partnership with Ken Loach in the cinema with films such as *Hidden Agenda*, *Raining Stones* and *Land and Freedom*. His play *Perdition* (which examined the complicity between Zionist leaders and Nazis in wartime Hungary) caused a storm of protest and could not be staged for many years. Jim once said of his work: “My films blow the whistle, rise above the truth, engage the audience intellectually and emotionally. After a film I hope the audience demand answers and action. I’m not keen on sending them to bed happy – I want them angry to get change.”

Contact:

Grace Allen (Jim’s daughter): 079442 68747
Michael Herbert (TGWU): 0161-234 4414
Lorraine Rolston (Cornerhouse): 0161-200 1509



No one forgets a good teacher

In recognition of the consistently valuable contribution this column has made to schooling in Britain and our enthusiastic support for the commercialisation of learning we are proud to announce that we have just been awarded a prestigious recruitment contract by the Teacher Training Agency. Realising that well educated and intelligent middle class individuals are unlikely to be drawn to a profession reduced by government to a dreary army of snivelling unimaginative, conformists we submitted a radically different recruitment proposal. We at *FREE-Ed Global Dot Con* appreciate that recruiting through the traditional educational press is simply barking up the wrong tree. Schools don't need want any more dreary old educationalists. At *FREE-Ed Global Dot Con* we know that the sort of mindless proles who flick through *Exchange and Mart*, *Hello* magazine, *What Yacht?*, *Freedom* and *Practical Anorak* are just the sort of people we require, the potential pedagogues our classrooms are crying out for. Of course as professionals we can't just, willy-nilly, place anyone with their own fountain pen and picture dictionary. All potential recruits must first complete the sophisticated psychological profile printed below (just tick your preferred options). By then following a simple marking scheme, clients will be apprised of a selection of recommended professional placements.

Christopher Draper
for *FREE-Ed Global Dot Con*

Just tick your preferred options ...

1. Children's education is important because ...

- It develops intellect, character and contacts.
- Literacy and numeracy standards need to be raised to the level of competitor nations.
- It's all about learning to love and loving to learn.

2. School uniform is ...

- Good because richer children are prevented from flaunting their designer clothes.
- An instrument of control and authority and should be avoided.
- Smart and encourages corporate identity and pride in one's school.

3. The National Curriculum ...

- Entitles everyone to a balanced curriculum but it needs to be trimmed down a bit.
- Helps state-schools follow the curricula of our excellent Public Schools.
- Is an authoritarian tool for enforcing cultural conformity.

4. Nursery Schools ...

- Could offer part-time support but small kids deserve individual attention.
- Are a poor substitute for learning at the mothers knee.
- Should be compulsory to ensure that all children get an early start in learning.

5. I would advise David Blunkett to ...

- Crack down on education authorities who put social goals before standards.
- Stop promoting homosexual education.
- Listen to his dog.

6. Citizenship Education ...

- Should emphasise responsibilities as well as rights.
- Is effectively impossible in state schools which are models of dictatorship.
- Has got nothing to do with real education.

7. Parents have the right to ...

- Spend as much money on their kids education as they wish.
- Express an opinion, but children should choose their own education.
- Demand efficient, well regulated local schools.

8. Teacher Trade Unions ...

- Have done little for their members and even less for children.
- Need to become more flexible and modern in their approach.
- Are for losers, good teachers don't need nannies.

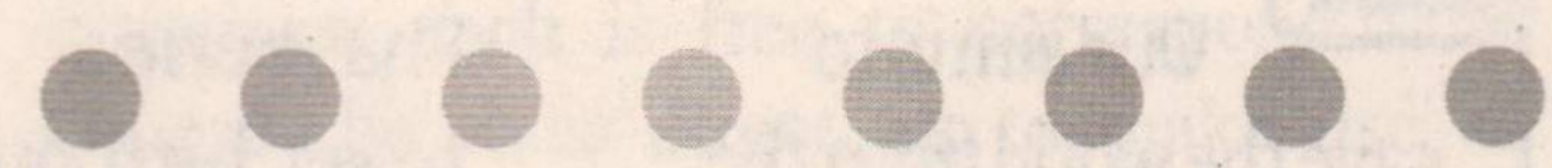
9. League Tables ...

- Are for football teams.
- Allow parents to make informed choices about their children's education.
- Keep teachers on their toes.

10. Home Based Education ...

- Can be worthwhile providing one is able to engage the services of a suitable governess.
- Is old fashioned, irrelevant, inefficient and undesirable.
- Is an excellent option which could be supported by flexible, non-compulsory schooling.

Now turn the page and, using the key, compute your score ...



0 to 12 points
Piss off to some Free School you hippy!

13 to 23 points
'Balsamic Grammar', Kensington
'Tony Blair Stage School', Islington
'Chianti Comprehensive', Hampstead
'Belgrano Academy', Grantham
'Mallory Towers', Eastbourne
'Jeffery Archer Preparatory', Windsor

24 to 30 points
And discover our suggested placements:
1. (a) 2, (b) 3, (c) 1
2. (a) 3, (b) 1, (c) 2
3. (a) 3, (b) 2, (c) 1
4. (a) 1, (b) 2, (c) 3
5. (a) 3, (b) 1, (c) 2
6. (a) 3, (b) 1, (c) 2
7. (a) 2, (b) 1, (c) 3
8. (a) 1, (b) 3, (c) 2
9. (a) 1, (b) 3, (c) 2
10. (a) 2, (b) 3, (c) 1

Just award yourself the following scores for each answer, and add them up.

EDUCATION OTHERWISE

Many people have asked me as to why and how did I become an anarchist. The answer which I dared to use flippantly was that, like most people, I was born a child and all children are anarchists.

Perhaps, it was a good thing that I could, like most people, remember what it was like being a child to whom all and everything was possible.

My horizons have widened but I still hold on to my anarchism. For me life is an unexpected gift and like Arthur Moyses, the oldest child I know (there are preparations at foot to celebrate his fast-approaching centenary), I know what the Town and his Frau are up to and good luck to them, let them pin as many medals as they like on their ample bosoms. I remain a child, despite my grey beard reaching my waist.

But then how was it that Society, the Rulers, the Paymasters had no power over me, had not been able to make me into a worthy card and cash-card carrying citizen with a mobile in each ear and a computer on each lap?

There was a war, comrades, which bombed my school and other peoples' schools out of existence, there was starvation and famine and children like myself escaped the net of education. For me my rulers were people I had to avoid at all cost in order to survive.

The laws these nincompoops made just to get me controlled. Those days, Arthur will sing you the song, those were the days when they sold you your own shit with a profit to the Exchequer.

The child has no education until it is taught what is what, who is who and which is which. Once he learnt that little bit of grammar the child has been captured. Whose book is this? The State's. Whose land is this? The State's. Everything else belongs to God and that is an abstract noun. So now you know that everything you see, hear, sense and smell is the property of an abstract noun.

At least if you speak the English. For if you speak the Latin the nearest thing they got to God is gobio: a fish of no value. For them the Omnipotens is Deus, who is the God of the English, and not Isten who is the Deus of the Magyars, or Gott which is the Isten of the Deutsch, which was incidentally the name of a childhood friend, a lovely clever generous person who was the first person to tell me that you didn't have to go to America to make sure that there was such a place as America and that their god was called Mammon and it was one of the most deceitful creatures that Isten ever created.

But the Latins were a real headache. I can be as factual as you wish, comrades, and can tell you that it was the Latin language that has finally persuaded me to stay a child, as it happens a *puer* and not a *puella*. Those were the days, as Arthur well remembers, when beer was tuppence a pint and many a times we pounded the oaken table arguing the toss.

Allow me to come to the point, comrades. There is another child who hasn't grown up and his name is Oliver Bernard who has recently translated all of Arthur Rimbaud's works from French (yes, there is such a language and their superintendent is *Mon Dieu*). Now Oliver has remained a child despite all the unnecessary knowledge he had crammed into his capacious skull, and he is not an anarchist in the strict sense of the word because he could never shut the door on whatever he calls his Isten, but nevertheless he had done the greatest service to learning

(continued on page 6)

Let us point you...



in the right direction

The following pamphlet, originally published by the Haldeman-Julius Company in 1926, was written by that trust scourge of the religious establishment, Joseph McCabe, when he was nearly 60 but still at the height of his powers. Now republished by See Sharp Press at £2.50, *Judeo-Christian Degradation of Woman** gives chapter and verse on the lies which the Christian and Jewish religions have put about for centuries: to wit, that they have greatly enhanced the status and freedom of women as compared to the Greek and Roman empires, not to mention other pagan societies before them.

Being scrupulously fair to his opponents as always, McCabe argues that precisely the opposite was the case: that woman's equality of status and her liberties – previously the rule for all of the preceding four thousand years – were, in fact, from the moment Christianity arrived gradually eroded by that very same doctrine until, by the sixth century AD, she was treated as no more than a chattel with no rights left except the 'right' to obey. It is from these barren depths, he emphasises, that the modern – eighteenth and nineteenth century – women's movements have had to fight their way back up from, merely reclaiming what had been denied them since the Judeo-Christian invasion of Europe.

He cites plenty of evidence to support his case and praises his predecessors worldwide for their work in this direction: among others Cady Stanton, Frances Wright, Saint-Simon, Fourier, William Godwin, Robert Owen, Marx, Mary Wollstonecraft, Ibsen and Max Stirner. He even refers to himself as a feminist.

Freedom Press Bookshop Readers' Round-up

McCabe's background of scholarly training comes through clearly, and the former Catholic priest-turned-atheist doesn't miss an opportunity to maul his former indoctrinators intellectually. His lively writing style throughout this pamphlet's 40 pages and his mordant wit, make it a pleasure to read.

Corroboration of McCabe's arguments can be found in Stevie Davies' *Unbridled Spirits: women of the English Revolution, 1640-1660* (The Women's Press), where she chronicles the protests, writings, preachings, demonstrations and other acts of rebellion against the religious and secular authorities by women during these momentous events in English history. The English Revolution – currently a subject of much interest, and rightly so, among the new wave of street protesters and anti-globalisation activists – was no revolution for women, in spite of the brave efforts of the assorted rebels and radicals in Davies' book, as she herself so convincingly demonstrates.

What she aims to do is redress the balance of history by rescuing from obscurity the small but important part played by women in the Revolution, which traditional historians, and even those such as Christopher Hill, have left out of their accounts. The extent to which she succeeds can be seen in John Carey's description of it as "history at its most gripping and passionate. From a huge range of eyewitness accounts and personal

narratives, she reconstructs the sufferings and triumphs of the women radicals of the Revolution." Margaret Drabble calls it "unorthodox, scholarly and enjoyable". Running to 356 pages, this sizeable work includes chapter notes, bibliography and an index, and although this attractive hardback was published at £17.99, we can now offer it at the very cheap price of £4.99.

An interesting discussion of the relevance of Postmodernism to the anarchist movement is laid out in Larry Gambone's short pamphlet *Toward a Post-Modern Anarchism** (Red Lion Press, 80p for 11 pages). For those of us who haven't a clue what postmodernism means, if anything, Gambone begins by sketching an outline of it and contrasting it with Enlightenment rationalism. He suggests that many aspects of nineteenth century classical anarchism are out-moded and could justifiably be replaced by postmodernist ideas. He looks at both the useful and harmful facets of postmodernism and warns against the undesirable tendencies that some erstwhile anarchists have picked up from under the postmodernist umbrella. He emphasises that he is not advocating the wholesale adoption of it; merely trying to stimulate a discussion of its possibilities, believing that it may have something to offer an anarchist movement which, he says, is in danger of losing its identity.

While some may agree that there are areas of the anarchist philosophy which are in need of re-examination, others will dispute the author's thesis that postmodernism has anything at all to offer of substance. But he does make a number of valid points in this brief essay, and leaves readers to make up their own minds.

Among the periodicals to arrive recently is *Corporate Watch* no. 11, with major features on climate change; corporations and the law; and oil, arms and bio-piracy in the Chiapas region of Mexico. Other pieces worthy of note are on telephone call centres and the working conditions inside them, and another on the way fascist organisations have relied on the support of big corporations. 44 pages for £3.00 – and for the 25% of you who have access to the internet *Corporate Watch* has just launched a new website (www.gm-info.org.uk) "featuring interactive maps of where GMOs are being produced, handled or sold ... includes field tests, offices, storage, mills, ports and other facilities. Plus campaigning resources, links and contacts – all you need to get active against the biotech beast."

From Boston, Massachusetts, we are now receiving stock of one of the latest North American newspapers to hit the streets. *We Dare To Be Free* is a similar format to *Freedom* and consists of 20 pages of newsprint, appearing at the moment two or three times a year. The latest is no. 6 – it takes an anarchist-communist stance and is yours for a mere £1.00.

For those of interested in the history and politics of East London, two recently reprinted publications are now in stock again. *The Streets of East London* by William Fishman, with photographs by Nicholas Breach, is at last available again after much badgering of the publisher, Duckworth. The price has crept up to £12.99 but this is still very good value for the 140 large-format pages of informative history and atmospheric photographs. Along with Freedom Press in Angel Alley (looking

far worse than it ever does now) there are scenes of the General Strike, the Siege of Sidney Street, the workhouse and the doss-house, street markets, the match-girls' strike, Jewish and Muslim immigration and a whole lot more. *The Battle of Cable Street 1936: a people's history* is compiled and edited by the Cable Street Group and is a smart pamphlet in two colours with photographs

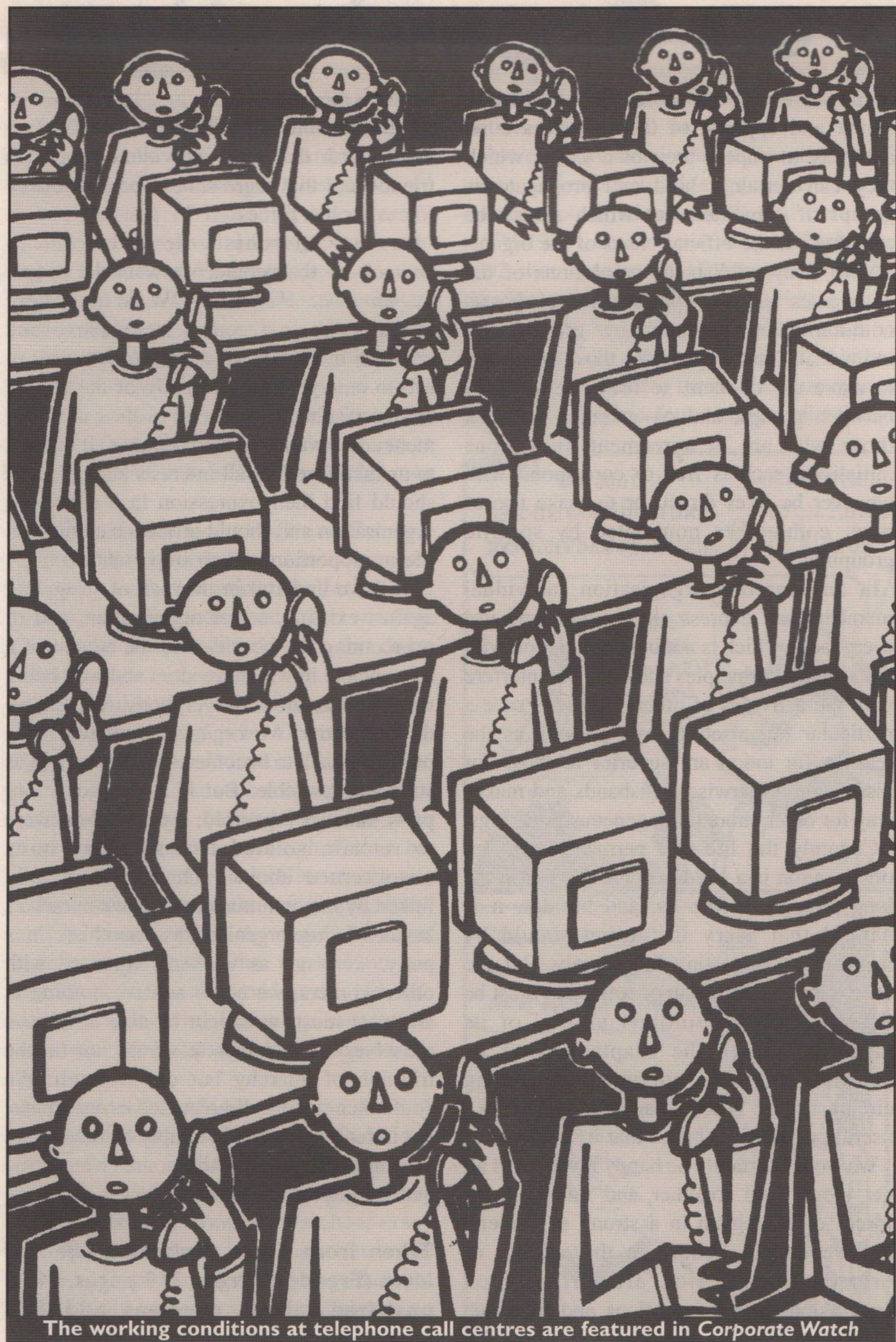


Picture taken from *The Judeo-Christian Degradation of Women* by Joseph McCabe

and illustrations, which covers not just the battle but Britain and the East End at the time, Jewish immigration and anti-semitism, the Spanish Civil War, and the Far Right after 1936. £3.99.

We have been informed by White Horse Press, the publishers of *Anarchist Studies*, the academic journal which we have stocked for the last few years, that it will no longer be available for sale through bookshops or mail order services. In future anybody wanting this journal will have to take out a subscription with its commercial suppliers, whose address is: Turnpin Distribution Services Ltd., Blackhorse Road, Letchworth, Hertfordshire, SG6 1HN. You will find that this will cost you £20 for two issues. We are sorry that we will no longer be able to obtain future issues for you, but we have still got a few copies of the October 1999 issue on anarchism and science fiction at the old price of £6.95.

Four Eyes



The working conditions at telephone call centres are featured in *Corporate Watch*

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NIX DA 2000 - CARAVAN

In May 1998 a caravan of bicycles and wagons pulled by tractors named 'Money or Life?' made its way to the WTO Ministerial Conference in Geneva. A colourful mixture of political action, adventure, holiday, cycling, celebrating and experiencing a utopia. Since then people have been asking for more. Last year there was a caravan from Dresden/Berlin and one from Basel to Cologne to the EU/G8 summits. After that they spontaneously decided to go to the No Border camp in Zittau (German-Polish border).

This year, the route will be from Hannover to Prague, thereby showing the relation between the Expo 2000 and the IMF/WB summit. On one hand a Brave New Expo World and on the other forcing oppression onto humans and nature through 'Structural Adjustment Programmes' by the IMF/WB. There is enough political substance that we can tackle in Hannover, Prague and the places on the route.

On 22nd September an 'art of resistance festival' will start, and we'd like to take part in it. The 'art of resistance' is also a label that could fit our caravan. Art in this case is not referring to artistic performances on stages which people can admire and clap to it, but more the art of living, the illustration of other possibilities, other points of view, the breaking out of tight conceptions of what reality looks like, the creative response to the situation found on the way.

We will meet on 9th September in Hannover for a kick off-demo about Expo and IMF/WB. There will also be a party get to know each other, find friends or meet

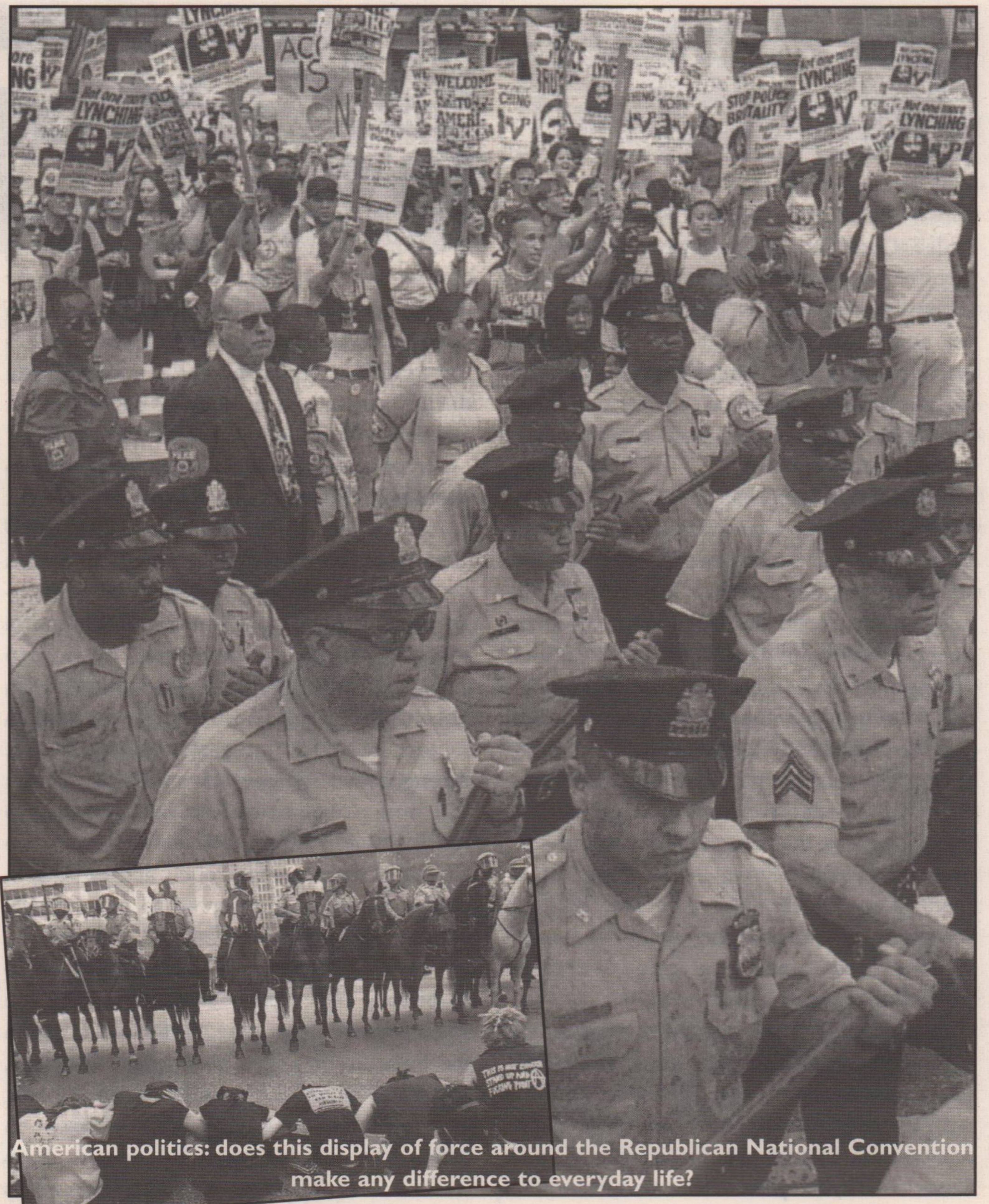
again after a long time. The Caravan will start on Sunday going southwards towards Goettingen and then eastwards passing Thuringen and Sachsen. We will do around 60 km per day and we'd like to arrive in Prague on 21st September.

We are currently creating contacts with people on the route we will pass, to prepare common actions or activities. A more detailed map with dates and stops will be available later.

How to participate?

It's easy. Get some time off, get your bike, sleeping mattress and sleeping bag, whatever you like having with you and come! You don't have to register and there is no participation fee. There is no tour-organiser, no leaders, you are responsible for yourself. We will collectively take care of organising food, drinks and whatever we will need. There will be a couple of wagons (pulled by tractors) which can be used to transport your luggage. We will probably have the kitchen wagon this year too. If you have a tent, bring it. We'd like to organise a few large tents, but it's impossible to predict how many we'll be.

For more information, contact:
karawane@mail.nadir.org
or telephone +49 (0)170 3418814



American politics: does this display of force around the Republican National Convention make any difference to everyday life?

(continued from page 4)

by translating this preposterous brigand who could have become or rather stayed an anarchist, the clever child he was and good luck to him in his effort to derange all the senses, for what else could he do this child of genius who at the age of ten wrote sixty perfect odes in Latin in praise of his Prince and having done that came to the conclusion, and I quote Oliver's breathless prose translation (Rimbaud was ten years old when he summed it up for us totally):

"In spite of this, my father sent me to school when I was ten. 'Why', I would say to myself, 'learn Greek and Latin? There is no need of it, anyway' What is the use of passing one's exams? It is no use at all, is it? They say there is no employment without a pass, But I do not want any employment. Why learn Latin. No one speaks their language. Then take history: learning the lives of Chinaldon, of Nabopolassar, of Darius, of Cyrus and of Alexander, and of their other cronies, outstanding for their disgusting names, they are a torture. What does it matter to me that a certain Alexander was famous (and not the other two million)? What does it matter? ... How does one know the Latins ever existed? Perhaps their Latin is some counterfeit language? Let them keep their language for themselves! What evil have I done to them that they should put me to the torture?'"

This by a child of ten, the wisest of all children, was it his fault or was it due to the pressures of society that he did not stay wise, literate and an example to us all anarchists who have never, have we Arthur, deserted our love of reason and our reasons for love.

John Rety

Malatesta on Organisation

An anarchist organisation must, in my opinion [allow for] congresses, correspondence complete autonomy, and independence, and therefore full responsibility, to individuals and groups; free agreement between those who think it useful to come together for co-operative action, for common aims; a moral duty to fulfil one's pledges and to take no action which is contrary to the accepted programme. On such bases one then introduces practical forms and the suitable instruments to give real life to the organisation. Thus the groups, the federation of groups, the federations of federations, meetings, congresses, correspondence committees and so on. But this also must be done freely, in such a way as not to restrict the thought and the initiative of individual members, but only to give greater scope to the efforts which in isolation would be impossible or ineffective. Thus for an anarchist organisation congresses, in spite of all the disadvantages from which they suffer as representative bodies ... are free from authoritarianism in any shape or form because they do not legislate and do not impose their deliberations on others. They serve to maintain and increase personal contacts among the most active comrades, to summarise and encourage programmatic studies on the ways and means for action: to acquaint everybody with the situation in the regions and the kind of action most urgently needed: to summarise the various currents of anarchist opinions at the time and to prepare some kind of statistics therefrom. And their decisions are not binding but simply suggestions, advice and proposals to submit to all concerned, and they do not become binding and executive except for those who accept them and for as long as they accept them. The administrative organs they nominate - Correspondence Commissions, etc. - have no directive powers, do not take

initiatives except for those who specifically solicit and approve of them, and have no authority to impose their own views, which they can certainly hold and propagate as groups of comrades, but which cannot be presented as the official views of the organisation. They publish the resolutions of the congresses and the opinions and proposals communicated to them by groups and individuals; and they act for those who want to make use of them, to facilitate relations between groups, and co-operation between those who are in agreement on various initiatives; each is free to correspond with whoever he likes direct, or to make use of other committees nominated by specific groupings.

In an anarchist organisation individual members can express any opinion and use every tactic which is not in contradiction with the accepted principles and does not interfere with the activities of others. In every case a particular organisation lasts so long as the reasons for union are superior to those for dissension: otherwise it disbands and makes way for other, more homogeneous groupings.

Certainly the life and permanence of an organisation is a condition for success in the long struggle before us, and besides, it is natural that every institution should by instinct aim at lasting indefinitely. But the duration of a libertarian organisation must be the result of the spiritual affinity of its members and of the adaptability of its constitution to the continually changing circumstances. When it can no longer serve a useful purpose it is better that it should die.

We would certainly be happy if we could all get along well together and unite all the forces of anarchism in a strong movement, but we do not believe in the solidity of organisations which are built up on concessions and assumptions and in which there is no real agreement and sympathy

between members.

Better disunited than badly united. But we would wish that each individual joined his friends and that there should be no isolated forces, or lost forces.

But we anarchists do not want to emancipate the people; we want the people to emancipate themselves. We do not believe in the good that comes from above and imposed by force: we want the new way of life to emerge from the body of the people and correspond to the state of their development and advance as they advance. It matters to us therefore that all interests and opinions should find their expression in a conscious organisation and should influence communal life in proportion to their importance.

We have undertaken the task of struggling against existing, social organisation, and of overcoming the obstacles to the advent of a new society in which freedom and well being would be assured to everybody. To achieve this objective we organise ourselves in a party and seek to become as numerous and as strong as possible. But if it were only our party that was organised; if the workers were to remain isolated like so many units unconcerned about each other and only linked by the common chain; if we ourselves besides being organised as anarchists in a party, were not as workers organised with other workers, we could achieve nothing at all, or at most, we might be able to impose ourselves ... and then it would not be the triumph of anarchy but our triumph. We could then go on calling ourselves anarchists, but in reality we should simply be rulers, and as impotent as all rulers are where the general good is concerned.

Taken from Errico Malatesta, *Life and Ideas* (Freedom Press, 310 pages, £4.00 post-free inland, overseas add 15% postage).

Poor Marx

Dear Freedom,
In reprinting Nicolas Walter's 1998 commentary on the *Communist Manifesto*, (*Freedom*, 29th July 2000) you have, perhaps unintentionally, allowed some light to fall also on the theoretical quagmire into which the contemporary anarchist movement has itself become ensnared. The problems start when Walter moves from the historical to the political; when he begins to examine the successes and failures of the revolutionary movements which embraced the *Manifesto* post its publication in 1848. We are told that the spectre haunting Europe was "not communism but socialism". By this I assume Walter means that reformism established itself within the working class movement as the primary ideological force, although Walter doesn't here, or hereafter in the piece, support any of the assertions he makes, leaving us to fill in the facts

ourselves. There then follow a list of claims Marx and Engels never made (for instance, their claim was that the 'wage relationship' would become the main, not only, relationship between men – Walter here substitutes 'cash nexus', which suggests primacy of exchange over production, but, contra Walter, would be as true for our present age, and hardly refutable so glibly in a time so obviously saturated by the values of the market) followed by the *coup de grace* of "the proletariat was not a genuinely revolutionary class", stated baldly, as if irrefutable.

What's revealed in all this, I'd contend, is the extent to which our movement has lost any sense of the political, and of the need to move beyond utopian rhetoric to ideological engagement. For instance, the ascendancy of social democracy over revolutionary socialist ideas within the labour movement was the result of both the physical defeats inflicted on the working class movement (the suppression by force of the German working class for instance) and the consequent ability of the ruling class temporarily to buy off its proletariat. A triumph of one idea over another, for sure, but the ideas themselves have historical roots, and arise from a given society at a given time. To suggest from this, that the battle of ideas has therefore achieved a kind of closure for all time is a nonsense. What hold does social democracy have over the working class in these days of New Labour authoritarianism, and the desertion (a strike, John Pilger has called it) of the 'traditional' Labour vote?

In suggesting that the working class proved itself incapable of revolution, Walter skips over 1917, 1936, the history of the IWW, and the post-1968 militancy of the European labour movement, amongst others. Again the

idea that political defeats should be analysed, and learned from just falls away (I have to say it's a problem I've always found with Nicolas Walter's writings. I don't wish to speak ill of someone no longer here to defend themselves, but all too often the stream of historical fact serves to blind one to the lack of argument to support the issue at dispute). In dismissing the revolutionary capacity of the mass of ordinary people though, Walter doesn't just 'do for' Marx, he takes away the basis for the anarchist project also. Bakunin was a supporter and translator of the *Manifesto*. Its ideas were his ideas. A belief in the revolutionary capacity of working people was common also to Kropotkin, Malatesta and Berkman. The reason is simple. Anarchism is a project for self-emancipation and direct democracy. If we do not believe that working people can liberate themselves from the wage relationship which underpins all other forms of oppression in our society, then we are left with either the possibility that such direct democracy is not achievable or that the task of liberation falls not to the mass of people themselves but to some vanguard force on their behalf. By dismissing the capacity of ordinary people to change their own lives, Walter actually concedes the real argument that divided anarchism from Marxism (but not, it has to be said, Marx, whose thoughts were much less fixed in this regard) – the question of direct democracy.

Once the question of self-emancipation gets tipped out of the tub, anarchism becomes no more than a form of liberalism, wherein self-emancipation becomes a form of middle class self-realisation (reducible in its best form to the humanism Nicolas Walter represented, and at its worst to the solipsistic nonsense of a Hakim Bey), with the rest of us

consigned to the historical sidelines.

What's always forgotten in the stream of glib dismissals of the working class is that the majority of people on this planet are ensnared within the wage relationship which is fundamental to capital. If we aren't capable of liberating ourselves, then either the revolutionary democratic project is over, or freedom is achievable within the capital-labour relationship (a position no one who had to work at a job they hated, or endure the indignities of unemployment, would ever seek to advance). The new social movements of the 1960s failed to end the oppression of women or drive the scourge of racism from our society – should we conclude then that these also will always be with us in our bright anarchist future ... for the self employed white middle class male.

Nick S.

Please keep
sending in your
letters and
donations

COPY DEADLINE

The next issue of Freedom will be dated 9th September, and the last day for copy intended for this issue will be first post on Thursday 31st August.

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).

A revolution in the psyche

Dear Freedom,
Francis Ellingham (29th July) asks an interesting question: "Are there any anarchists who see that the problem [of greed and ambition] is in the human psyche. If there are, what is their view of the solution?" This question became acute in the Committee of 100 in the Sixties. We called it 'the strong personality problem'. We never solved it.

Since those days I have been much involved in experiments that bear closely upon the same subject and have come to certain conclusions that seem to have stood the test of time. The anthropological record is helpful.

The human psyche evolved during countless millennia of hunter-gathering. People lived in groups of fifty-plus, half were children, with about a dozen men and the same number of women. The only social divisions were between age-groups and the sexes. Decision-making within the domestic scene was the business of women. Decision-making without the domestic circle (mostly about hunting, and fighting incursion) was the male responsibility. Our genes evolved to deal with that situation. Only today we have the same genes struggling with a very different structure. And they can't cope – thus present confusion.

One thing is certain – we are not going to change our genes. We have, therefore, to change our circumstances. We have to devise a social and political system in which essential decision-making takes place in small groups of up to about twelve people. Seven or eight is best.

Over the last few years I have been involved in at least ten campaigns and associations that, more by accident than design, observed the small group principle, which is this: that in a small single-figure group, face-to-face relationships are the norm, hierarchy is unnatural, factions have no base and instant accountability is the order of the day. This is the ideal situation, but to people who work together in small groups (consider quartets to octets in music) the thing is so self-evident that it is hardly worthy of comment. The answer is so close to us that we cannot see it!

Civilised society, life in towns, involves ever-growing scales of operation that have now reached the global. There is no way in which we can put that situation in reverse. What we can do is to rethink and recast the

foundations. Throughout the country we need a vast complex of small groups dealing with every imaginable situation, all part of relevant networks and served by the internet, the world wide web, the telephone and the postal service. This the foundation of all else; above it are neighbourhoods, communities, city-regions and a Europe of the Regions. The nation-state fades into the margin. What are we waiting for?

Peter Cadogan

Dear Freedom,
As to your three quotations from anarchist authors (printed after my letter, 29th July), none of them show the slightest awareness that the problem is in the human psyche. True, they all describe the harmful effects on the human mind of various forms of social conditioning, but they all overlook the fact that social conditioning is a product of the human mind. Society, as it is now, certainly cripples and destroys the minds of most people, whether they be kings or slaves, but who created this society? Not some devil, but human beings!

If there is such a thing as "the natural and wholesome complexion of the human mind" (Godwin), how did human beings ever create an unwholesome society in which kings are "surrounded by servility, adulation, and falsehood"? Or how could they have come to desire wealth by simply seeing a man "drawn in a coach of state by eight milk-white horses"? If "the unsophisticated labouring masses" who believe that the government is necessary are like "someone whose legs had been bound from birth" (Malatesta), who could have bound them?

Denis Pym recognises that even anarchists like him "are products ourselves of that abstract parent, the system" and thus

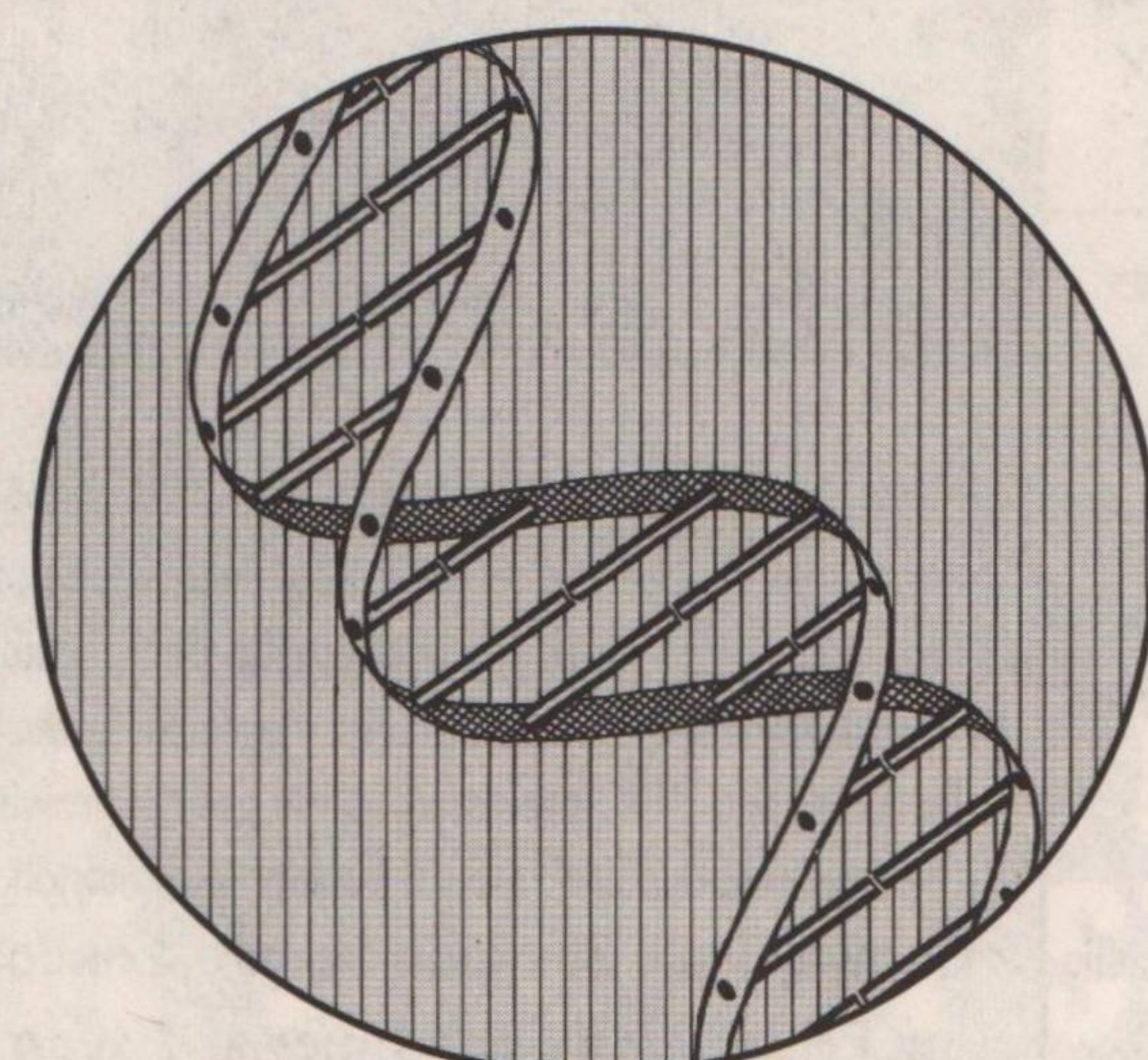
conditioned not to challenge the system too much – "we prefer to let the old thing die quietly." But instead of asking himself who created the system he pins his hopes on 'a chance' that the recession of the early nineties will make people wake up and turn to mutual aid. Seven years have passed since he wrote that article, and 'the old thing' is still going from strength to strength.

Thus we blame the society we have ourselves created and the revolution never comes. What then, you may ask, will bring the revolution? Surely the first essential thing is to face the fact that our society is a projection of our consciousness, which is based on the sense of being a separate individual having separate interests. Then we could enquire whether that sense of being separate is an illusion. That enquiry, pursued to the end, would lead to a revolution in our consciousness, in the psyche, which would then project a radically new society.

Francis Ellingham

Number 40 of the anarchist quarterly

The Raven on Genetic Modification



96 pages for £3.00 post free worldwide

Free Mumia!

Dear Freedom,
Nick S. writes (15th July) that "too few in the anarchist movement" have given their time to the Mumia Abu Jamal campaign. Comrades in the Anarchist Federation – especially in London – have been involved in the campaign to save Mumia from early on. We have had an important role in organising for every picket and demonstration and have had a regular presence at the London meetings of the Mumia Must Live! campaign. Some of our members have spoken in public on behalf of the campaign at two open-air rallies.

Ron Allen
for Anarchist Federation (London)

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The Raven

anarchist quarterly

Number 40

Genetic Modification

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Meetings & Events

London Anarchist Forum

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— MEETINGS FOR 2000 —

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

18th August Meeting to be announced

25th August Monthly free dialogue (any topic)

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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Any readers in the Cardiff area who are interested in forming an action/discussion group please write c/o Freedom Press at 84b Whitechapel High Street, London E1 7QX quoting 'Cardiff Group'.

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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,
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The author of *Future Primitive*, *Elements of Refusal* and *Against Civilization*, anarcho-primitivist writer/activist John Zerzan will be speaking about the green anarchist movement in the US, the recent anti-WTO protest in Seattle and the growing international opposition to the totality of civilisation.

Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London
on Friday 22nd September at 7.30pm

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