

# FREEDOM

anarchist fortnightly

Vol. 61 No. 19

7th October 2000

50p

## Milosevic's endgame

What are politicians for? They look after their friends. They look after the interests of big business. But above all, they win and keep power for themselves. Yugoslavia's Slobodan Milosevic has always been a past master of this bloody art. As his ruling Socialist Party headed for popular defeat in last week's presidential election, western bosses looked on with mixed emotions. The arms dealers cleared their order books. Strategists plotted likely outcomes. Maybe, in some dark corner of our politicians' hearts, a tinge of admiration lingered. And the question on everyone's lips was, what will Slobbo do now?

Very few, in Yugoslavia or the west, would mourn a regime which has launched four nationalist wars in a decade. Once the wealthiest area of eastern Europe, inflation now runs at 100% as the presses churn out cash. Milosevic's rule has been exercised with an increasingly iron fist. Yet he has managed to hang on, at least until now. How? Tony Blair recently learned the hard way the importance of making sure people got their food and fuel. This lesson Milosevic never needed to learn. For most of his reign, he has guaranteed both, at the cost of huge state subsidies. By fair means or foul he has persuaded the media to sing his tune. He has always made sure the plods (especially the notorious Special Intervention Brigade, who learned their skills as paramilitaries in the

Balkan wars of the 1990s) have been onside, paid well and on time. Perhaps he took a tip from Mrs Thatcher. But even these textbook examples of the politician's art don't seem to be enough any longer. Subsidies fail as economic collapse looms. What a cowed media says is too different from most people's experience for the lies to work any



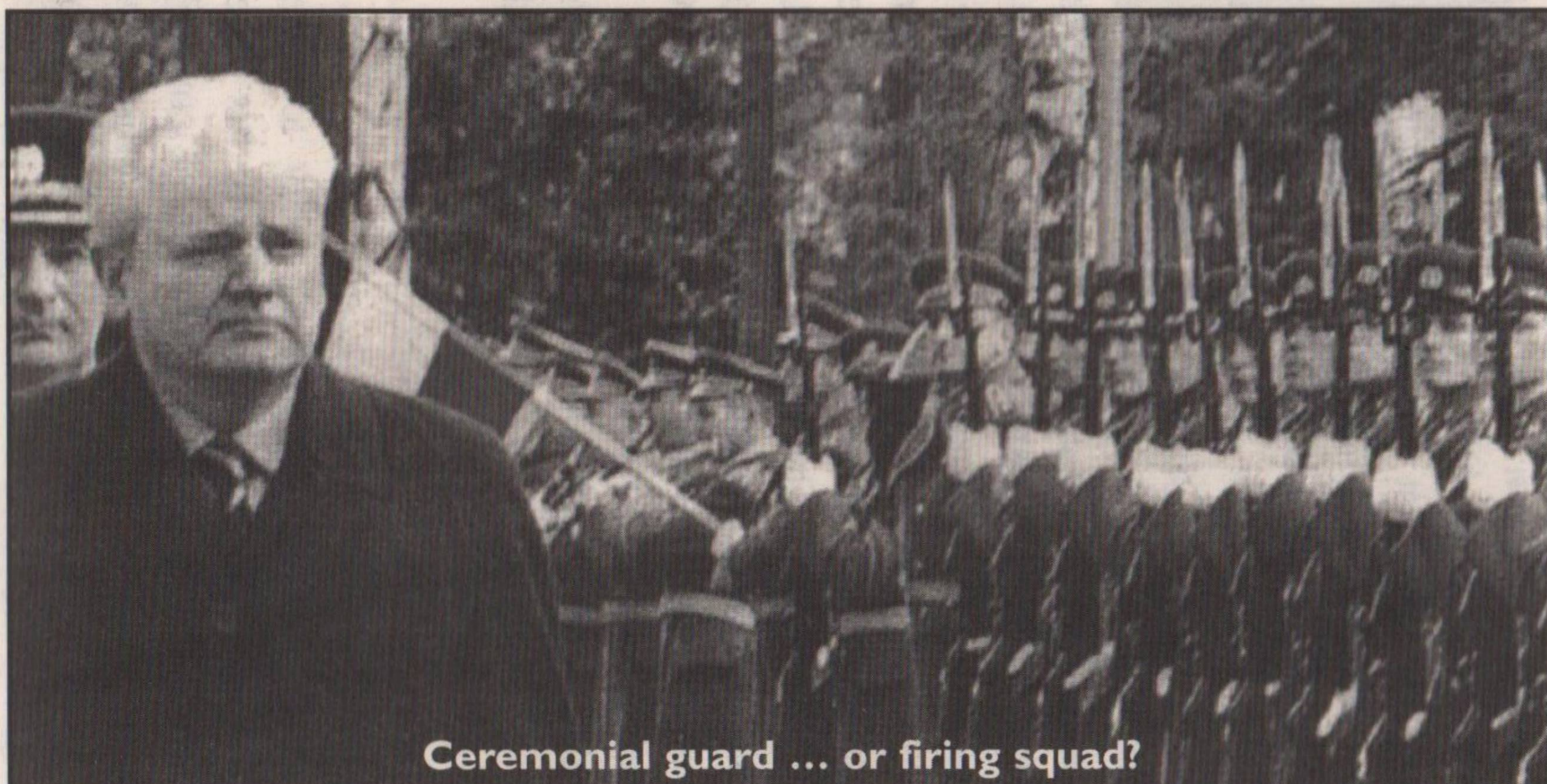
more. Even the army and police are restless, and there was doubt last week how far Milosevic could rely on their support. The one sure weapon he had left in his armoury as the election approached was fraud, what western newspapers were calling 'the big steal'. The poll itself was hardly (even by the standards of western 'democracy') fair and open. Thousands of unknown voters registered in areas where only hundreds live. Ballot boxes arrived ready stuffed. Factory workers faced redundancy if they voted the wrong way (no

empty threat, when many votes were conducted for all to see). And still as much as 70% of the population voted against the president. In the face of massive rejection by voters, Milosevic spent most of last week desperately trying to buy himself time. The stalled count, the late announcement that a second round of voting would be necessary, these were signs of panic at the top. Not for nothing did an independent Serb journalist warn that "it isn't a question of maths, there is simply a 0% chance of him leaving office". Not if Milosevic could help it, there wasn't.

Until recently, his best ally was always the opposition itself. When his party was beaten in 1996 local elections, he refused to yield. 300,000 protesters took to the streets, only to be betrayed when their leaders were sweet-talked into seats in the government. But a valuable lesson was learned that year. The biggest catalyst for change this time round has been the movement known as Otpor (Resistance), a leaderless (and for that matter anarchistic) organisation, with no formal membership. Now the real opposition will be done by people for themselves, whatever opposition politicians say, and it won't go away.

All of which leaves Slobbo a stark choice. If he steps down, the best he can expect is a cell in the Dutch prison reserved for convicts from the War Crimes Tribunal on the Hague. The alternative is to hold on at all costs. But his wriggle room is limited. If the opposition can't be bought off, if the people can't be pacified, his only option is to divert them with another crisis. But that needs force to provoke it. And "beating up people for a president who is finished is not good for any policeman's job prospects", as one of his aides conceded as the scale of the defeat became clear. His friends have finally begun to desert him. As Milosevic's darkest hour began, he must increasingly have been haunted by the fate of fellow dictator Sir Nikolai Ceausescu, in 1989. How long left before the Balkans tragedy devours its chief begetter?

R.S.G.



Ceremonial guard ... or firing squad?

# Freedom

anarchist fortnightly

Vol. 61 No. 19

7th October 2000

50p

At the Labour Party conference it's ...

## Business as usual

As we go to press, the Labour Party conference is convening in Brighton. Gordon Brown will miss the conference's opening because he'll be at the IMF/World Bank jamboree in Prague. Given that conference delegates are up in arms about petrol prices and pension levels – and been overtaken by the Tories in all recent opinion polls – Brown's choice of conferences probably says all we need to know about New Labour and its priorities; this is a government committed to the interests of capital, and the concerns of pensioners, small farmers, single parents and NHS users are irrelevant to it, and, in consequence, the voices of those who articulate such concerns are voices fit only to be ignored. At Brighton, Tony Blair has moved to ensure such voices are literally not heard by conference delegates;

### Racists and neo-nasties

Fatma Eladi left Turkey 21 years ago. She has lived in Germany, paying stamps on her health insurance ever since. But that isn't enough to save her apparently. She's been refused a heart transplant by two leading hospitals, even though she'll die without it. The reason? She can't speak German well enough. Officials at the Heart and Diabetes Centre near Hanover told her daughter that this would "seriously impair post-operative care", the *Times* said (23rd August 2000).

The same page of that paper reported the trial of three men in eastern Germany. The



Alberto Adriano

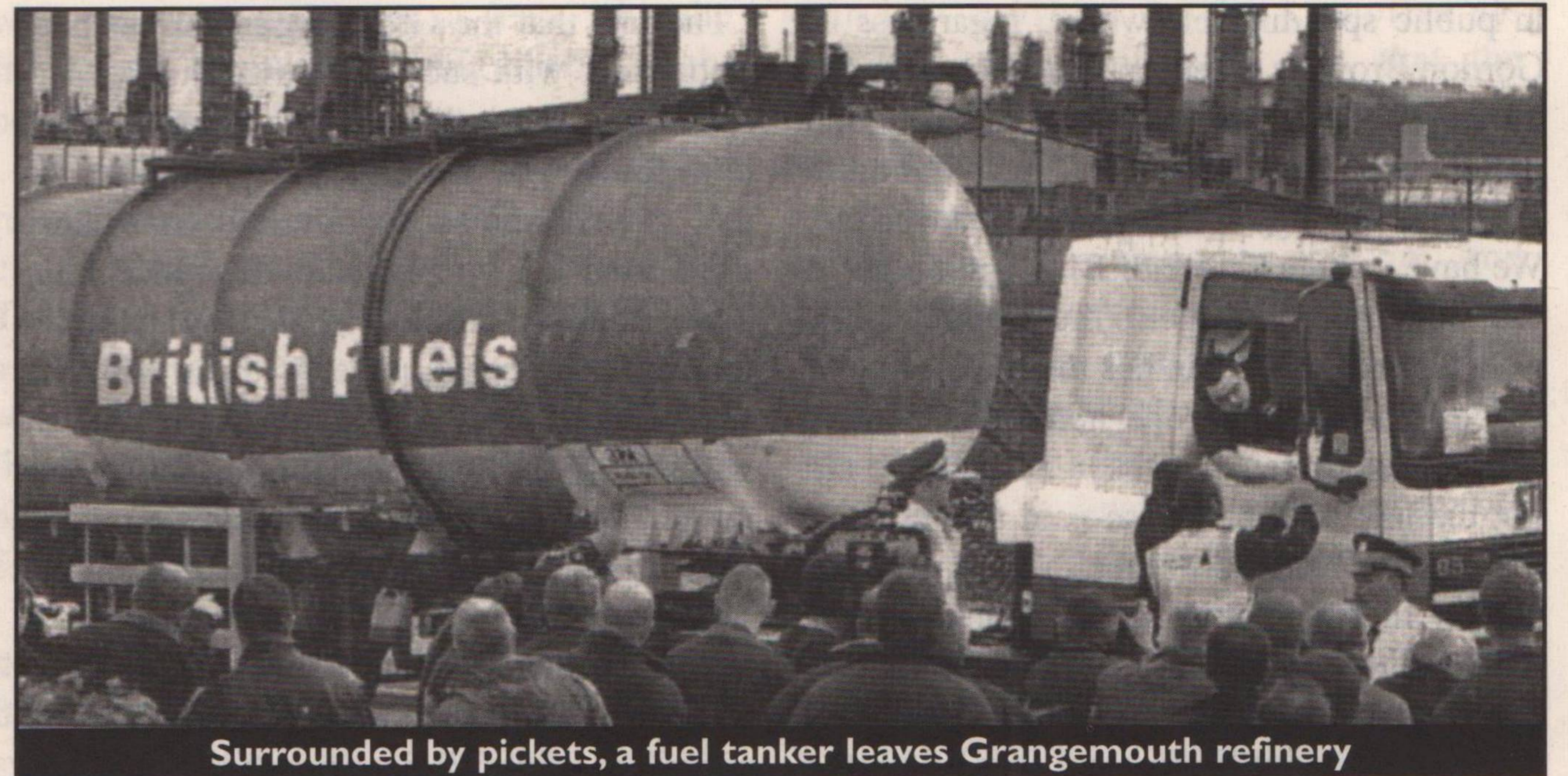
neo-nazis who attacked Mozambiquan Alberto Adriano as he made his way home in Halle kicked him so hard with their steel-capped boots that he died soon afterwards. Readers of *Freedom* might well ask what's the difference between those well-paid and respected doctors and these unemployed drunken yobs. Easy really. Only one of these groups is currently sampling the joys of prison food. Any idea which?

the party has spent £300,000 building a covered walkway between the Hilton Metropole, where King Tony will reside, and the conference centre, at the Grand Hotel, protecting delegates and their entourage from the protests of anyone still stupid enough to think this a government to be lobbied, to be persuaded, rather than fought.

Some people, though, will get a chance to touch the robe of the Great Leader. More than six hundred lobbyists, PR consultants and industrialists will hand over £350-per-plate for dinner with Blair on Tuesday night, raising £200,000 in the process for party funds (cost per table is £3,500 – conveniently below the £5,000 threshold for declared donations, so you'll never know, therefore, which particular set of commercial interests bent the ear of which MP). The real business of conference – the dinners, parties, displays, which Labour's corporate relations manager Anne Creek describes as "an opportunity for business to engage in both formal and informal dialogue with Labour politicians" – will generate about £4 million for the party. There you have it – representative democracy in action (perhaps rather than close the Dome, New Labour could keep it open indefinitely with public funds until Blair departs this mortal coil, at which point it could become a mausoleum for the Great Man, with private companies invited to sponsor Blair's embalming, the highest bidder getting the opportunity to have its logo on the sides of the sarcophagus, with any losses involved in the project cooked away by an Immortalisation Commission made up of Friends of Tony from his days in chambers).

Representative democracy, though, is having a bit of a rough time at present. Few of us any longer feel represented, and those who do are beginning to sweat. (Perhaps unnecessarily; Lady Jay has after all reassured farming protesters that she understands the problems of the countryside because she "has a little cottage she visits most weekends". Maybe we protest too much – this is, after all, the way most MPs see their constituencies anyway.) The response of the Great and Good of Hampstead to the fuel protests gives us a few clues as to what's really at stake.

Bill Morris, leader of the Transport and General Workers Union, called for a public inquiry into why oil companies and police appeared to collude with fuel protesters, citing the failure of the police to use "their considerable public order powers to restore safety to the roads". The argument that tanker drivers failed to drive through blockades because their bosses didn't pressure them to is a bizarre one for any trade unionist to advance. Most tanker drivers stayed put because they agreed with the protests. Some stayed put because they'd been told they'd be followed home and their addresses posted on a scabbing website if they attempted to breach the blockades. Morris's argument amounts to a request to fuel bosses on behalf



Surrounded by pickets, a fuel tanker leaves Grangemouth refinery

of the government to threaten to sack drivers who won't do their jobs, with the inference that, if such drivers were disciplined or sacked, the TGWU would not intervene. Nothing more clearly illustrates the supine nature of the trade union leadership than this craven attempt to curry favour with a government that has refused to allow it its place at the table, handing over its members as sacrificial lambs. New Labour, though, knows full well that the trade union bureaucracy is a spent force, and, while politely thanking Morris, began moves to extend the 1976 Energy Act to cover fuel companies; seeking to introduce unlimited fines on fuel companies if they fail to ensure maintenance of supplies. Morris claims his hostility to the hauliers stems from lorry drivers' scabbing during the 1984-85 miners strike, suggesting he's stupid as well as craven. Large numbers of drivers who crossed picket lines during the miners strike did so because they were refused the support of the TGWU if they refused to cross. The miners strike was broken by a combination of co-ordinated police violence, state-supported scabbing in the Notts coalfields, and the refusal of trade union bureaucrats like Bill Morris to sanction solidarity action in support of the miners in the key industrial conflict of the post-1979 period. Morris – the man who sold out the Liverpool dockers – is now reduced to seeking to advise Gordon Brown and Jack Straw about how to get his men to work.

As to the argument that the police should have steamed in – at the Hyde Park Corner blockade it was fairly easy to see what was holding them back. Most lorry drivers on the blockade had failed to live up to their image as middle class militants, and looked, as one motorbike cop was observed to yell to another alongside him, "rough as fuck, big bastards. I really don't fancy it, do you." Trying to stop articulated lorries driven at speed during a protest with massive public support presented, as the Association of Chief Police Officers made clear to Straw, a public order problem they really didn't want.

The line taken by the liberal-minded opinion-formers at the *Guardian* was that the protests were some kind of right wing revolt, engineered by the Tory Party, an uprising of the *Daily Mail* reading middle classes.

According to Polly Toynbee, the coalition of hauliers, small farmers, cabbies, and anyone else who turned up on the day represented the "forces of conservatism" incarnate, a revolt of "The Sun's white van man" which should have been opposed by "the other, greener Britain" (*Guardian*, 15th September 2000). Car drivers were, for Toynbee, embodied manifestations of "individual selfishness", the protesters "a popular front of Poujadists, small businessmen, farmers, cab drivers and truckers, all supported with weasel words by Mr Hague and the right wing press" (*Guardian*, 13th September 2000). Isabel Hilton took the argument even further, reminding us that "when the CIA wanted to destabilise Salvador Allende's Chile in the early 1970s, they organised a truckers strike ... In Northern Ireland the Ulster Workers' Council strike of 1974 ... also targeted transport and succeeded in breaking the power sharing executive" (*Guardian*, 13th September). So the fuel protests were a right wing-almost neo-fascist conspiracy? The problem is, that, for the analogy with Chile to work, we have to accept Blair – whose government pioneered the Terrorism Act, the New Deal for

(continued on page 2)

### New oil shock!

The government of Sudan routinely bombs its citizens. It also bombs UN planes delivering humanitarian aid. Its membership of the IMF was suspended in 1993 after it defaulted on its loan payments. And two years later the US accused it of supporting terrorism, and imposed sanctions.

But what's this? "European countries, keen to take commercial advantage of Sudan's new oil industry, have beefed up their embassies and toned down their criticisms" (*Economist*, 19th August). Allah, apparently, has blessed Sudan with oil. Unsurprisingly, the IMF has welcomed Sudanese bosses back with open arms, and the Americans have realised that no, perhaps they were wrong about the terrorists after all. What's the use of humanitarian concern when there's profits to be made?

(continued from page 1)

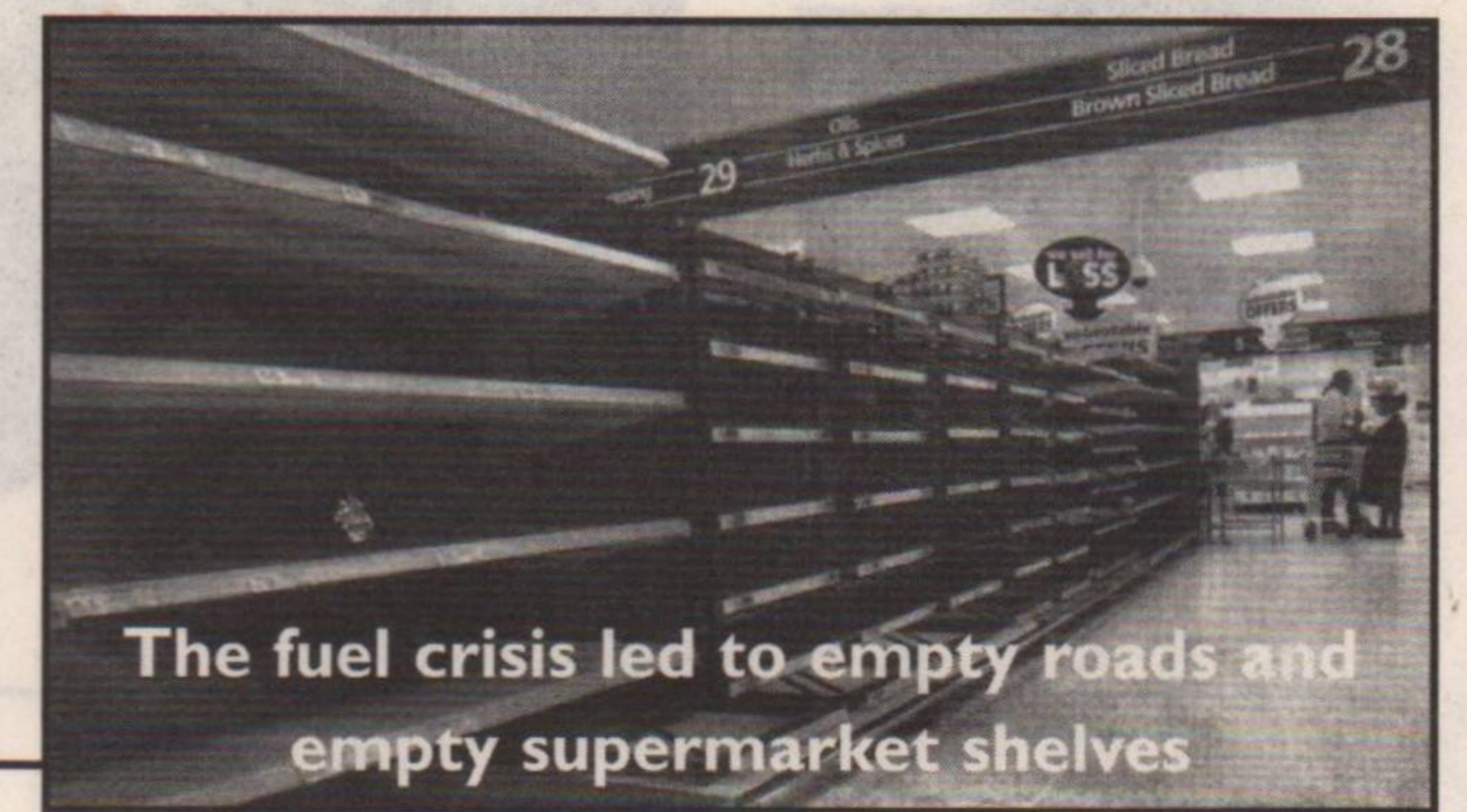
Jobseekers, witch-hunted single parents and asylum seekers and sneeringly handed over 75p to the pensioners – as Allende, and as soon as we attempt the comparison the analogy is revealed as nonsense. It is significant also that opinion polls suggest that broadly the same numbers who supported the fuel protesters support a substantial increase in the basic state pension (more than 90% of those polled in each case) – suggesting that the idea that the fuel protests represented a militant selfishness was a convenient fiction resorted to by the likes of Toynbee and Hilton in the absence of any more coherent or convincing argument. Most people, it seems, don't buy the line that a cut in fuel taxes would have to lead to a cut in public spending elsewhere, regardless of Gordon Brown's assertion that "irresponsible tax promises" would put "both stability and public services at risk". New Labour's economic strategy is increasingly transparent. We have written before of Blair's attempts to use the minimum wage as the prop for a low wage economy. Britain has the lowest rate of corporation tax in Europe, and New Labour's income tax strategy has been designed to aid not the low paid but those paid the most. In reaping the benefits of stealth taxes like the tax on fuel New Labour has continued its redistribution of wealth from poor to rich by covert as well as overt means. If fuel costs go up, then those hit hardest are those with the least to spend. If fuel costs go up at a time when political pressure and trade union conciliation have conspired to hold wages down then those with the least are hit harder

still. If you drive for a living then your future is mortgaged to fuel prices. The Green argument for fuel taxes doesn't hold under present circumstances, because the money raised from fuel taxes isn't going towards improvements in public transport, but towards underpinning New Labour's existing public spending commitments, so that the tax concessions to the rich can remain in place. New Labour has spun the myth that we're all middle class now. If large numbers of those in work bought the lie in 1997 then rises in petrol costs, mortgage rate increases etc., have quickly disabused them of the notion. The majority of us, clearly, then, want the cost of daily living to fall, and want those worst off (pensioners in the case polled) to have more. Hardly a sign of incipient fascism.

The fact that the Green argument has been trotted out with such regularity though says something about those who employ it. Keen to denounce the fuel protesters, it's fair to say that the columnists in question have never used such heated prose to denounce King Tony and his cronies as they've overseen increases in child poverty, heart disease, workplace stress, debt and suicide. As we write (25th September) Gordon Brown has invited the low pay commission to come forward with proposals for an increase in the minimum wage, and is considering an increase from £3.70 per hour to £4.00. The Council of Europe's low pay threshold, fixed at 68% of adult full time earnings, was £5.87 per hour in 1997. Will the likes of Toynbee and Hilton condemn Brown for consigning millions to a life of poverty and ill-health, or will they continue to hand out 'comradely'

advice to their friends in Cabinet? I think we can guess. Where were the words of barely contained fury when Chris Woodhead told the *Guardian* on 4th September that A Levels ought to be made more difficult and preserved for the minority of students. "Let's preserve A Levels that really do stretch the intellectually most able, but let's recognise that such qualifications are only for a minority ... An examination which doesn't involve failure is a very peculiar examination ... for me failure isn't a dirty word at all. An education system must involve failure. Life involves failure." Was there then any ringing condemnation of the 'forces of conservatism'? Or just the silence which is part and parcel of any conspiracy? As Simon Charlesworth has observed, in his book *A Phenomenology of Working Class Experience* (Cambridge University Press, 2000), which is one of the few works in recent years to take seriously the question of – and the experience of – class from the point of view of those condemned by class rather than that of those who profit from it, "to fail to be outraged is to fail in one's connection to the world and to fail to see the domination that the position of the scholar [or journalist: NS] is predicated upon: the dispossession of those whom the political system requires to be what Galbraith calls 'a functional underclass' (J.K. Galbraith, *The Culture of Contentment*, 1992), a group whose poverty is guaranteed in order to maintain the standard of living and relative prosperity of the very section of the population that are politically important to election and re-election and whose own social reproduction is invested in the academic field." In other words, the likes of Toynbee and Hilton and, as another example, Hugo Young, rush to condemn the 'ugly masses' for intervening in political life because their privileges depend on the containment and atomisation of that mass, the 'swinish multitude' of middle class nightmare. New Labour is doing okay by those who flock to it in time of crisis – the real voice of middle England, the real Pouladism, manifest in the anti-working class prejudice of *Guardian* columnists, think-tank hacks and Green Party movers and shakers like Darren Johnson. That they cloak their class prejudice as environmentalism ought to tell us what really motivates the environmentalism-from-above which the Greens now represent. Because the politics that suggests New Labour needs to crack down on lorry drivers that refuse to cross picket lines, that suggests cabbies and hauliers can rot on the dole so long as fuel tax stays high, and thinks that Ford and Rover workers should go down with their industry without a fight amounts to nothing more than a politics of 'Clean Air for the Middle Classes, and Screw the Rest' – a politics of selfishness, pure and simple.

In the fuel protests, the anger over pensions, and the recent UNISON strike in Scotland, we can see the beginnings of a new politics emerging. That it takes such disparate forms, that it sometimes fails to articulate its agenda clearly, that it sometimes carries with it the allegiance of those of other classes, whose fundamental interests are really set against it, ought not to surprise us. To quote Simon Charlesworth again, "deindustrialisation has, clearly, had the effect of wrapping many in a powerful sense of entrapment, as low wages, the cheapening of the qualifications they might reasonably aspire to obtain, and the shortening length of time that they hold jobs, have given them a sense of inescapable destiny, of being individuals



The fuel crisis led to empty roads and empty supermarket shelves



collectively overwhelmed by historical change. Absence of security and of respect create a crisis in the reproduction of the culture that

many grew up with, such as the educational links with the trade unions, the presence of union people in the communities, and the decline of the old spaces that used to be those of working people, like the pub and club." Building a new politics of working class solidarity will have to involve a battle for new spaces in which to organise, new ways of organisation – and the adoption of direct action by the fuel protesters is a precursor of this. It showed us also how little it might take to stop the 'friction-free' capital of 21st century Britain in its tracks. People who hadn't been asked their opinion by a television reporter or newspaper journalist in fifteen years suddenly found themselves questioned at petrol stations, at blockades, on their way to work. Those of us who for years had been told we didn't count could see again just how much we count for, how much social power we wield. In the *Observer* on 24th September, Richard Dawkins, that figurehead of scientific objectivity and reason (if, that is, you associate corporate cash with reason) voiced his fear that "Big Brother-watching *Sun* readers" might begin to determine government policy, and Mary Riddell sweated over the fact that "the oppressed are a motley bunch" and that "group power of any sort teeters uneasily between the mild and the mad". The wrong sort of people are being heard, we're told. "Public uprisings do occasionally pitch it right, as in the outcry for more money for the health service, but in the main they specialise in the selfish, the blinkered and the vindictive ... In a modern democracy, the cult of direct action ... looks increasingly bizarre." Politics, then, is not for the great unwashed. We should listen to the voices of calm of our betters. For Riddell, the fact that many of us are not prepared to is a "signal of something more sinister". The constitutional theorist Anthony Barnett has written of the 'sovereignty of voice' assumed by the established political class. "They" used to conduct the only conversation about the rules of the game that mattered, and they did so in exclusive tones. The upper class accent dominated British power. And until now it has been almost impossible to break into the conversation from outside" (*This Time*, Vintage, 1997). That sovereignty of voice is beginning to be challenged. Everyone from the London Socialist Alliance to William Hague wants to seek to divert the mood of dissent against New Labour down one electoral cul-de-sac or other. Our challenge is to ensure that the anti-capitalism of Prague and Seattle manifests itself as a challenge to the everyday sovereignty of capital in Tottenham, Moss Side and Rotherham, and that challenge be mounted through the development of working class self organisation along the lines shown by the movements in France in 1995 and briefly in the fuel protests here that brought the world we were told had 'escaped space and time' to a sudden, grinding halt.

Nick S.

## Two new Freedom Press titles ...

Charlotte Wilson

### Anarchist Essays

edited by Nicolas Walter

Freedom Press dates from the first issue of *Freedom* in September 1886. The chief founder and first editor was Charlotte Wilson, who had been writing about anarchism in the socialist press since 1884, and led an anarchist fraction in the Fabian Society. The most prominent contributor, Peter Kropotkin, had been released from prison in France in January 1886, and invited to London by Wilson and her group. Charlotte Wilson was for a decade the best-known native anarchist in Britain, but her life and work has been generally neglected. This volume includes the most important of her writings, with a biography and notes by the editor.

96 pages

ISBN 0 900384 99 9

£5.95

Colin Ward

### Social Policy: an anarchist response

Colin Ward was visiting Centenary Professor in the Department of Social Policy at the London School of Economics during the academic year 1995-96. His lectures on the history of informal housing movements were very popular among LSE students.

This volume, first published by the LSE and now kept in print by Freedom Press, includes all the talks he gave during his professorship.

96 pages

ISBN 0 900384 98 0

£5.00

Available from your bookseller or direct from the publishers (payment with order) post free in the UK. When ordering from abroad please add 15% towards postage.

**Freedom Press**

84b Whitechapel High Street • London E1 7QX  
(Girobank account 58 294 6905)

# North Country Matters

## Seven days that shook the government

Leaving England on 7th September for a small island in the Mediterranean, the roads to Manchester Airport gave no inkling of impending drama. The return journey on 21st September gave no sign of a crisis just ended that had threatened to bring down a government. Between these dates the only news to reach us came from the BBC World Service, heard amid the crackles and static on a tiny short-wave radio. The significance of this news was emphasised by the knowledge that the World Service is not intended for the British tourist abroad, nostalgic for news of home, but is much more a catalogue of world events, major natural catastrophes, major political upheavals and international conflicts, with most events in Britain rarely getting even a mention. For the 'petrol crisis' to be the first item in every news bulletin for several days told us more than the actual content of the items – something significant was happening.

Truckers and farmers were blockading the refineries, stopping supplies reaching the petrol stations in an apparently widespread, spontaneous but networked, non-hierarchical direct action protest against the state, enough to gladden the heart of any anarchist. But on second thoughts, this is direct action in the interests of capitalism, and have we really got such a large anarcho-capitalist movement in Britain? Of course not, this was just another single issue campaign aimed at reducing the price of petrol, by commercial users albeit with widespread support from the general motorist.

## A threat to democracy?

Initially Tony Blair and the ex-socialist Prescott were telling us that the action was poorly supported, would soon be over and the government would never give in to such a threat to democracy. At the weekend (8th to 9th September) the Transport Minister was telling us that the demonstrations had flopped. After all, that clever tax on a tax was worth hanging on to at all cost. But then came the news that the area around Whitehall had been sealed off, and the government was in crisis session, getting emergency powers from the Queen to "ensure essential supplies could reach the emergency services" – fire, ambulance, hospitals, and no doubt also the army just in case.

Being thousands of miles away in a relatively isolated place one could only wonder. Were the streets empty and silent? Had industry been shut down? There was a need to seek out any new arriver to ask for news of England, rather like the two English gentlemen in the film *The Lady Vanishes*. What is the movement making of all this? Were the anarcho-syndicalists bewailing the fact that a few self-employed truckers and farmers could achieve more and quicker than had any group of organised industrial workers, or just thinking, right method but wrong

ideology, or more likely no ideology? Were green anarchists devastated, pleased to see the roads almost empty, but knowing that success would mean cheaper petrol with more pollution and the roads more crowded than ever?

## The government had a plan

So would Blair give in? Of course not, his spin doctors had a plan, they would play their trump card. No need to shoot the ringleaders, or even detain them, then make some small concessions to the rest – a standard response in a war situation. They couldn't anyhow, because there were no leaders and, with much of the media ready to help out the government, all that was needed was a mesh of fine words. This came on the 13th in the form of a news item, the health service is in crisis and on red alert, and with staff unable to get to work many patients' lives are at risk unless the blockades are lifted immediately. The Health Minister and the acting Chief Officer of the NHS toured the country taking this misinformation to the demonstrators.

## On the seventh day

The farmers and truckers capitulated to a PR con, with a face-saving device to return in sixty days if no concessions had been made. They gave in because they, probably correctly, believed they would lose popular support if people believed the health service was collapsing rapidly rather than just slowly as at present. They knew that if one patient died because the ambulance did not arrive in time, something that occasionally happens anyway, the media would help the government to blame the blockaders. But there was no health crisis, just inconveniences with the hospitals functioning normally. No patients were at risk, at least no more so than in normal times, all the emergency services had enough of their own supplies to last for weeks, if not months, and who can doubt that the army had its own supplies well safeguarded.

Any claim by members of this government to have principles, integrity and honesty must be forfeit. Loyal Labour Party members and especially MPs other than those seeking preferment and a share of the power for themselves must be feeling very ashamed

that they voted for such a collection of scheming, lying manipulators that they have to call their government. The role of Bill Morris, General Secretary of the Transport & General Workers in all this is another story, but one that must be told one day.

## What might have been

In retrospect one can see how it might have been. No refinery gates were physically blocked. This was an entirely peaceful protest with tanker drivers refusing to cross picket lines. The truckers and farmers were themselves encouraging and quietly organising the distribution of essential supplies. A public offer to the government to ensure essential supplies would have been met by a government refusal to negotiate and this might have retained them their widespread support. If we had a trade union movement run by the workers in their own interests and those of society instead of a bureaucracy intent only on maintaining its own power as a lackey of the government, then who knows what might have been.

But the state has learned a lesson; direct action works, direct action can bring down government provided it has at least the passive support of the majority. Next time the PR battalions may not be so successful – a trump card can only be used once.

Expect repercussions, most authoritarian and arrogant government we have had to endure for some time will already be working on new legislation for more repressive laws

in an attempt to make such actions more difficult; to make, in fact, even peaceful protest illegal.

Postscript: So why 'North Country Matters' as a title? Well it is strongly believed by Labour Party supporters and others in these parts that the government's initial dismissal of the events as of little importance, a minor problem that would soon be sorted, was because they started and were initially confined to northern parts of England and to Scotland. It was not until the fifth day when the action had spread to the south west and south east that they panicked. And it is not only the government that thinks that what happens Up North is of no importance.

H.S.

## Shock, horror

Oh, the absurdity of it all. Jeffrey Archer, nowadays better known as Lord Archer of Weston-super-Mare, was last week charged with the ancient crime of perjury. His lordliness is alleged to have lied, during a libel trial he won in 1987.

What's that? A politician is alleged to have lied? When you recover from the shock, just remember that his crime wasn't the telling of the porkies, but the telling of the porkies in a court of law. As this could earn Archer a sentence of seven years in the slammer if found guilty, Gordon Brown and Tony Blair (and every other member of the club) must be glad that it's perfectly alright to lie to everyone else. Got a million quid you could lend us, guv?

Johnny M.

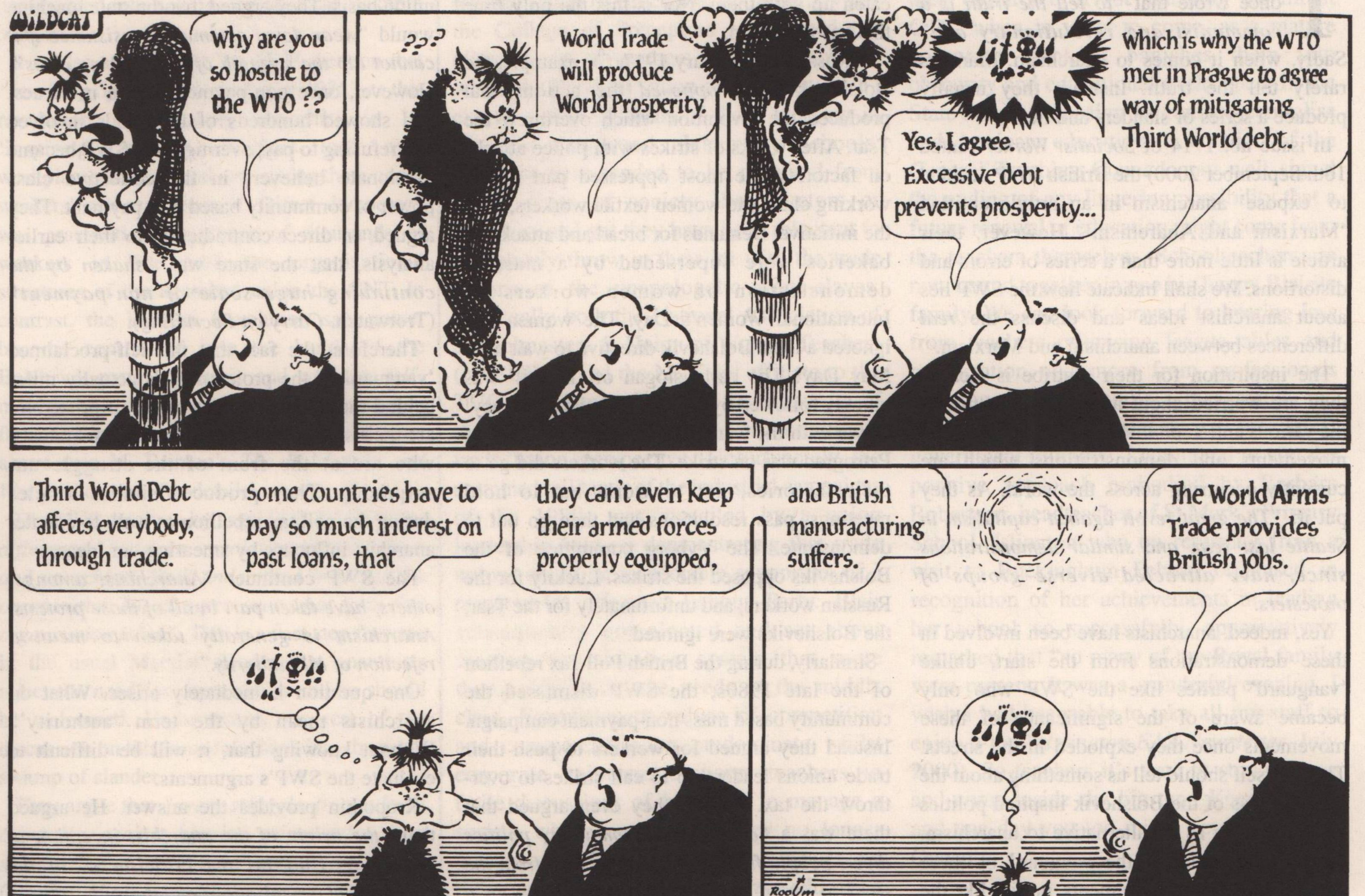
## Disabled activist and Bury's bins

Bury Unemployed Workers' Association backed disabled rights activist Stephen Bridge in early September, when he went to protest about the failure of the council's 'Take and Return' waste collection scheme.

The 42 year old paraplegic is a member of the Bury Unemployed Workers' Association and the Disabled Action Network. To protest, Stephen and his supporters walked into Bury Council's Craig House and scattered the rubbish from his wheelie bin all over the

office floor. His objection is that the council binmen are failing to return his bin properly after they have emptied it. A shocked council officer who came down to talk to Stephen promised things would improve in future.

Stephen said: "I hope so or else I'll be down to dump some more rubbish". As we left the council officer asked if we wanted to take the contents of the bin off the office floor. We said: "No you can keep it, and don't say we never give you nowt".



### COPY DEADLINE

The next issue of Freedom will be dated 21st October, and the last day for copy intended for this issue will be first post on Thursday 12th October. 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).

It is the nineteenth Anarchist Bookfair on Saturday 14th October – and it's still growing. In the main hall and the hallways, you'll find over fifty anarchist groups and publishers, selling (and giving away) everything from new and secondhand books, to pamphlets, mags, tracts and rants, to t-shirts, videos, tapes, CDs, comic books and postcards. But that's not all. In the rooms around the Conway Hall complex, you'll find this is also a day of events and meetings. From activism to academic research, education to sex, alternative comedy to art, the Anarchist Bookfair shows the astonishing variety of anarchists and anarchism.

See <http://freespace.virgin.net/anarchist.bookfair> for more information and look out for the Anarchist Bookfair Information point in the main foyer on the day at Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London WC1 (the nearest tube is Holborn).

#### THE BROCKWAY ROOM : Small Hall

12.00-1.00pm

**Digging for Freedom** – Peter Marshall, author of *Demanding the Impossible* and *Riding the Wind* will be giving a talk on the modern significance of the diggers.

2.00-3.00pm

**Reflections on MayDay** – Organised by the MayDay 2000 group, this is looking back at last year's events and there will be a meeting the Sunday after the Bookfair to look forward to next years (further details available at the Bookfair).

3.00-4.00pm

**Smash the Beaufort Hunt** – Organised by Ma'am (Movement against the Monarchy), this is an organising meeting for a special royal event.

4.00-5.00pm

**Czech and Irish Anarchists on 'After Prague: Where next for the international anarchist movement?'** – The fight against global capital has seen a global resurgence of the anarchist movement. Speakers from the Workers Solidarity Movement (Ireland) and the Organisation of Revolutionary Anarchists – Solidarita (Czech Republic) outline where they think the movement needs to go next.

## Anarchist Bookfair Programme

5.00-6.00pm

**Anarchist Involvement in the Prague Events** – Following the recent action in Prague against the IMF and World Bank anarchist activists will be reporting back. Details of how the S26 Collective organised along libertarian lines to launch this latest attack on international capitalism. Activists will discuss their involvement and perceptions of the week and look to the future for further mobilisation.

#### BERTRAND RUSSELL ROOM

11.00am - 7.00pm

**Play and Freedom @ Creche** for children aged 2-10.

#### CLUB ROOM

11.00am-12.00pm

**Anarchist Research Group** – Sebastian Hayes, 'The Society of the Spectacle'

12.00-1.00pm

**Organising in the Sex Industry** – Discussion organised by the recently formed International Union of Sex Workers. Topics include a manifesto of sex workers, pornography, censorship, etc.

1.00-2.00pm

**Esoteric Anarchism** – 'The Dionysian Underground initiate an open debate on their creative mix of post modern anarcho-surrealism and pagan anarchism.'

2.00-3.00pm

**London Social Centre** – London's anarchist scene is in dire need of a self-managed building! Following a meeting at the MayDay 2000 conference, we are looking to set up a venue (named Emma's) for gigs, films and meetings with vegan food and bar. To achieve this, we aim to establish a membership structure along the lines of a working (wo)men's club, a co-operative consortium or possibly a charity, to build support, interest and finance. We see Emma's as following the examples of Bradford's 1-in-12 or Giros in Belfast. The workshop will look at practical solutions and would welcome anyone interested in becoming a member or participant.

3.00-4.00pm

**Stewart Home Society**

Join initiates of the Stewart Home Society as they celebrate their inaugural millennial meeting of minds with a selection of fine wines, obscure beers and mature malts. Be prepared to expect readings, rants, pranks and the unexpected.

4.00-5.00pm

**The class war after the Prevention of Terrorism Act:** a public meeting and debate presented by Class War – Will Jack Straw and his Un-Merry Men be able to prevent us from voicing our dreams and the governments' nightmares? With speakers: Larry O'Hara, Class War, and the Legal Officer of the Hunt Saboteurs' Association (to be confirmed).

5.00-6.00pm

**Individualist Anarchist Society** – Inaugural Meeting

6.00-7.00pm

**Anarchist Information Network** – Annual discussion/business meeting

#### ARTISTS ROOM

1.00-2.00pm

**No Borders!** – Meeting to discuss range of issues and possible actions including direct actions against immigration control and deportations, as well as practical support for asylum seekers, refugees and others around the country.

3.00-4.00pm

**'Introduction to Anarchism' pamphlet meeting**

#### TOWER ROOM I

12.00-1.00pm

**'Anarchists and the Information Society'** – Organised by Anarchist Librarians. Information shapes our lives. Information production and provision is shaped and determined by the state and capitalism. What are the implications for anarchists, and for those who work in the information economy? Do new

technologies like digital radio and the internet provide anarchists with a weapon for social revolution? What are anarchist priorities in the Information Society?

1.00-2.00pm

**Rebel Words** – Anarchist writers John Moore and Leigh Starcross will read from their latest work.

2.00-3.00pm

**London Anarchist Forum** – 'Wot is Anarchy?'

The well known anarchist debating facility group invites individuals to express and discuss what anarchism means for them. Is a general definition possible? Or does anarchism mean something different for everyone? Does this matter?

3.00-4.00pm

**Virtual Revolution** – A meeting to set up a virtual revolution site on the internet. Want to burn down your school or bring global capitalism to its knees? Just send your virtual action details to Virtual Revolution. We can link in with other virtual actions and build for a new world. Reality is only a click away!

4.00-5.00pm

**Simon Jones Memorial Campaign** – Simon Jones was killed over two years ago on his first day at work at a Shoreham dock - killed by casualisation. Since then, a campaign of direct action has exposed government support for deadly working conditions and won significant victories. Video and discussion about direct action and fighting for workers' rights.

5.00-6.00pm

**Mumia Must Live**

6.00-7.00pm

**Zapatista Solidarity meeting**

The Zapatista revolt has inspired resistance against neoliberal globalisation throughout the world. Local groups have held public meetings, promoted delegations to Chiapas, organised pickets of the Mexican Embassy, and run e-mail list-serves (kebele@marsbard.com, chiapaslink@yahoo.com). This meeting will discuss recent developments in Chiapas and ideas for extending the solidarity network here.

# Marxism and 'Anarchism': a reply to the SWP

## — Part One —

The Italian Marxist Antonio Gramsci once wrote that "to tell the truth is a communist and revolutionary act." Sadly, when it comes to anarchism, Marxists rarely tell the truth. Instead, they usually produce a series of slanders and lies.

In issue no. 1714 of *Socialist Worker* (dated 16th September 2000) the British SWP decided to 'expose' anarchism in an article entitled 'Marxism and Anarchism'. However, their article is little more than a series of errors and distortions. We shall indicate how the SWP lies about anarchist ideas and discuss the real differences between anarchism and Marxism.

The inspiration for their diatribe is clear – they are worried about anarchist influence in the various anti-capitalist and anti-globalisation movements and demonstrations which are currently occurring across the world. As they put it: "The great revolt against capitalism in Seattle last year, and similar demonstrations since, have attracted diverse groups of protesters."

Yes, indeed, anarchists have been involved in these demonstrations from the start, unlike 'vanguard' parties like the SWP who only became aware of the significance of these movements once they exploded in the streets. That in itself should tell us something about the effectiveness of the Bolshevik inspired politics the SWP raise as an alternative to anarchism. Rather than being at the vanguard of these demonstrations and movements, parties like the

SWP have been, post-Seattle, busy trying to catch up with them. Nor is this the only time this has happened.

In Russia, in February 1917, for example, the Bolshevik party *opposed* the actions that produced the revolution which overthrew the Tsar. After weeks of strikes with police attacks on factories, the most oppressed part of the working class, the women textile workers, took the initiative. Demands for bread and attacks on bakeries were superseded by a massive demonstration of women workers on International Women's Day. The women had ignored a local Bolshevik directive to wait until May Day! The early slogan of 'Bread!' was quickly followed by 'Down with the autocracy! Down with the war!' By February 24th, half of Petrograd was on strike. The workers did go to their factories, not to work, but to hold meetings, pass resolutions and then go out to demonstrate. The Vyborg committee of the Bolsheviks opposed the strikes. Luckily for the Russian workers, and unfortunately for the Tsar, the Bolsheviks were ignored.

Similarly, during the British Poll Tax rebellion of the late 1980s, the SWP dismissed the community based mass non-payment campaign. Instead they argued for workers to push their trade unions leadership to call strikes to overthrow the tax. Indeed, they even argued that there was a "danger that community politics divert people from the means to win, from the need to mobilise working class activity on a

collective basis" by which they meant trade union basis. They argued that the state machine would "wear down community resistance if it cannot tap the strength of the working class". However, once non-payment began in earnest and showed hundreds of thousands involved and refusing to pay, overnight the SWP became passionate believers in the collective class power of community based non-payment. They argued, in direct contradiction to their earlier analysis, that the state was "shaken by the continuing huge scale of non-payment" (Trotwatch, *Carry on Recruiting*).

Therefore, the fact that the self-proclaimed 'vanguard of the proletariat' is actually miles behind the struggle comes as no surprise. Nor are their slanders against those, like anarchists, who are at the front of the struggle unsurprising. They produced similar articles during the poll tax rebellion as well, to counter anarchist influence by smearing our ideas.

The SWP continue: "Anarchists, amongst others, have taken part in all of those protests. Anarchism is generally taken to mean a rejection of all authority."

One question immediately arises. What do anarchists mean by the term 'authority'? Without knowing that, it will be difficult to evaluate the SWP's arguments.

Kropotkin provides the answer. He argued that "the origin of the anarchist inception of society ... [lies in] the criticism ... of the hierarchical organisations and the authoritarian

conceptions of society; and ... the analysis of the tendencies that are seen in the progressive movements of mankind". He stresses that anarchism "refuses all hierarchical organisation".

Thus anarchism rejects authority in the sense, to use Malatesta's words, of "the delegation of power, that is the abdication of initiative and sovereignty of all into the hands of a few". Once this is clearly understood, it will quickly be seen that the SWP create a straw man to defeat in argument.

The SWP correctly argue that we "live in a world of bullying line managers, petty school rules, oppressive police, and governments that serve the rich and powerful". However, they trivialise anarchism (and the natural feelings that result from such domination) by stating "everyone who hates that has, at least at times, felt a streak of 'anarchist' revolt against authority". Thus anarchism is presented as an emotional response rather than as valid, coherent intellectual opposition to hierarchical authority, an authority which serves its own interests as well as the rich and powerful. But, of course, anarchism is more than this, as the SWP acknowledge: "Anarchism, however, is more than a personal reaction against the tyrannies of capitalism. It is a set of political beliefs which have been held up as an alternative to the revolutionary socialist ideas of Karl Marx. Anarchist ideas have, on occasion, had a mass influence on movements (continued on page 5)

# Blunkett's New Poodle

Years ago my mum worked for Marks and Spencer. She wasn't bothered that she wasn't allowed to join a union because there was a staff association and she got company perks like cheap clothes and haircuts. David Blunkett has created a similar company union for teachers, but they don't get the cheap clothes and haircuts. His idea is to replace teachers' vestigial commitment to political unionism by membership of his new 'professional association', the General Teaching Council (GTC). Just in case teachers don't fall for this ruse the government have made membership compulsory and to add insult to injury they will have to pay an annual fee for registration. Teachers seeking tax relief on this payment have already been advised by the Inland Revenue that the GTC "does not appear on our approved list of professional bodies".

## Struggling for status

Superior teachers, able to discern the exquisite tailoring of the Emperor's new clothes, convince themselves that this is indeed progress. Believing themselves to be at last entering those hallowed halls inhabited by members of the General Medical Council and the Law Society they feel flattered and elevated above the common herd. Surely this demonstrates the government's determination to recognise and reward the professionalism of the nation's pedagogues. After all haven't teachers been trying to establish just such a professional body for more than 150 years? Back in 1846 a group of teachers created the College of Preceptors as a parallel to developments in the medical and legal professions. In 1902 a Teachers' Registration Council was set-up and becoming known as the Royal Society of Teachers in 1929 it continuously sought to acquire more powers of self-regulation for the teaching profession. It signally failed to gain any autonomy and in 1949 was formally abolished. After 150 years of struggle the Teaching and Higher

Education Act of 1998 empowered the present Secretary of State to create a new General Teaching Council (GTC), which came into formal operation on 1st September. This is no teachers' tiger, only Blunkett's new poodle.

## Creeps, cronies and careerists

The Chairman of the GTC is that highly experienced teacher and fiery political radical, Lord David Puttnam. A simpleton might wonder just how an ennobled filmmaker qualified as Chairman of a teaching council. Of course he was put there through

radicalism that Blunkett was looking for. Having been prompted to volunteer for the GTC by her local authority she lost no time in recording her response to the vicious attacks made on the education system by successive governments. She said: "I think the GTC will have a very important role in building the professional status of teachers, and reinstating a sense of pride in the profession." Hardly a rally to man the barricades, still no doubt it's a good career move for Valerie. Fortunately Blunkett has also managed to find a Council place for Eugene Sullivan of accountants Robson

tree; it will enhance their distance from classroom practitioners below and will effectively sideline debate about fundamental principles of education. Blunkett's hope is that it will, above all, marginalise the influence of radical teachers. The GTC will seek to preserve and police the elitist education system that currently prevails and further confine the parameters of teachers' activism and debate. In their own ominous words the OTC's priority is "to ensure that the high standards of the many are not jeopardised by the few" and "to ensure that the status of the teaching profession is maintained".

## Puttnam the poodlemaster

Some directly elected members of the GTC, like Carole Regan, may be expected to gently rock the boat but the Council's constitution ensures that classroom radicals will always remain in the minority. Power will inevitably stay in the hands of the authorities as the whole enterprise has been structured to control rather than represent the views of classroom teachers. It goes without saying that the opinions of the real victims of the system, the children, are completely unrepresented. Whilst glorying in his chairmanship of the GTC David 'Chariots of Fire' Puttnam is beginning to find that everything is not quite going to plan. Just a week before the launch of the GTC his press officer, Tim Miles, decided to do a runner and has gone off to work for London's *Evening Standard*. Now Puttnam's pet project, the teaching Oscars, is losing backers at a rate of knots. Lloyds TSB, Camelot, Railtrack and Dorling Kindersley have all recently pulled out leaving Puttnam's bauble a bit light in the glitter department. The show will go on as awarding Oscars for sycophantic teachers whilst threatening stricter professional regulation is too important a part of New Labour's educational strategy for these projects to be allowed to suffer the fate they deserve. The trade unions have so profoundly embraced Blair's corporatist approach that they now do not have the courage to do more than express minor reservations about the GTC project. They may well come to regret their cowardice in not attacking the infant GTC, when in years to come, as a mature corporate giant, it banishes them into obscurity and educational irrelevance. In the State's long campaign to control, centralise and dominate education its creation of the General Teaching Council may well signal the ending of any lingering possibility that a future renewal of education might come from the teachers themselves. Schoolteachers are now bound together in one big happy Blairite family. We can look forward to hearing less from teachers criticising league-tables and privatisation and more from professionals boasting of their pupil's achievements and gushing with enthusiasm for the latest government initiative. I commend to you the positive approach embodied by Barbara Robertson, headteacher of St Mark's Primary School, Islington who on returning from a visit to Buckingham Palace, organised in recognition of her achievements in leading her school so successfully, appreciatively remarked that "so many of the Royal family were present. It was a wonderful evening. I wish I had been able to take all my staff to enjoy it too" (*Islington EAZ Newsletter*, July 2000). So teachers it's time to stop carping and come inside the big tent. Keep smiling and one day you too might get to meet the Queen.

Christopher Draper



The first meeting of the General Teaching Council

the grace and favour of the Honourable David Blunkett, as was the vice-chair of the GTC, Professor John Tomlinson. Out of Blunkett's other eleven nominations only three are classroom teachers and they only got through after rigorous interview. Valerie Dennis, senior teacher at an east London secondary school, displayed the absence of

Rhode, for surely accountancy is the very heart and soul of New Labour's philosophy of education.

## Workers or professionals?

The GTC is a creation and creature of government. The Law Society and GMC secured their relative autonomy by selling their souls to the establishment. The establishment is prepared to cede power to licence their own practitioners because the GMC and Law Society implicitly agree not to challenge the dominant establishment values. Since the era of mass education, teachers have maintained ideological ambivalence. Whilst many unequivocally promoted conventional elitism others have campaigned for a radical reorganisation of education. In the early years the College of Preceptors represented the elitist views of teachers in private schools whilst the National Union of Teachers (NUT) expressed the opinions of those working in the less privileged elementary schools. Teachers have tended to be recruited from lower strata of society than doctors or solicitors and yet they have been reluctant to completely throw in their lot with the trade unions of the unapologetic wage-slaves. Eventually both the National Association of Schoolmasters & Union of Women Teachers (NASUWT) and the NUT did affiliate to the TUC and hence brought the majority of teachers within the influence of a traditional trade union perspective. Unfortunately the sustained militancy of the industrial campaigns of the 1980s was curtailed by a union leadership bent on demonstrating that trade unions could be respectable supporters of a respectable, reformed Labour Party. Blair subsequently got elected and set about creating an education system that more thoroughly serves the needs of the middle class. Establishment values of competition and commercialisation predominate whilst corporate unionism ensnares teachers in futile discussions of how best to manage a system whose core values they no longer question. The GTC will gain more power and influence for those at the top of the education

(continued from page 4)  
against capitalism."

Given that the 'revolutionary socialist ideas' of Marx have been proven wrong on numerous occasions while Bakunin's predictions were proven right, anarchists humbly suggest that anarchism is a valid alternative to Marxism. For example, Bakunin correctly predicted that when "the workers ... send common workers ... to Legislative Assemblies ... The worker-deputies, transplanted into a bourgeois environment, into an atmosphere of purely bourgeois ideas, will in fact cease to be workers and, becoming Statesmen, they will become bourgeois ... For men do not make their situations; on the contrary, men are made by them." The history of the Marxist Social Democratic Parties across the world proved him right. Similarly, Bakunin predicted that Marx's 'dictatorship of the proletariat' would become the 'dictatorship over the proletariat'. The experience of the Russian Revolution proved him correct.

The SWP continue by arguing: "Socialists and anarchists share a hatred of capitalism. They have often fought alongside each other in major battles against the capitalist system. They struggled together in the Europe-wide mass strikes at the end of the First World War and the inspiring Spanish Revolution in 1936, as well as in countless smaller battles today."

Which is true. They also fail to mention that the mass-strikes at the end of the First World War were defeated by the actions of the Social-Democratic Parties and trade unions. These parties were self-proclaimed revolutionary Marxist organisations, utilising (as Marx had argued) the ballot box and centralised organisations. Unsurprisingly, given the tactics

and structure, reformism and bureaucracy had developed within them. When workers took strike action, even occupying their factories in Italy, the bureaucracy of the Social Democratic Parties and trade unions acted to undermine the struggle, isolating workers and supporting capitalism. The Marxist movement had degenerated into bourgeois parties, as Bakunin predicted.

It is also strange that the SWP mention that "inspiring Spanish Revolution in 1936" as this revolution was mainly anarchist in its 'inspiring' features. Workers took over workplaces and the land, organising them under workers' self-management. Direct democracy was practised by hundreds of thousands of workers in line with the organisational structures of the anarchist union the CNT. In contrast, the Russian Revolution saw power become centralised into the hands of the Bolshevik party leadership and workers' self-management of production was eliminated in favour of one-man management imposed from above (see M. Brinton's *The Bolsheviks and Workers' Control* for details).

The SWP continue by arguing that "there are differences between revolutionary socialism and anarchism. Both understand the need for organisation but disagree over what form that organisation takes". This is a vast step forward in the usual Marxist slander that anarchists reject the need for organisation and so should be welcomed. Unfortunately the rest of the discussion on this issue falls back into the usual swamp of slander.

They argue that "every struggle, from a local campaign against housing privatisation to a mass strike of millions of workers, raises the (continued on page 6)

# MELBOURNE PROTESTERS DEFY POLICE VIOLENCE

Protests against the World Economic Forum meeting in Melbourne earlier this month began on 11th September. S11 and S12 saw the mood amongst the police soon turn ugly. S13 started with another police charge on about forty blockaders at the Clarendon Street entrance to the conference hall.

One of the protesters, Nick, says he and his colleagues were hopelessly outnumbered by police involved in this morning's baton charge, according to ABC. "I saw a woman about 40 that went down and people were just screaming to let her out, let her up ... Just general people getting hurt, a lot of screaming, a lot of young people going down", he said.

This follows a similar baton charge on Tuesday night, to bring the delegates out. Riot police viciously attacked people engaged in non-violent civil disobedience with more than twenty people needing hospital treatment. ABC interviewed well-known local entertainer Rod Quantock, who said that several friends were hit by police batons in an unprovoked attack. "Nothing would justify the violence that was there. I was on the ground. I couldn't see who was batoning me. It wouldn't have made a difference. They didn't have ID on anyway. I saw people with so much blood on their face you couldn't literally tell if they were men or women."

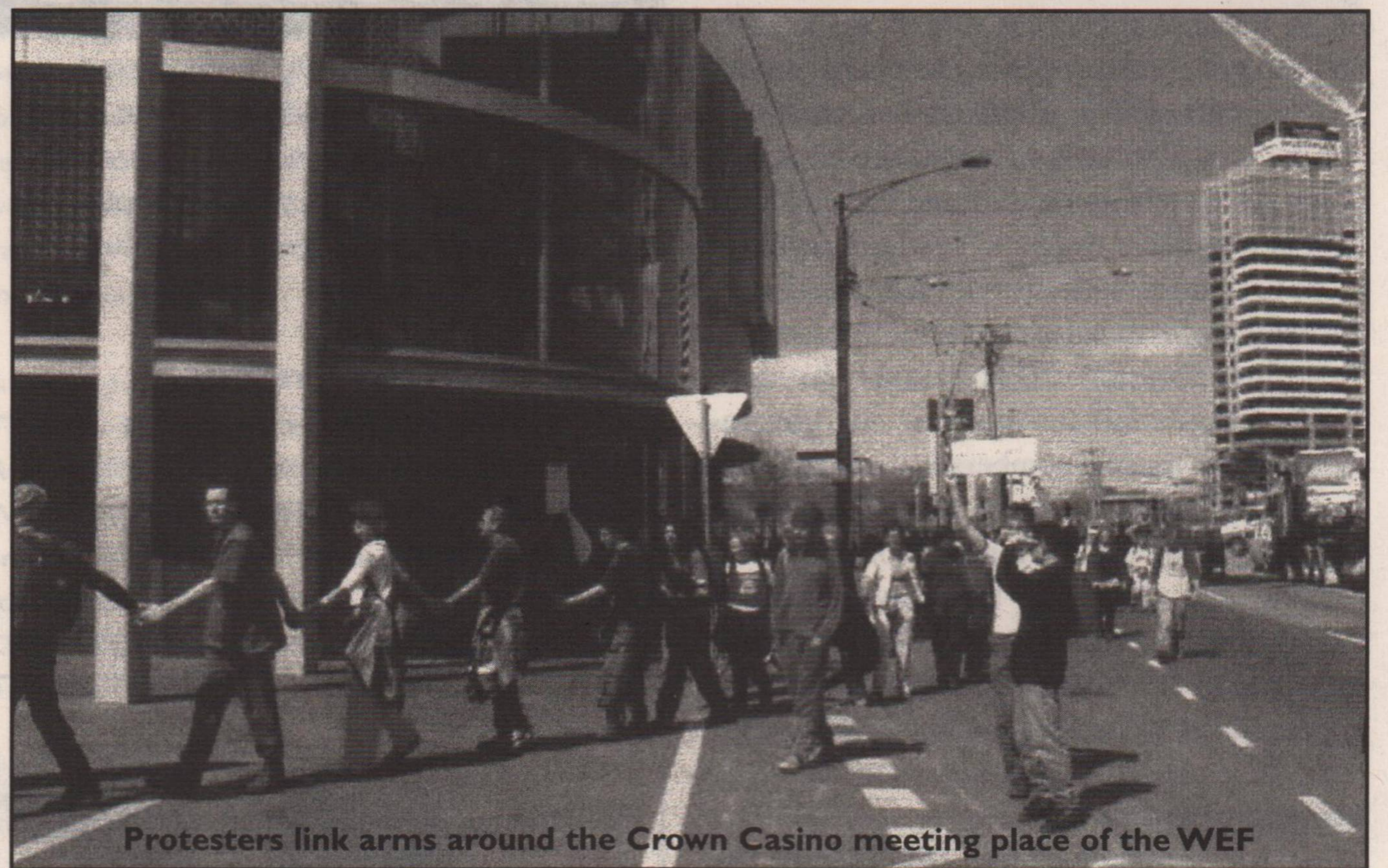
Klaus Schwab, the founder of the WEF, said: "The police action was excellent. They gave the

protesters a chance at the first day to behave in a civilised way, they charged when it was necessary to restore law and order". His bidding was done by our esteemed Labor premier, Steve Bracks, who stated "police have been charged with the responsibility of keeping law and order and keeping the public protected, the delegates protected, and peaceful protesters protected and in that they have done a fantastic job. Those that have incited disruptive behaviour by throwing missiles are the ones that are causing difficulty for the peaceful and sensible protesters".

This makes a mockery of the numerous unprovoked baton charges on peaceful people protesting through civil disobedience techniques. The level of violence by the police had been deliberately escalated after the successful blockading on the first day.

Up to two hundred protesters had been injured by police who had hit them on the head with batons, trampled them with horses, dragged them by the hair, punched, kicked, elbowed and bitten them and driven at high speed to disperse crowds, the team of legal observers said.

Police are also not wearing their identification badges. Legal observers estimate 90% of officers have taken off their name tags. Damien Lawson, of Melbourne's Western Suburbs Legal Centre, said "this goes to the heart of accountability at this protest. If they can't be identified then they can act with impunity. There was a young man who was



baton-charged and lost two teeth and had to have emergency surgery".

Now we know that Bracks is just another puppet like our Prime Minister John Howard, with the ear of the rich and powerful. The WEF organisers complained and Bracks and his police minister jumped to obey and ordered the police to use horses, riot police and batons in unprovoked attacks on peaceful protesters. Cam Walker, from Friends of the Earth, told ABC "we've always used civil disobedience. We've always done it according to protocol and that protocol is the police ask you to leave, they remove the protesters, and they arrest them if they've done anything unlawful. The police have broken with thirty years of tradition and they've declared war on peaceful protesters".

At lunch time more than two thousand protesters toured the city precinct, stopping outside a Nike store and several branches of McDonalds. When they returned to the assembly point outside the Crown Casino complex, where the meeting was held, a giant multicoloured Gippsland Earthworm puppet led an encirclement of the complex of

people linking hands. This act involved thousands of people.

By mid afternoon the blockade was winding down. Why then did an unmarked police car try to force its way into a group of blockaders? When a person was trapped underneath the car, with people pleading for the car to stop, the driver accelerated, running over the person. This person required hospitalisation. This comes at the end of a long list of brutal police attacks and violence at the encouragement of WEF organisers and conservative politicians, including the Labor Premier, Steve Bracks, and his deputy, John Brumby.

The excessive use of force by the police will be pursued through the legal system. A legal team, comprising barristers, solicitors, law students and paralegals who came together to give protesters legal information, has taken over 300 statements detailing claims of police using excessive force over the duration of the blockade. Our resistance must be as global as capitalism.

Takver

<http://www.takver.com>

News from the Freedom Press website

## 'Your files will be deleted'

Folk who visit the Freedom Press website will be aware that things have changed recently. Folk who do not visit the Freedom Press website but who read the back page of *Freedom* will also be aware that things have changed recently: we have a new web address. So, for visitors and readers the change seems recent but for those who work on the site the changes are long overdue.

About a year ago the controllers of The 'Anarchy' Organisation (based in Toronto) instituted changes in the 'service' they were providing to us (and others). A set of political principles was established and if you didn't agree with - we would say trotskyite - slogans such as 'jobs for all' or generally go along with a 'we-are-a-self-defined-workers-collective' type approach you were, basically, not kosher, not PC and in the relegation zone.

We, perhaps unsurprisingly since we can hardly sign up for a set of principles on behalf of all our readers, found ourselves in the relegation zone and carrying the label 'dojo'.

We don't like carrying labels imposed on us by others and neither did the Jews in Hitler's Germany but in both cases victims had to make the best of a bad situation and start to cover their ass and make provisions for the future. Those Jews who were lucky got out of Germany before it was too late. We headed for a server in Italy which, despite the fact of police oppression that we had suffered in the past, seemed a better bet than The 'Anarchy' Organisation and slightly better than Mussolini's Italy version.

Our early move turns out to have been wise. Having been demoted to the dojo (what is meant by dojo? Be mystified, my friend, for smoke screens are the intention) we learn in an e-mail today (15th August 2000) that - we quote with our comments in parentheses - "TAO workers" (we are not included in the definition despite the work we have done for the 'anarchy' organisation) "have spent a great deal of time trying to deal with our issues of lack of disk space on the dojo".

It is in this way that TAO has superseded Einstein. Time is Space and Space is Time and both, of course, are Money (watch out for the last paragraph, my friend, it is on its way) but let's get

back to the e-mail from those above us.

"Much time" (we are told - but how much we are not) "has been spent trying to clean up the various hard drives to ensure that the system is available for your use".

We are frankly perplexed. Computers are able to delete files in nanoseconds and a clean-up is done in a few minutes. What always takes time is human beings answering e-mail messages regarding difficulties experienced by users. Much time has not been expended in this direction for sure. But let the Torontonian 'workers' continue: "it is at this point that we are unable to do more work to ensure that the home partition (the drive that stores all the data for user accounts) will keep from filling up. It would be safe to assume that the drive will reach its capacity within the next week resulting in a system crash that will mean data loss for all users".

Be frightened, all good dojo people. Ye who did not seek the title are the cause of all things bad - and were deleted from all mailing lists when ye dared say otherwise. TAO Toronto are working round the clock to delete the evil files we produce and we, the evil non-working dojo, have got them beat.

Ah! But there is more: "it is extremely important that you go through your accounts" (we, Freedom Press, do so every day) "immediately removing all old e-mail and files" (ours comes in at approximately 0 kilobytes - we wonder why we got this message) "that are creating this problem" (a problem - yes, but not of our making).

Now we would hate the good 'workers' in Toronto to suggest that we have edited their e-mail to our benefit and if you want to read all the puff we'll send you the whole caboodle but let us simply jump to the final paragraph: "Monetary donations are, as always, very much needed to keep this project running. We are very much in need of extra hardware for all of our systems, and to begin building new systems. On top of hardware issues, money also is needed to pay for labor, rent, bandwidth, etc. Please send funds to ..."

We concur. In a gesture of goodwill we say send them a donation. But also we say ask yourself first if, after a hard day's work (ummmm ... that's dojo work as opposed to any other), they deserve it more than you.

(continued from page 5)

need for organisation. People come together and need mechanisms for deciding what to do and how to do it." They continue by arguing that "anarchism says that organisation has nothing to do with centralisation. For anarchism, any form of centralisation is a type of authority, which is oppressive". This is true, anarchists do argue that centralisation places power at the centre, so disempowering the people at the base of an organisation. In order to co-ordinate activity anarchists propose federal structures, made up of mandated delegates from autonomous assemblies. In this way, co-ordination is achieved while ensuring that power remains at the bottom of the organisation, in the hands of those actually fighting or doing the work. Federalism does not deny the need to make agreements and to co-ordinate decisions. Far from it - it was put forward by anarchists precisely to ensure co-ordination of joint activity and to make agreements in such a way as to involve those subject to those decisions in the process of making them. In other words, it is the means to combine participation and co-ordination and to create an organisation run from the bottom up rather than the top-down. As can be seen, anarchists do not oppose co-ordination and co-operation, making agreements and implementing them together.

After mentioning centralisation, the SWP make a massive jump of logic and assert: "But arguing with someone to join a struggle, and trying to put forward tactics and ideas that can take it forward are attempts to lead."

"It is no good people coming together in a struggle, discussing what to do and then doing just what they feel like as if no discussion had

taken place. We always need to take the best ideas and act on them in a united way."

Placing ideas before a group of people is a 'lead' but it is not centralisation. Moreover, anarchists are not against making agreements! Far from it. The aim of federal organisation is to make agreements, to co-ordinate struggles and activities. This does not mean ignoring agreements. As Kropotkin argued, the commune "cannot any longer acknowledge any superior: that, above it, there cannot be anything, save the interests of the Federation, freely embraced by itself in concert with other Communes". This vision was stressed in the CNT's resolution on Libertarian Communism made in May, 1936, which stated that "the foundation of this administration will be the Commune. These Communes are to be autonomous and will be federated at regional and national levels for the purpose of achieving goals of a general nature. The right of autonomy is not to preclude the duty of implementation of agreements regarding collective benefits." Hence anarchists do not see making collective decisions and working in a federation as an abandonment of autonomy or a violation of anarchist theory.

They continue by arguing: "Not all authority is bad. A picket line is 'authoritarian.' It tries to impose the will of the striking workers on the boss, the police and on any workers who may be conned into scabbing on the strike."

What should strike the reader about this 'example' is its total lack of class analysis. In this the SWP follow Engels. In his essay *On Authority*, Engels argues that a "revolution is certainly the most authoritarian thing there is; it is the act whereby one part of the population imposes its will upon the other part by means of

(continued on page 7)

# More on Poor Marx ...

Dear *Freedom*,

Peter Cadogan – and please correct me if I'm wrong – has never claimed to be an anarchist. Now, however, he seems to be setting himself up as an expert on who is, or isn't, an anarchist, accusing Nick S. of being a "class struggle Marxist". Nick's own articles and letters in *Freedom* show up the absurdity of this accusation. Yes, Nick S. is a class struggle anarchist, as am I, and I venture to say that so are the majority of anarchists worldwide. The obituaries I have written of various anarchists over the last year or so show the strength of the class struggle anarchist tradition. This is not something that died out a century ago, but is a living movement, and one that is renewing itself and beginning to grow again.

Yes, classes exist, and sometimes members (a minority) of the ruling classes come over to the revolutionary movement, but primarily revolutions are the movement and actions of the working class and peasantry to overthrow the ruling class and the state.

Yours for anarchist communism.

Nick Heath



Dear *Freedom*,

I was at first reluctant to reply to Peter Cadogan's denunciation of me in his letter (23rd September 2000) because I couldn't grasp the basis of his attack at all. I think I've worked out the sense of it now, but perhaps he'll excuse me if I've missed the point.

Class struggle, he tells us, is a "dogma ... lethal to the cause of freedom". Whose freedom? Certainly not the freedom of those who currently lose out in the 'relation' (a relation that is really a war) between those who own, and those exploited by those who own, the means of production under capital. The freedom to exploit is, as far as I can see,

the only freedom at risk here. Perhaps Peter believes that capitalism is not a society predicated on the exploitation and oppression of one class by another? Perhaps he doesn't believe capitalism exists? Who can tell? It ought, though, to be the case, that, if he recognises the fundamental inequality which is at the heart of capitalism, that exploitation of the weak by the strong that Proudhon denounced as 'theft', he should conclude that any emancipatory project ought to be based upon overcoming such inequality. A politics of working class emancipation, which I believe anarchism has to be, is based on the end of the relations of class oppression, not their perpetuation in another guise. So far as I can see, I'm neither original nor alone in this – it being the conception of anarchism common to Bakunin, Kropotkin, Malatesta and Rocker, whatever the differences between them. The problem "that is set for our time" remains, as Rocker put it, "freeing man from the curse of economic exploitation and political and social enslavement."

It seems to me that only someone who by virtue of status, wealth, etc., has escaped such exploitation could denounce a politics based on a challenge to capitalism's conception of itself as 'the end of history', as a 'lethal dogma'. When Peter writes of "goals which were ... political, not economic" as truly emancipatory goals, he reveals how little he knows of how the condition of 'the economic' defines the extent to which we are able to participate in the political arena, not only in the sense that those of us who labour under capital are deemed to have no place in 'political life' (a condition made worse by the collapse of organised labour such that those who conduct the 'politics' of class society no longer feel pressured to pretend to include working class opinion) but also the sense in

which 'being working class' becomes a form of self-exclusion, in that the poverty and economic insecurity which is working class life under capitalism conspires towards an ontological insecurity which makes the confidence and disposition which allows a 'political viewpoint' less accessible to us. A properly working class politics would be a politics which seeks to liberate politics from the constraints of 'the economic' through the transformation of the relations of 'the economic'. Should we seek to liberate ourselves from that "class property which makes the labour of the many the wealth of the few" or does Peter believe that capitalism is the inescapable horizon of our politics, and that those of us who are condemned to the losing side under capital should be content with our lot, or content at least with the freedoms a few well meaning liberals might negotiate on our behalf?

His comment that the "study of every revolution ... proves that in all of them the classes were on both sides" is meaningless. The issue is surely what form of property – and hence of freedom – those revolutions sought to introduce. Might it not be the case that members of one class could fight on the side of another in the belief that the society fought for might also emancipate them?

Crying 'Marxist' whenever anyone within the anarchist movement talks about class doesn't really take the debate forward. It also suggests that those of us who take the issue of class seriously and base our politics around it are either wrong or stupid or both, not an argument one can imagine being put forward any longer with regard to a politics which sought to challenge racial or sexual oppression as part of its agenda, and suggesting also that prejudice against the creativity and self-emancipation of working class people is, still, an acceptable prejudice for supposed 'radicals' to hold. As Peter ought to know, it wasn't Marx who dreamt up the notion of working class emancipation – Marx and Bakunin both took their inspiration from the practice of the Parisian working class in the 1870 Commune, and Bakunin concluded that Paris in 1870 opened up the possibility "of the definitive and complete emancipation of the masses and their future solidarity". Still, if Peter believes working class people aren't able to liberate themselves from the oppression and exploitation of class society, he's in good company. Lenin didn't believe they could either – hence the notion of the vanguard party bringing the Bolshevik 'good news' to the class from outside. Perhaps Peter's conception of anarchism is a liberal humanist version of vanguardism? Or perhaps he believes that the project of emancipation from class relations and any other relation of oppression is over and done with and the best we can do is just be kinder to each other? Am I a 'century out of date' for believing class is still the fundamental relation of exploitation under capital or only for believing it can be overcome?

Nick S.



Dear *Freedom*,

I was amazed to read the letter from Nick S. in *Freedom* (12th August). I cannot believe that anyone in the early 21st century can still be taking the redundant theories of nineteenth century intellectuals like Karl Marx seriously! Let alone anarchists. As for the idea that Bakunin supported the *Communist Manifesto* this is pure nonsense, and made me wonder if Nick has ever read any Bakunin. While Bakunin saw that the working class as the best revolutionary agency in his day (quite rightly due to contemporary economic and political conditions) and seems to have supported the Manifesto as a myth that could

galvanise them (remember Bakunin was a great conspiratorialist). his ideas and the ideas of Marx while similar in some respects were at root incompatible. The whole early history of the International can be seen as a conspiratorial battle between two opposed forces the anarchists and the Marxians, with Marx regrettably winning (by the manipulation of State laws). Today we are in a different situation, the economic, political and social theories of Marx are now defunct (though that doesn't imply his basic historical approach can't be redeveloped) and the 'working class' is no longer a revolutionary subject (in fact there are no more revolutionary subjects in this sense). This doesn't mean that class is unimportant, it clearly is (especially to those of us in the anarchist movement who comprise its 'working class' minority), just that the abstract entity known as the 'proletariat' has been shown not to exist and that class is only one of the vectors within the power-system of oppression we find ourselves in. And speaking as a 'representative' of the 'working class' I find the term 'mass of ordinary people' deeply offensive, neither myself nor any of my 'working class' friends and comrades are 'ordinary', and neither are we part of any herd of sheep. Similar Nick's later tacit attack on the 'working class' is also insulting. To suggest that the 'working class' can only achieve self-emancipation as a mass (read herd) and that 'self-realisation' is only achievable by the 'middle class' reveals the low regard he has for us (and perhaps himself). The 'working class' are far more individual than any bourgeois clone could ever be. This is both our strength and weakness. It is for this reason that class based solidarity proved impossible in the last century and the notion of a 'working class movement', and the idea of the 'proletariat' as an entity, went down the drain. What's more I suspect that both Bakunin and Marx were both intelligent enough to come to the same conclusion if they lived today. But our diversity is also our strength (hence the systems attempt to reduce us to 'worker' clones through working practices and media imagery). As individuals we can achieve solidarity not only through our position of oppression within the work system (which must be abolished), but also with those whose oppression has more to do with gender, race or idiosyncrasy (whatever class they may belong to). Only through such a unity through diversity can a feasible, socially 'de-classed' revolutionary movement be created and rout the allies of oppression (whatever their class, race or gender). The majority of such a movement might be economically 'working class' (simply because the majority of the population is) but anarchists are not concerned about majorities, we are concerned about oppressed individuals (all of them). Similarly the anarchist movement has always opposed democracy (whether direct or otherwise), as Malatesta said "we are neither democrats nor dictators". Diversity makes total consensus impossible so democracy can only be the 'rule of the majority', and while this may be compatible with some forms of socialism (and bourgeois conformity) it is not compatible with genuine anarchism. It is the familiar policy of the weak dictator – if you can't rule as an individual then rule as part of a herd of identical sheep.

Steve Ash

(continued from page 6)

rifles, bayonets and cannon – authoritarian means, if such there be at all; and if the victorious party does not want to have fought in vain, it must maintain this rule by means of the terror its arms inspire in the reactionaries."

However, such an analysis is without a class basis and so will, by necessity, mislead the writer and the reader. Engels argues that revolution is the imposition by "one part of the population" on another. Very true – but Engels fails to indicate the nature of class society and, therefore, of a social revolution. In a class society "one part of the population" constantly "imposes its will upon the other part" all the time. In other words, the ruling class imposes its will on the working class everyday in work by the hierarchical structure of the workplace and in society by the state. By discussing the 'population' as if it was not divided by classes, and so subject to specific forms of authoritarian social relationships, is liberal nonsense. Once we recognise that the 'population' in question is divided into classes we can easily see the fallacy of Engels' argument. In a social revolution, the act of revolution is the overthrow of the power and authority of an oppressing and exploiting class by those subject to that oppression and exploitation. In other words, it is an act of liberation in which the hierarchical power of the few over the many is eliminated and replaced by the freedom of the many to control their own lives. It is hardly authoritarian to destroy authority! Thus a social revolution is, fundamentally, an act of liberation for the oppressed who act in their own interests to end the system in which 'one part of population imposes its will upon the other' every day.

This applies equally to the SWP's example of a picket line. Is a picket line really authoritarian because it tries to impose its will on the boss, police or scabs? Rather, is it not defending the workers' freedom against the authoritarian power of the boss and their lackeys (the police and scabs)? Is it 'authoritarian' to resist authority and create a structure – a strike assembly and picket line – which allows the formally subordinated workers to manage their own affairs directly and without bosses? Is it 'authoritarian' to combat the authority of the boss, to proclaim your freedom and exercise it? Of course not. The SWP are playing with words.

Needless to say, it is a large jump from the 'authority' of a strikers' assembly to that of a highly centralised 'workers' state' but that, of course, is what the SWP wish the reader to do. Comparing a strikers' assembly and picket line – which is a form of self-managed association – with a state cannot be done. It fails to recognise the fundamental difference. In the strikers' assembly and picket line the strikers themselves decide policy and do not delegate power away. In a state, power is delegated into the hands of a few who then use that power as they see fit. This by necessity disempowers those at the base, who are turned into mere electors and order takers. Such a situation can only spell death of a social revolution, which requires the active participation of all if it is to succeed. It also exposes the central fallacy of Marxism, namely that it claims to desire a society based on the participation of everyone yet favours a form of organisation – centralisation – that precludes that participation.

(This article will be continued in the next issue of *Freedom*, available from 21st October 2000)

Please keep sending in your letters and donations



**FREEDOM** fortnightly  
ISSN 0016 0504

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

**Freedom on the  
World Wide Web**

www.ecn.org/freedom  
e-mail Freedom Press at  
freedom@ecn.org

**a-infos**

daily multi-lingual international  
anarchist news service

To: majordomo@tao.ca  
Subject:

.....  
subscribe a-infos

Freedom and The Raven  
**SUBSCRIPTION  
RATES 2000**

	inland	outside Europe surface	outside Europe airmail	Europe (airmail only)
<b>Freedom (24 issues) half price for 12 issues</b>				
Claimants	10.00	-	-	-
Regular	14.00	22.00	34.00	24.00
Institutions	22.00	30.00	40.00	40.00
<b>The Raven (4 issues)</b>				
Claimants	10.00	-	-	-
Regular	12.00	14.00	18.00	16.00
Institutions	18.00	22.00	27.00	27.00
<b>Join sub (24 x Freedom plus 4 x The Raven)</b>				
Claimants	18.00	-	-	-
Regular	24.00	34.00	50.00	36.00
<b>Bundle subs for Freedom (12 issues)</b>				
	inland	abroad surface	abroad airmail	
2 copies x 12	12.00	13.00	22.00	
5 copies x 12	26.00	32.00	44.00	
10 copies x 12	50.00	60.00	84.00	
Other bundle sizes on application				
Giro account number 58 294 6905				
All prices are in £ sterling				

**The Raven**  
anarchist quarterly

Number 41  
**Censorship & Social Control**

**Back issues still available:**

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

**£3.00 each (post free worldwide)**  
**FREEDOM PRESS**  
84b Whitechapel High Street  
London E1 7QX

**Meetings & Events**

**London Anarchist Forum**

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 —

**6th October** Monthly free dialogue

**13th October** General debate: anarchist bookfairs

**14th October** Anarchist Bookfair LAF debate: Wot Is Anarchy?

**20th October** 21st Century Revolution? (invited guests from ACF, SWP and SPGB)

**27th October** Anarchy and Counter Culture: II – the great schism, Hippies versus Punks (speaker Steve Ash)

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**

**Protest and Survive**

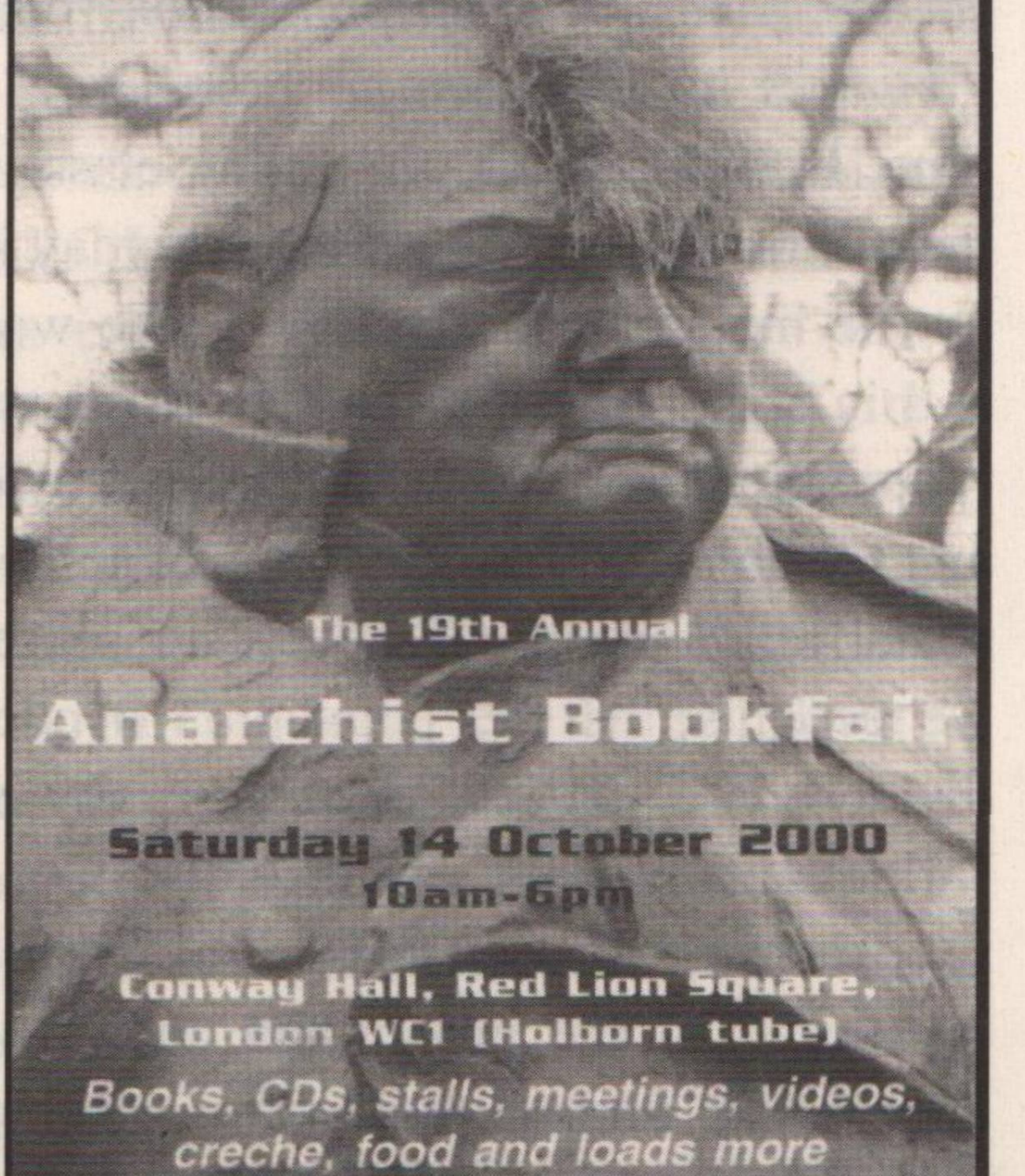
the current exhibition at the  
**Whitechapel Art Gallery**  
until 12th November  
open Thursdays to Sundays  
11am to 5pm (until 8pm Wednesdays)  
Admission free

**SAY NO TO STAR WARS  
at the US Embassy on 7th October 2000**

President Clinton has decided to leave the decision on whether to go ahead with the planned US 'National Missile Defence' (NMD) system to the next president. Now is a good time to demonstrate our opposition to this dangerous development – and British opposition is important as the system requires use of new facilities at Flyingdales and Menwith Hill which the British government has yet to agree to.

**On 7th October there will be a vigil at the US Embassy, Grosvenor Square, W1 from 11.30am to 1.30pm – try to arrive early.**  
For more info ring David on 020 7607 2302

**His finest hour!**



The 19th Annual  
**Anarchist Bookfair**  
**Saturday 14 October 2000**  
10am-6pm  
Conway Hall, Red Lion Square,  
London WC1 (Holborn tube)  
Books, CDs, stalls, meetings, videos,  
creche, food and loads more  
http://freespace.virgin.net/anarchist.bookfair

**On Sunday 22nd October there will be a talk at 2.30pm as part of the 'Protest and Survive' exhibition at the Whitechapel Art Gallery**  
John Rety will discuss the work of Freedom Press in the vicinity of the gallery and at the heart of international anarchism.

**SUBSCRIPTION FORM**

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

- I am a subscriber, please renew my sub to *Freedom* for ..... issues
- Please renew my joint subscription to *Freedom* and *The Raven*
- Make my sub to *Freedom* into a joint sub starting with number 41 of *The Raven*
- I am not yet a subscriber, please enter my sub to *Freedom* for ..... issues .. and *The Raven* for ..... issues starting with number 41
- I would like the following back numbers of *The Raven* at £3 per copy post free ..... (numbers 1 to 40 are available)
- I enclose a donation to the Freedom Fortnightly Fighting Fund / Freedom Press Overheads Fund / Raven Deficit Fund (delete as applicable)

I enclose £ ..... payment  
Name .....  
Address .....  
Postcode .....