

FRIBEDOM

anarchist fortnightly

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27th January 2001

50p

No free lunch

It was sleaze that did for the Tories last time and it will be sleaze that does for them next time too. For sure Hague's nincompoop, which will damage his party in this year's election. We know his policies are bonkers, which won't help. But the real humdinger is still the whiff of sleaze left lingering from the Major years. Who could forget the delightful Neil Hamilton, opponent of trade unions and the anti-apartheid movement, the man who once said "you need never pay for your own lunch as a member of parliament"? Or any number of his atrocious chums, snouts stuck so deep in the trough that all you could see wiggling was a little piggy tail?

Sleazy, certainly, but really pretty lowly stuff. Repulsive though it was to see a greaseball MP pocketing brown envelopes full of cash in return for questions asked in parliament, sleazewise it's left standing all the flipping time by the performance of the parties themselves. It's always the

Conservatives who get the bad rap for it, and they deserve it. Their party fundraising has been murky for a very long time, as even their friends (if they had any) would agree. During the first world war they helped flog off peerages to fill the coffers of Lloyd George's coalition, to which they belonged. More recently, there were whopping gifts from corrupt tycoons Asil Nadir and Octav Botnar, and persistent rumours of donations not unclosely connected to Bosnian fascist Karadzic. Mohammed Fayed himself once gave £250,000 to Tory party funds ("the worst money I ever spent"). Some rich wheeler-dealer bunged them £5m just last week. As for current party treasurer, Lord Ashcroft of Belize ...

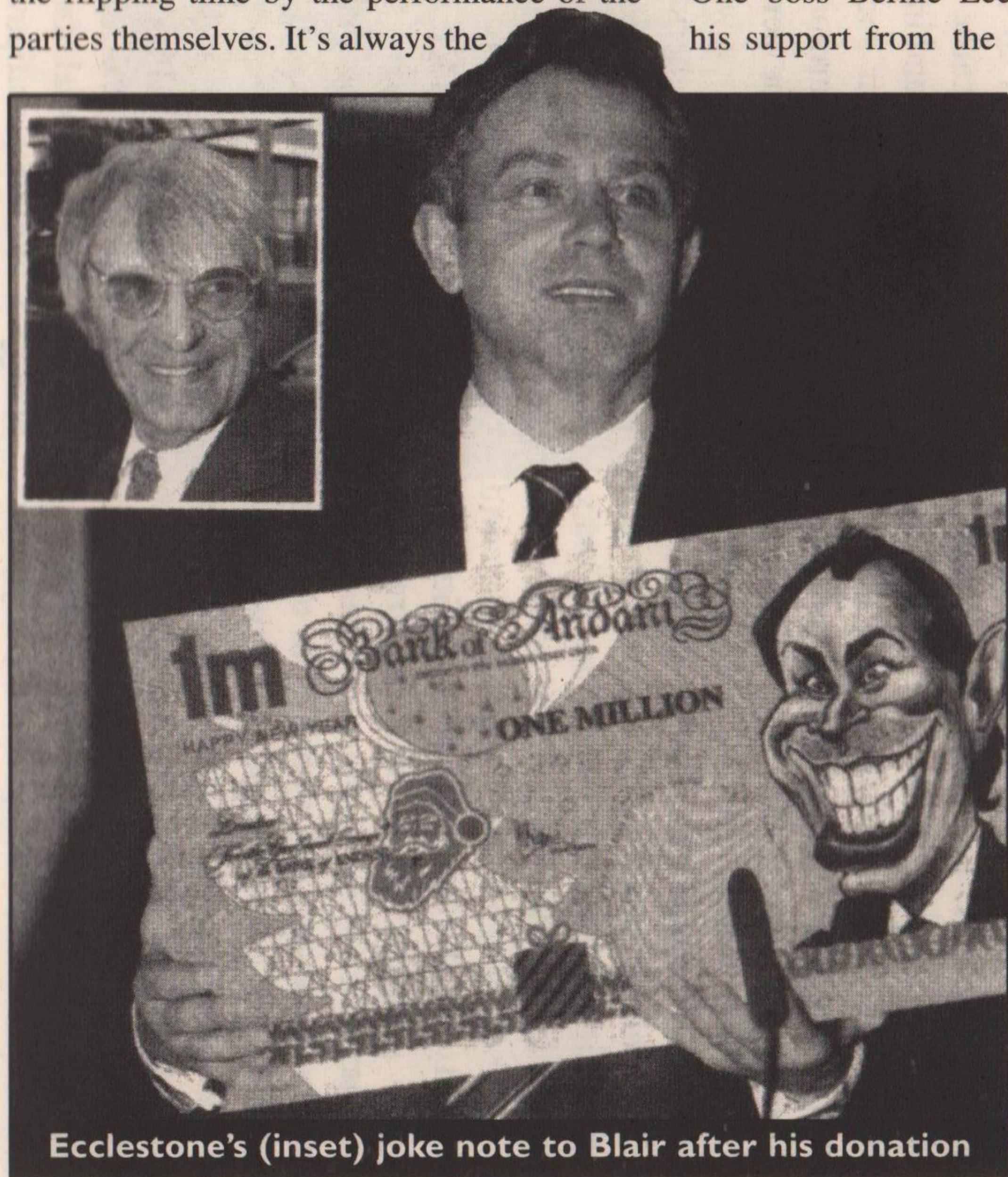
But Labour are hardly in a position to criticise (though naturally that doesn't stop them from doing it). Just months after the 1997 election, news was leaked that Formula One boss Bernie Ecclestone had switched his support from the Tories to Labour. He

had given a cool £1m to the party in January and intended to give another before the end of the year. Oops! The government was about to announce motor-racing's exemption from a ban on tobacco advertising, something Ecclestone had only just finished lobbying the Prime Minister for. Oops! In all the embarrassment Labour had to hand the lolly back. Oops! Now they've been at it again. Two fancy publishers and a supermarket mag-nate gave the party

£2m each at the start of the year, donations which were supposed to be anonymous (they were designed to be snuck in before anonymous donations are outlawed in two weeks' time). Then there's soon-to-be-Lord Robert Bourne, who's given Labour £100,000 after years of supporting the Tories, and whose Legacy Group has (quite coincidentally, we're sure) been given the land under and around the Millenium Dome, valued at £680m, for an upfront price of only £50m. Oops.

As always, British politicians are several steps behind their counterparts in the US. Bush's inauguration last week was the crowning of a man Ralph Nader called a "corporation disguised as a human being". The Prez has already said he'll make legal action harder against manufacturers of guns and tobacco, oil and drugs – hardly surprising as they all gave him lots of money during his campaign, besides the \$17m they spent on Saturday's shindig. As the boss of an American bank once said, when asked whether the huge amounts of money he'd handed US senators had influenced their behaviour, "I certainly hope so".

In a democracy, there are an awful lot of people who need to be persuaded to vote for Blair instead of Hague or for Bush instead of Gore. Once upon a time it was done by politicians on the stump at meetings across the country. Now it's done on television, the whole thing run by well-oiled and well-staffed party machines. It all costs (\$3bn on congressional and presidential races in 2000, probably £50m on the British election in 2001) and it's industry that picks up the tab. But business does no favours without seeking favours in return. As it happens, the Chairman of at least one major corporate donor to the Bush campaign is already part of his administration. The firm is dodgy energy company Enron and its boss is now, dammit, Adviser to the Energy Department! Mohammed Fayed said of Neil Hamilton "they're all fuggers, these politicians". Quite.



Ecclestone's (inset) joke note to Blair after his donation

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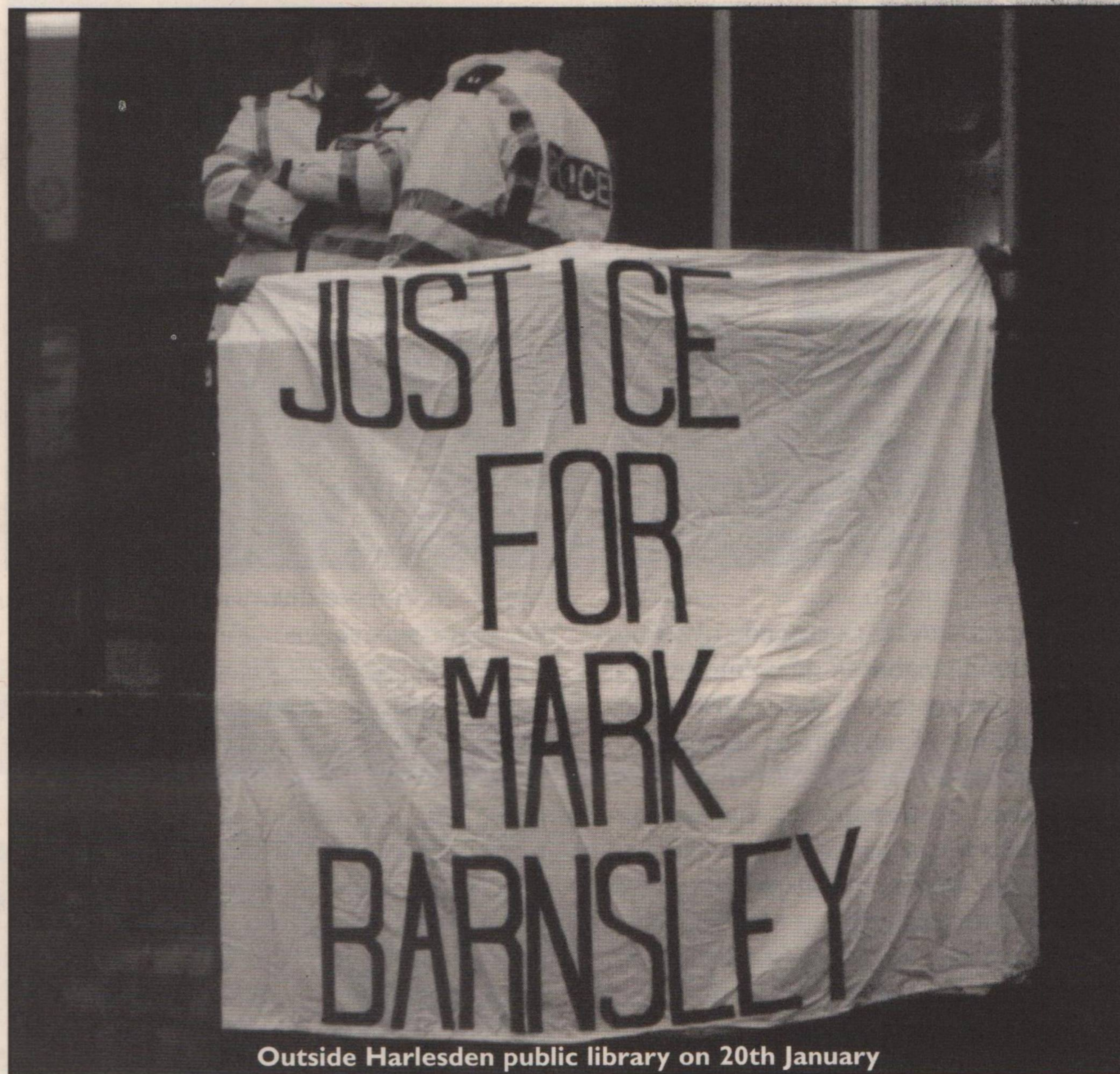
Mark Barnsley ... the struggle continues

Protesters picketed Harlesden public library on Saturday (20th January) while prisons minister (and north London MP) Paul Boeteng held an advice surgery inside. The demo, organised by the Justice for Mark Barnsley Campaign, was called to highlight Mark's continued imprisonment six years after his dubious trial. Although the morning was cold, with snow still lying on the ground from the night before, a number of activists got approval from Boeteng's waiting constituents to hand out leaflets and talk to members of the public outside the building. "We wanted to raise the profile of a national injustice by bringing a case from the north to the streets of the capital" said Jez, one of the protesters, before adding "and we all get off on cold weather!"

MP Paul Boeteng didn't see the protest himself, however, preferring to slip into the building sometime after the surgery was due to begin through a back door.

Mark was sentenced to twelve years by a Sheffield court in 1995, after being attacked by a large group of drunken students while out with his baby and a friend. The judge refused permission for the jury to see evidence which proved that several of the students had committed perjury, and the city's Crown Prosecution Service somehow neglected to pass relevant information on to the defence. He has been inside, often in high security prisons, ever since.

In an unpleasant development in Mark's case, screws at Durham's HMP Frankland put him and two others in the segregation unit on 17th January, for which no good



Outside Harlesden public library on 20th January

reason has been given. Reports from Mark and other prisoners suggest that conditions in the jail have worsened over recent weeks, with more lockdowns as well as cuts to gym classes and association time. Prisoners will now be locked in their cells for an extra eleven hours a week. Despite winter weather

outside, cells have been kept unbearably hot (though the small prison windows hardly open).

Since it took off two years ago, the campaign has successfully publicised Mark's case. Comedian Mark Thomas recently added his name to the list of supporters. "Mark

Barnsley is an innocent man serving twelve years for crimes he didn't commit", he said a couple of months ago. "His crime is to be a local activist and working class. To the judge and the police ... [it] meant they could get rid of someone they saw as undesirable".

Two campaigners managed to see Boeteng on Saturday, because they live in the constituency. They made representations about flaws in the original trial and about his being placed in the segregation unit. "We wait with interest to see whether he does anything about it", one of them said.

Write letters of protest about Mark's continuing detention for a crime he didn't commit, and about his continuing segregation and mistreatment at the whim of prison authorities, to: Governor Ivor Woods, HMP Frankland, Brasside, Durham DH1 5YD. Tel: 0191-384 5544, Fax: 0191-384 9203.

Write letters of support to Mark Barnsley (prison number WA 2897) at the same address.

Contact PO Box 381, Huddersfield, HD1 3XX
www.appleonline.net/justiceuk/just.html

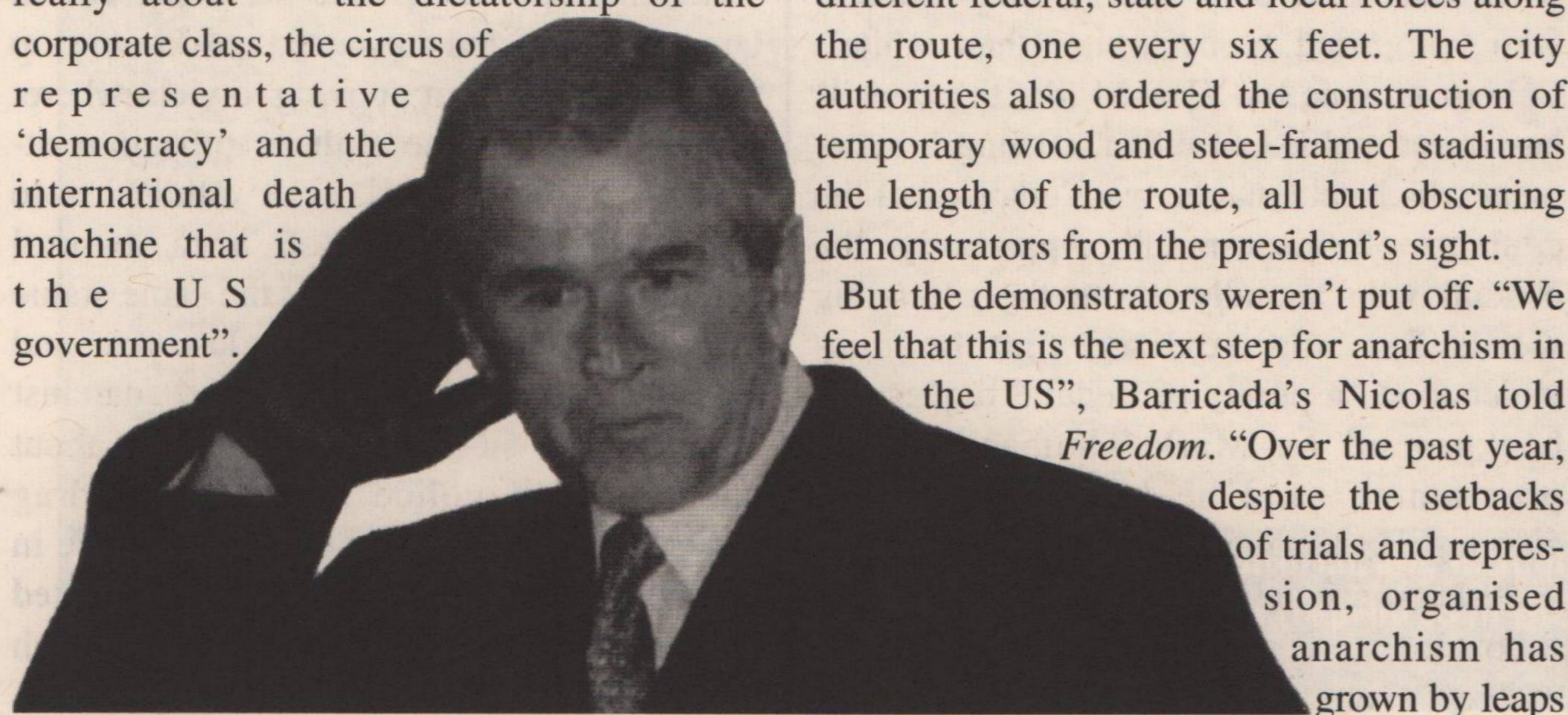
Police riot shock

Events such as 1999's J18 action in the City of London are often attributed to a handful of well-organised activists, while historically the crowd has been seen in the corridors of power as a primitive, pathological and compulsive mass. But doubt was cast on these officially-approved explanations for riots by research presented at a Liverpool psychology conference earlier this month.

Professor Steve Reicher, of Scotland's St Andrew's University, told his colleagues that most crowds contained a variety of small groupings with different values. When treated by authority as a dangerous unit needing to be contained, however, those who had previously rejected violence often began to see fighting the police as possible, even necessary. Another academic, Dr Clifford Stott, reported how clashes during the Poll Tax demos eleven years ago led to changes in the participants' social identity that followed this pattern. Demonstrators felt threatened by police heavy-handedness, and they resisted it in ways they would never have contemplated before. Professor Reicher, who has worked for the Association of Chief Police Officers, claimed his evidence would help the police deal with crowds in future. "The police need to ask how can we facilitate the legitimate aims of the majority", he said. An anarchist activist who was present at the Mayday 2000 event in Westminster disagreed. "The police are part of the problem, not the answer. It sounds like an interesting report, but I don't think it goes far enough".

DC police take no chances for J20

As many as thirty thousand people from all over the United States, including several anarchist groups, converged on Washington DC on Saturday to mark the inauguration of George W. Bush as America's president. Amidst protests at the strange nature of Bush's victory and the way black people found themselves disproportionately excluded from voting, organisations such as the Barricada Collective mobilised to remind people of what the presidency is really about - "the dictatorship of the corporate class, the circus of representative 'democracy' and the international death machine that is the US government".



It was the presence of this 'black bloc' of anarchists that particularly seemed to concern Washington's finest in the days before the inauguration. The police promised "a phenomenal show of force" to discourage any violence at the ceremony itself or during the accompanying parade along Pennsylvania Avenue from the Capitol to the White House. After the experience of Seattle in 1999 senior fuzz weren't taking any risks, ordering the deployment of 10,000 cops from sixteen different federal, state and local forces along the route, one every six feet. The city authorities also ordered the construction of temporary wood and steel-framed stadiums the length of the route, all but obscuring demonstrators from the president's sight.

But the demonstrators weren't put off. "We feel that this is the next step for anarchism in the US", Barricada's Nicolas told *Freedom*. "Over the past year, despite the setbacks of trials and repression, organised anarchism has grown by leaps

and bounds as the mobilisations in Seattle, Washington, Philadelphia and LA have shown. But they have usually been against the institutions of capitalism or the main parties of US democracy. In this one we are going directly at the root of all the other evils, which is the state itself. From now on, the ceremonies of the upper class will always have to be defended by thousands of police".

ALSO IN THIS ISSUE

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Tony and the tomato

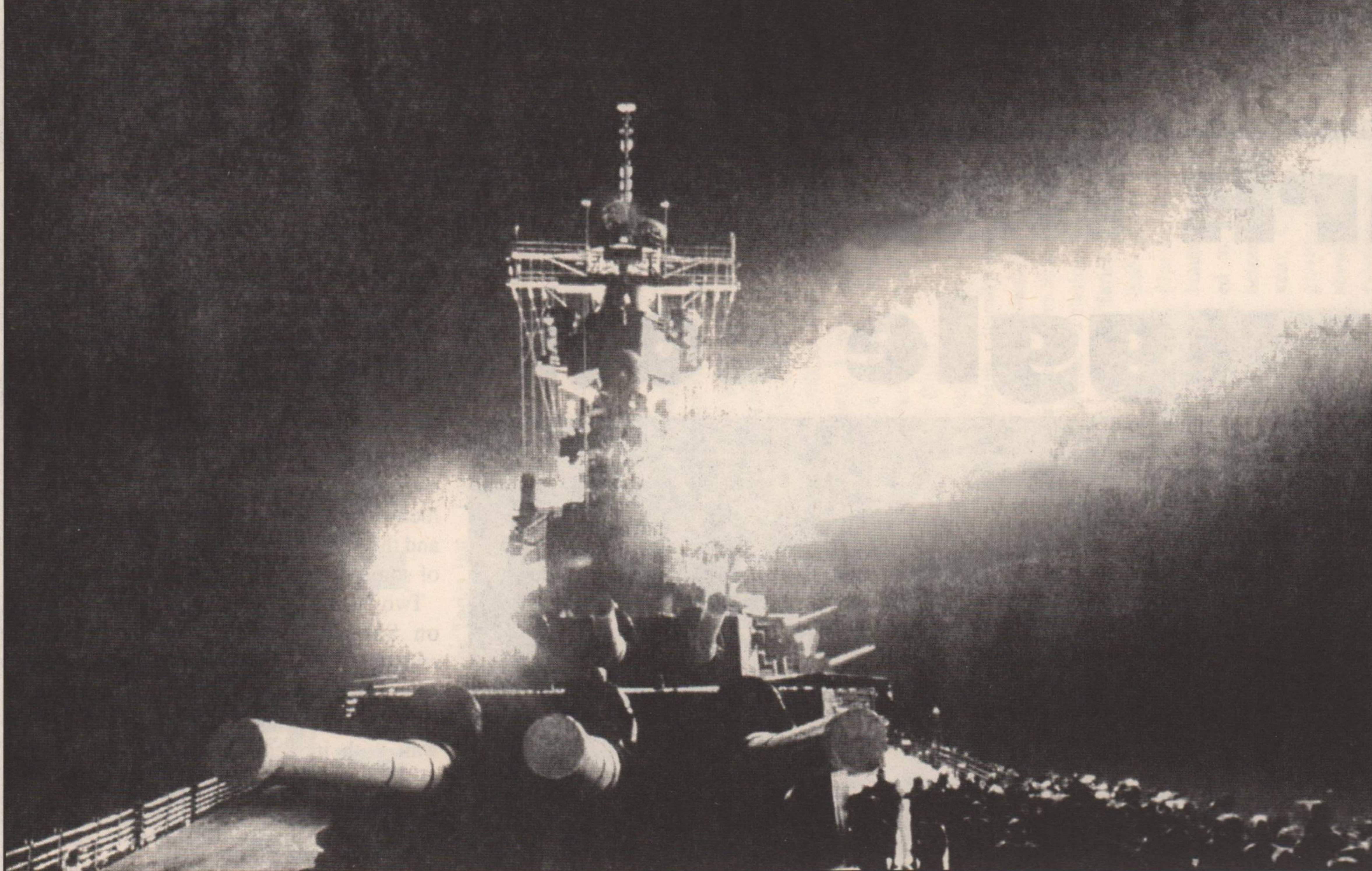
Bhopal protesters attack globalisation

The WEF in Davos

Review and extracts from new Charlotte Wilson book

Iraq two years on ...

A Tomahawk missile bound for the Iraqi capital of Baghdad is launched from USS Wisconsin at the start of the Gulf war



Looking about me in the intensive care unit in Saddam Paediatric Hospital in Baghdad, I was staggered to see that two and a half years on, the unit provides 'intensive care' in name only. Young patients were receiving oxygen and saline drips, but there were still no monitors on the ward.

In the Cardiac Care Unit in Fallujah, a town just outside Baghdad, the story was the same. The same broken monitors, now rearranged, were ignored by the same highly trained consultants.

There have been changes in the last three years, as the oil revenues flowing through the UN-controlled oil-for-food programme have increased dramatically with the oil price and the removal of a 'cap' on oil sales. These changes are evident in the three hospitals that I visited in February and August 1998, which I have just revisited in January 2001. Better lighting, greater availability of drugs and basic equipment, some new equipment. Marginal

changes, it seemed to me.

Down in Basra, Iraq's second city, we saw some enduring realities – an unfinished water treatment plant operating at only 50% capacity, and streets full of rubbish and sewage.

Mr Tun Myat, the new UN Humanitarian Coordinator, explained to us that water and sanitation continue to be 'the major killers' in Iraq today. Contaminated drinking water, together with unsanitary conditions in the home and on the street, cause what the head of oil-for-food described as a 'vicious circle' of disease and malnutrition.

Ten years ago, the Gulf War exploded onto our television screens. One of the unseen realities of the war, however, was the deliberate targeting of much of the civilian infrastructure, including the electricity-generating and telecommunications sectors. The short campaign inflicted an estimated \$232 billion worth of damage to civilian economic assets and civilian infrastructure –

significantly more than was damaged in the ten-year Iraq-Iraq war.

The main reason the sanctions have been so lethal is that they have come on top of the enormous macroeconomic shock caused by the 1991 Gulf War. The sanctions have prevented reconstruction and recovery in the basic health infrastructure, and Iraq's children have paid the price.

Furthermore, Iraq's economy continues to be flattened under the sanctions regime, despite the enormous revenues being earned by Iraqi oil exports. The resulting unemployment and depreciation of the Iraqi dinar mean continuing mass poverty.

Rafran Halaf, a one-month old girl we met in Fallujah General Hospital, was suffering from diarrhoea. She needed a special lactose-free form of powdered milk – for two months – to allow her gastrointestinal tract to recover. Her father earns 10,000 Iraqi dinar a month. In 1990, that would have made him a

rich man – earning £20,000 a month. Now, 10,000 ID is worth only £4 a month.

The powdered milk recommended by the doctor costs 3000 ID a tin, and a tin only lasts three days. Without the milk, Rafran is going to be less able to absorb nutrients, will become malnourished (to what degree we don't know), and has a higher risk of infection and septicaemia. She is likely to be back in hospital again soon.

The two crushing pressures on Iraq's children are the appalling state of Iraq's public health infrastructure – unrepaired because of the sanctions – and the catastrophic collapse in family purchasing power.

As Mr Tun Myat explained, for a large proportion of the family, this collapse in real income is so great that families cannot afford to eat the food ration they receive for free from the government. They have to sell food to gain money to pay for clothes, travel, rent, and other basic expenses.

Having been to Iraq twice in 1998, my main impressions of the changes on the streets of Baghdad and in the hospitals I have visited before are that the rich are much richer (playing Playstations in snooker halls and buying fancy clothes in boutiques) and the rest of the population is 'enjoying' a marginal improvement in circumstances.

There is less acute malnutrition to be seen in the wards (though a mother rushed up to a doctor in the corridors of the Al Mansour Teaching Hospital with a child as desperately malnourished as any I saw on my previous visits), and antibiotics are more plentiful. But mothers are still crying as they tell their hopeless stories of enormous sacrifices made in seeking (inadequate) medical treatment for their children.

The tragedy of Iraq is of a very rich country, which formerly provided some of the best medical services in the region and some of the best living standards in the developing world, deliberately reduced to grinding poverty by the US and UK.

Denis Halliday said in October 1998, as he resigned in protest from the post of UN Humanitarian Coordinator, 'We are in the process of destroying an entire society. It is as simple and terrifying as that. It is illegal and immoral.' To our shame, all these statements continue to be true.

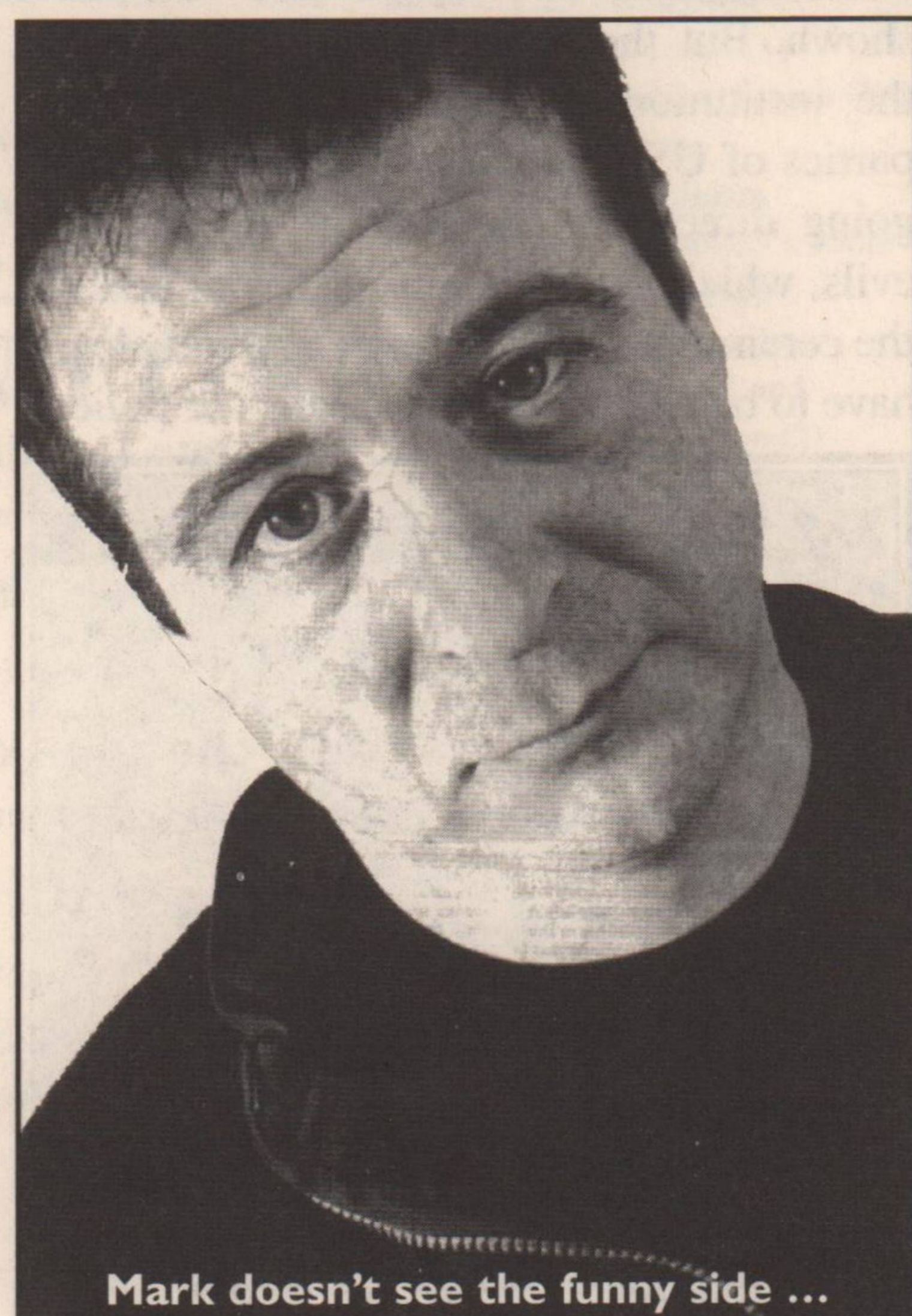
Milan Rai

Milan Rai has just returned from the seventh Voices in the Wilderness UK sanctions-breaking delegation to Iraq. Voices in the Wilderness UK can be contacted on 01865 243 232.

Government's dirty tricks?

For five years comedian Mark Thomas has used a combination of comedy and serious investigation on his Channel 4 show *The Mark Thomas Product* to highlight scandals and hypocrisies in British political life. He mocked the Tory government's liberal export policy for military hardware to Iraq in the 1980s by chasing minister William Waldegrave in a tank, asking for his help in shipping it to Saddam Hussein. He hoodwinked Indonesian military bosses (the recipients of huge British weapons sales) into admitting on film their complicity in torture and human rights abuses. He led Jack Straw into believing that a multiple sclerosis sufferer in his Blackburn constituency smoked cannabis to ease the pain, and filmed the home secretary officiously calling the police to report it.

But it was two programmes on the government's Export Credit Guarantee Department (ECGD) that really got under New Labour's skin. His criticism of ECGD plans to support the Ilisu dam project in Turkey, which will



Mark doesn't see the funny side ...

make 25,000 Kurds homeless (but which will benefit construction giant Balfour Beatty

quite considerably) provoked a flurry of activity in Whitehall. "The bloke is an out-and-out nutter" says one internal e-mail, obtained by Thomas under the terms of the Data Protection Act. Trade minister Richard Caborn is mentioned by name in another: "Caborn wants [us] to gather background/dirt on him in order to rubbish him".

Mark Thomas has been none too pleased by what seem to be dirty tricks from politicians who "promised to be whiter than white". Caborn is none too pleased that the e-mails have been published either, issuing a statement which said that he was "unaware of the contents of this e-mail". Apparently, the official who actually wrote the offending words has now realised that he misunderstood "a purely procedural request for background on Mark Thomas and his programme" and he has been given a warning. He remains anonymous however, so there is no chance for Mark's programme to follow the story up with an enquiry into who ordered what and why.

Demo against Iraq sanctions

The campaign against sanctions on Iraq and their terrible consequences for ordinary people there (see Milan Rai's article, above) continues in Britain. A group from Voices in the Wilderness UK left Westminster's Central Hall on Tuesday afternoon for Parliament Square, accompanied by activists from RTS and a samba band.

The metropolitan police were present in large numbers, and they acted quickly to stop the protesters from moving on elsewhere. This persuaded some of them to begin a sit-down protest instead. The others were pushed into a cordoned area around Churchill's statue, ironically the same statue that was painted on Mayday last year and was featured on publicity for the anarchist bookfair. The sit-down carried on for about an hour until police moved in to drag protesters away, breaking the wrist of one in the process. Fifteen people were arrested during the afternoon and charged with obstructing the highway.

Tony and the tomato



Bristol-based anarchists last week vowed to continue the campaign which began with a tomato hitting Tony Blair on his visit to the city on 9th January. Three days after telling the media that in

democratic politics it was impossible to please all of the people all of the time (the biggest lesson he has learned since 1997, apparently), Blair went to the west country to fire an opening salvo in the unannounced general election campaign now being fought by the political parties. He hasn't yet said whether a hail of fruit bombarding him as he stepped out of his car (there were tangerines too) was what he had in mind.

The fruit-throwers on this occasion are thought to be protesters against Iraqi sanctions. But Bristol's anarchist Copwatch, while not claiming responsibility for the action, was in no doubt that it was an action that should be supported, saying "a vote for any political party is a vote for more of the same".

A variety of anarchist groups around the UK are preparing to use the election campaign as a time to put anarchist views across, from London's 'Mayday Monopoly' to the north west's Corrupt Party. One long-standing activist says "basically, elections are the time when we are told that we are asserting our self-responsibility by voting for one or other bunch of leaders. It's the best time to point out that none of the options is committed to bringing about a just and equitable, let alone socialist, society - merely to operating the capitalist system more efficiently".

BBC censors

The BBCs consistently marketed boast to provide 'impartial news and analysis' looked as shaky as ever when film maker Ken Loach appeared on *Desert Island Discs* on BBC Radio 4 in April 1999. It has just emerged that he told presenter Sue Lawley how he had been offered an OBE but had turned it down on grounds of principle. The legendary film director elucidated all the reasons why he thought the royal awards had more to do with a corrupt system of cronyism than any justified acknowledgement of merit, and specifically requested that this part of the interview was broadcast. However, no small surprise that the ever partial BBC decided to leave the section on the cutting room floor. Ken Loach is famous for directing some of the most powerful social-realism films ever made British cinema including *Kes* and *Land and Freedom*. He also directed the court room scenes in the underground documentary classic of the McLibel trial, *Two Worlds Collide* - a film Channel Four refused to broadcast. Sue Lawley, on the other hand, was more than happy to receive her OBE in this year's New Year's Honour's list.

(source: *Squall*)



On Wednesday 10th January Vincent Bethell, the naked protester, left Southwark Crown Court clutching the bags containing the clothes he refused to wear and cleared of the charge of causing a public nuisance. "Being human is not a crime" he declared triumphantly, insisting that his campaign would continue: "I want to test this precedent and see if it makes any difference".

Prisoners' mail: information needed

A few months ago a meeting was held in Liverpool for supporters of victims of miscarriages of justice. When the meeting closed an informal discussion took place at which it became clear that a number of friends and family members had sent items to prisoners which had never arrived. These included postage stamps, stationery and a variety of innocuous magazines. Upon enquiry, the authorities had sometimes placed the blame on the postal service. However, many of the missing items had been sent by recorded delivery and had therefore been signed for by someone at the prison. Royal Mail provides on request and at no cost a claims form, P58, which should be filled in whenever a letter or packet does not arrive. Never simply let the matter pass. Someone could be lining his or her pockets with the 'missing' postage stamps or whatever.

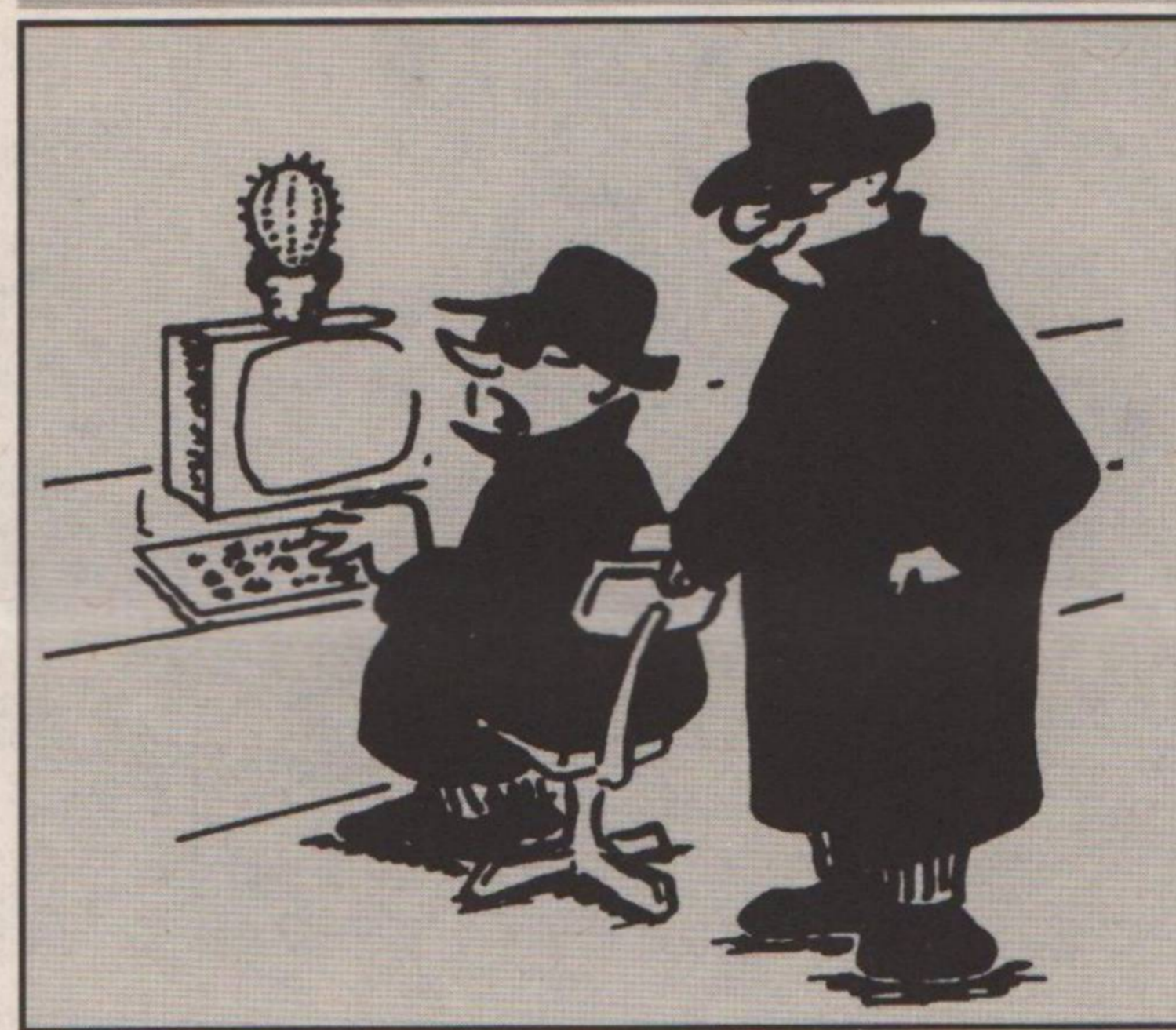
As a member of the Communication Workers Union I wrote to a member of the Executive Committee, who is willing to take the matter up with the Home Office. Quite rightly, he does not wish CWU members to take the blame when it lies elsewhere. In the past letters by prisoners' families or supporters have been passed on to Paul Boateng, ex-left wing firebrand who was surprised racism existed within the British prison service

(dear, oh dear!) or Lord Bassam of Brighton, who makes Bertie Wooster seem intellectual. The EC member would like specific incidents of interference with prisoners' mail as without them the Home Office would fob him off. If anyone can provide incidents and would like to forward them to me, I would be happy to pass them on. Of course it would have to be items such as stamps etc, and not items which are known to be banned under prison regulations. And as guilt or innocence are liberal concepts, I am happy to pass on details relating to any prisoner.

Dave Charles

Please send any instances of prisoners' mail disappearing to: dave_charles_2000@yahoo.com

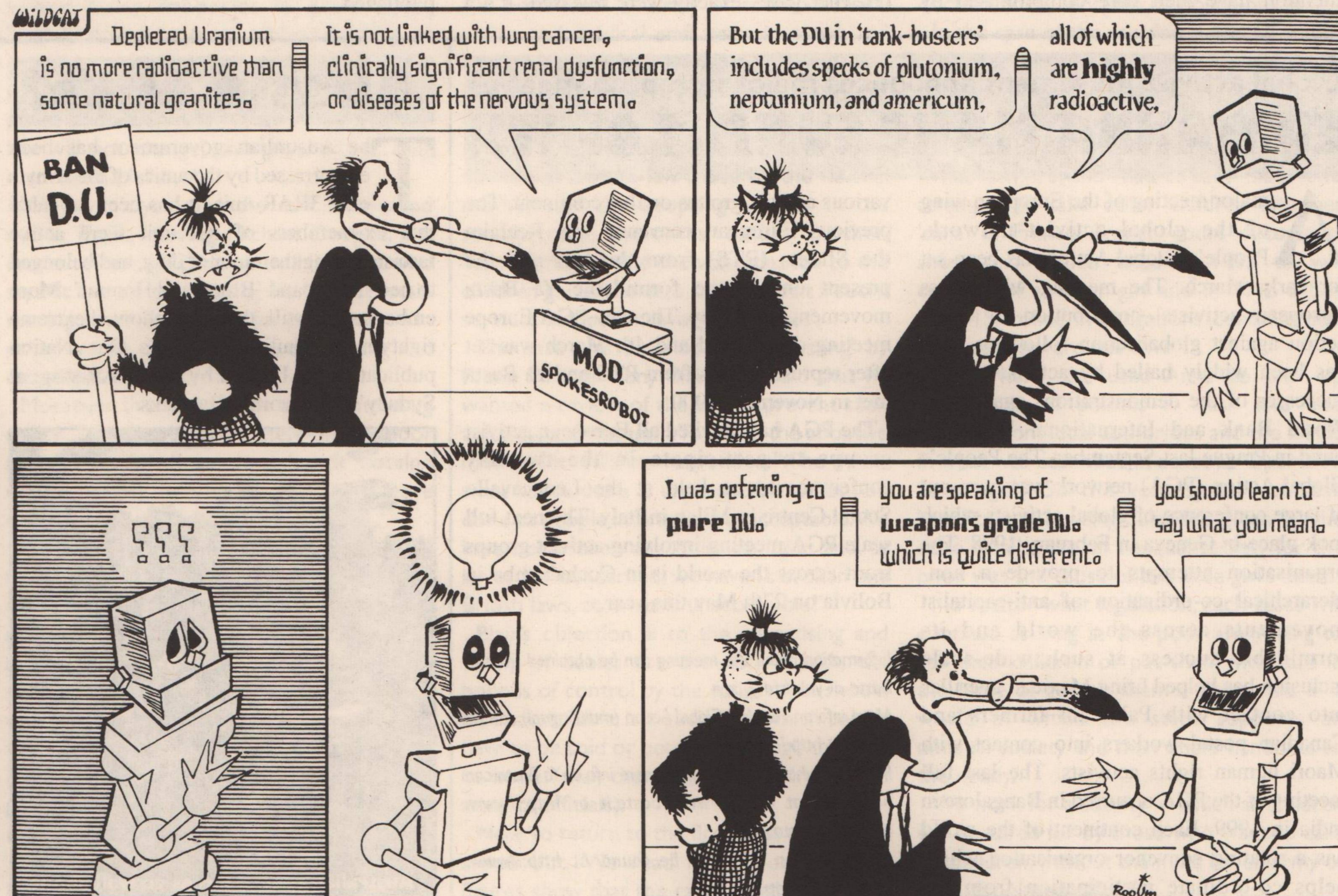
Spooks exposed



A judge last week refused to stop the *Sunday Times* serialising a book by renegade MI6 officer Richard Tomlinson. *The Big Breach* details MI6 training and operations, including the claim that secret service agents write articles in the mainstream press to put the state's preferred line. The state has launched an appeal.

Election Call Centres

Managers and strategists at Labour's Millbank HQ are worried by the apathy towards the party from people who would once have been firm supporters. In an effort to enthrone their traditional activists and voters as an election looms, they have launched plans for a professionally-run cold-calling centre based on Tyneside. The full and part-time staff of sixty would make it a medium-sized operator in the field. These workers, who are now being recruited, would ring up targeted homes and encourage the recipients of calls to vote, and (it is hoped) maybe do some canvassing too. Some observers have pointed out that this is part of Labour's wider electoral strategy, which has also seen Blair discovering a commitment to investment in public services and trumpeting his concern for social justice.



COPY DEADLINE

The next issue of Freedom will be dated 10th February, and the last day for copy intended for this issue will be first post on Thursday 1st February. 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).

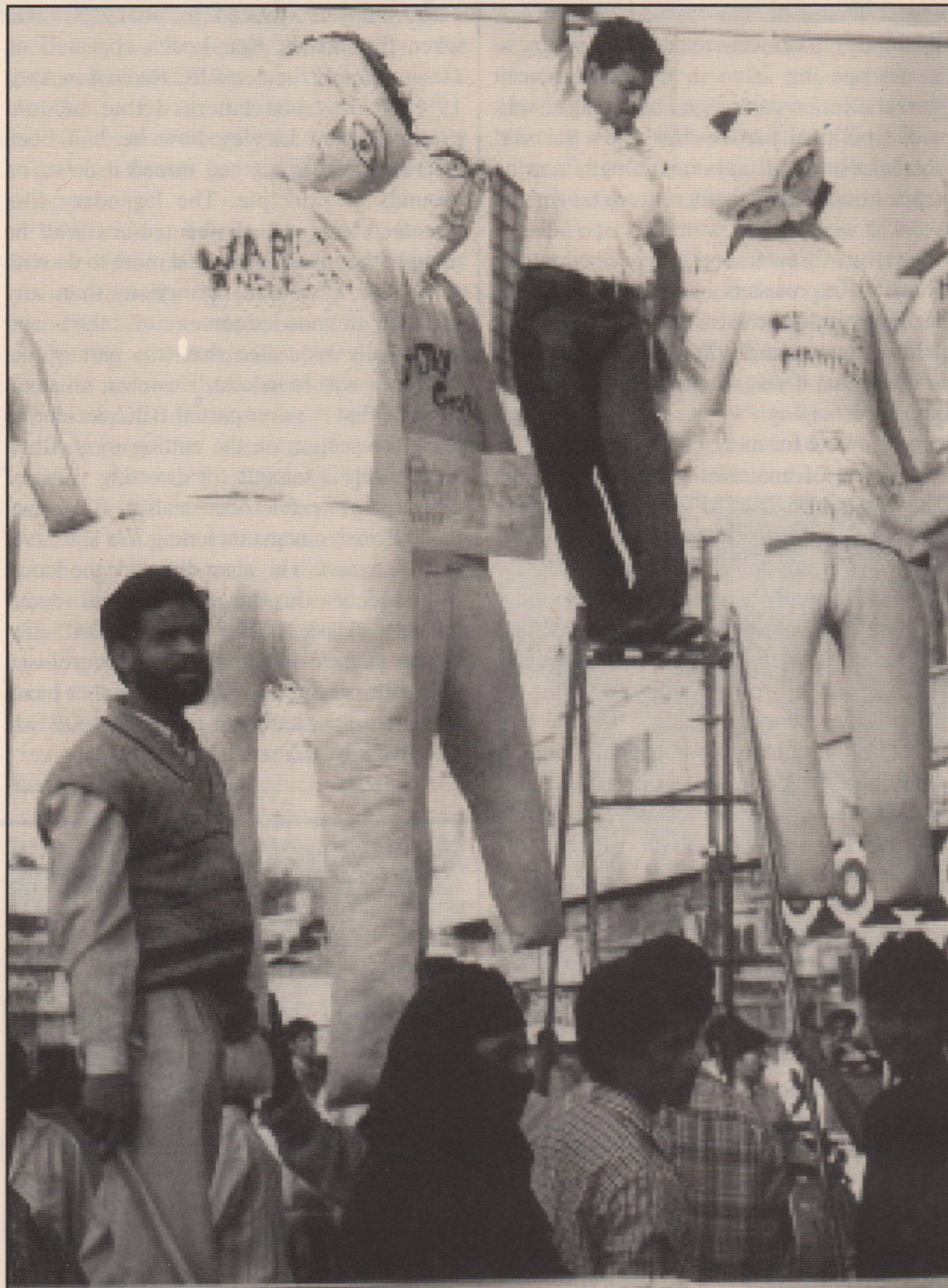
Bhopal protesters attack globalisation

Almost 150 people were arrested in the Indian city of Bhopal last week during a march. Members of a range of organisations, including campaigners against the Narmada dam and activists working with the survivors of the 1984 Bhopal gas tragedy as well as tribal and peasant support groups joined the protest on 17th January against the policies of the World Bank and Asia Development Bank. Other protesters were detained outside the city and prevented from joining the march.

The demo coincided with a meeting in the city of a 'development forum', hosted by the state government of Madhya Pradesh, and attended by the British Minister for Overseas Development Claire Short. Alok Agarwal of the Narmada dam campaign said that it was a matter of concern that international agencies should be attending at all, and that the state government's actions in ordering the arrests reflected its slavery to multinational corporations. Those who were arrested were detained until the evening before being released.

At the behest of the Asia Development Bank the state has privatised its energy sector, leaving the poor majority powerless for most of the time in the face of massive electricity bills. The controversial state Forestry Project, backed by the major international lenders, has seen the uprooting of tribal Adivasi communities and the killing of four people by the forestry officials and police. Memories of the shocking 1984 tragedy, and the response then and since of Union Carbide – the company responsible – besides the ongoing struggle against the dam have brought massive forces of popular resistance to bear in the state. The resulting Special Areas Security Act has been introduced at the urging of the multinationals whose interests are threatened by this resistance.

In a meeting with Short, Indian activists told her that the international agencies and businesses have served to pauperise the people who live in the area. The gas of sixteen years ago still kills 10-15 people a month, bringing the total close to 20,000; the 120,000 people still requiring medical attention have their care compromised by



Union Carbide's refusal to share information on what gases exactly were released. It's a 'trade secret'. Short's answers have not been published.

Global activist movement announces major European meeting EU WANNA MAKE SUMMIT OF IT?!

A major meeting of the European wing of the global activist network, People's Global Action has been set for early March. The meeting will assess European activists' contribution to direct action against globalisation following what has been widely hailed by activists as the successes of the demonstrations against the World Bank and International Monetary Fund in Prague last September. The People's Global Action (PGA) network was born out of large conference of global activists which took place in Geneva in February 1998. The organisation attempts to provide a non-hierarchical co-ordination of anti-capitalist movements across the world and its formidable success at such wide-scale inclusion has helped bring Mexican guerillas into contact with Pakistani farmers and Canadian postal workers into contact with Maori human rights activists. The last full meeting of the PGA occurred in Bangalore in India in 1999. Each continent of the world has a rotating convenor organisation which helps co-ordinate participation from the

various activist groups on that continent. The previous European convenor was Reclaim the Streets (RTS) from the UK and the present one is the formidable Ya Basta movement from Italy. The new PGA Europe meeting date of 3rd and 4th March was set after representatives from RTS and Ya Basta met in November 2000.

The PGA have invited all European activist groups to participate in the two-day conference to be held at the Leoncavallo Social Centre in Milan in Italy. The next full scale PGA meeting involving activist groups from across the world is in Cochabamba in Bolivia on 27th May this year.

Information about the meeting can be obtained from Ya Basta at yabasta@tin.it. More info on People's Global Action (multilingual) can be found at <http://www.agp.org>. For those who can read Italian, more info on Ya Basta can be found at <http://www.yabasta.it> or <http://www.ecn.org/yabasta.milano>. More info on RTS can be found at <http://www.reclaimthestreets.net>.

WEF in Davos

A strong protest was expected in the Swiss ski resort of Davos this week, as anti-globalisation campaigners gathered to demonstrate during the annual meeting of the shady World Economic Forum (WEF). Under the hopeful title 'Bridging the Divides: Creating a Roadmap for the Global Future', three-thousand bosses from the world's politics, industry, media and universities have spent the last three days planning their response to the anti-globalisation movement and working out the niceties of helping multinational corporations to succeed. Though the party goes on until Tuesday, the protests are planned to culminate today in a mass demo.

The WEF has not received the prominence in the anti-globalisation movement of other institutions such as the WTO and IMF (though Australian groups picketed its Asian meeting in Melbourne in September), partly because of its location. The village sits at a height of 1,560 metres and can only be accessed by easily controlled road and rail. In previous years any demo has been outlawed, but protesters were hopeful this year that, following a Swiss Supreme Court ruling in their favour, the demo would be allowed to go ahead.

Groups from Switzerland, Italy, Germany and France agreed a platform for the protests based on a rejection of all forms and systems of domination. "The WEF is, with its organised meeting of global leaders, one of the driving forces behind the development and consolidation of the new world order".

Given that official media coverage of the meeting has been very tightly controlled, with privileged access given to 'world media leaders' and no access at all given to many, the protesters are particularly keen to undermine WEF attempts to appear as open-minded participants in what they call "a dialogue with civil society ... Against omnipresent neo-liberal thinking we want to make other social possibilities both imaginable and realisable".

Czech television

The stand-off between journalists and politicians over the running of Czech television took a new turn when it was announced on 13th January that the state Broadcasting Council had been sacked – following the resignation two days before of controversial director Jiri Hodac, apparently on the grounds of ill health. Journalists had been occupying the studios in protest at Hodac's appointment. He is closely tied to the rightwing Civil Democratic opposition party of Vaclav Kraus, who has promised to privatise the service if he is elected president in 2002. Anarchists on the ground remained unimpressed, the Czech Anarchist News Service standing by its previous observation that the strike was about journalists protecting their interests rather than any wider concern with freedom of speech.

Nikos Maziotis

Greek anarchist Nikos Maziotis is back in jail this week, after an appeal court hearing finished on 15th January. Judges did however reduce his sentence from the fifteen years imposed by the original trial judge to five and a half years. The new sentence was passed without Nikos being in court to hear it, after he physically attacked the judge. After his attack, the judge also took the opportunity to dismiss his lawyers and appoint new ones in their place.

Nikos was jailed last July for his 1997 bombing attempt on the Ministry of Industry and Development in Athens, to show his solidarity with villagers of Strymonikos Bay. They are still resisting the installation of an industrial plant in the area by multinational goldmining concern TVX GOLD.

Aussie elite?

The Australian government has been embarrassed by the antics of the army's elite 3RAR unit. It has been revealed that ex-members of the unit were active fascists during their tour of duty, and belonged to neo-nasty band 'Blood and Honour'. More embarrassing still, the army allowed extreme rightwinger Pauline Hanson's One Nation publications to be sold by the 3RAR store at Sydney's Holsworthy Barracks.



Australian special forces go walkabout

Reasons to be cheerful ... part two

Dear Freedom,

Further to my article in your last issue, may I add some comments on the debate on penal policy which has begun to seep into the media. Lord Woolf, the Lord Chief Justice, recently suggested that fewer convicted criminals should be sent to jail and that politicians should stop promising to lock more people up as a way of battling crime. In 1989 the total prison population stood at 48,600. In 1996, the year before Labour took office, it stood at 55,300. This year it is expected to hit a record high of 68,300. New Labour has urged the courts to hand out more – and longer – custodial sentences. It has moved to speed up – and make harsher – the process of juvenile 'justice'. Over a thousand boys aged between 15 and 16 have been remanded in custody in the last eight months. Blair and Straw intend to expand the prison population still further, with restrictions on the right to jury trial and moves to force the disclosure of previous convictions such as to render a fair trial effectively impossible. That a political decision was taken to incarcerate more for longer ought to be obvious. Prison levels have risen even as crime figures have fallen. There are two reasons for the growth in prison numbers. The most transparent is the move to privatisation of prisons and the increasing links between New Labour and corporations such as Wackenhut (which, with Serco plc, owns Premier Prison Services and is contracted to build new prisons in Bristol and Northamptonshire) and the Corrections Corporation of America (which has a 50% share in UK Detention Services Ltd, which

built HMP Blakenhurst). There is money to be made from building prisons and money to be made from those who fill their cells. Privatisation of prisons is combined with increased prison labour. The link between work and prison privileges is being rammed home hard. As Linda Evans and Eve Goldberg have noted: "For private business, prison labour is like a pot of gold. No strikes. No union organising. No unemployment insurance or workers compensation to pay ... New leviathan prisons are being built with thousands of eerie acres of factories inside the walls. Prisoners do data entry for Chevron, make telephone reservations for TWA, raise hogs, shovel manure, make circuit boards, limousines, waterbeds and lingerie for Victoria's Secret. All at a fraction of the cost of 'free labour' (from *The Prison Industrial Complex and the Global Economy*, Prison Activist Resource Centre, Berkeley, USA, 1999). As for the USA, so for here. There's more to it though, although the discipline of work is part of it. If the politics of the last twenty years has been based around the de-subordination of the working class – through the abandonment of welfare in favour of coercion and the smashing of coherent working class organisation – politics now is about making sure the working class stays in its proper place. Given that the future is at best likely to be low paid casual work for the majority, the workless (and potentially dissident) need to be taught the discipline capital requires – either in the workplace or in jail. The jail regime is intended to school the working class in the rules of the work-

place, and let us know that the coercive force of the state is never far away.

In the 'debate' over prison numbers the response from politicians has been the same across the board. Home Office minister Mike O'Brien responded to Lord Woolf by stating that "I've never had a constituent ask me to put one less person in prison, unless its one of their relatives." William Hague contended that: "I think it may be necessary to have more people in prison in order to deal with the law and order situation in this country." Britain currently has 125 prisoners per 100,000 of the population. Most working class families know someone – whether friend or relative – who either has been in jail or is doing time at present. What's clear from the response of both Hague and O'Brien is that such families do not for them represent a constituency that matters.

So how do we begin to resist that process of criminalisation and exclusion which is deemed to be our fate by the ruling class?

Nick S.



Dear Freedom,

I have no doubt Nick S. is passionately opposed to racism, but his reference to the debate around the Macpherson Report appeared slightly odd (in 'Reasons to be cheerful?', 13th January).

At first sight, the article looked as if it was suggesting that the Macpherson Report itself was an attempt by the Labour Party to 'play the race card' as a way of distracting attention from more fundamental issues. Re-reading, this doesn't seem to be what he's saying, but it would have been worthwhile to have recognised that the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry and the Macpherson Report (whatever their outcomes) were important victories for the anti-racist movement, for black communities, and for the Lawrence family in particular.

I think it would also strike many black people as odd to describe the current debate about racism as 'a means of focusing our thoughts on the distribution of resources within the working class, between black and white, native and refugee, etc., rather than on the distribution of wealth between classes.'

The national debate about racism hasn't just been about 'the distribution of resources within the working class', it has also been about the behaviour of state agencies (the police and the immigration authorities in particular) in relation to black communities, and therefore about racism among 'white collar administrators' as well as 'white van men'.

I'm sure that Nick would agree that racism cannot be reduced to class issues. Unfortunately, his brief reference to the current debate gave that impression, which many black people would find offensive.

Mil

And what we say ...

The drugs war

Drugs can be classified in various ways: hard/soft, class A/class B. We have no special interest in drugs and the only division that interests us is that of legal or illegal.

The most harmful and addictive drug of all – tobacco – is of course legal everywhere and its consumption raises huge profits for manufacturers and huge amounts in revenue for the government.

The less harmful – apart from a small minority of unfortunates who get addicted – are all illegal everywhere in the western world with the result that they are supplied by small-time crooks trying to get rich and bringing gun-wars over territory into our cities, most recently London.

Tobacco companies Imperial Tobacco and Gallaher are under investigation that they abet smuggling. It is now estimated that one in three of the cigarettes smoked in Britain are smuggled. London's *Evening Standard* reporter Nigel Rosser writes "tonight in bars, clubs and car parks all over Britain a clandestine trade in smuggled cigarettes is taking place. Most smokers probably already know where to get these smuggled cigarettes – at £2.50 a pack they are some £1.70 cheaper than the ones you buy over the counter".

The fact is that prices have risen in real terms without much effect on smoking habits: in spite of health warnings the middle class no longer smoke but the working classes still do. So they pay more for their (legal) pleasure.

If the police are to be believed, crack cocaine and heroin are available in London in

a traffic organised by 'Yardie' gangsters playing for high stakes. Crimes involving handguns are at the highest-ever level, despite the ban on private ownership of guns introduced after a madman killed sixteen children in Scotland in 1996, while the twenty-a-day robberies in Brixton are "mainly driven by crack addicts robbing or mugging to pay for the next drug deal". So the government response is to bring in more police and harsher laws but insists that the law will not change, says government 'drug czar' Keith Hellawell.

We haven't yet seen the new Hollywood movie *Traffic*, starring Michael Douglas, but read a review by Christopher Hitchens, who says "it may do to the 'drug war' what certain roaring twenties films did for prohibition – in other words expose it as a corrupting and dangerous racket".

Moreover the effect of the official anti-drug policy "falls disproportionately on the poor and the black, whose cheap 'crack' cocaine draws heavier sentences than the more costly powdered version".

We do not like guns (unless they are used for sport) and we confess to little interest in drugs (except alcohol in moderation, for social reasons). We do not like poorer people having to risk penal sanctions to get something they need for their own pleasure, nor do we like (although we do not blame) the small crooks who get rich at their expense. But then, neither do we like governments who tax our pleasures in order to maintain themselves in power.

We do not approve of drug laws or gun laws – or any laws.

The interests of the child

Two stories about children made headlines in the press last week, the one of a cruel stepmother who was jailed for life for the murder of an eight year old girl after months of abuse, the other of a woman who wanted babies and was willing to give them care and love, having them taken away from her.

In both cases an army of social workers, police and medical staff were involved, and both cases have brought from politicians and NSPCC spokesmen demands for changes in the law.

More to the point to us were the comments on the law made by the natural mother and the adopting mother in the second case: the twins' natural mother, Tranda Wecker, said she was opposed to the children going into care, claiming that if social services stepped in 'everybody loses'.

The case was described as 'disgusting' by Prime Minister Tony Blair, who said that he wanted a review of the law to prevent such a deal happening again. To which the adoptive mother Mrs Kilshaw responded: "if he thinks what we've done is unacceptable, what he's done to people in Britain is unacceptable. We have not broken any American laws and, as far as I'm concerned, we haven't broken any British laws, so what is unacceptable?"

Blair's objection is to the advertising and selling of babies (on the net) outside the bounds of control by the state. What should be unacceptable is a society in which babies have to be sold or bought (although this may be better than the placing of children by an army of officials).

Now, to return to the first case, two points stood out. We read that "Home Office figures show that the rate of child killings in

England and Wales has not fallen in the last 25 years. More than 1,000 die at the hands of violent or neglectful parents or carers in each generation". Which suggests that such abnormal acts as the killing and abuse of children means that there is something wrong with society, and occur despite the legislation and the virtue and defects of doctors, social workers or police officers.

In the case of the murdered Anna Climbie, the carer Marie Therese Kouao offered to take Anna to Europe to be educated "in line with a tradition common to African cultures of richer relatives looking after the poor". What is more, she "had already made two attempts to take other children into her 'care' in France. French court documents show that Kouao tried in 1993 to win custody of another girl and in 1996 a boy aged 15. Police investigations continue into whether they are still alive".

Once here she used Anna to pick up "thousands of pounds in cash and free housing from local authorities and the DHSS in what was described in court as 'Operation Scrounge'." So the very system of cash benefits and housing subsidies given by the state to alleviate an unequal society for the poor was the cause of this little girl's death.

No matter what legislation, such cases will continue as long as the poor are willing to sell their children or put them into care in the hope of getting them a better life in a world in which the state supports an unequal society and then offers handouts to the needy.

We work for a society in which all children will be cared for by those who want to care for children, without the need for an army of state-appointed officials.

A neglected voice

Charlotte Wilson, *Anarchist Essays*
edited by Nicolas Walter
published by Freedom Press, £5.95*

Charlotte Wilson was the founding editor of *Freedom* when it began in 1886. She was also its first publisher, main financial supporter, a dedicated writer for it and organiser of the group which quickly grew up around the paper. She spoke at meetings across the country, wrote and translated pamphlets and led the anarchist fraction within the Fabian Society. Kropotkin sailed to Britain from France at her request. So it is strange, considering the key part she played, that she has been relatively neglected by historians of the British anarchist movement. Possibly it's because she dropped out of anarchist activity after a few years; maybe it's embarrassment at her later political life in the Independent Labour Party, awarded the OBE for her services in the first world war. This edition of eleven of her articles from *Freedom* Press – then as now publishers of this newspaper – is an important reminder of what an impressive figure she was in Victorian anarchism, and it is a major addition to the published history of our movement. Designed, like the essays of Malatesta, to persuade a sceptical public of the necessity of anarchism, they were originally published in several different papers, a few of them in *Freedom* itself. Their existence in collected form is entirely due to the late Nicolas Walter, who died just a few days after completing his work editing and annotating them for publication.

A few things strike a modern reader as odd. Wilson consistently talks about 'he' and 'man' when she means all human beings; she uses 'England' and 'Britain' interchangeably; she talks about an anarchist 'party', meaning simply a collection of people who hold similar views rather than in the modern sense of 'political party' (which would be a contradiction). All these were the usages of her time. Harder to understand, let alone forgive, is the way she calls anarchism a 'faith' and anarchists its 'religionists'. Oh Charlotte, I do wish you wouldn't do that!

Anarchism is the name of "a certain school of socialists" who want to abolish government and property. Like any political position, it ultimately rests on a view of human nature, and Wilson's view (not shared by this reviewer) was that human beings have developed conflicting social instincts, the "ineradicable Tory and Whig instincts", one towards domination, one towards equality. The tendency to equality works towards "the self-affirmation of fulfilment of the greater and only true human self, which includes all nature, and thus dissolves the illusion of mere atomic individualism", while the tendency to domination conversely destroys real social union. Its main manifestations

in society are Property and Authority, "the government of man by man". Property is the domination by an individual or group of individuals over things – the claim, not only to use such wealth, but to prevent others from using it.

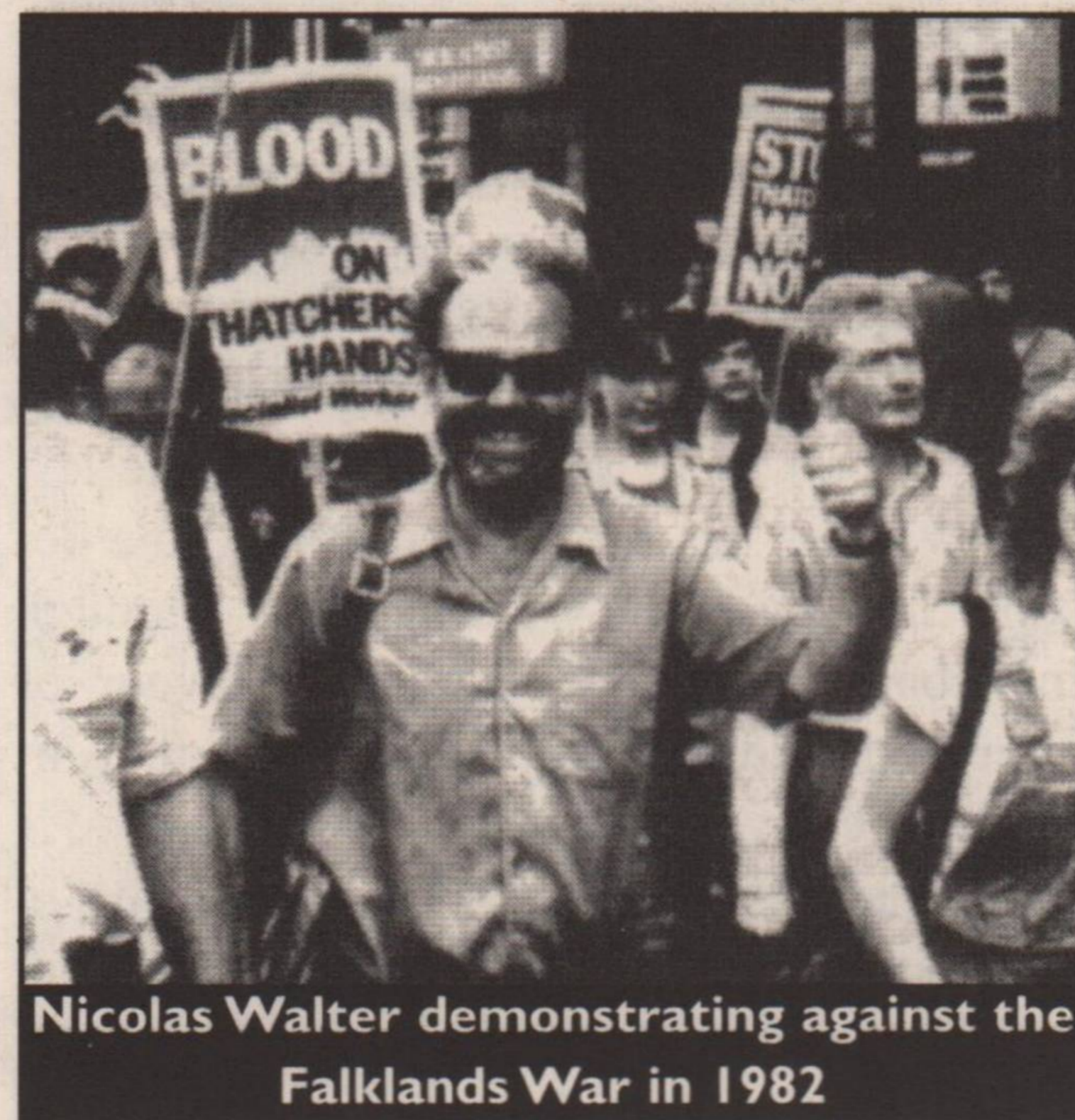
"Wealth being the product of the collective labour of society past and present, of associated mankind, can only belong to society. When it is monopolised by the force or cunning of individuals, other individuals ... must necessarily become subordinate to the monopolists, since they must work to obtain wherewithal to exist, and cannot work without the monopolised instruments of production. Hence the monopoly of social wealth is the main agent of domination".

Although the language is different, Wilson comes close to putting the classical Marxian view of capitalist production, where the many are poor because the few are rich at their expense. "What enjoyment is there to the modern wage slave", she asks, as he "toils wearily on and on, with no prospect but the same dull round, until he breaks down and is sent to the work-house, like some worn-out cart-horse to the knackers"? But while she seems to accept a version of Marx's class analysis – which on an intuitive level it is hard not to – she recognises that in capitalism, "for the taskmaster as for the slave there is but little joy in labour". Wherever we sit in the scheme of things, we will not be free while capitalism lasts.

She calls herself a socialist because she stands, as did Marx (and unlike people who later called themselves socialist), for the abolition of property. She quotes with approval Saint-Simon's maxim for how work should be done, "from each according to their capacity, to each according to his needs", and insists that the question is not how to make people work but how "their spontaneous desire to work [can] be allowed the freest scope and guided into the most useful directions". The justification used for the monopoly of property – that without it nobody would do what needs to be done – she rejects outright. In fact, she argues, socialist organisation of production is so obviously better than property society that

monopoly ownership would be powerless against the demands of justice and human need unless sanctioned and protected by law. Property needs the authority of the state to survive at all. "Law encircles private property with some of its own sanctity – a sanctity arising from the fact that it is supposed to represent – in some mysterious manner – that which is in the abstract eternally right". There is, true enough, a small part of law which does represent "crystal-lised social function", which does set standards for human behaviour. But Wilson

rejects law nevertheless, for two reasons. The first is theoretical: law can only legislate for generalities, whereas every incident with which it concerns itself must vary from every other. Law thus becomes an obstacle to social progress. The second reason is a tactical one, reflecting the function of law in practice: in reality, even that little kernel of social custom which law prescribes is overwhelmed because of what law is asked to do. In property society, it must always be the possession of the privileged few, who use the legitimacy given it by the kernel of right behind a few laws to cloak all the rest with the same aura of reverence, though they exist



Nicolas Walter demonstrating against the Falklands War in 1982

only to preserve the position of the powerful.

Nor, Wilson maintains, does it matter if the law is made by a democratic government. "The manufacture and administration of law by delegates of a majority, changes nothing of its oppressive character; its only purpose remains to impose the will of certain individuals upon the rest". Again, this rejection works on two levels, both theoretical and practical. In practice, she says, anarchists reject democracy as it exists now because it represents no change in the status quo. The politicians just do what they would've done any way, but pretend they're doing it for us.

"Social democracy in every land is thus setting out for the new Jerusalem, along the same old muddy political tracks, of which some of us are so weary, and the Holy City to which it aspires, is to be built up of the old bricks and mortar of property and authority: but the bricks are to be set the other way up and refaced so as to look smart from the outside".

We reject the theory of democracy because it is contradictory. Human beings can join together, either on the understanding that some have the right to overrule others, or that we are all equals on equal terms and common action must be decided upon unanimously. Democracy tries to do both. We are a community of equals, yet the majority have the right to overrule the minority. It doesn't add up, because (Wilson suggests) it is a blundering attempt to return to the principle of free association still hampered by the ideas of authority current in society now. Instead of democratic votes, she proposes consensus decision-making.

The purpose of society is to increase the opportunities of the individual, something an anarchist communist like Wilson accepts just as much as her one-time collaborator, the individualist Henry Seymour. "One isolated human being is helpless, a hopeless slave to external nature; whereas the limits of what is possible to human beings in free and rational association are as yet unimagined". But here is one of those contradictions Marx banged on about. Nineteenth century capitalism was about socialisation of a sort, as it relied on

human beings coming together to work in the factories of the industrial revolution. But it was only a partial socialisation, because the workers were denied the ability to direct their own work and satisfy their own wants as they did not own the means of production. Free cooperation, Wilson insisted, would allow them to do both, but first "a radical change must have come over opinion as to the nature of property and public duty", a slow and silent growth of awareness. The way we live now degrades us all, but it has paved the way for a truer human cooperation to take its place because it forces us to examine our place in the world and draw conclusions accordingly.

"Anarchism is a protest against the government of man by man in every shape and form as the disturber of social life, an assertion that the free play of the social nature of free and equal human beings is the only solid basis of society".

Our freedom is there for the taking when we are no longer intimidated by the mystique of law. These essays are a call to do just that.

After one meeting Charlotte Wilson addressed, a member of the audience reported that her words were "delivered with great clearness of enunciation, with great purity of accent, with a certain appearance of effort". This could equally well describe the style of her writing as we find it in the first essays in this book. Wordy, slightly laboured, often hard-going. But the articles improve as she finds her voice, and some of the later ones are very good indeed. One in particular, on "Anarchism and Homicidal Outrage", is as good as anything Malatesta wrote and could justifiably be called an anarchist classic. Although occasionally repetitious (Wilson was repeating the same things for different audiences), the collection as a whole outlines many of the fundamentals of the anarchist case. Abolition of power and property, of governments, law and state. Free association and free access to goods. Rejection of democracy and the parliamentary road. Anarchism as an evolutionary process, encompassing all areas of human experience, based on a change in ourselves. The need for consensus decision-making instead of majority rule. Why criminals are not 'guilty' of the crimes they commit. The inviolability of freedom of speech. All of it is here, and somebody new to our ideas would find this as good a place as any to start. But for the rest of us too, her assertion that "the free play of the social nature of free and equal human beings is the only solid basis of society" is as timely now as it was when she wrote it a century and more ago. "Each man owes it to himself and to society to be free".

Toby Crowe

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Censorship and Social Control



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Charlotte Wilson in 1874

The word Anarchism is open to such grievous misconstruction from English readers, who associate it with mere confusion, or, still more unfortunately, with acts of personal violence and revenge, that, in the absence of any more competent co-religionist at liberty for the moment to undertake the task, I would crave your permission to explain what our creed really is and especially its bearing on social reconstruction.

Anarchy, as your readers are aware, means simply "without a ruler" or "chief magistrate". Anarchist, therefore, is the name assumed by a certain school of Socialists, who, in the words of the Declaration of the Forty-Seven at Lyons, believe that "the time has come to teach the people to do without government", as well as for teaching them the advantages of common property. They believe that, in the present stage of progress, social union can only be stable when it is based upon absolute economic equality, and perfect individual freedom. They further believe that the rottenness and injustice of the present constitution of society is reaching a climax, and that a revolution is inevitable which shall sweep away privilege, monopoly and authority, with the laws and institutions which support them, and set free the constructive energies of the new social ideal already growing up within the outworn formulas of a past phase of civilisation.

Their conception of the mission of revolution as purely destructive, leads Anarchists to face the query of the unknown future less in the form of - What scheme have we to substitute for the status quo? than - After the

An extract from the new Freedom Press title *Anarchist Essays* by Charlotte Wilson ...

Anarchism by 'an English Anarchist'

annihilation of the oppressive institutions of the present, what social forces and social conditions will remain, and how are they likely to be modified and developed?

It is hardly needful to inquire, as some cavillers are fond of doing, what would happen if civilised men ceased to be social animals and existed each for himself alone. We do not live together in societies and mutually yield and accommodate ourselves to one another so as to make a common existence possible, because we are coerced to do so by certain laws and institutions. We are drawn together by our social instincts, and moulded into such harmony as we have at present attained, by the perpetual action and reaction of the influence we exert over each other, and by our inherited and acquired habits, sympathies, and beliefs. The Revolution, in breaking up the stereotyped forms into which some of these social instincts and beliefs have crystallised, can, in no sense, destroy the social instincts themselves.

Since the ordered and systematised society of mediaeval Europe was dissolved by Individualism, these social instincts have made themselves most powerfully felt in the growth of two vast and ever increasing forces, i.e., Socialised Production and Public Opinion. Both are the direct outcome of the influence of personal freedom, and the energy of individual initiative upon the action

of society. Both are amongst the realities, which Revolution directed against shams and hypocrisy, will leave unscathed.

The present highly socialised system of production on a large scale, with its endless division and sub-division of labour, its machinery, its concentrated masses of human "hands", and its complex industrial relations, has taught men the enormously increased command over the forces of nature, which they may obtain by co-operating for existence. It is, moreover, already practically a system whereby all workers labour for society as a whole, and, in return, supply their needs from the general stock of finished products. When the individual monopoly in land and capital which prevents the workers, firstly, from directing their own labour and, secondly, from adequately supplying their wants, is destroyed the end of social reconstruction must be to enable them to do both as simply and effectually as possible. Will free co-operation and free contract enable the workers to carry on production on a scale adequate to their needs, if they retain the necessary instruments in their own hands, without any State or Communal organisation and direction to take the place of monopolists, masters and organisers? We believe that they will. For a radical change must have come over opinion as to the nature of property and public duty before the Revolution can succeed. Proudhon's famous dictum, "Property is theft", is the key to the equally famous enigma proposed to Socialists by Saint-Simon, when he wrote, "From each according to his capacity, to each according to his needs". When the workers clearly understand that in taking possession of railways and ships, mines and fields, farm buildings and factories, raw material and machinery, and all else they need for their labour, they are claiming the right to use freely for the benefit of society, what social labour has created, or utilised in the past, and that, in return for their work, they have a just right to take from the finished product whatever they personally require, the difficulty will be solved and obstacles in the shape of making necessary changes in the detailed working of the system of production and its relation to consumption, will vanish before the ingenuity of the myriad minds vitally concerned in overcoming them. But until they do realise, that, as long as land and capital are unappropriated, the workers are free, and that, when these have a master, the workers also are slaves, no lasting and effectual improvement can be wrought in their condition. The fatal passion of acquisitiveness has got such hold upon men's minds, that masterless things appear now to many of them as monstrous an anomaly as masterless men did to the country justices of Queen Elizabeth. They devise all sorts of elaborate schemes for putting the common property of the people in trust, and appointing administrators to direct its application - a masterful sort of servants, likely to become worse tyrants than the old ones. We Anarchists, who desire neither to rule nor to serve, prefer to trust to the reason of the workers, enlightened by their bitter experience of past slavery.

communication). 3. That the necessary connections between the various industries and branches of trade, should be managed on the same voluntary principle, and that the task of furnishing intelligence as to the relations of production and consumption (by means, for instance, of the public press, special trade journals, offices for information, &c.), should be left to brain workers, whose taste leads them to make industry a special duty. 4. That finished goods should be massed in large stores and markets, and that offices for facilitating the mutual convenience of producers and consumers (as for example, house builders and carpenters, and house seekers) should be opened in convenient centres. 5. That each individual should supply his needs therefrom as his self-knowledge prompts.

This is the theory of *laissez faire*, modified and extended to meet the needs of the future, and avoid the injustice of the past. It implies that the majority of men are capable of acting with some approximation to effectiveness, if left free to do so, and is based on the assumption that the individual is the best judge of his own capabilities, and, further, that self-interest, intelligently followed, tends to promote the general economic well-being of the community. It differs from the old system in placing self-interest on the side of just distribution, by the destruction of private property in the means of production, and thus does much to neutralise the dangers of Society from natures whose selfishness is their strongest sentiment. It also allows free play to those social sympathies, the influence of which in determining conduct it was one of the chief mistakes of the orthodox economists to ignore. It assumes that just and generous economic relations are for the interest of the individual, and that he is capable of being taught so, if not by science and the teaching of the moralist, then by the stern lessons of experience. Has not the process of instruction already begun?

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FREEDOM

A JOURNAL OF ANARCHIST SOCIALISM.

VOL. I.—No. 1.

OCTOBER, 1886.

MONTHLY; ONE PENNY.

FREEDOM.

THROUGH the long ages of grinding slavery behind us, Freedom, that unknown goal of human pilgrimage, has hovered, a veiled splendour, upon the horizon of men's hopes. Veiled in the trembling ignorance of mankind, their misty unreasoning terror of all that revealed itself as power, whether it were an apparently incomprehensible and unrollable natural force, or the ascendancy of superior strength, ability or cunning in human society. The inward attitude of slavish adoration towards what imposes itself from without as a fact beyond our understanding, that is the veil which hides Freedom from the eyes of men. Sometimes it takes the form of the blind fear of a savage of his "medicine" or his fetish, sometimes of the equally blind reverence of an English workman for the law of his masters, and the semblance of consent to his own economic slavery wormed out of him by the force of representation. But whatever the form the reality is the same, ignorance, superstitious terror, cowardly submission.

What is human progress but the advance of the swelling tide of revolt against this tyranny of the nightmare of ignorant dread, which has held men the slaves of external nature, of one another, and of themselves? Science and the arts, knowledge and all its varied shapes of practical application by ingenuity and skill, the binding and enlightening force of affection and social feeling, the protest of individuals and of peoples by word and deed against religious, economic, political and social oppression, these, one and all, are weapons in the hands of the Rebels against the Powers of Darkness sheltered behind their shield of authority, divine and human. But they are weapons not all equally effective at all times. Each has its period of special utility.

We are living at the close of an era during which the marvellous increase of knowledge left social feeling behind, and enabled the few who monopolised the newly acquired power over nature to create an artificial civilisation, based upon their exclusive claim to retain private, personal possession of the increased wealth produced.

Property—not the claim to use, but to a right to prevent others from using—enables individuals who have appropriated the means of production, to hold in subjection all those who possess nothing but their vital energy, and who must work that they may live. No work is possible without land, materials, and tools or machinery; thus the masters of these things are the masters also of the destitute workers, and can live in idleness upon their labour, paying them in wages only enough of the produce to keep them alive, only employing so many of them as they find profitable and leaving the rest to their fate.

Such a wrong once realised is not to be borne. Knowledge cannot long be monopolised, and social feeling is innate in human nature, and both are fermenting within our life-bound Society as the yeast in the dough. Our age is on the eve of a revolt against property, in the name of the common claim of all to a common share in the results of the common labour of all.

Therefore, we are Socialists, disbelievers in Property, advocates of the equal claims of each man and woman to work for the community as seems good to him or her—calling no man master, and of the equal claim of each to satisfy as soon as good to him, his natural needs from the stock of social wealth he has laboured to produce. We look for this socialisation of wealth, not to restraints imposed by authority upon property, but to the removal, by the direct personal action of the people themselves, of the restraints which secure property against the claims of popular justice. For authority and property both are manifestations of the egoistical spirit of domination, and we do not look to Satan to cast out Satan.

We have no faith in legal methods of reform. Fixed and arbitrary written law is, and has always been, the instrument employed by anti-social individuals to secure their authority, whether delegated or usurped, when the maintenance of that authority by open violence has become dangerous. Social feeling, and the social habits formed and corrected by common experience, are the actual cement of associated life. It is the specious embodiment of a portion of this social custom in law, which has merit law tolerable, and even sacred in the eyes of the people it exists to enslave. But in proportion as the oppression of law is removed, the true binding force of the influence of social feeling upon individual responsibility becomes apparent and is increased. We look for the destruction of monopoly, not by the imposition of fresh artificial restraints, but by the abolition of all arbitrary restraints whatever. Without law, property would be impossible, and labour and enjoyment free.

Therefore, we are Anarchists, disbelievers in the government of man

by man in any shape and under any pretext. The human freedom to which our eyes are raised is no negative abstraction of licence for individual egoism, whether it be massed collectively as majority rule or isolated as personal tyranny. We dream of the positive freedom which is essentially one with social feeling; of free scope for the social impulses, now distorted and compressed by Property, and its guardian the Law; of free scope for that individual sense of responsibility, of respect for self and for others, which is vitiated by every form of collective interference, from the enforcing of contracts to the hanging of criminals; of free scope for the spontaneity and individuality of each human being, such as is impossible when one hard and fast line is fitted to all conduct. Science is teaching mankind that such crime as is not the manufacture of our vile economic and legal system, can only be rationally as well as humanely treated by fraternal medical care, for it results from deformity or disease, and a hard and fast rule of conduct enforced by condign punishment is neither guide nor remedy, nothing but a perennial source of injustice amongst men.

We believe each sane adult human being to possess an equal and indefeasible claim to direct his life from within by the light of his own consciousness, to the sole responsibility of guiding his own action as well as forming his own opinions. Further, we believe that the acknowledgment of this claim is a necessary preliminary to rational voluntary agreement, the only permanent basis of harmonious life in common. Therefore, we reject every method of enforcing assent, as in itself a hindrance to effectual co-operation, and further, a direct incentive to anti-social feeling. We deprecate as a wrong to human nature, individually, and therefore collectively, all use of force for the purpose of coercing others; but we assert the social duty of each to defend, by force if need be, his dignity as a free human being, and the like dignity in others, from every form of insult and oppression.

We claim for each and all the personal right and social obligation to be free. We hold the complete social recognition and acknowledgment of such claim to be the goal of human progress in the future, as its growth has been the gauge of development of Society in the past, of the advance of man from the blind social impulse of the gregarious animal to the conscious social feeling of the free human being.

Such, in rough outline, is the general aspect of the Anarchist Socialism our paper is intended to set forth, and by the touchstone of this belief we propose to try the current ideas and modes of action of existing Society.

THE COMING REVOLUTION.

We are living on the eve of great events. Before the end of this century has come we shall see great revolutionary movements breaking up our social conditions in Europe and probably also in the United States of America.

Social storms cannot be forecast with the same accuracy as those which cross the Atlantic on their way to our shores. But still, there are tokens permitting us to predict the approach of those great disturbances which periodically visit mankind to redress wrongs accumulated by past centuries, to freshen the atmosphere, to blow away monopolies and prejudices.

There is a certain periodicity in these great uprisings of the oppressed. The end of each of the last five centuries has been marked by great movements which have helped Freedom to gain ground in France, in England, in the Netherlands, in Switzerland and in Bohemia. The great German historian of our century, Gervinus, saw in this periodicity a law; while the Italian patriot and philosopher Ferrari, devoting special attention to the phenomena of evolution and revolution, tried to explain its causes. Explained, or not, it has been a fact for five centuries past.

No doubt our century will be no exception to the rule. It is sufficient to look around us, to observe. All those facts which foreshadowed the approach of revolutions in times past, cannot but strike the unprejudiced observer.

The commercial crisis grows worse and worse. Millions of workmen, driven away from the country to the ever-growing cities, are wandering about without work. We boast of our gigantic cities, and unheeded misery grows up in those centres where all the wealth of the world is spent in an unhealthy luxury, amidst the rags and destitution of the poor.

Nowhere, in no quarter, any prospect of improvement. The crisis

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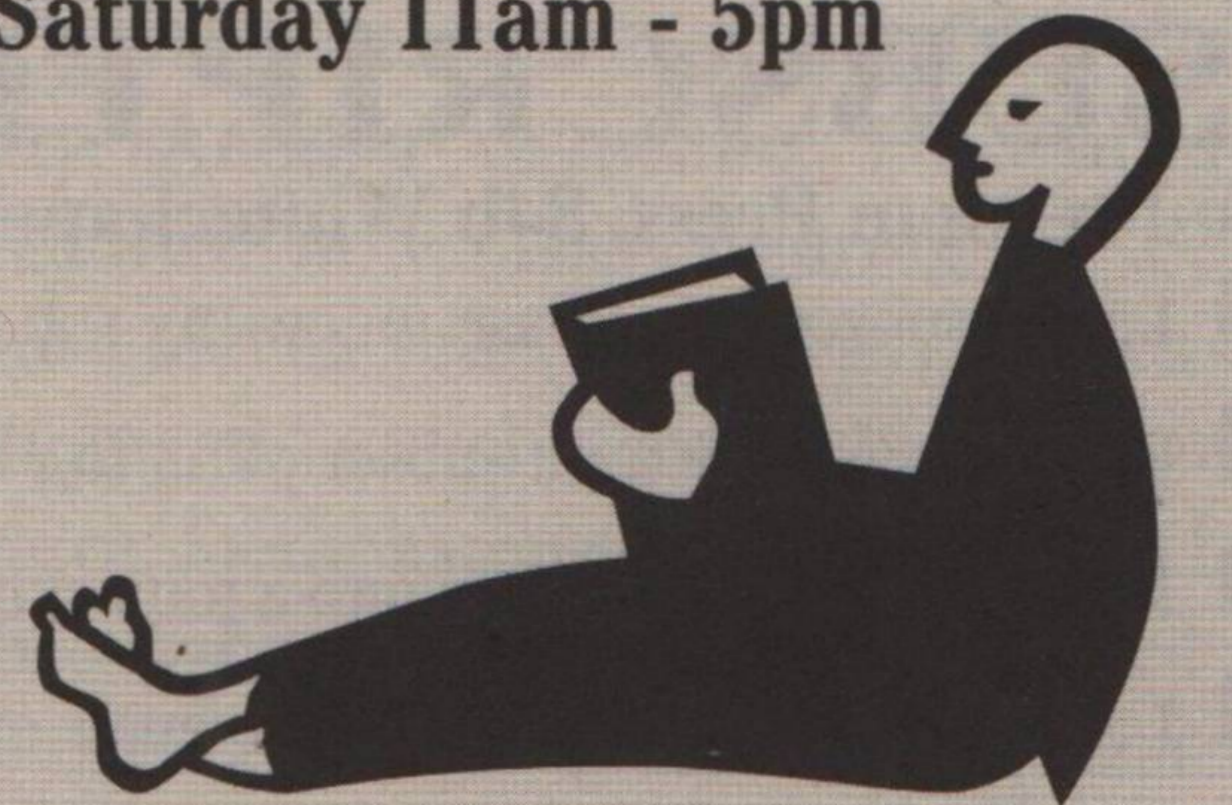
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Meetings & Events

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 2001 —

26th January The Messianic Banquet and the End of Religion (speaker Peter Lumsden)

2nd February The Anarchist Response to Elections (speaker John Rety)

9th February Speaker to be arranged

16th February Women in Anarchy (symposium)

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. For more information see: LAF@anarchic.co.uk or www.trak.to/LAF

Steve Ash
for London Anarchist Forum

We're planning Human Rights as our theme for

**International
Labour Day
(Mayday) 2001**

We are planning and organising events for the day now, and we'd welcome suggestions, help, comments and co-operation from your group. Perhaps you would like to get involved.

What do you and your members think.
Contact us at:

Lancaster & Morecambe Trade Union
Council, 178a Lancaster Road, Morecambe
Tel/Fax: 01524 413600

Red Rambles 2001

After a break of one year, and back by popular request, Red Rambles are being relaunched with an annual Summer-Autumn season of walks and rambles for Radicals, Libertarians, Anarchists, Greens, Socialists, Syndicalists, et al. Walkers are reminded to wear walking boots, appropriate clothing and to bring waterproofs, food and drink. You can also visit our website at http://members.tripod.co.uk/ainema/index-2.html

Mayday bank holiday 7th May 2001

Meet at 12 noon outside Hurt Arms Hotel, Ambergate, Derbyshire, on the A6 road (also on bus route R1 for Nottingham to Manchester, 100 yards from Ambergate railway station) for a short and easy walk four miles in length through Shining Cliff Woods. Walk concludes with a Mayday picnic, so bring food and drink to share, musical instruments, blankets to sit on, etc. Walk leader Jonathan.

Sunday 2nd July 2001

Cromford Canal to Scarthin Promenade for lunch and return, 6 miles. Meet at 11am at Whatstandwell railway station car park on the A6 north of Ambergate. Also on route of R1 Manchester to Nottingham Trans-Peak bus. Walk leader Mike.

Sunday 2nd September 2001

Repton - Viking, Saxon and Medieval remains, 6 miles. Meet at Repton village church at 11am. Walk leader Ray.

Telephone 07939 440548 / 01773 827513
e-mail ain@ziplip.com

**Northern
Anarchist Network**

**Spring meeting
Saturday 3rd March**

10am to 6pm
Bury Unemployed Centre

12 Tithebarn Street (off The Rock)
contact: Harry on 01422 842558

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