

anarchist fortnightly

Freedom

Vol. 62 No. 14

14th July 2001

50p



Fascism is not welcome here

Oldham, Burnley, Bradford ... the rioting at the end of last week followed a National Front get-together in a Bradford pub. When the fascists began to chant racist abuse at a counter demonstration nearby, they got an instant response from members of the local community. Within seconds, a fight had spilled into nearby streets and a riot began.

We have no time for racism. If white people were set upon just for being white, that was racist and we condemn it. But we have no time for fascism either. While liberals were busy demanding that the state do this or that to thwart the NF and the BNP, Bradford people were sorting them out more effectively by themselves.

Both sides have reasons for acting the

way they do. Years of abuse and neglect suffered by Asian and white communities alike have finally driven one to resistance and substantial portions of the other into the hands of the BNP. The irony is that the causes of their dissatisfaction are the same. The real answer is solidarity, not hate. But until that happens, we support those who stand up to the fascists.

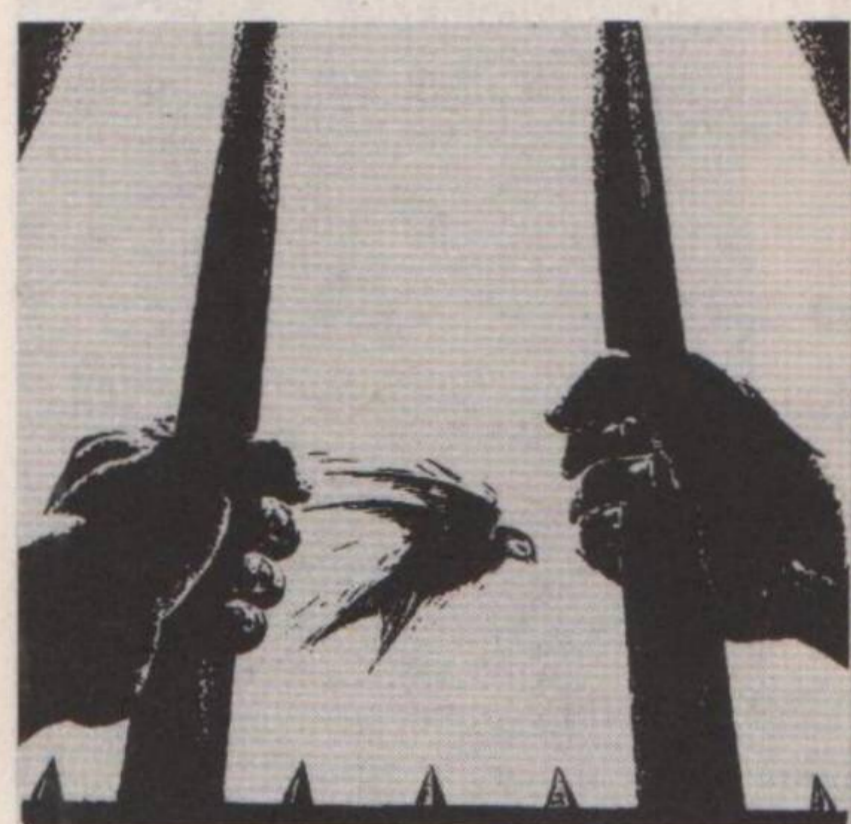
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SENTENCING**
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Outrage as police kill protesters

Anarchists around the world expressed outrage last week, following the killing of three students in Papua New Guinea. The students had been taking part in protests against economic reform, which has been imposed on the country by the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

Riot police opened fire on protesters in Port Moresby, the capital, on 26th June. Seventeen students were wounded, five seriously.

The protesters had claimed widespread public support for their campaign, aimed at forcing the government of Sir Mekere Morauta to abandon its plans for a massive privatisation programme. They had demanded that the World Bank and IMF cease their operations in the country.

After five days of peaceful protests, which had seen streets blockaded and state-owned buildings occupied, Morauta ordered Port Moresby police to disperse the protesters. It is thought that local cops refused to obey the order, leading the government to bring in squads of paramilitary riot police from outside the city.

The shootings happened after the protesters had been forced away from government offices, which they had been blockading. They were then chased back to their university compound, where they were trapped.

"We did not have anywhere to go, because there was a fence at the back of us", said William Doa, a commerce student. "We thought we must surrender to the police to avoid being shot. We thought we would be alright if we surrendered with our hands up". But he said that cops opened fire instead, using shotguns and M-16 assault rifles.

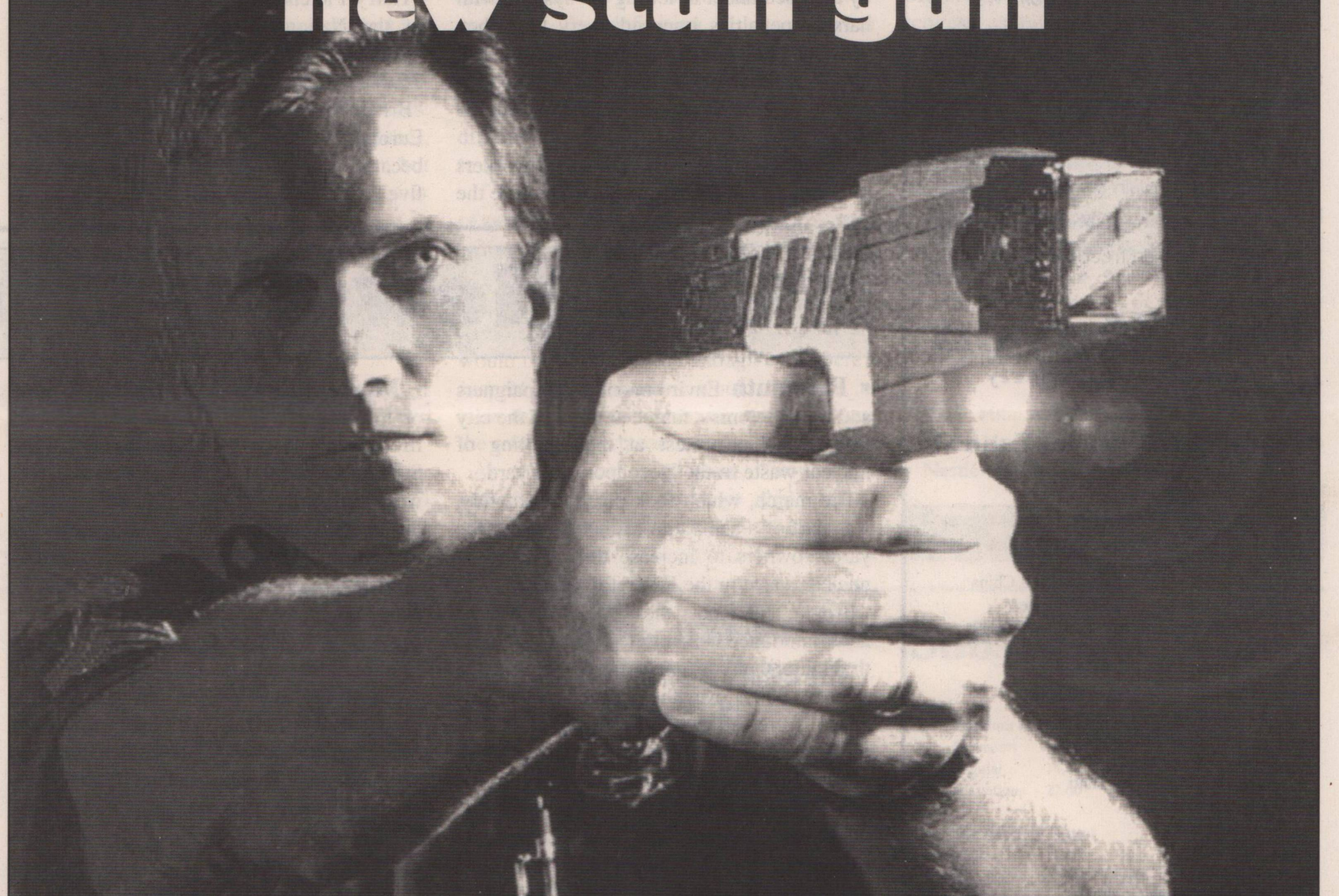
Morauta's move did not stop the protests, however. After the shootings became known, crowds began to gather outside the hospital where the dead and injured had been taken.

At one point, several truckloads of soldiers arrived to protect the students from further police attacks, and around 60 soldiers took part in a demonstration against the government's actions. The commander of the army, Brigadier-General Carl Marlpo, was forced to appeal for his troops not to side with the students.

Members of the army are known to be angry because of cuts to the military budget imposed by the reform programme. A mutiny in May forced the government to withdraw plans to slash personnel numbers.

Editorial on page 7

British cops to test new stun gun



Northamptonshire cops are set to start trials of a new stun gun that temporarily paralyses its victims with a 50,000 volt electric shock. The 'taser', as the new gun is called, is already used by police in the United States. Its manufacturers claim that it will "physically debilitate a target regardless of pain tolerance or mental focus". Amnesty International has condemned the taser.

Nuclear capacity boosted

The boss of British Energy, the UK's largest producer of nuclear power, last week stepped up pressure on the government to agree an extension to the country's atomic capacity.

Robin Jeffrey said that Blair had a year to decide on the building of new nuclear plants. Otherwise, he claimed, Britain's carbon emissions would rise as the company replaced its eight existing nuclear stations with plants using carbon-based fuel.

"If all our plants closed down and were replaced with the current mix of coal, gas, oil and renewables, the UK's transport emissions of carbon would rise by 50%", he said on 1st July.

He also argued that new nuclear plants should qualify for financial assistance under the government's public private partnership (PPP), and that the regulatory process should

be reformed to make it attractive for lenders to invest in nuclear power.

His intervention followed an announcement at the end of last month that British Nuclear Fuels (BNFL) is to put forward plans to rebuild its existing plants. These are due to close in the next few years, after almost half a century of production, and BNFL wants to replace them with at least four new ones.

The plan will be submitted to the government's energy review committee, which the prime minister announced in June. Its chair, energy minister Brian Wilson, has already given strong signals that the government will look favourably on requests from the industry. He said that proposals to build new plants on current sites would make "a lot of sense", and that he himself wanted a new reactor at Hunterston in his Strathclyde constituency.

His remarks have been condemned by environmentalists, who condemned him as "aggressively pro-nuclear". Helen Wallace, a representative of Greenpeace, said, "it's shocking to consider this when they don't even know how to deal with existing nuclear waste".

Mark Johnson, of Friends of the Earth, said, "we will fiercely oppose any new proposals for nuclear power stations. Renewables can already deliver more power for less subsidy, and will overtake natural gas as the preferred power producer".

Both BNFL and British Energy have experienced financial problems in the last few years. BNFL admitted on 28th June that its operating losses were running at £210m. Despite this, a company representative said, "the prospects for a renaissance in nuclear power are brighter than for many years".

Freedom

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"Satire died the day Kissinger got the Nobel Peace Prize"

Tom Lehrer

US satirist

There were calls recently for ex-Secretary of State Henry Kissinger to be tried at the Hague like Milosevic, for his role in Vietnam and Chile

Anarchists work towards a society of mutual aid and voluntary co-operation. We reject all government and economic repression.

Freedom Press is an independent anarchist publisher. Besides the fortnightly newspaper *Freedom*, we also produce *The Raven* quarterly journal and many books on all aspects of anarchism. We also run Britain's biggest anarchist bookshop.

Our aim is to explain anarchism more widely and to show that only in such a society can human freedom thrive.

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Promises made by the new Home Secretary ...

Tougher sentences and bigger police force

David Blunkett last week used his first major speech as Home Secretary to promise that he would "put the sense back into sentencing".

Speaking at the launch of the new National Probation Service on 5th July, he announced plans to keep what he called 'violent offenders' in jail for longer, along with those convicted of sexual crimes.

Home Office civil servants, who had drafted the new strategy before Blunkett took office, are known to be keen to stop what they call "revolving door syndrome". This sees over half of those imprisoned being reconvicted less than two years after their release.

Blunkett said, "the current system is not working. About 56% of offenders who have served a community or a custodial sentence go on to offend again within two years. Half of all crimes are committed by a hardcore of about 100,000 criminals".

Under the plans, persistent criminals will be assessed under a 'totting up' system, with harsher penalties imposed every time they face a court. Those considered dangerous will also get extra time in prison because they will no longer be automatically considered for parole.

Probation officers, who are social workers rather than cops, were quick to denounce the



plans. They pointed out that the British jail population of 66,611 is the second highest in Europe, after Portugal.

Harry Fletcher, assistant general secretary of the National Association of Probation Officers, said the number could soon rise to 75,000 if Blunkett's plan went ahead. "Britain will soon be the bang-up capital of Europe", he said. "This is all very strange, because crime has fallen by 23% in the last five years, according to police statistics".

The new sentencing strategy was unveiled just days after Blunkett pledged to create the largest ever police force in England and Wales, with at least 130,000 cops in post by 2005. There are currently 125,537 of them.

At the same time, he said that he would increase the rate of deportations and removals of refugees whose bids for asylum had been refused. He said that his target of 2,500 deportations per month would be achieved by early next year.

News in Brief

• **Plymouth** Environmental campaigners and trade unionists marched through the city last week, in protest at the handling of nuclear waste in the Devonport dockyard.

The march, which took place on 4th July, was part of a campaign against plans by the yard's owners to increase the dumping of nuclear waste in the River Tamar.

Brown and Root, the US-based owners, have announced their intention to increase the amount of tritium waste dumped in the river by 500% over the next ten years. This waste is created by the servicing of Trident nuclear submarines in the city.

Tony Staunton, a branch secretary in the UNISON trade union, took part in the march. He said that many local people were rushing to join the campaign. "This is just the start of the protest action", he warned dockyard bosses.

• **London** Opponents of Plan Colombia last week held a rally outside the American embassy in Grosvenor Square. The rally, on 4th July, followed the killing of seven Colombian trade unionists and kidnapping of five others at the end of last month.

Andy, one of the organisers, said, "Plan Colombia is spreading death and destruction. It is a plan for war. Stopping drugs is the pretext for the plan, not its real cause. Just like Bush's refusal to endorse the Kyoto Agreement, US military intervention in Colombia follows the dictates of Big Oil. Bush's solution to the US energy crisis is to control all potential supplies".

• **North Wales** A rally was due to be held last Saturday in the north Wales town of Caernarfon, following the sacking of 87 strikers at the Friction Dynamics Factory. The strikers, all members of the TGWU, comprised two thirds of the factory's workforce. They were sacked on 3rd July, after the company had locked them out for nine weeks in retaliation for a strike over pay and conditions.

• **Merseyside** The army was ready to move on to the streets of Liverpool yesterday, if a firefighters' strike went ahead as planned. Soldiers began to train last week in case they were called on to replace the fire brigade during the eight-day walkout, which was due to begin yesterday morning. Unless Merseyside Fire Authority withdrew its proposed reforms, Liverpoolians will now be served by green goddess fire engines, the first time they have been used for five years.

The strike was called in response to proposals by the region's chief fire officer, Malcolm Saunders. These include appointing senior personnel who have not previously served as firefighters themselves. Members of the Fire Brigades Union say that this threatens their traditional career structure. But the fire authority says that the change will attract more applications from women and ethnic minorities.

• **London** Anarcho-queers are holding a meeting in Kings Cross tomorrow (see back page). This follows their autonomous queer presence on the Pride march on 30th June. With banners saying 'pervert power', 'pride not profit', 'anarquist - anarcho-queers' and 'sex workers unite!', 500 or more folk frolicked about as the sun shone. As we distributed the most excellent publication



The Pink Pauper, we were greeted with a torrent of excited fervour as a gratified crowd screamed it was time we had something interesting to read. In Green Park, we paraded up to our free space outside the enclosed Mardi Gras corporate festival, to a fabulous free vegan meal courtesy of Food Not Bombs. There in the shade a group of gorgeous people sat making rubber whips and sex toys, while others gathered around our information tent. Some chilled out in the sun, while the more energetic danced away to the sounds of Megabitch, with their brilliant solar-powered 12V rig. In the evening a sexy party evolved. The bands rocked us while the DJs worked us. Thanks to all who put this together or took part in any shape or form. It was inspiring, and best of all it was free and queer.

Anarquist

• **Oxfordshire** Members of the Wombles will show solidarity with protesters in Genoa next week by holding a No Borders camp outside the Campsfield Detention Centre. The camp begins on 18th July, and ends on Sunday 22nd July. The Wombles say, "while the G8 meet in Genoa to discuss expanding free trade and profit, thousands of people are forced to leave home just to survive. On arrival here, instead of help they get interned in prisons such as Campsfield House, run for profit by private security business Group 4. Close Campsfield Detention Centre! Close every detention centre! Free the prisoners!"

• **South Wales** The Welsh Green Gathering, originally due to be held in Llanelli in August but cancelled after opposition from Dyfed Powys police, has now been postponed until next year. This follows the failure of efforts by the organisers to find an alternative site which could accommodate the festival at short notice. "We are very disappointed", said Brig Oubridge, one of the organisers, saying that the matter would be referred to the Police Complaints Authority.

Star wars base invaded

North Yorkshire

Security at RAF Menwith Hill is to be tightened after protesters invaded the US-run monitoring station twice last week. Around twenty protesters from

Greenpeace and the Campaign for the Accountability of American Bases (CAAB) climbed over razor wire on Wednesday 4th July, in protest at American plans to use the base as part of the 'Star Wars' missile defence shield.

The station near Harrogate, with its 37 distinctive white 'golf balls' (also known as 'radomes'), is manned by US service personnel. It is expected to form the eyes and ears of the proposed \$100bn system, being introduced by the Bush administration.

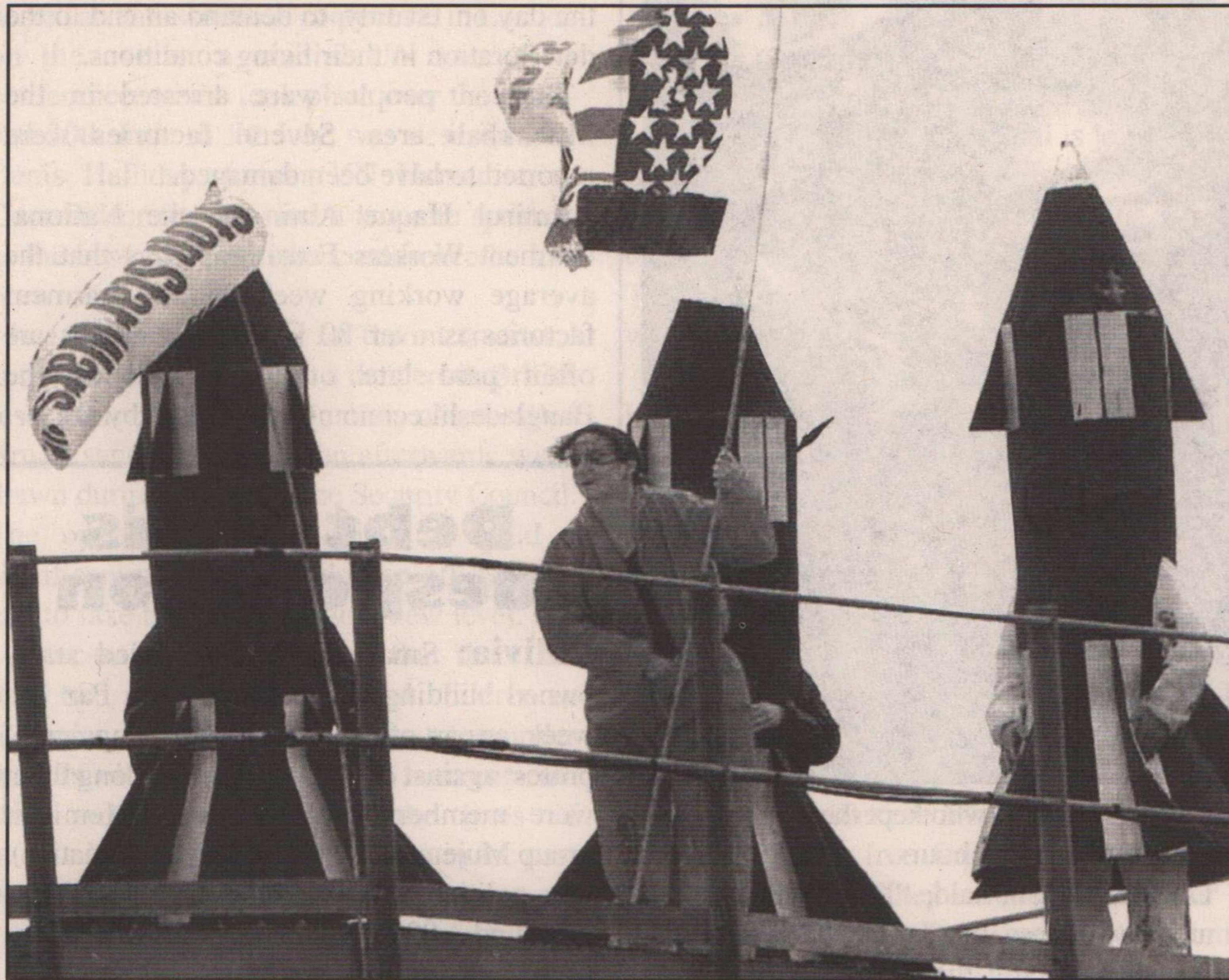
The day before, over fifty Greenpeace activists had walked through the main gate to the theme from *Mission Impossible*. Many of them were dressed as missiles. They then climbed a 20,000 gallon water tower and waved flags from the top.

At the same time, two teams of around 40 people each scaled the three-metre high fences on the other side of the base, before running across open ground towards the golf balls themselves. Five of them managed to break through the enclosing fence. "It was very tempting to jump through the domes", said one of the five. "They are made of fabric".

The protesters were finally removed by American personnel and Ministry of Defence police. Two people were later charged with criminal damage.

On the Wednesday, two protesters climbed a 50ft radio tower and stayed there for fifteen hours. Richard Watson and Al Baker finally surrendered to Ministry of Defence police as it grew dark.

Editorial on page 7



CAAB activist Lindis Percy at Menwith Hill on Wednesday 4th July. Two other members of the group climbed a radio tower at the base, where they stayed for fifteen hours before surrendering to the police.

John Armitson

State subsidies for arms trade exposed by report

The extent of the support the British state gives to the armaments industry was confirmed last week, with the publication of a report from two establishment think tanks.

The report from Saferworld and the Oxford Research Group, academic institutes which have been praised by governments for their work, was published on 3rd July. It estimates that a direct subsidy of £420m per year is given by the government to arms firms. This represents a net figure of £4,600 for every person employed by the trade.

It also highlights a number of other significant indirect subsidies, including the estimated subsidy of £570m spent on research and development costs for new weapons, even though they are intended for export.

The report outlines four main types of direct subsidy, and estimates the cost in each area: export credit guarantees (£227m), marketing (£68m), tax breaks on bribes (£64m) and distortion of Ministry of Defence purchasing (£60m).

Ian Davis from Saferworld, the joint author of the report, said, "at least £420m of taxpayers' money goes directly into enabling foreign governments to purchase British arms. Ending the subsidy to the UK defence industry as a whole, which has no clear benefit to the armed services or national security, could save a further £4bn".

His co-author, Paul Ingram, agreed. "It is time for an open and public debate on the arms subsidy trap in which the government finds itself".

The report also disputes the claim that arms exports are vital for British jobs. It estimates that the government spends £4,600 for each of the 90,000 jobs that are dependent on the industry.

The Ministry of Defence strongly disputed the reports findings, but they were supported by anti-militarist activists. "What this report gives us is some solid figures for government subsidies. We knew they happened, we knew

they were big. Now we've got some figures to tell us how big, from two pillars of the establishment", said one.

Government ministers have praised both Saferworld and the Oxford Research Group in the past. "We need concrete ideas for the reform of the security sector. Saferworld's work in the area has been excellent", said Clare Short, Secretary of State for International Development, last year.

The UK supplies 20-25% of all legally traded arms and military equipment in the world, making it the world's second largest arms supplier after the United States.

Bosses try to gag paper

The *Observer* newspaper is being sued for libel by a mining firm, after it printed an article by investigative journalist Greg Palast. Under the headline 'Best Democracy Money Can Buy', Palast reported on the firm's financing of George Bush's election campaign for the US presidency.

Barrick Gold Mining of Canada, which gave employment to Bush's father when he left the White House, says that the Palast article libelled them when it quoted an Amnesty International report which alleged that fifty miners might have been buried alive in Tanzania by a company now owned by Barrick.

Legal threats have also been issued against Tanzanian lawyer Tundu Lissu, an investigator of the allegations and one of Palast's sources.

Amnesty International says that it cannot verify the allegations about the mine killings because the Tanzanian government will not allow an independent investigation. But Tundu Lissu gathered witness statements himself when he travelled to the mine, and these formed the basis of Palast's report.

Barrick has also demanded that the *Observer* force Palast to remove the article from his own US website. He calls this "a frightening extension of Britain's punitive libel laws into the World Wide Web".



Protesters ignore threats



Austria

Despite earlier threats of state violence against them, around two thousand anti-capitalist activists from around Europe gathered in the Austrian city of Salzburg a fortnight ago, to protest at a summit on the future of Europe organised by the World Economic Forum (WEF).

The summit, which began on Saturday 30th June, was entitled 'Europe: Building on Diversity'. Fifteen heads of state and prime ministers listened to EU enlargement minister Günter Verheugen describe what he called the "huge social benefits" of enlarging the European Union.

As many as 5,000 riot cops are thought to have been deployed to protect them, in a huge security operation designed to prevent a repeat of the recent scenes in Gothenburg.

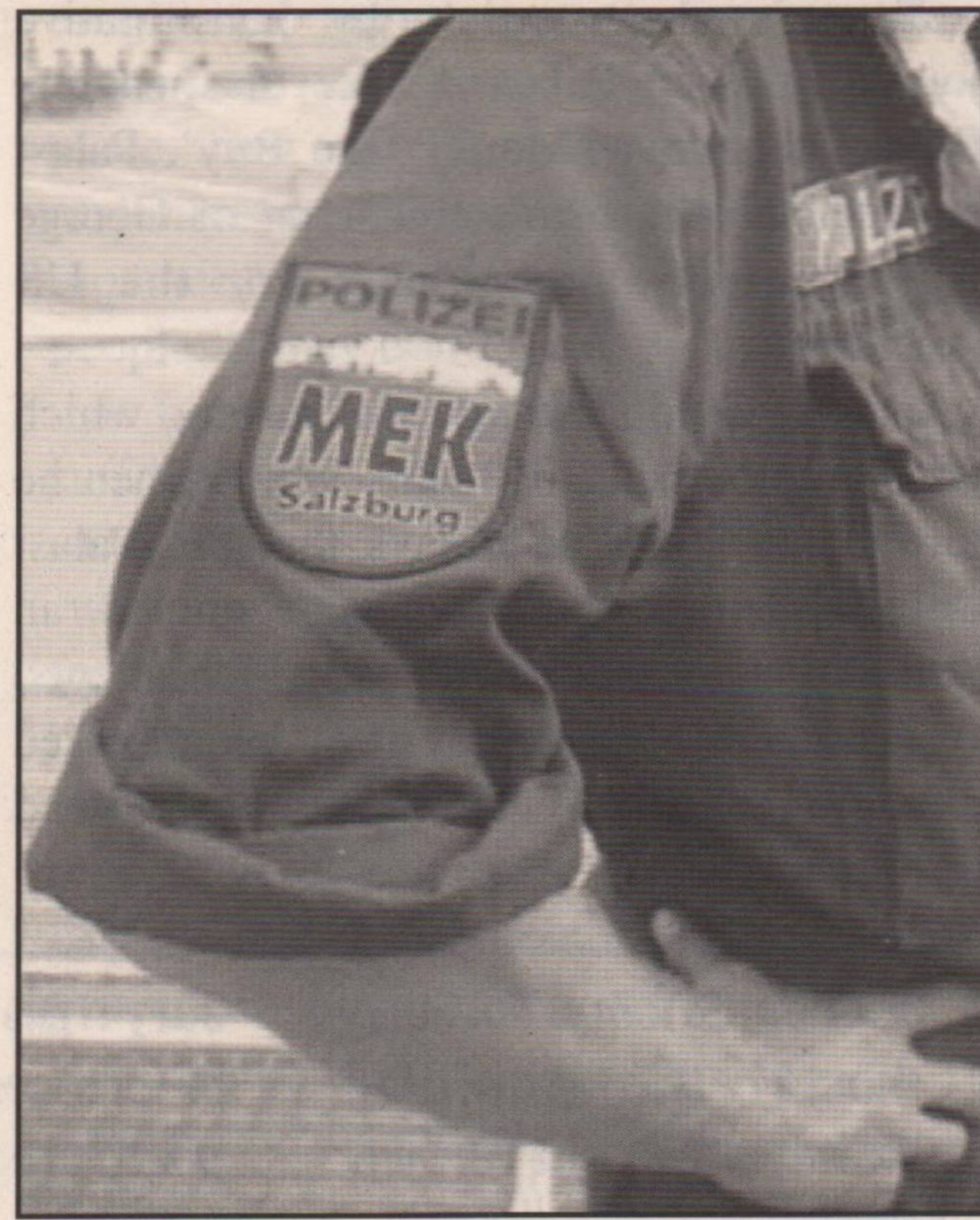
Anarchists and other protesters were not put off, however. "They're all capitalists, all out for themselves", said Johannes, who is also planning to travel from his Linz home to the Genoa G8 meeting next week. "It's time we smashed them all".

There were protests on the Saturday, but the biggest demonstration took place the next day. Activists, some of whom were dressed up as the composer Mozart (who came from Salzburg), gathered at the central railway

station in the morning. This was the only place where police had given permission for a protest of any sort to take place.

But demonstrators quickly moved off towards the city centre. At one point, cops moved in with batons drawn to try and push protesters back, but they were engulfed by protesters and forced to retreat.

Some activists then started to pelt cops with food and beer cans, and police lines were charged by elements from within the anarchist black bloc. They were surrounded



by a mass of cops, who kept them imprisoned in this way for five hours.

One participant said, "I've never seen so much awareness by demonstrators, and it was fantastic. But there are certain tactical catastrophes which need to be learned from. The entire situation of getting surrounded could have been avoided. But even with that last fuck-up, it was a great day. I think nobody can forget the unity and strength that we lived during the demonstrations".

Before the meeting, the Austrian government had tightened its border controls in an attempt to prevent protesters from coming into the country. This followed a temporary suspension of the Schengen agreement, which allows free movement over borders within the European Union. Officials said that the Italian government, which will itself suspend the agreement next week to stop protesters travelling to Genoa, had been very helpful.

In another move, the government announced at the end of June that it had given permission for police to shoot protesters. Major Rudolf Gollia, a senior advisor to the interior ministry, said, "we don't want a repeat of what happened in Gothenburg, but we will use guns if we have to".

There were also reports in the Austrian mainstream media that body bags had been ordered.

Garment workers strike

Bangladesh: At least ten people were hurt in skirmishes with police last week, during a strike called by the Bangladesh Garments Workers Unity Council.

Around 1.6m workers in the clothing industry, most of them women, went out for the day on 1st July, to demand an end to the deterioration in their living conditions.

Thirteen people were arrested in the Mohakhali area. Several factories were reported to have been damaged.

Amirul Haque Amin of the National Garment Workers Federation says that the average working week in the garment factories is over 80 hours, and wages are often paid late or not at all as the Bangladeshi economy is wracked by crisis.

Debt crisis desperation

Bolivia: Small debtors occupied state-owned buildings in the capital La Paz last week, as part of their continuing campaign of protest against credit problems. Among them were members of the anarchist-feminist group Mujeres Creando (Women's Initiative), who politicians labelled the 'organisers'.

Around 1,000 people took over the offices of the banking supervisory body on 2nd July, and detained 94 officials. They were tied up, and some had dynamite wrapped round their bodies. "We are here because nobody is listening to us", said one protester.

Bolivian anarchist youth organisation Juventudes Libertarias said, "the activity of the small debtors is by nature anti-capitalist, because it delegitimises private property and directly attacks profits. It utilises direct action and self-organisation".

See comment on page 6

WTO ask for peace code

Switzerland: The boss of the World Trade Organisation, Mike Moore, last week appealed to his anarchist critics to turn their backs on violence. Speaking at a two-day meeting in Geneva, Moore



Mike Moore

said that there should be a code of conduct within which any debate on globalisation should be carried out.

He condemned what he called "anti-globalisation dot.com types, who trot out slogans that are trite, shallow and superficial".

Genoa, the G8 and us

Protesting against the G8 at Genoa is a natural thing for us: we stand against every form of exploitation and domination. If domination at its worst was expressed until not long ago by the repression of governments, today the power has passed into the hands of the transnational organisations. It's against these that our criticism is made and our energies revolt.

The planet is in the hands of a few organisations and individuals. On them depend millions of people, affairs such as war, pollution, life and death. Democracy, with its mundane protracted rituals, appears all the more as an empty shell. The institutions of parliament, which have never really represented the people in any case, are daily losing their power in favour of transnational companies.

Tens of thousands of demonstrators are expected to descend on Genoa next week, for the summit of the G8 group of bosses. This is a declaration from one anarchist group in the city, the Circolo Anarchico.

It is right to denounce publicly the injustices produced by globalisation, and to say that these are defects in the process which cannot be mended. It would also be a grave error to think of fighting to restore the power of the state instead. Yes, it is true that a different world is possible – a world in which ecology and equality between human beings are two sides of the same coin, without wars and where nobody is condemned to choose between hunger and immigration. We can have a world where the production

of goods serves only to satisfy needs and not the already overstuffed pockets of the few through the destructive process of unbridled consumption. But it will be possible only when we liberate ourselves from the old schemes and myths. We have to build up, from the foundations, a new society day by day.

Today this all seems, if not at hand, then also not too distant. Groups organised the same way are fighting globalisation around the world, without leaders to command them or footsoldiers to follow.

And if, beyond the spectacular protests, these groups serve to build something new? It could be a good beginning, we think!

Circolo Anarchico
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Iraq: the suffering goes on

Report from
Voices in the Wilderness UK

Two weeks ago, Voices in the Wilderness UK and the Campaign against Sanctions on Iraq (CASI) co-hosted an anti-sanctions conference in London on the eve of a crucial UN vote. The conference, which took place over the weekend 30th June to 1st July, was described by Denis Halliday, former UN Humanitarian Coordinator for Iraq and a keynote speaker, as the best anti-sanctions conference he had been to.

In a significant victory for the international anti-sanctions movement, a dangerous British resolution on the introduction of so-called 'smart sanctions' was soon afterwards withdrawn during debate on the Security Council. The opportunity now exists to build a significant march in London on 5th August, and to take the campaign to a new level.

A recent UN report noted that there are over two million malnourished children in Iraq on a special feeding programme under the UN oil-for-food deal. The humanitarian crisis which has claimed the lives of hundreds of thousands of children in the past decade continues.

The reaction of the British government has been to try to pull the wool over our eyes with the 'smart sanctions' resolution, which they claimed would solve the crisis. According to a joint statement from Denis

Halliday and Hans von Sponeck (another former UN Humanitarian Coordinator) on 29th May, "what is proposed at this point in fact amounts to a tightening of the rope around the neck of the average Iraqi citizen".

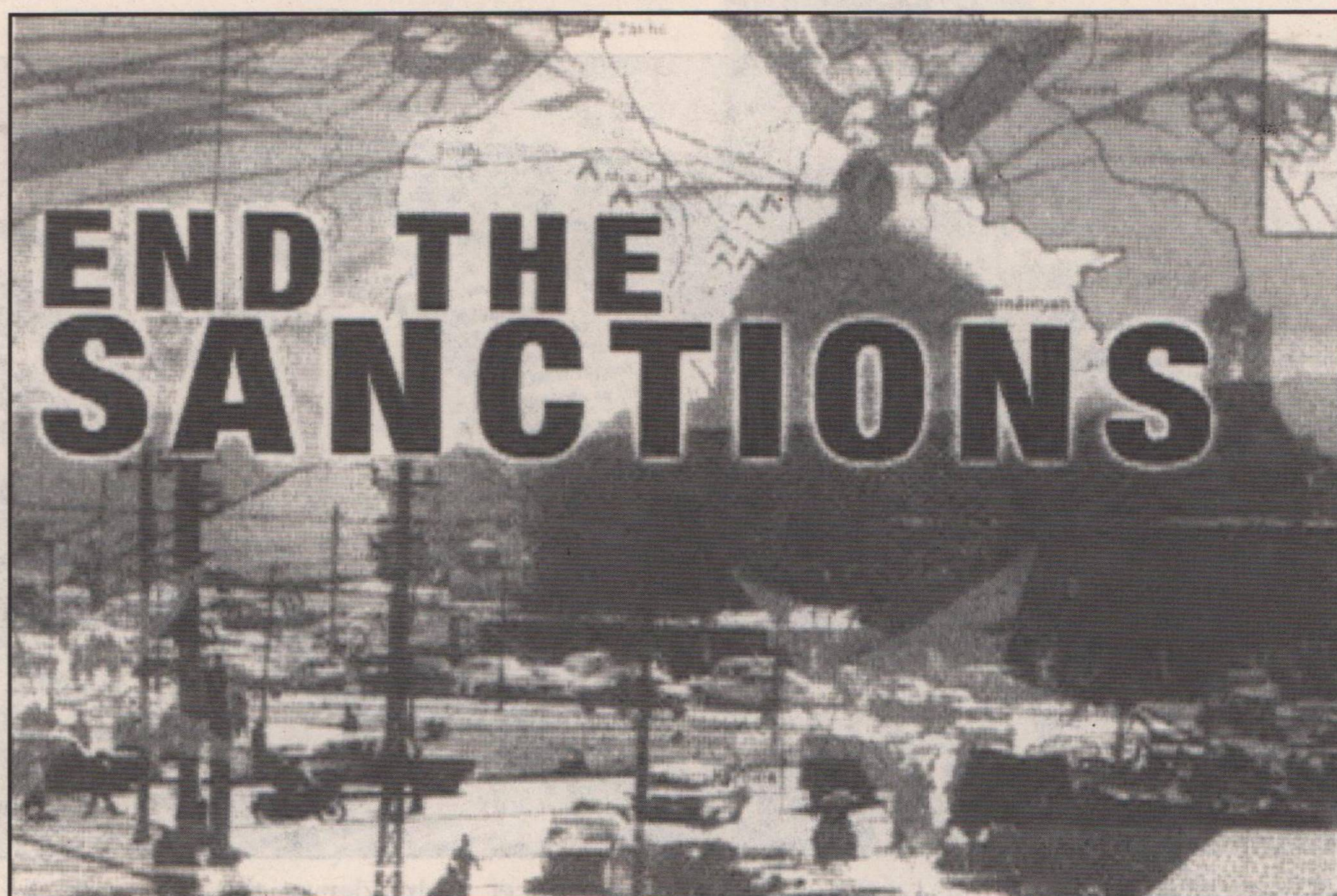
Families' needs

To figure out where the resolution failed, we need to understand what Iraqi families need now. What they need most of all is jobs (von Sponeck estimated last year that unemployment was running at 60%), and to be paid their wages in money that means something. The Iraqi dinar, worth £2 in 1990, is now worth less than 0.05p.

They also need the restoration of the public health infrastructure. This would mean, for example, rehabilitating or replacing water purification plants, water pumping stations, an electricity system which doesn't keep breaking down, and water pipes which aren't corroded. Contaminated drinking water is the main reason that child mortality has more than doubled under sanctions.

Reviving the Economy

Many Iraqi families are now too poor even to eat the virtually free food ration they are given each month. They have to trade part of it to buy clothes, pay for travel (perhaps to hospital) and make other essential purchases. They need purchasing power to survive, to be able to buy fruit and vegetables and meat (a staple of the Iraqi diet).



The UN Food and Agriculture Organisation said in 1995 that solving the nutritional crisis in Iraq meant restoring the "viability" of the Iraqi dinar, and "creating conditions for the people to acquire adequate purchasing power". These conditions could be fulfilled "only if the economy can be put back in proper shape, enabling it to draw on its own resources, and that clearly cannot occur as long as the embargo remains in force".

Generating jobs and improving the value of the dinar depend on the re-inflation of the entire economy.

Humanitarian panel

"The humanitarian situation in Iraq will continue to be a dire one in the absence of a sustained revival of the Iraqi economy", said the UN security council's own 'humanitarian panel' of experts in March 1999.

According to the experts, in order to re-inflate the economy Iraq must be allowed to export its civilian goods to earn foreign exchange, to take foreign loans and investments, and to have access to its foreign exchange earnings.

None of these things was allowed under the British-sponsored resolution.

Failing the people

The *Financial Times* reported an anonymous aid agency as saying, "it won't improve life for the ordinary Iraqi. It will do nothing to tackle the real issue - how to stimulate the internal economy and allow civil society to come back". The paper's own verdict was that the proposals "will not revive Iraq's devastated economy while control over Iraq's oil revenues remains in the hands of the UN".

Having seen the draft resolution, the *Economist* commented, "although the country would be able to import more, it would still be denied the free movement of labour and capital that it desperately needs if it is at last to start picking itself up. Iraq needs massive investment to rebuild its industry, its power grids and its schools, and needs cash in hand to pay its engineers, doctors and teachers. None of this looks likely to happen under smart sanctions".

Tightening the noose

The resolution is designed to stop Iraq having access to foreign exchange from oil smuggling and under the counter 'surcharges' from oil companies, and proposes using oil-for-food revenues to bribe neighbouring states to tighten up on these operations.

But without foreign earnings, how is Iraq meant to pay its teachers and doctors, and pay for the maintenance of schools, hospitals and other essential services? This is why Denis Halliday and Hans von Sponeck describe the resolution as tightening the noose around the neck of the average Iraqi citizen.

Voices in the Wilderness is responding to the failure of the British proposals - blocked in the end by a threatened Russian veto - by organising a march on 5th August to mark the 11th anniversary of sanctions being imposed (see back page).

Milan Rai

For more information on Voices in the Wilderness UK please contact 0845 458 2564 or voices@viwuk.freereserve.co.uk

Murder in Small Town X

There is a dangerous new player that is defining our role in life - branding. Over the past few decades, corporations have gradually penetrated our everyday lives. They enter our homes, our schools and ultimately our minds through branding. Corporations attempt to convince us that their products are 'liberating', 'adventurous', 'attractive', 'intellectual' and 'sexy'. They try to convince us of the 'need' to own their products. Through the millions of pounds invested in research and advertising, corporations are redefining not only our culture but also our individuality.

And how have they afforded such investments? By passing the responsibility for the production of their raw materials to contractors, where sweatshop working conditions ensure that workers have low wages, no benefits, no job security and no right to organise - in essence ensuring low

production costs for corporate branders. The textile industry for example, with corporations like Nike and Gap, has passed production on to sweatshops in Central America and Asia.

The creation of culture belongs in our hands, not the hands of the profit-oriented corporations. We are the ones who should be defining our cultural, economic, social and political relations. We are the ones who should be defining our individuality. Now is the time to confront this dangerous new trend. It's time to take back our space - a space that is free from corporate branding, a space that is defined by those who rightfully own our culture and our individuality: us!

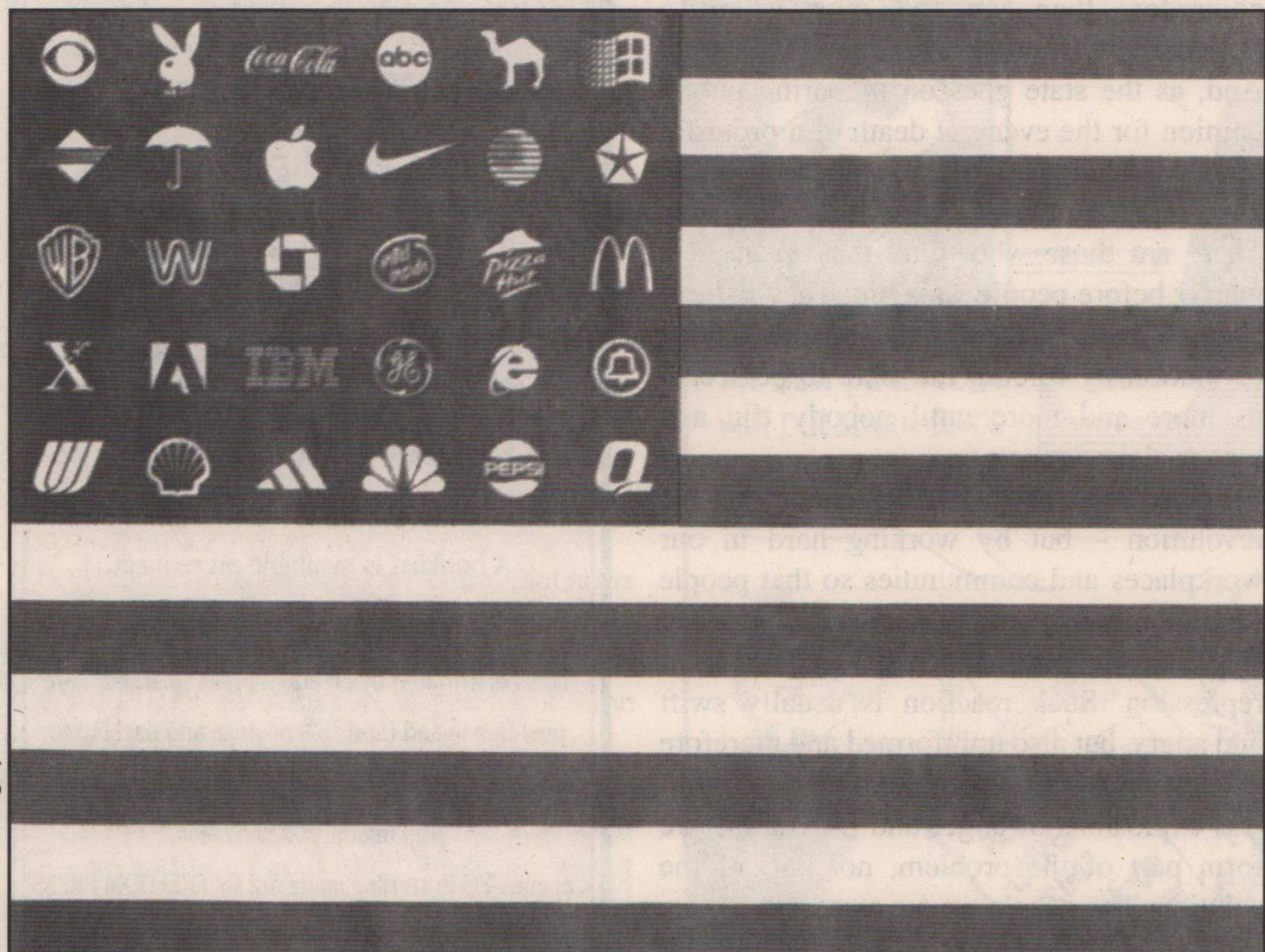
Corporate advertising has started invading a new space, at least in the United States. This is done through what the Taco Bell Corporation calls an "in-programme brand placement strategy" and what the Fox Broadcasting Company calls "the next

generation of marketing".

Taco Bell has sponsored the new US television show *Murder in Small Town X*, a reality-based television show that will debut on Fox on 24th July. In the words of Debbie Myers, vice president of media services at Taco Bell, "our involvement with *Murder in Small Town X* is an organic and creative way to break through the media clutter". Through the media and into our children's minds.

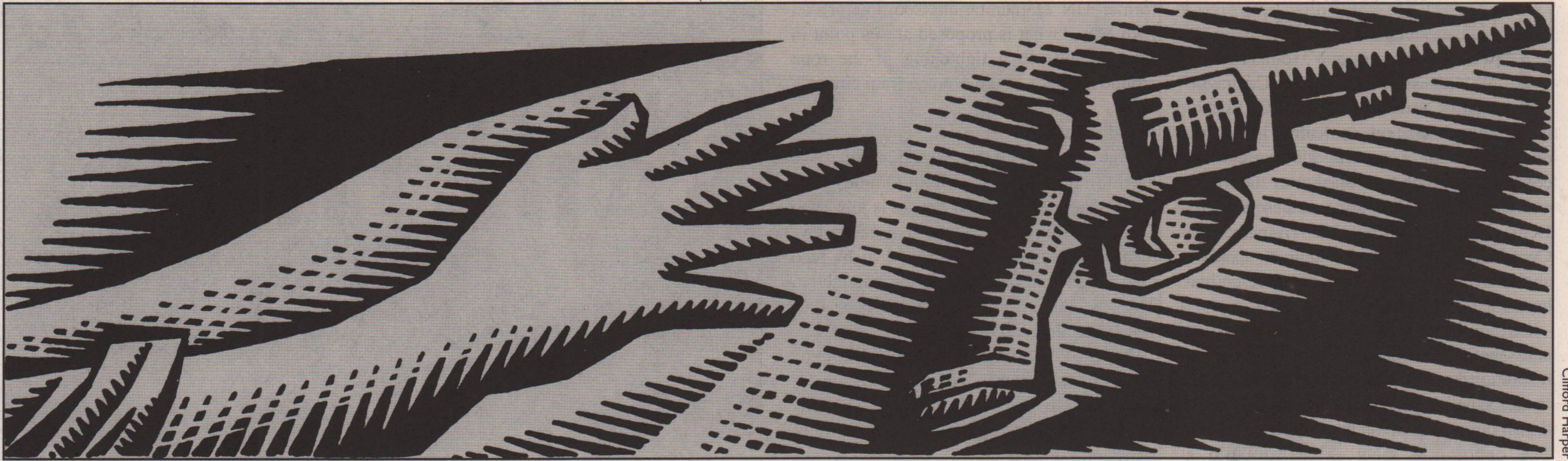
In exchange for sponsorship, Taco Bell is given the right to an onscreen presence with several key scenes in which the main characters are inside a Taco Bell restaurant enjoying the food. Taco Bell is also given the right to brand merchandise products on the show - for example, their new grilled stuffed burrito will be, in the words of Taco Bell Corporation, "prominently featured in a seamless manner". Quite a reality show, where products are advertised in a 'seamless manner' and where the main characters 'casually' enjoy Taco Bell food. I wonder if the characters in this 'reality show' will be allowed to talk about Taco Bell's many exploitative business practices: maintaining sub-poverty wages and poor working conditions for the workers who provide them with tomatoes, for example; degrading Mexican culture in order to sell their products; systematically cheating their employees out of their wages in Washington, Oregon and California; using illegal contaminants in their taco shells.

From the perspective of the Taco Bell Corporation, young people are mindless creatures that can be manipulated into blindly enjoying the Taco Bell brand, without actually considering where the food comes from. "The heightened anticipation created by the murder investigation among the show's viewers can be compared with the excitement our core target audience has for our brand", says vice president Debbie Myers. Hmm. **Dubya**



alternative US flag by Adbusters

Violence and me



Clifford Harper

In the wake of the various meetings of our owners and their corresponding counter-demonstrations in places like Salzburg and Gothenburg comes the perennial argument about anarchist and violence. Perennial arguments are usually perennial because both sides (or all sides) are right about some things and anchor their opinions around this fact, regardless of the equally obvious fact that nobody is ever right about everything. Regarding their opinions as correct, they become resistant to criticism and refuse to budge from their position. This seems to be the case with the issue of anarchism and violence. In order to foster the spirit of comradely debate, this article seeks to put the case against violent behaviour.

Violence is authoritarian

In a movement comprised of equals, those who favour violence will always dominate those who are opposed to it and their actions will have consequences that affect everybody. The violent nature of protest drowns out all other (perfectly valid) means and the dominant identity becomes that of the minority.

Violence is dehumanising

All violence is dehumanising. This is true whether it is justifiable or not. Violence dehumanises both the aggressor and the victim. Anarchism is all about becoming as human as possible, a goal best achieved through the attainment of freedom. Using the limiting and dehumanising tactic of violence is not going to get us there. Sometimes there is no other option, but (as the Taoists tell us) violence is employed by the wise only as a last resort.

Violence leads to vanguardism

This is perhaps the argument which is most strongly felt by anarchists. I for one cringed when I read of people cheering the black bloc as they paraded down a street in Québec in April. I resent the declaration of war that the Tutte Bianchi prepared for the media and which they made in my name, more so when I hear that this group works hand in hand with political parties and

the police. I shudder at the idea that the Wombles and other such groups 'spearhead' protest groups.

Anarchists are realists. We understand that many people look to others to lead them. The anarchosindicalist unions have structured themselves in such a way as to make it difficult for would-be leaders to rise to the top. Many people in the anarchist movement, on the other hand, sing the praises of the anarchist vanguard groups who head the demonstrations, literally as well as metaphorically.

Violence is alienating

Violence carried out by anarchists serves to alienate the whole movement from the very people we want to embrace us. Some anarchists argue that these people are reformists, predisposed against us in the first place. That may be so, but they remain the majority. Our violence shouldn't be anarchist violence, it should be the violence of the people. If they don't share our point of view, it is because we are failing to put it across sufficiently.

Our analysis is the analysis of the political 'working class'. And yet we are alienated from our grassroots because we are throwing our lot in with a (middle class reformist) movement that is rapidly gaining a reputation as pointlessly nihilistic. Editorials like the one in *Freedom* (30th June), where violence is justified or portrayed as irrelevant to the development of the repression, do nothing to clarify the diversity within the anarchist movement. It is not for anarchists to justify (or condemn) the actions of other people. And violence is quite clearly relevant to the growing repression that the states are unfolding.

Violence is addictive

There are those who feel addicted to violence. Understandably so. It's glamorous and we live in a world which sells violence to us on a mass scale. Now we get the chance to buy in. But it's worth remembering that the means determine the end, and that the ends should determine the means. Violence will one day by necessary to defend the gains of the working class, but for now we have nothing to defend. We are playing with words if we argue that we are just defending ourselves from the attack of the police. Surely nobody really believes that all those who engaged in rioting and stone throwing were spontaneously responding to police aggression?

Violence (for now) is pointless

For me, this is the biggest problem. Like most anarchists, I accept that in the event of revolution, violence will be necessary and inevitable. But we are a long way from that day. Now, the violence that we use against them is being turned back on us. What can we possibly hope to achieve by this violence? Is it just the spontaneous expression of frustration and anger that we (quite rightly) feel? If so, we should learn to exercise self-discipline. There will be a day when violence is needed, but now it's premature.

Violence is polarising

We are not going to change many people's minds with violence. Usually we are simply reaffirming prejudices or preaching to the converted. There are those who will see the police's reaction as proof that the state is hypocritical, and reserves its right to defend its monopoly on violence. Unfortunately they are in the minority and were with us any way. Others will watch the police rain down baton blows against our skulls, open fire against us, gas us, arrest us and imprison us, and they will think, 'they got what was coming to them'. So nobody changes their minds, and the majority become inured to the escalating level of violence against dissent. In the absence of political awareness, our violence serves only to maintain the status quo and, in the worst case, strengthen it.

Gratuitous violence is hypocritical

If we can't hope to change anything with our own violence, yet persist in defending, justifying or excusing the violence of our comrades, then we too must share a responsibility for the dead and wounded. And, as the state goes on preparing public opinion for the eventual death of a protester in Europe, our participation in the game is short-sighted at best and cynical at worst. There are those who think that we need a martyr before people wake up. They believe that we have to create the conditions for revolution by forcing the state to persecute us more and more until nobody can any longer claim ignorance.

We do need to create the conditions for revolution – but by working hard in our workplaces and communities so that people become more aware of their slave status, not so that people react against acts of repression. Such reaction is usually swift and angry, but also uninformed and therefore unsustainable. By encouraging these pointless explosions of anger and frustration, we form part of the problem, not part of the solution. The people we are standing next to, fighting the police, are carrying posters of

Mao, flying Bolshevik flags, selling Trotskyist papers and wearing Leninist badges. Their hypocrisy is to be expected, but it is so disillusioning to see anarchists betraying revolutionary principles as well.

There is clearly a role for violence within anarchist philosophy, but it should be violence which is inevitable and strictly defensive. Naturally, there are other anarchists who favour violence now, and they are as entitled to their views as I am to mine. I understand their frustration and anger against the bosses. I understand and (reluctantly) accept that we will ultimately have to resort to the authoritarian, polarising, alienating and dehumanising force of violence in order to create a new world. But I feel that there are comrades whose eager embrace of violence is at best premature and counterproductive, at worst vanguardistic and gratuitous. I would advocate playing a much less glamorous role by working within our communities and at our workplaces. That way, when the time for violence does come, it will be brief, joyless and counterproductive.

Kroppie

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(in Angel Alley)

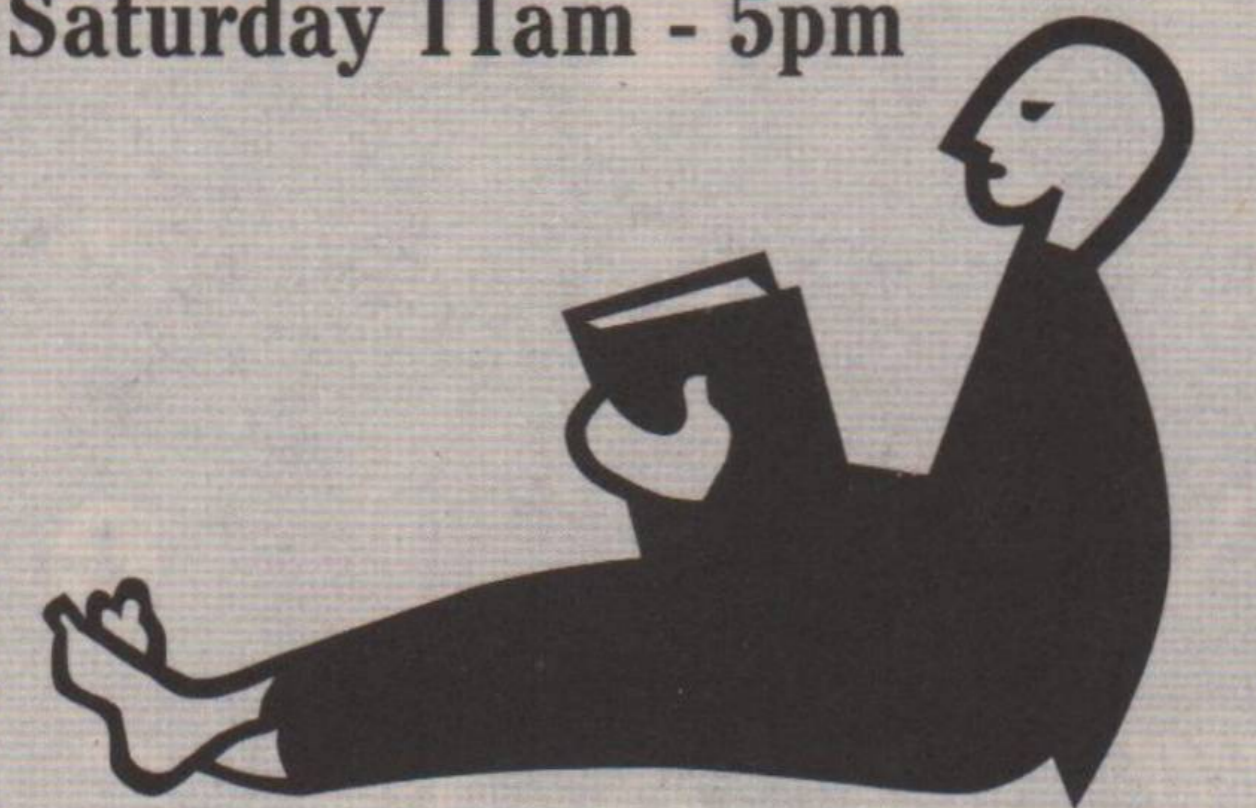
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What we say ...

Speed the day

When we wrote the editorial for the last issue, we never thought that the very next day we'd be getting reports of killings on an anti-capitalist protest in Papua New Guinea.

The deaths in the (apparently misnamed) Pacific have, we think, upped the stakes even more than the shootings in Gothenburg did last month.

As we said in that last editorial, the bosses are scared that a system which supports them – capitalism – is under attack as never before. But they'll not give in without a fight, and for them the fight starts now: nip it in the bud is a well-advised strategy, from their point of view.

Taking on capitalism is a dangerous business, and the system's beneficiaries will do their best to remind us of the danger. In the same way that first world war generals had a few of their own side shot to make sure the others did as they were told, the politicians and capitalists will quite happily have a few anarchists blown away to put the frighteners on the rest.

It won't work. The system's too big and bad for us to bow our heads and submit forever. All their guns and all their force can only put off the inevitable day, when we reach out for freedom and hold it in our grasp.

Psychological weapon

The original Star Wars initiative was launched by US president Ronnie Reagan in the 1980s, supposedly to counter the perceived threat from Soviet nuclear forces but really a psychological weapon designed to trick the USSR into boosting its arms spending, so bankrupting itself in the process.

Just like the first Star Wars project, this second one won't work and (we suspect) was never meant to. We reckon it's a psychological weapon just like its dad, this time designed to show an impregnable, safe and secure face to Americans and the outside world alike.

But that would make it nothing more than a sophisticated, expensive and dangerous way for citizens of the world's only superpower to stick their heads in the sand. And as we all know, doing that solves nothing.

What we say

No newspaper, this one included, likes to lose subscribers. It is even more regrettable to lose a subscriber of forty years' standing over what seems to us to be a misunderstanding.

"I particularly object to your 'What the Mirror Thinks' type column", says Jonn Roe (right), "which insults anarchists by telling them in an ABC manner what they ought to think".

But this column, which has so annoyed Jonn, was never intended to tell other people what they should think.

What is an editorial? In the mainstream press, it is the thoughts of the editor and his executives, guided by the proprietor's wishes. In the papers of the leftwing, it is the policy decreed by central committee.

But *Freedom* is neither of these things. We have no party or central committee to represent. Nor is our editorial column called 'what you ought to think'.

One of the guiding principles of anarchism (we maintain) is that people take responsibility for themselves. 'What we say' means just that: what we, the editorial group, say about the issues of the fortnight. You say and think what you want to, Jonn. We speak only for ourselves.

Readers' letters

Subs cancelled

Dear *Freedom*,

I shall not be renewing my sub to *Freedom*. The publication seems to have become, in the main, a sort of 'anarchism for beginners' which, as a subscriber on and off for 40 years or so, is not my case. 'He is not your friend' (19th May) as a headline about policemen is carrying back-to-basics to extremes.

I don't like your recent soundbite attitude to subjects. There can be no real discussion of anything – or indeed any proper reporting – in a dozen lines. I particularly object to your 'What the Mirror Thinks' type column, which insults anarchists by telling them in an ABC manner what they ought to think.

This ties up with Nick S's hectoring tone, he seeming more concerned to alienate those who might come to anarchistic attitudes but infringe his extremely narrow rules, than to convert people.

These days, I often get the impression I am reading, or re-reading, one of the narrow-minded and dog-in-the-manger communist rags of the 1950s. There are still articles, such as 'Poisoned Atmosphere' (16th June), which are informative and well written, but by and large I think I am not part of your target public.

Jonn Roe

See editorial, left

Dear *Freedom*,

Thank you very much for the copies of *Freedom* you have been sending me. They have been a good read.

However, I will not be renewing my subscription because I cannot, in all conscience, subscribe to a paper that prints pro-abortion articles.

I am an anarchist through and through, but I am also a Christian and as such I believe that life is precious and sacred, and so all unborn children, I believe, have rights – especially a right to life.

I hope you can understand my position.

Simon O'Meara

purpose, there would only be a reason for exchanging it (other than as a curious hobby) if private property survived and so most people were being deprived of access to goods. Is that what Richard wants? In what way would it be 'their own money'?

Laurens Otter

More on Garner

Dear *Freedom*,

Richard Garner challenges (letters, 16th June): "would you ban 'capitalist acts between consenting adults' (in your anarchist communist society?)".

One could as well reverse the question: would you ban statist acts? Prisons? Or slave-holding? In each case of course the question is meaningless. Capitalism does not, and never has, acted between consenting adults (nor has the state, nor did slave-owning). By definition it is a power relationship under which some people are masters (if you will excuse the gendered word, as unfortunately mistresses has a different connotation), and others are forced to be subservient and to work for the master.

If Richard's challenge were merely a case of saying 'would an anarchist society tolerate within it an exceptional case where a group of people worked together and that they all willingly preserved unequal relationships reminiscent of class society?', the answer would obviously be yes, though even there I suspect the neighbours would be right to view the group with extreme suspicion, lest the relationship spread more widely.

As to the earlier question, "would you permit workers to exchange their labour amongst themselves, by means of their own money?", money would only serve a

Nasty Nestlé

Dear *Freedom*,

Further to your report on the anti-Nestlé demo (16th June), I thought readers might like some further information about the campaign and how they can help.

Baby Milk Action, who organised the demo, have an excellent website which gives all the information you need about the issue and the campaign against Nestlé. Those who don't have access to the internet can write to Baby Milk Action for further details, including on request examples of the code violations which Nestlé deny.

To aid the campaign, the following action can be taken:

- Boycott Nestlé products, Nescafé in particular, and write to the company telling them you are doing this.
- Publicise the boycott through groups and publications, and get others to take action too. I would also like to hear from anyone interested in leafletting or running a stall in the central London area. Mail me on edmcArthur94@hotmail.com

Ed McArthur

- Baby Milk Action, 23 St Andrews Street, Cambridge CB2 3AX (www.babymilkaction.org)
- Nestlé UK, Park Lane, Croydon CR19 1NR

Correspondents are asked to keep their letters short. Letters may be cut for reasons of space.

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24th June to 6th July 2001

Freedom Fortnightly Fighting Fund

Beckenham, DP, £10; Glasgow, TK, £2; Presteigne, MH, £3; Weston Super Mare, KF, £6.

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Freedom Press Overheads Fund

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Total to 6th July = £16.00
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We're trying to build up a network of regular reviewers, to help us extend *Freedom's* coverage of books and other media. While unsolicited reviews remain very welcome, we are also keen to make our treatment more focused and comprehensive. We want reviewers for cd-roms, videos, discs, books, cassettes, pamphlets, periodicals and websites, on many topics. We also want to increase our reporting of news from around the UK. To do this, we need more contributors willing to send in news from their own areas. Similarly, there are areas of anarchist comment which we hardly cover now, though we'd like to.

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The next issue of *Freedom* will be dated 28th July, and the last day for copy intended for this issue will be Thursday 19th July 2001.

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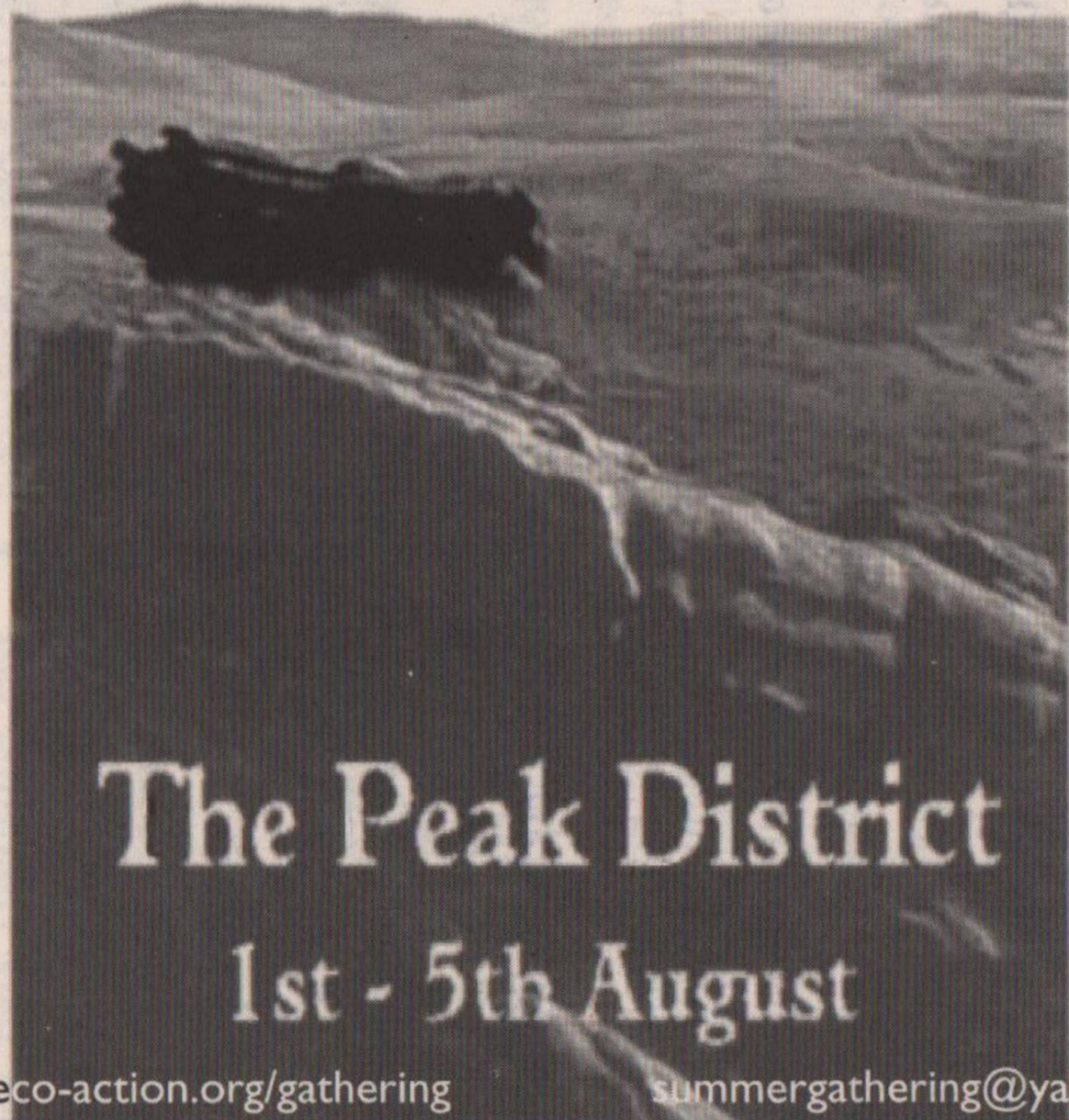
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Summer Gathering 2001



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Anti-sanctions march Sunday 5th August

meet at 1pm, Temple Place, Embankment, London
for march in solidarity with the people of Iraq to mark the
11th anniversary of the imposition of economic sanctions.
Info:Voices UK on 0845 458 2564

Also from 6pm on 5th August to 6pm on 8th August there
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organised by *Voices in the Wilderness UK*

Queeruption

An open meeting on Sunday 15th July at 3pm to discuss future
plans and projects such as publications, parties and actions.
Central Station, upstairs meeting room, Wharfdale Road, Kings
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www.queeruption.com

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FREEDOM fortnightly

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London Anarchist Forum

Thursday 12th July Anarchy, Dictators and Burmese Democracy
don't mix but go together! (speaker Sam Buchanan)

The weekly discussion forum of the London anarchist movement now in
its eighteenth year, held from 8pm at Conway Hall, Red Lion Square,
Holborn. Following the above session the day will shift to a weekday as yet
to be confirmed (probably Thursdays). For more info see: www.trak.to/LAF
or contact LAF@anarchic.co.uk

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Swansea Stop the Incinerator campaign

protests over the planned incinerator scheduled for construction on the
Neath-Swansea constituency border.

Assemble 10.30am on Saturday 14th July, Castle Gardens
contact: stic@hotmail.com

INDUSTRIAL WORKERS OF THE WORLD

London Branch meeting on Monday 16th July, starting at 7.30pm
Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London WCI

All welcome

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www.iww.org.uk info@iww.org.uk

Close Campsfield Detention Centre 18th to 22nd July 2001

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at Southsea Common (opposite the Fun Fair)

*We will be celebrating and educating for the
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— all welcome to free the weed —

www.smokeybearspicnic.com

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Red Rambles walks and rambles for Radicals, Libertarians, Anarchists,
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walking boots, appropriate clothing and to bring waterproofs, food
and drink. See <http://members.tripod.co.uk/ainema/index-2.html>

Sunday 2nd September 2001

Repton: Viking, Saxon and Medieval remains, 6 miles. Meet at Repton Village
Church at 11am. Walk leader Ray.

Sunday 18th November 2001

Lathkill Dale in autumn, 6 miles. Meet at 11am at Monyash Village Green by
the War Memorial. Walk leaders Malcolm & Marion.

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