

# anarchist fortnightly **Freedom**

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FIFTY PENCE

**"The capitalists own  
the tools they do not  
use, the workers use  
the tools they do not  
own"**

**Eugene V. Debs**

## **MAD COW PANIC**

**S**pongiform encephalopathy (BSE, vFSE, Scrapie, CJD, Kudu and other names varying with the species of mammal affected) resisted all attempts to identify the virus which caused it, until the totally unexpected hypothesis was proposed that it is not a virus at all but a mis-shapen protein.

Politicians and officials without scientific training are impressed by Greek. Because scientists can translate

'disease that makes holes in the brain' into *spongiform encephalopathy*, it is assumed they know what is going on. Before 1995, scientific advice to the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (MAFF) was "we don't know what causes BSE, but we're looking for a virus". MAFF proceeded on the basis that BSE was caused by a virus, citing 'scientific evidence'. A hand-out of the 1970s reads:

"Food items containing meat or meat products, such as sandwiches, pork pies, pasties and burgers, may carry viruses which, although harmless to humans, can cause serious disease in grass eating animals and pigs. It is illegal to feed such products to livestock."

But the prohibition did not apply to the meat in cattle-cake, because that was heated to destroy viruses and other parasites.

The inclusion of meat in cattle-cake is often misunderstood. Cattle are not 'vegetarian'. They are herbivores which require meat chemicals to be healthy. On grass they obtain all the meat they need by ingesting invertebrates 'by accident', but in artificial feed meat much be included 'on purpose'.

Epidemiological studies suggested that the unknown agent of BSE could be acquired by eating brain, so brain was banned from cattle-cake in 1989. Now some cases of human spongiform encephalopathy (CJD) have occurred which appear to be due to eating beef *before 1989* (one victim has been a vegetarian since 1991). The only thing anyone can do about what happened before 1989 is panic. So that is what is being done.

Panic has not been alleviated by Minister of Agriculture Douglas Hogg, probably promoted to the Cabinet because he is descended from

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## **'THREE STRIKES AND YOU'RE OUT'**

### **UNEMPLOYED ACTION GROUPS DECLARE WAR ON DOLE HARASSERS**

**O**n 25th May around forty people representing groups from London, Brighton, Manchester, Edinburgh, Cambridge, Sheffield, Leeds, Huddersfield and Nottingham attended the fifth conference of Groundswell at the Sheffield Coordinating Centre Against Unemployment. Launched in April 1995, Groundswell (which is a network of unemployed groups) seeks to coordinate and mobilise national opposition to the Job Seekers Allowance (JSA) which the government is planning to introduce in full this October.

This was the first Groundswell conference to be held in the north and, though the turn-out was disappointing as compared with previous conferences, the meeting was packed and the contributions on the whole were very good and informative. A Brighton delegate informed us about anti-JSA activity in his area and the links which the unemployed had built with local employment service staff who are seeking to stop the implementation of the JSA in Brighton by taking industrial action, ostensibly on the grounds of health and safety. In Nottingham an unemployed group had embarked on a big leafletting campaign and were intending to target, both at home and at work, the managers who were responsible for implementing the JSA in their region. In Manchester, we were told that anti-JSA activity had been centred around the Cheetham Hill benefit office which is running a

pre-JSA pilot scheme. Around twenty people had occupied the Cheetham Hill office in April, and senior employment service officials had been photographed. Apparently the manager is now claiming that he has received death threats. In London around fifty people occupied the offices of the Department of Education and Employment following a demonstration on 9th April. Fire alarms were set off and the building was evacuated. A delegate from Oxford told us that a public meeting about the JSA had recently been organised in Oxford with around thirty people turning up. We were informed that staff working for the employment service in Oxford had been told that all leave would be suspended or cancelled until October, and that staff were leaving in droves. Apparently the staff who had left were being replaced by casuals on three-month contracts.

In terms of anti-JSA activity throughout the country, the conference was told that there had been a number of demonstrations since the beginning of the year. In February there was a demonstration in Newcastle, and in March demonstrations took place in Manchester and Plymouth. In April there was a demonstration and lobby against the JSA and demonstrations against 'Project Work' (work for dole) in London, Hull and Chatham respectively. The conference was told that Hull City Council were boycotting 'Project Work'

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**and much more ...**

# MAD COW PANIC

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politicians who were astute, which he is not. The European Union acted quickly and quietly over swine fever in Germany and Italy, briefing officials to work out plans of eradication and compensation to farmers, and making no public statements until the plans were in operation. Mr Hogg announced the BSE crisis to start with, then went and laid down the law to other Agriculture Ministers about what they must do.

They were insulted and said so. Mr Hogg persisted in thinking they could be browbeaten, so they told him to piss off.

The way of democratic politics is that when a Cabinet Minister does something stupid, the Prime Minister has to declare utter confidence in him and wait until the matter blows over before 'accepting his resignation'. John Major had no political alternative but to back Mr Hogg in his quarrel with the rest of Europe.

The EU has declared a worldwide ban on British beef, including innocuous products like gelatin (in which all the proteins are de-natured) and bulls' semen for breeding. The British government has retaliated by refusing to cooperate with Europe on routine matters like the standardisation of accounting practices and mutual recognition of diplomas (while agreeing to cooperate on important matters like the reduction of fishing quotas). Beef sales have collapsed everywhere, and the government announces they have recovered in Britain, which is not true.

Mr Hogg has sunk from view. Phthalates have been detected in nine brands of baby milk, and MAFF refuses to interfere with trade by saying which brands, but all is announced by junior ministers and anonymous spokespersons.

Some say the function of the state is to protect citizens. Anarchists say it is to protect the ruling class. In the cases of BSE and poisoned baby milk, we observe the government is protecting capitalism at the expense of public health.

## THE BSE BLACK MARKET

Animals which are eaten by the farmers who rear them do not go to market, and are not subject to market regulations. Fifty years ago, when rationing was in force, meat 'for farmers personal consumption' was sold on the black market. Last week, it was alleged in some news media that a similar black market was operating in BSE beef.

That story was quietly dropped after somebody pointed out that beef sold to the government for incineration fetches a higher price than the best beef in butchers' shops. There is a black market, but it operates within the system.

There are two price lists for condemned cattle. Live animals, per kilo, are 86p for old cows and £1.11 for prime beef cattle. Carcasses after slaughter are £1.72 for old cows and £2.22 for prime beef. The difference compensates for weight loss during the slaughtering process, and more than compensates. One example we have seen quoted (in *Private Eye*) is that a heavy steer

worth £660 live can fetch £860 after slaughter. Only a few large slaughterhouses have Ministry killing contracts (at £87.50 per animal - smaller slaughterhouses are applying for Judicial Review of the decision to leave them out). They kill fewer than 20,000 a week, and the number scheduled for destruction is at least 250,000. Farmers have to feed them while they wait, so many are happy to sell them at live weight price to others who gamble on being able to sell them at carcass price in time to make a profit.

This 'gamble' becomes a black market deal when the dealer makes a secret agreement with the slaughterhouse manager to be put at the head of the queue in return for some of the profit. All the lolly, legitimate and black market, is paid out of tax income by a government nominally dedicated to the free play of market forces.

## ALBERT'S FUNERAL

Albert Meltzer's funeral, on Friday 24th May, was a lavish affair paid for by himself, with a hearse drawn by two black horses, a marching jazz band, a stand-up comedian telling jokes in the pulpit and the sound of Marlene Dietrich singing 'See what the boys in the backroom will have' as the coffin slid into the crematorium.

Some might say this was his final humorous act of self-aggrandisement, but it was also a contribution to anarchist propaganda - some might say his first for thirty years. 230 people, including many with whom Albert had fallen out in his quarrelsome later life, walked through Lewisham in his funeral procession. It was reported in the national press, and excited some interest in anarchism as such.

We agree with Albert that his passing should be "celebrated with jollity".

# 'THREE STRIKES AND YOU'RE OUT'

(continued from page 1)

and so is most of the voluntary sector. Within the employment service, around eleven pre-JSA pilot schemes have crashed due to non-cooperation or the threat of industrial action from staff. This is out of a total of 21 schemes. In addition, various benefit offices have been occupied.

As the campaign against the JSA intensifies, there are signs of increasing anxiety among employment service staff who will be responsible for its implementation in October. A recent survey of 44,000 employment service staff which was leaked to the *Guardian* (13th May 1996) revealed that two-thirds of staff believed that the JSA would endanger their personal safety and 74% believe that the JSA would also put their jobs at risk. Already staff are demanding security screens in open-plan offices and security staff have been deployed at some benefit offices. A conference delegate from Manchester informed us that a source within the employment service who he had spoken to had indicated that many senior employment service officials were now having serious doubts that the JSA would work. Many employment service staff realise that the JSA is a potential bomb which is waiting to explode and that the shit will hit the fan when it is introduced in full in October. An Oxford delegate told the conference that it had been revealed that the employment service intended to target some 216,000 people during 1996/97 who, under JSA rules, would be disqualified for not being available for work, not actively seeking or work or not being willing to accept work, i.e. 'notified vacancies'.

Faced with this kind of onslaught, claimant

groups are now starting to fight back. The Sheffield Groundswell conference agreed to adopt an excellent direct action initiative which is already being used by claimant groups in Edinburgh to counter dole harassment. This initiative, which is known as 'Three Strikes and You're Out', involves a series of warning letters being sent to employment service officials who are known to harass claimants. An official who is reported for dole harassment receives two warning letters advising them to stop harassing claimants and to treat them more courteously. A third 'strike' means that the official's photograph and home address are obtained and flyposted around Edinburgh, and an angry demonstration is mounted in the benefit office where the recalcitrant official is employed. Needless to say, the vast majority of employment service staff who do not harass claimants have nothing to fear from this type of measure, which will be aimed at the 'recalcitrant few' who like to act like the 'Gestapo' of the employment service.

Finally, the Sheffield Groundswell conference also discussed and agreed on future actions (which I have no intention of revealing) which will take place later in the year to thwart the introduction of the JSA. It was also agreed to hold the next Groundswell conference in Nottingham in early August. Further details about Groundswell can be obtained from Oxford 01865-723750.

Joe McCarthy

The last date for copy for the next issue of Freedom will be Friday 14th June 1996.

# ANARCHIST COMMENTS IN BRIEF

**WHAT IS A LIFE?** I am still under the influence of one of television *Panorama's* half-hour programmes, the title of which I forget, but it was about the 2½ year old Thomas who was born with such awful brain damage - blind, deaf, no sucking reaction at birth, not able to move his limbs ... what else can you add to justify snuffing out this non-life at birth. Fed by a tube up his nostril and later through his nasal, he was allowed, thanks to the medical profession and the law, to live (?) for 2½ years. He would still be alive now if that mafia continued to deny his loving, doting parents, who knew that all little Thomas experienced was pain and wanted him to be allowed to be put out of his misery, but for the expected fact that he developed a chest infection and, to the credit of their local GP who refused any treatment, little Thomas died within a day or two.

In this excellent *Panorama* programme not only do the parents and their other two children emerge as extraordinarily warm human beings (it does me good, as a change from the daily murders on the motorways by 'stressed' 'raged' drivers to which the media give such prominence). I saw nothing, even in the broadsheets, of that *Panorama* programme

which reduces me to tears as I write.

Needless to say, I have a bitter comment for the medical man who was responsible for little Thomas not being spared daily pain. He, as a medical man, recognised that the infant, by his pathetic cries, could feel pain (though when objects were directed against him he could neither see nor feel the rush of air) and therefore there was 'a future' for him.

The same doctors, in wartime, examine the conscripts to decide whether they are fit to fight and be killed. So much for the hypocrisy of mouthing all about the sanctity of life.

It was an important *Panorama* programme which got no recognition by the media - not surprisingly. And those of us who saw Thomas's parents will wish to send them greetings and sympathies, but also to tell them that it was their love for the infant that made them ask society - the law - unsuccessfully to spare more pain for Thomas, quite apart from their own pain when taking that decision.

Thank goodness there are still some human beings among us!

**ALWAYS BLAME THE ANARCHISTS!** Since I imagine most anarchists don't read the *Sunday Times*, a recent issue (12th May) splashed over

a six-column headline "Anarchists living high on the hogwash" - whatever that may mean - is obviously of interest.

"Life with 250 students, new age travellers and hard core anarchist squatter radicals who have taken over the site of a disused distillery in Wandsworth."

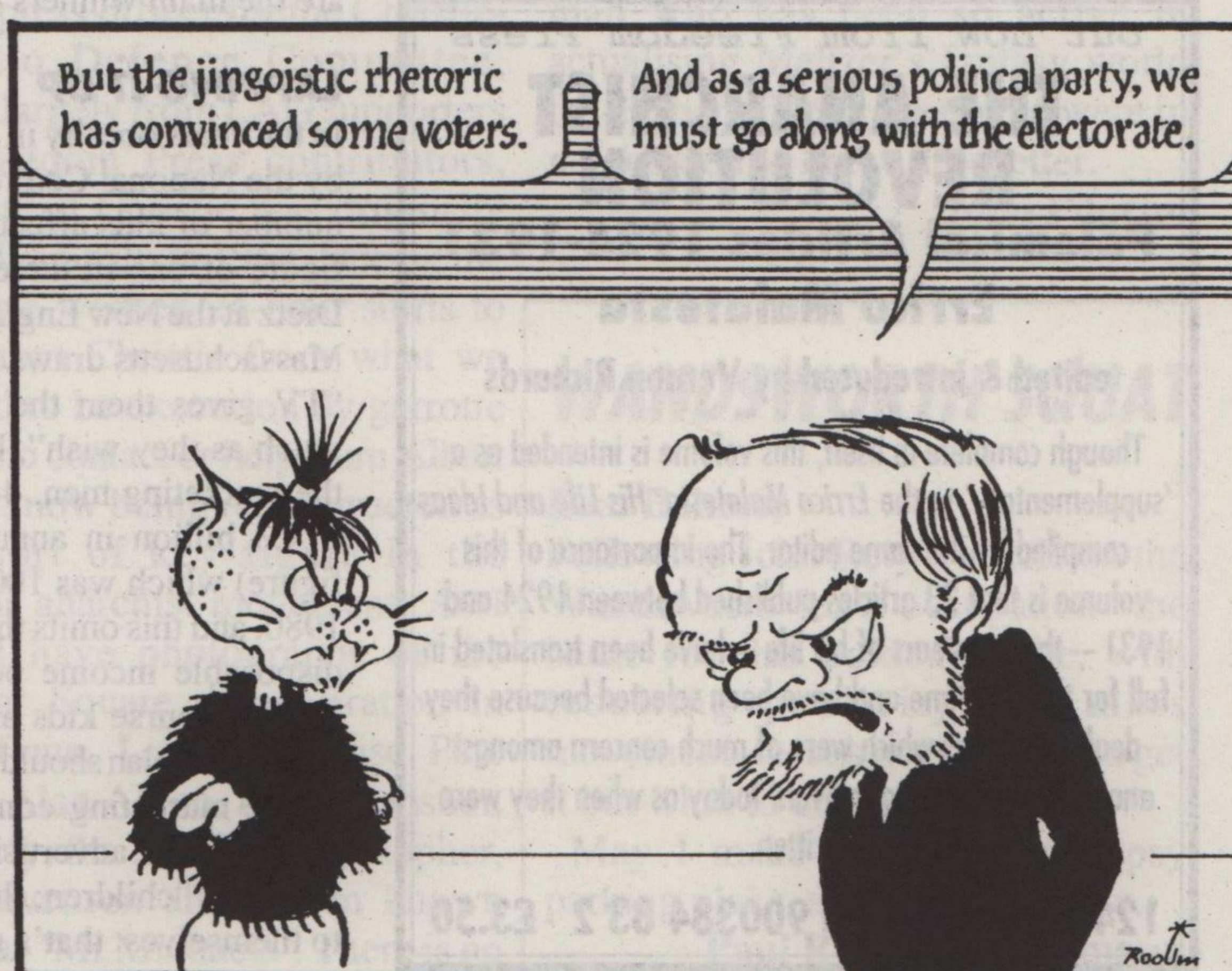
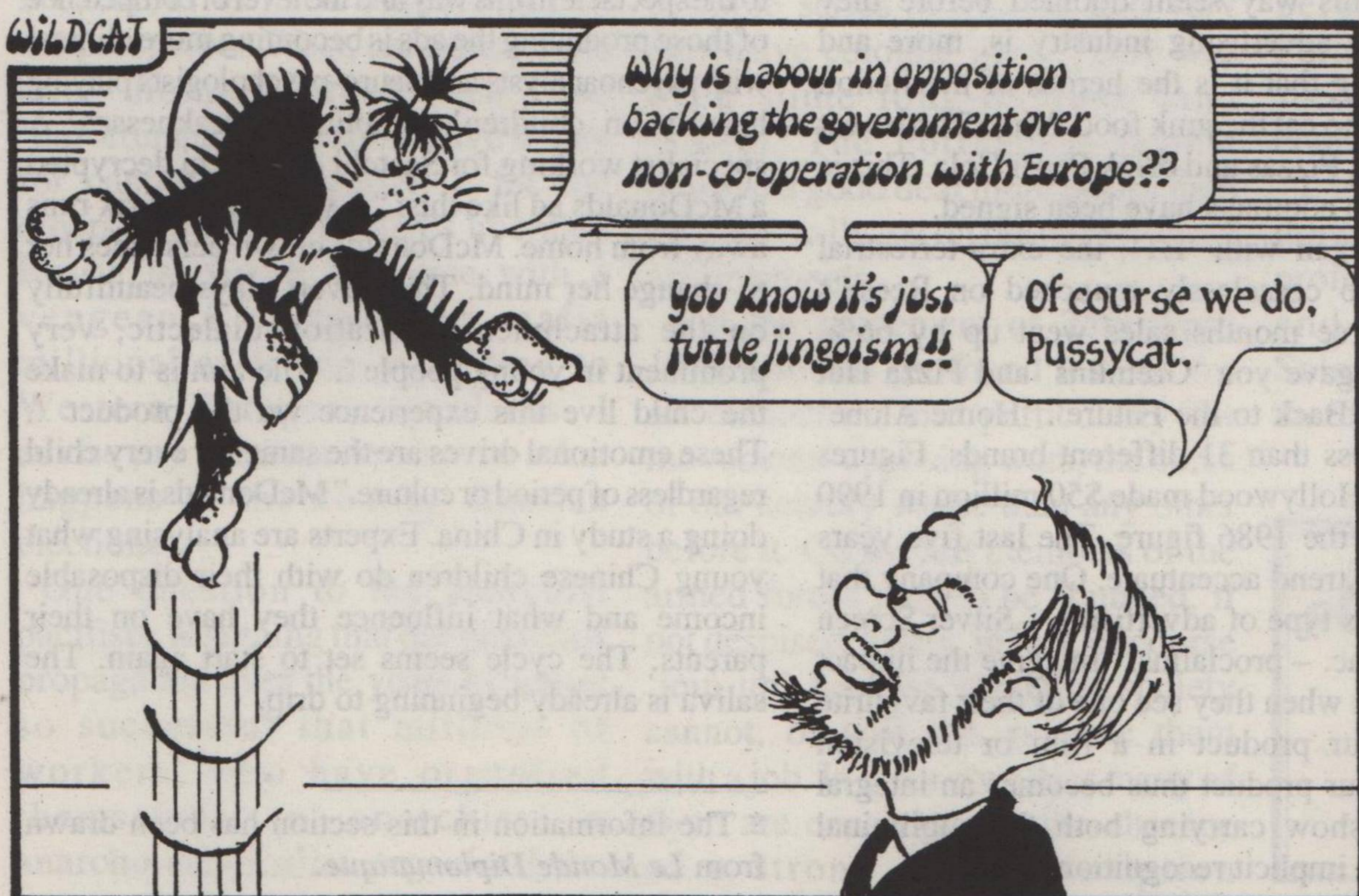
*Freedom* readers already know all about the Wandsworth squat. It's nothing like Simon Sebag Montefiore's report of when he joined "the circus of misfits masquerading as eco-warriors". With a name like that what would he have to think of the squat!

I quote a passage from Sebag for you to get the flavour:

"There are many educated, ecologically concerned students here. They wear suede jackets, carry laptop computers and use pitchforks to work the soil. The trouble lies with the hard core, who are not nice, cud-chewing, hippie gardeners but rent-a-crowd anarchists, vicious nihilistic kill-the-richers whom I met when I went undercover at Brightonsea and new age travellers festivals. They, who are as far from the hippie ideals as Hell's Angels from heaven, have all been at Newbury for the by-pass, Brightonsea for the meat and Stonehenge for the solstice, and were bused here in free transport."

When will somebody de-bag Sebag?

Libertarian



# EVICITION OF SQUATS IN AMSTERDAM

Reporters of all Dutch television stations and newspapers gathered early Tuesday morning, 2nd April 1996. For years reports about 'the eviction of the last big squatted house in Amsterdam' had been spread, but the once-famous Amsterdam squatters' movement had re-emerged. The journalists all got what they came for: violence, drama, a circus. But, the average age of these squatters was 20, or under 20. Due to cut-backs in social security, students' allowances, high unemployment rates, rent prices rising 6% every year, more and more young people see no other way to get a roof over their heads than to squat a building. After the enormous influence of squatters in the early '80s, their downfall in the mid-1980s, a new generation of squatters seem to demand their place in Dutch society now.

First one up this Tuesday was a squat on the Heerengracht 584, in the centre of Amsterdam. It had been squatted only three days before, and was going to be evicted under Article 429, the one and a half year old anti-squat law, that says squatting of a building that has been used in the last one year is forbidden, and can be evicted without any intervention from a judge. Squatters said it had been empty for over three years. The owner is the ING-Bank (the one that bought Nick Leeson's bankrupt Barings Bank). When the police column arrived early Tuesday morning there

were no squatters any more: all water-taps were open and the place looked like a post-modern swimming pool. Next one up was a former supermarket in the east of town. A big audience watched the police open the doors: nothing.

Only a few hundred meters away from the supermarket is the Zeeburgerpad. The houses and (small) industrial buildings were to be demolished because the town council of Amsterdam wants to build a road that connects the development area New-East to the older part of the city. For ten years people in the Old-East part of town had been protesting this road, that would cause even more traffic in the already congested city. In 1994 squatters took over the last buildings that were to be demolished for this plan, and tried to get a referendum organised on this plan. For this purpose they gathered over 7,000 signatures, but the town council turned down the request for a referendum, saying some of the people signing the request were no longer traceable. In the period they lived there the squatters turned this piece of town into a social-cultural project: they organised concerts and discussions, run a soup kitchen and established an atmosphere of self-organisation.

The Zeeburgerdijk squatters built barricades in the night before their eviction. One of these barricades was lit at 7.30am, directly beneath a railroad crossing nearby. Train traffic was

down for an hour. The police did not arrive immediately, they decided to evict the two earlier mentioned squats first. The fire on the barricade was extinguished by the fire brigade at approximately 8.30am, without any interference from the squatters. After the police had evicted the supermarket, at 10.00am, police-spokesman Wilting told the press the eviction of the Zeeburgerpad-buildings were to be a piece of cake. At 11.30am, the police column with water-cannons, bulldozers and helicopter moved in.

Resistance was bigger than the police ever expected. After the first barricade was a second, containing steel, a wrecked car and a caravan. From the roofs of the first building squatters were throwing rotten fruit. When they ran out of fruit they turned to stones. Others were banging oil-drums. The water-cannon was spraying its smelly contents over the squatters on the roof. Since the toilets in the Zeeburgerpad had been broken for weeks, buckets full of shit were thrown off the buildings on the heads of riot-police standing in line when there were no more stones available. One squatter inside one of the buildings, reporting live by telephone, told Vrije Keyser Radio he was ready to throw the telephone itself out of the window, just to stop the eviction. After an hour some policemen managed to get into the back of the building and soon the squatters inside were

rounded up, but not after one of them had fallen off the roof (squatters say he was pushed - he's not in hospital any more). Thirty-six squatters got arrested. They were taken to police headquarters charged with 'violence in public' (Article 141).

That night a group of approximately a hundred squatters demonstrated out of solidarity with the imprisoned comrades. At that moment, nobody knew what had happened to the squatter that fell off the roof. After arriving at police headquarters the demonstrators smashed some windows, turned a car upside down and left some steel on the pavement. They went on to the Prinsengracht police station, where they 'punked' (i.e. trashed) the front of the building: a sign that was hanging at the front of this station is now on display in the nearest squatters' bar. One person was arrested that night. In the following hours most of the arrested people were released.

Yet, six of them remained in jail. After nine days - 11th April - they were taken to appear in court. Police-detectives told they had recognised them throwing stones, etc. The prosecutor demanded ten-day jail sentences. After this court-session they were released. A sentence of nine days (the period they already spent in jail) is expected. The other thirty squatters will have to appear in court on a later date. But, they're all homeless now, and looking for new places to live. So, new buildings have been squatted in the past few days, all these squats risk eviction as well, and there's more houses/buildings that will be evicted soon. These evictions will be followed by squatting new houses, too.

Vrije Keyser Radio  
Amsterdam

The bowling alley has spread the globe as the Friday night out for the young urban middle classes. But back home in the US it is experiencing trouble which reflects more deeply on a trend in US culture visible since the 1950s. True more Americans are bowling than ever before - more than voted in 1994 - but what is perhaps significant is that league membership has dropped by some 40% in the last decade. Bowling itself is becoming a serial activity - an individual activity rather than a collective, communal pastime.

Collective organisations are on the way out in America. Over the last two decades groups like the Red Cross and the Boy Scouts have seen membership fall by one-third, women's clubs have gone down by 25-60% and on the men's side the Elks, the Moose and the Eagles have seen similar trends.

And yet at the same time some organisations have seen great increases in membership. The American Association of Retired Persons and many environmental groups have seen growth mushroom, but the organisations that are enjoying membership growth seem to be enjoying just that: membership growth.

"The rule", according to Robert Putnam in an article in *The Economist* *The World in 1996*: "seems to be this: organisations in which membership means moving a pen are booming, but groups in which membership means meeting others are withering". This also affects the political world with collective forms of participation down by some 40-50%. It is well known, for example, that education functions best when all concerned parties are involved, crime is lower in areas where there is a sense of community, but it has also been shown that folk who are active in their communities are more tolerant, more trusting and live longer healthier lives.

## UNCLE SAM'S TV DINNER

The drop off is not universally even; it is apparently greater among the economically more comfortable than those who have borne the brunt of economic liberalism and there also seems a greater tendency for women to be affected but with those who are at home more affected than those who work outside it - so it seems hard to pin the blame on any perceived feminist revolution.

So where is the blame? Perhaps the best clue is in the timing of it all. The trend seems to have affected the post World War Two generations. Those born in the first four decades of the century are far less affected and still show high levels of civic engagement and social trust but, their children and grandchildren raised in the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s, however, have been struck by a mysterious 'anti-civic' x-ray and there is no sign that the gap narrows as they approach middle age - as the older generation leave us they are seemingly unlikely to be replaced and the loss of trust and social cohesion threatens to deepen.

One cannot infer from all this any conclusions other than those based on circumstantial evidence but clearly here the cathode ray tube must be high on the suspect list. This year the average US adult will spend more than four hours a day in front of the box. The average pre-teen viewer will spend more time watching television than all other activities considered together and it has been shown that heavy television addiction of this nature is a prime factor in producing lack of civic cohesion. So what effect is this having on the young and who are the main winners of the captive audience?

### LAPPING IT UP

In ten years obesity in US kids has doubled. A study by the National Centre for Health Statistics put the number of kids affected at one in five, and gave a figure of one in three for their parents.\* William Dietz at the New England Medical Centre in Boston Massachusetts draws a direct link to the television: "TV gives them the feeling that they can eat as much as they wish". Kids are the final frontier for the marketing men. 4-12 year olds in the US have \$14.3 billion in annual purchasing power (1991 figure) which was 100% up on the same figure for 1980, and this omits their influence on their parents' disposable income put at a further \$128 billion. And of course kids are a dream of vulnerability. Barbara Caplan should know. She is the vice president of the marketing company Yakelovitch Partners: "Faced with advertising adults are circumspect", she says, "children; they watch TV and simply say to themselves: that's great".

Further statistics from Yakelovitch reveal that 45% have their own receiver in their bedroom and 79% say that munching whilst viewing is their favourite activity. According to *Consumer Report* the average child sees about 40,000 adverts per year, so that by the end of high school the figure is touching the half million mark. "Apart from sleep", says Bruce Watkins of Michigan University, "TV is the activity children devote most time to".

Saturday morning is reserved for kids to 'zap' between the four main television stations - ABC, NBC, CBS and Fox. They are exposed mainly to cartoons depicting friendly characters in lively scenarios. Mixed in are the ads. Out of these, in one period of observation, well over half were for food. Of these only 9% were considered to be for products that could be considered, 'reasonably healthy' - that is cereals low in added sugar and milk and ice cream low on fat and salt. Otherwise we had chocolate bars, fast food sandwiches, sweets, sugary fruit juices, crisps and biscuits. A diet of fat, salt, sugar and chemical additives. Ironically during the same period of observation there was one public service announcement exhorting folk to eat healthy food.

The latter was produced by consumer associations who are fighting a battle against the food industry. The main one is Action for Children's Television (ACT) which is aiming for a limitation on ads directed at the under-eights - limitations that Reagan had swept aside. Bush brought back a limit of ten and a half minutes in the hour.

But the attempts to deal legislatively with the problem in this way seem doomed before they come in. The advertising industry is, more and more, ensuring that it is the heroes of the fiction themselves who eat the junk food. Ninja Turtles eat Burger Kings, Pizzas and drink Pepsi Cola. This is no fluke. Firm contracts have been signed.

Really it began with 'ET', the extra-terrestrial character who ceaselessly munched on Reese's Pieces. In three months sales went up by 66%. Burger King gave you 'Gremlins' and Pizza Hut brought you 'Back to the Future'. 'Home Alone' features no less than 31 different brands. Figures estimate that Hollywood made \$50 million in 1990 - three times the 1986 figure. The last five years have seen the trend accentuate. One company that deals with this type of advertising - Silver Screen Placements Inc. - proclaims: "Imagine the impact on your client when they see one of their favourite stars use your product in a film or television broadcast, your product thus becomes an integral part of the show carrying both the subliminal message with implicit recognition..."

Also of course there is the gravy train for the stars when they appear in the ads. Pepsi has recently employed Agassi, as many know. Also recently the Flintstones were with Cocoa Pebbles. Garfield sold Pizzas and Bart Simpson worked for Butterfinger ice cream.

The impact of publicity is far reaching as far as age is concerned. James MacNeal at Texas A&M University claims his studies "show there is a state of awareness of brand names which could exist well before the first birthday. As a consequence of this by the time the kid is 18, 20 or 24 months old it already perceives brand names as objects".

Is there anywhere safe where these guys won't go? School? No. Free teaching kits go out in this field. One such - Life Learning Systems - sends out advertising material "with an educational goal". The envelope says "open immediately". This envelope contains a free teaching programme centred on maths, social science and artistic languages". When you open it you get a game called 'Count your Chips' whose first activity is to become a 'chipemantician'. Life Learning Systems - who claim 300 clients - promote themselves thus: "Children spend 40% of their waking day in a classroom where traditional publicity cannot reach them. Henceforth you can get into their school by means of our teaching materials designed specially to answer to your sales needs". 74 other businesses are operating in this field and schools, strapped for cash, find resistance difficult.

Wherever they are, US kids seem to be exposed to the spectacle in this way and the level of competence of those producing the ads is becoming more clinical with psychoanalysts and neuro-psychologists playing heavily on children's emotional weaknesses. A specialist working for Saatchi & Saatchi decrypted a McDonalds ad like this: "A young girl of six runs away from home. McDonalds clown persuades her to change her mind. This advert plays beautifully on the attachment/separation dialectic, very prominent in young people... The aim is to make the child live this experience via the product... These emotional drives are the same for every child regardless of period or culture." McDonalds is already doing a study in China. Experts are analysing what young Chinese children do with their disposable income and what influence they have on their parents. The cycle seems set to start again. The saliva is already beginning to drip.

\* The information in this section has been drawn from *Le Monde Diplomatique*.

out now from Freedom Press

### THE ANARCHIST REVOLUTION Polemical Articles 1924-1931 Errico Malatesta

edited & introduced by Vernon Richards

Though complete in itself, this volume is intended as a 'supplementary' to the *Errico Malatesta: His Life and Ideas* compiled by the same editor. The importance of this volume is that 23 articles published between 1924 and 1931 - the last years of his life - have been translated in full for the first time and have been selected because they deal with issues which were of much concern amongst anarchists and are as relevant today as when they were written.

124 pages ISBN 0 900384 83 2 £3.50

## ANTI-JSA CAMPAIGN

## CHEETHAM HILL HOUSE OF HORROR

Imagine a hand slapping a human face forever, and you have some idea of what it is going to be like for the jobless when the Job Seekers Allowance comes in this October. The Job Seekers Allowance is all about shaming the poor. It is about bullying them off benefits. This year, April 1996 to March 1997, the Employment Service is aiming to chuck 216,000 off benefits (last year 135,000 were referred for exclusion).

If you are on the dole and the loan sharks don't get you, the Employment Service fraud investigators will. After October the signs are that the jobless are going to be ground down between the loan sharks, the Job Centre fraud squad and the Benefit Advisers who will be trying to take people off the employment register.

In 1993 Ken Loach made a film about this kind of thing and he called it *Raining Stones*.

Last April the Department of Social Security issued a press release:

"Up to 1,100 Employment Service fraud investigators will transfer to the Benefits Agency in April 1996 to form the Benefit Fraud Investigation Service in readiness for the introduction of the new Jobseeker's Allowance in October."

This has already had an impact at Cheetham Hill Job Centre, where the cameras are zeroing in on dole queue conversations in which claimants talk to each other about doing odd jobs, or 'foreigners' or governor jobs, and the fraud teams are picking them up as they leave. This is the information *Freedom* is getting: claimants at Cheetham Hill are being held on the basis of evidence taken on the security video while they are signing on.

## CRIMINALISING THE POOR

Since the occupation of Cheetham Hill Job Centre, reported in *Freedom* last month, the management has taken on a team of security guards. This is in addition to all the sophisticated technology filming claimants and demonstrators alike from the minute they step into the office. The films, and tapes of

claimants conversations, are collected each Friday.

When I asked Irene Evans, a senior supervisor in charge of the office at Cheetham Hill, why they were employing a security company, she said: "It is to do with safety". She claimed "other offices are employing security firms as well".

I put to her the *Guardian* report that: "The government's Job Seekers's Allowance has triggered a collapse of morale among Job Centre and dole office staff, most of whom fear it will put their own jobs and physical safety at work under threat, according to a leaked official survey". Mrs Evans responded that she couldn't comment on this report.

At a time when risk assessment exercises are being done at all Job Centres to see if more security is needed, it is understandable that staff may have a vested interest in emphasising the dangers. After the April Job Centre occupation at Cheetham Hill by Manchester claimants, it was claimed by the staff there that the manager was taken hostage and a riot was provoked on the premises. In reality the manager was interviewed by the jobless activists, and business was disrupted in the office while leaflets were distributed and slogans chanted. During the later May picket, entrance to the building was blocked by a security officer.

Elsewhere in the country the Groundswell campaigns by claimants are being blown up out of all proportion, so that the employment staff, management and their unions can extract funds from the government. A report in the *Edinburgh Evening News* on 23rd May says: "Benefit staff are coming under fire in a backlash against a fraud crackdown". It goes on to say:

"A group saying it represents claimants has launched its own campaign against the DSS - urging people not to shop dole cheats. And they say DSS investigators and staff who harass claimants could find their photographs on fly-posters around Edinburgh."

Union leaders say they are worried about this. In the long run they are right to be anxious. At

the moment many claimants are unaware of what's about to hit them, and are moving like sheep to the slaughter towards the October enforcement of the Job Seekers Allowance. But when the truth dawns, there is going to be hell to pay.

As one anarchist told me recently: "This government is criminalising the poor and the unemployed". Section 34 (Offences) of the Jobseekers Act creates more crimes for the poor:

34. (1) A person is guilty of an offence if, for the purpose of obtaining a jobseeker's allowance (whether for himself or for some other person) ... he: a) makes a statement or representation which he knows to be false; or b) produces or furnishes, or knowingly causes or knowingly allows to be produced or furnished, any document or information which he knows to be false in a material particular."

This means if somebody tells a benefit adviser they have been for a job which they never applied for, they could face a fine or prison for up to three months. If they delay or obstruct an inspector, or refuse to answer a question, they could face a fine of up to £40.

With all this in the pipeline, clearly any disruption that is going on now in the Job Centres is just the tip of the iceberg. There'll be more to come!

## THE RELUCTANT JSA ADMINISTRATORS

With this time-bomb ticking, it is perhaps understandable that Jennifer Wall, deputy manager at Cheetham Hill Job Centre, should seek to deny they were operating a JSA pilot scheme during the picket on 17th May. Unfortunately this contradicts her senior manager's earlier remarks.

When asked by a benefit claimant: "Why is Cheetham Hill Benefit Office operating a pilot scheme?" the manager, Mr Davis, replied "Because we have been asked to do it".

Sources high up in the Employment Service tell us that he disapproves of the pilot scheme and the JSA, but Mr Davis says: "If I didn't run it they would transfer me". Mr Davis is now refusing to meet with delegations of protesting claimants as he is reported to be frightened. His assistant, Jennifer Wall, is now acting as his front-woman and enforcer in the office. She is all for the JSA, according to our contacts in the unions.

Following the last anti-JSA picket at the Job Centre, the area manager was brought in to advise the local management. A gagging instruction was issued to all staff. Anyone who talks to the press will now be sacked, whoever they are - no one is too senior to be sacked. All the staff are now on training at twice-weekly sessions on how to deal with disgruntled claimants and demonstrations of the unemployed.

Claimants now have to prove that they have tried for six jobs a fortnight, and if they miss their signing-on day they are automatically suspended.

This July a hit-squad will be set up with five staff to enforce the JSA, and these will be moved to a specially protected building. No one at Cheetham Hill wants to be on this team - most of the staff there are against the JSA. But it will be easier to arrest activists protesting at the hit squad office, because while the office will be an open-plan affair the enforcement office will be on private land.

There are serious problems at Cheetham Hill office. Knives have been pulled on several occasions, and someone was threatened by a junkie with a hypodermic needle. One angry claimant took to throwing the computers around the office. Individual claimants are already taking action, staging sit-ins at Job Centres like Cheetham Hill. The danger is - and it is not being lost on the staff and their unions - that the Groundswell campaign against the JSA could set fire to a serious political movement of the poor in Britain.

Perhaps for this reason all staff leave has

been cancelled at Cheetham Hill from September, in the run-up to the implementation of the JSA in October. Staff who take an easy-going line with claimants have been hauled in before Jennifer Wall. One woman was seen leaving her office in tears for failing to jump on a claimant for some minor transgression. Jennifer Wall is now called 'Queen Bitch' by other members of staff at the Job Centre.

## ACTION GROUPS PATHETIC?

In an editorial the *Edinburgh Evening News* declared that claimant action groups who oppose the JSA are "pathetic". *The poor are pathetic?* The poor are pathetic because they suffer from excess of reasonableness. The poor of Great Britain are pathetic because they endure an absence of anger when threatened by this most monstrous scheme, and are spied on and listened to by arrogant authorities.

Fortunately many of the unions and staff who have to administer the JSA are either actively or passively against it, both in principle and in practice. Even the senior area manager in the north west was reported as saying: "We don't think this is going to work, but we've got to try to make it work!"

The government may have got another unenforceable Act - the JSA - on its hands. The staff administering it are against it; their unions and the TUC oppose it; even senior management in the Employment Service have no confidence in the scheme. Soon there will be blue murder at the dole offices, when the claimants realise what's going on. But the government in waiting - the Labour Party - had not, as far as I am aware, committed itself to overthrow the Job Seekers Allowance.

Mack the Knife

## BLOODY EXPENSIVE!

Last May, on the fiftieth anniversary of LVE-Day, a group of peace activists (several from ARROW) attended the 'peace celebrations' in Hyde Park along with thousands and thousands of others. In the midst of these celebrations was a British Aerospace display exhibiting a Hawk 200 warplane, of the kind that is currently being sold to the Indonesian military for use against the East Timorese.

Two of the activists, Andrea Needham and Mark Chapman, climbed onto the plane and held banners protesting against the sale of Hawks to the genocidal Indonesian regime. Andrea also poured fake blood (coloured water) onto the waterproof canopy of the cockpit.

The grand trial for this action was held this month at Southwark Crown Court (Crown Court not magistrates court because BAe could not confirm that the damage was less than under £4,000). Andrea and Mark were both charged with criminal damage.

The first day of the two day trial by jury saw Mark's case thrown out for lack of evidence (a police officer and an RAF Benevolent Fund worker were both found to be unreliable witnesses as their evidence in court was contradicted by their statements at the time).

Andrea defended herself excellently and was able to give full political and moral arguments in court. However, on being found guilty the judge sent her down for two months for spilling 'blood'! Let's hope that British Aerospace get a little longer than this!

Andrea Needham (VD 0088) is currently on remand (in HMP Risley, 617 Warrington Road, Risley, Warrington WA3 6BP) for disarming a Hawk warplane. The trial for two million pounds worth of criminal damage will be held in Liverpool in the next couple of months.

Emily Johns

Contact: East Timor Ploughshares Support Group, c/o 55 Queen Margaret's Grove, London N1 4PZ. Tel: 0171-923 9511.

## BEHIND THE SCENES OF THE IRISH PEACE PROCESS

It isn't often that one can honestly say that a particular book is indispensable to the understanding of a particular situation, but Eamonn Mallie and David McKittrick's new book, *The Fight for Peace*, is indeed indispensable for anyone interested in Ireland and in the tortuous 'peace process' there.

Mallie is a broadcaster in Northern Ireland, and some years ago wrote an excellent study of *The Provisional IRA*. McKittrick is the best-informed Northern Ireland correspondent of any of the national daily newspapers in Britain. Together they have uncovered much of the background to the startling developments of the last few years. Included in the book are excerpts from secret correspondence between John Major and the then Irish Taoiseach, Albert Reynolds (showing Major's reluctance to back the peace process Reynolds was championing); an astonishing series of documents drawn up by different figures in Ireland and Britain leading up to the Downing Street Declaration; and revealing interviews with many of the people who, meeting secretly, put the basis for the current peace process into place.

One of the great mysteries of the past few years has centred on the so-called 'Hume-Adams' document, which was never published, but whose existence was revealed with great fanfare by John Hume (and Gerry Adams) in September 1993. In November of that year, Hume promised that Hume-Adams could bring peace 'within a week'. Which may well have been true - the Government never dared test that possibility.

For the first time, Mallie and McKittrick publish the Hume-Adams document and show that it formed part of a continuum of papers started by John Hume and ending with the Downing Street Declaration, contributed to by Sinn Fein, the IRA, Loyalist paramilitaries, the two Governments and others.

Mallie and McKittrick also expose the secret contacts between the Dublin and London governments and the paramilitaries and their political representatives. A slight weakness of the book is the focus on the contacts with republicans, and the developing thinking of republicans, without a corresponding depth of understanding of loyalists and or of their participation in the underground peace process.

*The Fight for Peace* also demonstrates and chronicles (partially) the developing peace strategy of the IRA and Sinn Fein, towards what they term the 'Totally Unarmed Strategy' or 'TUAS'. Read in conjunction with Brendan O'Brien's *The Long War*, *The Fight for Peace* demonstrates the extent to which republicanism has developed and has come to terms with some fundamental realities of Northern Ireland. Unfortunately, while there are hopeful signs in some areas of the loyalist camp, large sectors of unionist and loyalist opinion remain rooted in past certainties.

Milan Rai

Eamonn Mallie & David McKittrick, *The Fight for Peace: The Secret Story behind the Irish Peace Process*, Heinemann, £8.99

— ANARCHIST NOTEBOOK —

# THE BOOT CAMP SYNDROME

Still in pursuit of anniversaries that don't get celebrated, did you know that it is fifty years since the events known as the Glasshouse Mutinies, when there was a series of riots in military prisons and detention camps which followed a groundless rumour that with the end of the war there would be an amnesty for military prisoners?

The post-war Labour government had announced its plans for a gradual demobilisation according to age and length of service. Time spent in detention pushed you into a later group. This was noted with a certain despair in the army's prisons. At Stake Hill Detention Centre, a suicide was followed by a riot which was quickly put down. But a troublesome local nonconformist minister would not keep quiet about it. A court of inquiry found that the men's complaints were justified.

Rioting next broke out at Northallerton, an obsolete civilian prison re-opened for the army. The commandant brought in the National Fire Service, whose hoses of ice-cold water drove the men up the stairs and onto the roof, where they ripped off slates and threw them into the yard below. Eleven men, most of whom claimed that the hoses prevented them from getting down and giving themselves up, were court-martialled for mutiny and awarded sentences of up to twelve years' penal servitude.

At the military prison in Aldershot, events were similar. The rioters found their way onto the roof, which they then proceeded to destroy. As the day moved on, Sir John Crocker, GOC, Southern Command, appeared in the courtyard with a loud-hailer and ordered *all* the men, including those who had no part in the riot, to appear on the roof. He then urged them to send down a deputation. One of the people he received down below was an RAF man called Robert Preston, who was subsequently court-martialled by the Air Force and sentenced to seven years' penal servitude. General Crocker

had assured the deputation that there would be no mass punishments, but said that the 'ringleaders' would have to be dealt with. When the men finally surrendered, the 'worst characters' – 110 of them – were moved to Reading jail, and another thirty to the Canadian detention barracks at Headley, where they destroyed their cells.

Who was to plead for these men? The National Council for Civil Liberties was, unfortunately, in those days a front organisation for the Communist Party and devoted itself to organising demonstrations demanding that Sir Oswald Mosley, the British Fascist leader, should be put back in prison. In 1945 it declined to defend the editors of *Freedom*, jailed for allegedly seducing members of the forces from their duty. So a new body, the Freedom Defence Committee, had to be formed for this purpose and inevitably found itself overwhelmed by similar unpopular causes.

With difficulty it obtained transcripts of the courts-martial, and picked holes in the evidence offered by the prison staff, and petitioned the Secretary of State for Defence (the former miners' leader Jack Lawson) with a document signed by those of the good and the great who cared to associate themselves with a plea on behalf of people described as "the scum of the armed services". (The petitioners included Benjamin Britten, E.M. Forster and George Orwell.)

Ten years ago Paul Barker, vigilant editor of *New Society*, asked me to write an account of those events – in which, simply for comic relief, I mentioned my own brief experience of military detention in South Ronaldsay, Orkney.

Soon after it appeared he passed on a letter from an officer called Robert Boyes, who was writing a history of military prisons and had very little information about South Ronaldsay. Could we meet? As he wrote from the Military Corrective Training Centre at Colchester – not far away – I met him, told

him my trivial tale, subsequently recorded in his book *In Glass Houses*, and was urged to stay for lunch, meet a few inmates and have a guided tour.

The establishment was at that time in the process of moving out of its old premises (a hatted camp built to house German POWs in the war) and into the new ones, which like most new buildings around here, from council offices to supermarkets, was in dark red brick with stained timber and pan-tile roofs.

I remarked on the quality of construction, and another officer confided to me that today's volunteer professional army had no use for unsatisfactory soldiers and the main function of the place, except for people who were committed to a military life, was to give offenders a very hard time before discharging them.

"What do you think is the most common military crime?" he asked. When I gave up, he answered "Cheque card frauds". He also hazarded the guess that the new buildings, though paid for from the MoD budget, were really intended to be handed over to the Home Office.

I forgot this encounter for ten years. But a month ago Anne Widdecombe, Home Office Prisons Minister, and Nicholas Soames, Armed Forces Minister, were given a similar tour, and doubtless a similar good lunch, when they went to Colchester to launch the plan to reclassify the MCTC as a Young Offenders Institution, and send there this autumn the first batch of persistent offenders aged between 18 and 21 to undergo the military regime for the final six months of their sentence.

The ministers held a press conference, but what the press reported was that the director of Essex Probation Service, Martin Wargent, thinks that "the taxpayer is going to pay up yet again for an ineffective and costly scheme" and that the Chief Inspector of Prisons (an army man himself) General Sir David Ramsbotham, condemns the idea as "muddled

and irrelevant", while the *Guardian* defence correspondent reported that "army officials are incensed at suggestions that the boot camp could provide back-door recruitment".

The local ward councillor in Colchester, Terry Sutton, went to the glasshouse gate asking to be allowed to the press conference, but was turned away by Military Police. But he is, in fact, on the army's side. Far from sharing the Duke of Wellington's opinion that "our army is composed of the scum of the earth", he fears that those simple young squaddies will be corrupted by the baddies, complaining that "we will have young thugs fraternising with soldiers, and this will be bad for servicemen".

They should worry over something else. In the army, having served time in the glasshouse always earned respect in the barrack-room, and it is obvious that in local sub-cultures of law-breaking, those who have been through six months of those terrifying barking sergeants will gain the reputation of hard-men without their even having to sign on in the army.

Not many of us can now afford to read *Hansard*, the official parliamentary reports, and least of all seek out the questions asked in the House of Lords. But I had to refer to it for the book I am struggling to write about water, and learned about the boot camp syndrome.

It was revealed that the cost of mixing 32 young offenders with 200 military detainees would be over £1 million. And Lord McIntosh of Haringey said that he had received last October from the Armed Forces Minister Nicholas Soames, a letter admitting that there was "no monitoring at all" of the two-thirds of military offenders who were released back into the community after their experience.

He declared that "there has been no evidence whatsoever to support the ability of this regime to secure a successful return to civilian life – this experiment is being carried out without any attempt to secure evidence." And the Minister of State, Baroness Blatch, when he reiterated this point, said "I would defer to what the noble lord says about it".

That officer's guess of ten years ago turns out to be a correct interpretation of Home Office policy towards young offenders.

Colin Ward

Probably the best value for money recently in periodicals is the *Here and Now* double issue 16/17. Articles on Italy, Bosnia and Chechnya vie for space with others on Scottish anti-roads revolts, Cyber-theory, the Martin Walker / Duncan Campbell dispute and many others. My favourite 'Feuds Corner', a guide to the many and varied individuals indulging in the current obsession with plot and counter-plot, smear and counter-smear in the anarchist/radical milieu. Players such as Robin Ramsay (*Lobster*), Paul Rogers (*Green Anarchist*), Michel Prigent, Stewart Home, Larry O'Hara and Fabian Tompsett (*Luther Blisset*) and others are all rated according to credibility, style and humour. Only a couple of them score positively on 'humour', and they've already bored most people to death. An astute and amusing article which also gives contact addresses "for those interested in getting behind the lies and rumours to yet more lies and rumours". A nicely defined board game, 'Parapoly: the game of trivial persecutions and wild goose chases', along with 'Prank' and 'Smear' cards, accompanies the article. The 60 A4 pages include plenty of reviews and some great graphics, and as a bonus there is a separate 28-page special *Guy Debord Supplement*, also illustrated, on the author and his and other Situationists' deaths. £2.00 for the lot.

*Girl Frenzy* No. 6 'by women for people' boasts "articles, strips and no make-up tips" and that's just what it is. Its 36 A4 pages in a glossy cover come for £1.80 and although the emphasis is on comic strips there are plenty of articles, interviews and reviews, all produced by women, with an emphasis on the

## FREEDOM PRESS BOOKSHOP READERS' ROUND-UP

subjects of sex and sexuality. Quite a slick production.

The opening salvos in the third Battle of Newbury (the by-pass) are covered in the regular 'Road Wars' section of *Squall* No. 12, as is Earth First!'s long-running feud with Whatley's roadstone super-quarry. There's a major article on the recreational drugs war between alcohol and ecstasy; a couple of pieces on the rural scene, the new right-wing Countryside Movement and the continuing progress of the Hunt Saboteurs Association, despite or perhaps because of the draconian measures in the Criminal Justice Act; and coverage of the ongoing attacks on Luton's Exodus Collective whose farm, as well as being persecuted by the law, has also been fire-bombed. The international section covers the Himalayas, Romanies and Zapatistas, and there are acres of news reports. £1.80 for 64 A3 pages.

Industrial and workplace articles, the attack on political asylum-seekers and international reports occupy most of the 28 pages of the glossy-covered *Black Flag* No. 207. It's sad to think that the recently deceased Albert Meltzer's main legacy to the anarchist movement is the sort of ignorant sectarianism and blind intolerance exhibited in its pages. Any hopes that future issues will break with its

destructive past and make this one a collector's item are probably premature, to judge by Mike Ward's drooling, sycophantic 'review' of Meltzer's autobiography. Ward attempts to misrepresent *Freedom* as 'liberal pacifist' and a 'clique'. He might like to know that nobody at *Freedom* is a pacifist, liberal or otherwise, and that if it is a clique so much more so is *Black Flag*. And they charge £1.50 for this kind of disinformation.

36 A4 pages of lively, well-written and honest reviews of 'zines, books, magazines and now d-i-y tapes is a better reason to part with £1.50 when *Bypass* No. 6 will be yours for the asking. Over 500 reviews cover publications on everything from anarchy to fiction, feminism to technology, sex to ecology, mail art to music. They're branching out on the international scene now, with stuff from Europe and Australia. Whatever your bag – be it *Twisted Nipples* # 26, *Communist Headache* or *Yorkshire Anarchist* #2 and 3 – this is where to check it out.

The spring issue of *Green Anarchist* No. 40/41 is a double issue, subtitled 'For the Destruction of Civilisation'. As usual there are pages of diary events of eco-defence, community resistance and animal liberation activities. There is also a piece on genetic engineering with an A-Z of the establishments

involved, plus addresses. But the major focus of this issue is an all-out attack on the concept of cities and city-dwellers, and the increasing trend of global urbanisation. There is a reprint of one of the introductions to the Unabomber pamphlet, and another reprint of Svetu's Anarcho-Futurist Manifesto, with a long commentary on it by John Moore. The 40 A4 pages for £1.00 include letters and not a few reviews.

The ten years since the formation of the Anarchist Communist Federation is celebrated this spring by the publication of No. 42 of their magazine *Organise!* in a bigger edition than usual for the same 60p. Aside from the usual articles and analysis, there is a supplement on Anarchist Communism in Britain, tracing its history and development through William Morris and the Socialist League, Sylvia Pankhurst, Guy Aldred, the Organisation of Revolutionary Anarchists, the Anarchist Workers Association and various other groups. This is followed by features on the ACF itself and on *Organise!* 28 useful A4 pages.

'Four Eyes'

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# IT WAS A BAD WEEK

Although the rot had begun when Nicholas Budgen stole our Post Office. This pleasant carefully preserved sixteenth century building, with its Georgian frontage, had been a real pleasure to visit with a helpful and well informed staff who knew their job and apparently enjoyed sorting out our problems. There was little economic gain from its closure. The building was still needed for parcels and various backstage Post Office activities. But the main counter service was now located at the back of Budgen's store presumably to catch the pensioners and Giro recipients on the days their pittances became available. It is staffed by Budgen's own ill-paid and pressurised staff who simply hadn't the time to be helpful in the same way and would probably be sacked if they tried.

We muttered, we grumbled, we got up petitions but a minor consolation of age, the enjoyable social intercourse of a visit to the Post Office, had gone. It was the first sign. The next thing to go was an old fashioned electrical shop where every fitting no matter how obscure could be obtained, and where the proprietor was prepared to mend things rather than insist on selling you a plastic replacement. The process began to speed up. Now, in a little town which the egregious John Gummer puzzlingly declared to be suffering from rapid expansion, six charity shops in the main thoroughfare indicate the ruin of six sets of hopes and the loss of six sets of services.

This week, as the news came through that Colin Ward had been sacked from the new Blairite *New Statesman* I found that the local wine bar and our corner shop have both sold up. It may not be the end of civilisation as we know it but life will be a little less civilised in this part of the world, a little closer to the capitalist ideal of a City of Standardised Consumption.

Our corner shop was one of the wonders of the region. Twice failed, it was built up about ten years ago by a family who talked to their customers, gave small amounts of credit where needed, and responded to every need no matter how small. Their food selection was so good they were beating the supermarkets at their own game, their range of newspapers was magnificent, their variety of goods unbeaten anywhere in the country. It was the best all purpose general store I'd seen anywhere in the world. Now it has been bought by a company who will make more short term profits by cutting back the range of goods. And the customer base they have built up will return to the supermarkets.

The wine bar was one of those idiosyncratic places that really should have failed in true blue Woodbridge. In fact it was popular with an extraordinary mixture of local dissidents and blue rinse stalwarts of middle England. Slightly shabby, it was run by an aggressive four feet tall North Londoner and a wife who sounded like a Sloane Ranger with an Australian accent. Stropy, irreverent, and opinionated, they were on a quiet day always good for a bit of intemperate argument. At busy times the tape machine played Lester Young, or Ben Webster or Mozart, not the plastic rock we have come to expect of such places. He provided the *Guardian* and the *Times*. Those wanting other papers were directed to other establishments. You couldn't buy chips or a sandwich. The atmosphere was quite distinctive and it was a place where you could arrange to meet a friend of any sex without worry if you were late.

The wine bar has been purchased by a hotelier who believes in deference and looks to the carriage trade. The corner shop has been bought by one of those all purpose trading companies. Woodbridge has moved a little closer to the regimented rural wasteland that industrial agriculture, supermarkets, and retail chains are making of the villages and small country towns. Not a great deprivation to set besides the horrors of the Balkans, Africa, or the Americas. Or some of the ghetto

housing estates of Britain. But a little more individualism is lost and we are all diminished in the process.

Colin Ward has often written of the importance of localism in the positive sense. Of local people operating local services flexibly, changing and responding to local needs in a way that had social significance as well as market exchange value. All very well but local support is needed too. The problem we face is that many people like the standardised product. The success of McDonalds, or the Little Chef, like that of Joe Lyons in my youth, was built on providing a standardised product in a standardised atmosphere. And people still argue that Safeways or Sainsburys is cheaper, without counting the cost of the transport needed to get to these consumerist shrines. The initiatives from below that produced the heroic age of the Co-ops don't always occur when institutionalisation and capitalist competition have ossified the original creative impulses.

There are hopeful signs though. The

Grameen Bank in Bangladesh now operating effective schemes in some of Americas most poverty stricken ghettos. Food and goods exchanges in Scotland and the North of England appear to be successfully re-inventing the co-ops. The growth of Credit Unions in Britain filling the gap left by the High Street banks branch closures in the poorer areas. The problem is how long the now triumphantly rampant capitalist economies will allow these initiatives to continue. They just might be getting worried about things. The massive casualisation of jobs and the mania for 'downsizing' have begun to have results that are worrying capitalism's chief gurus. Stephen S. Roach, the economist chiefly responsible for the theory of downsizing, has decided that he got everything the wrong way round and that the pendulum will swing back from capital to labour. "Tactics of open-ended compression are ultimately recipes for extinction," he is saying. "I was responsible for the myth and I was wrong," he goes on. As the *Independent*

on Sunday tartly pointed out he has admitted he was wrong. "An act unlikely", that vastly improved paper concludes, "to catch on over here yet". Meanwhile if the new poor and the newly insecure are really building firm institutions of self-help let us hope that this time they will not be so easily surrendered to facilitate government initiatives, as Tredegar and the Peckham Health Centre were to the National Health Service.

Jeremy Seabrook, noting that Marx once argued that we would have socialism or barbarism, has recently suggested that barbarism has arrived, with the rich withdrawn behind guarded frontiers "leaving the poor to fight over such resources as remain after privilege has taken its pick". Maybe. That does appear the way things are going. But if he is right then the new initiatives to create a better society than the techno-feudalism that is developing will come from an ability of these marginalised groups to organise and create for themselves. It will come from those who look for something beyond the standardised material that is presently as eagerly embraced by the lumpen bourgeoisie as the lumpen proletariat. Which is why my corner shop and local wine bar are important.

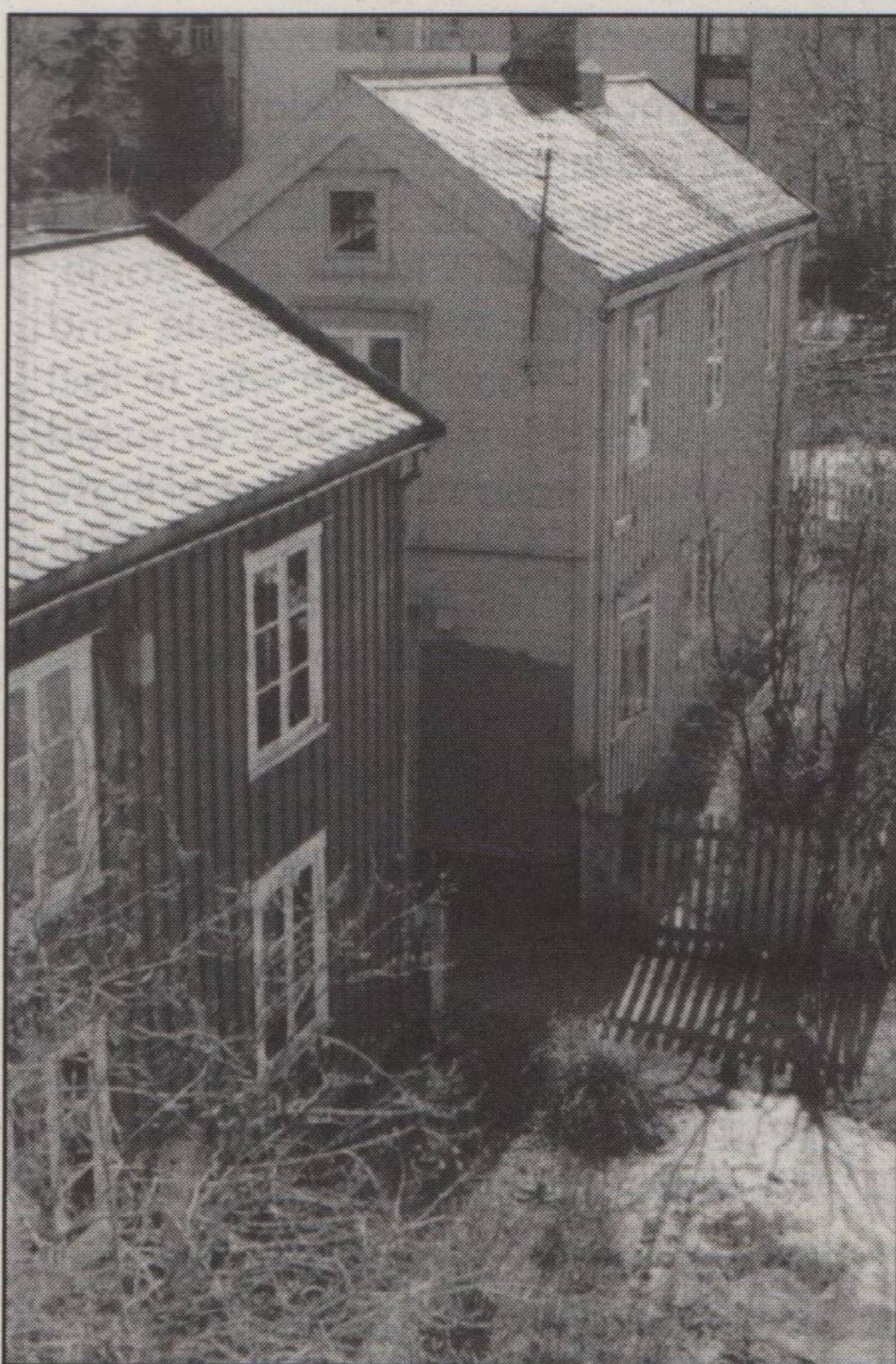
John Pilgrim

## SVARTLA'MON: housing not car dealers

The town council of Trondheim in Norway has finally decided the future of the old working-class area, and the city's most active alternative district. One industrial project and one car shop is buying half of the houses. They want to tear the houses down in favour of stocks and parking places.

Fifteen houses, which is half of the active alternative cultural area Svartla'mon, are heavily threatened by two local companies. But this is not just concerning these houses. The agreement between the city's politicians and the company bosses is jeopardising the other thirteen houses at Svartla'mon at well.

Svartla'mon as it appears today has become a social magnet. The houses they now want to tear down are the town's last surviving non-renovated workers' houses from around 1870. But there is more to this than just some old houses. The new generation, with youths active both politically and culturally, has since 1990 created a totally new environment around this part of the town, which the city's bureaucracy has always wanted to get rid of. The inhabitants are organised into their own union.



Svartla'mon 1996  
(Photo: Oddgeir Havan)

### 1949

Svartla'mon, originally called La'mon, was designated for industry. The German Nazis tore down the first houses during World War Two. Between 1949 and 1989, about 150 wooden houses, gardens, shops and charming streets vanished. Most of the area was left without any industrial initiative and it soon became wasteland, not even used as parking space.

### 1990

A new generation started to squat and fight for the area and to sort out the houses. They did everything from contacting lawyers and talking with politicians and bureaucracy to arranging demonstrations and cultural events.

This resulted in the signing of new contracts, with very good conditions and cheap rents. But since Svartla'mon was designated for industry the authorities didn't care about the safety of the inhabitants. They seemed to be happy to make a profit - as opposed to no profit on the houses if they were left to suffer from a silent death. In November 1995 one house burned down because of the faulty electrical wiring. Happily, the fire department managed to save the other houses in the street. Trondheim town council, the owner, took no responsibility.

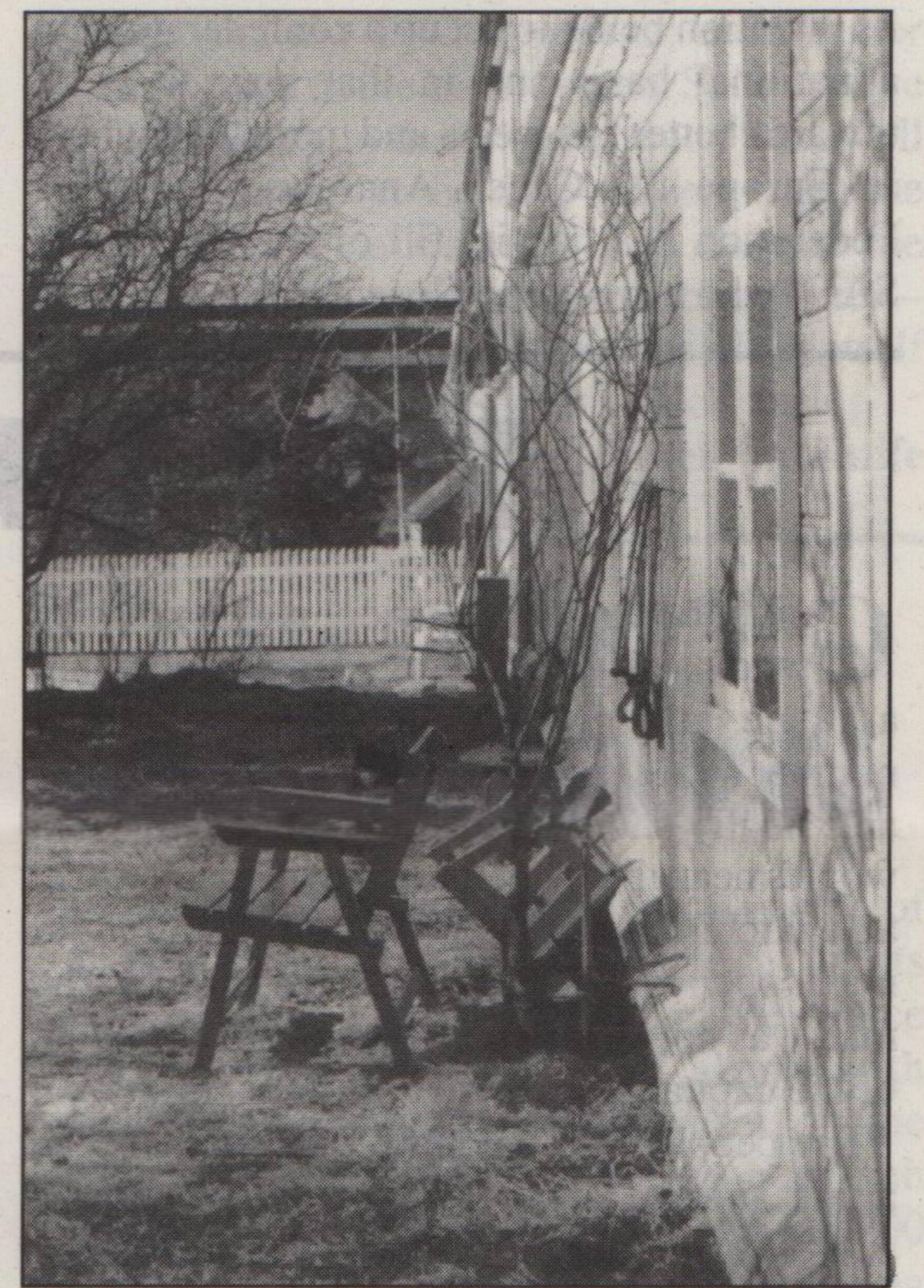
### 1996

After celebrating the victory and the saving of a disputed corner house came the longest lasting fight of Svartla'mon. A new message arrived: the alderman suggested tearing the other houses down in favour of two local companies. Later that same spring, 25th April, the town council decided to sell twelve houses. Two more houses will probably be sold too, and one house is already sold. None of them have yet been demolished.

Svartla'mon consists today of 28 houses of low-level material quality, mostly inhabited by youths who want to create a positive social environment. If it hadn't been for the inhabitants, Svartla'mon would have been history ten years ago. No similar phenomenon presently exists in Norway.

### WHAT NOW?

So what's happening now? In May/June 1996 the people at Svartla'mon are waiting to see the plans from the firm Strandveien Auto. They have to come up with some serious plans for expansion before they can be allowed to



Svartla'mon 1996  
(Photo: Oddgeir Havan)

demolish any of the houses. In the meantime people are working on the authorities, supported by their lawyer, to try and increase the pressure.

The situation is very unsure. Things may happen very quickly, or may take some time. Nothing is yet lost and the fight continues.

So far every legal possibility to win the battle has been tried. Many people are willing to take the next step, if that's necessary. The capitalistic politicians started this fight and it's their responsibility.

Please write to us at the following address for further information or to offer your support: Svartla'mon Beboerforening, Standveien 23, 7042 Trondheim, Norway.



These small working-class houses from the 1870s are heavily threatened.  
(Photo: Oddgeir Havan)

## AIT CONTINUES TO GROW

The seed of the International Workers Association continues to germinate and spread throughout the world. The upsurge of pro-AIT organisations which are growing into future sections in other countries, full of international optimism, gives the lie to some negative reporting...

In Ireland the voice of Anarcho-syndicalism is known as ORGANISE! – a group which publishes a journal of the same name. Up until now its presence is limited to the North of the country but the group has set itself the task of forming the Irish Anarcho-Syndicalist Federation crossing the artificial divide which blights the country. The secretariat of the AIT is in the process of translating its statutes, aims and objectives so that they can be considered by other sections who in turn can decide as to whether its application for membership be accepted. In Canada the idea of setting up a new section of the International, as part of Ottawa's IWW grouping, is also being considered. For the moment an Anarcho-syndicalist propaganda group has been set up.

In neighbouring Portugal the Associagao Sindical da Area Urbana do Lisboa (ASAUL) have also requested admittance to the AIT – its intention being to set up a confederation on a national basis and in that way to work towards better prospects and more. Elsewhere in Europe the Czech Anarcho-Syndicalist Federation has had its fill of the 'friends of SAC' who have come close to destroying the

movement. Currently the Federation is functioning as a 'wing' of the Anarchist Federation (whose journal has assigned it a fixed number of pages) until it takes off once again.

Latin America is also seeing new initiatives. In Colombia the group 'Alas de Xui' (greetings from Granada if you are reading this!) has set itself the task of setting up an Anarcho-Syndicalist centre from where it can explain to society at large the necessity of moving towards use-value organisational forms. In Chile trade unions for 'Oficios Varios' have been set up in Santiago and Concepción accompanied by much activity and hope.

Finally in Russia and other countries formerly within the USSR orbit there have been requests to join the AIT. The National Garments Workers Federation of Bangladesh will also discuss this summer its application during its forthcoming congress. Without a doubt the next AIT congress will prove a valuable meeting point for all of them.

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## THE INQUEST

Come the anarchist society and somebody who has some kind of grudge walks into a place and murders indiscriminately a number of his fledgling fellow human beings and finally shoots himself dead. Clearly this would mean that with the best will in the world an anarchist society is not possible. But it did not happen in the future anarchist society. The man was not an anarchist. He was the product of the capitalist industrial military complex.

The people who are not in the dock are the arms manufacturers, the government exploiters and the whole system of divide and rule. Here we have a society which protects its own and crushes the great majority.

Whether it is travellers who are pounced upon by the police and their poor homes immobilised, or the workers put out of jobs wholesale, fed with poisonous food living in a never-ending climate of nationalist wars or ridiculous attempts at mass education, bad hospitals, bad housing and the rest.

This is at the time of over-production of everything that is useless. The more the people produce, the more is stolen from them.

All they can talk about is tightening security and surveillance. Look at what happened in Newcastle where the police battered down the doors of the young people they caught on their shopping cameras. Aneurin Bevan used to say it was good to live in England because you knew that if anybody knocked on your door early in the morning it was the milkman.

We must put our faith in human reason, and that is anarchism. Whatever and wherever embryonic anarchist society has developed, people know how to live with each other. Anarchists must show patience for human problems. Nobody should say it is going to be easy after the revolution.

We have been living in the shadow of the bomb, with genetic changes entirely outside our control. Whole tracts of land, not only around Chernobyl, have become radioactive. Research on the mutation of insects already shows the evolutionary disaster which is the product of the aforementioned military/industrial complex.

Whether it is the loss of 450 lives sunk on a lake in Kenya, or the wholesale murder of populations in the Middle East or former Yugoslavia, in Rwanda, in Chechen, in Tibet, it's a big list of governmental nationalistic

murders and incompetence.

The capitalist press loves to bring up examples of individual irrational behaviour. Somehow this is their lame justification for their universal slaughter of the innocents.

No inquest will completely explain what made somebody turn on their fellow human beings. Anarchists do not blame individuals. Who can be rational in a system which exploits the mass of society?

A society which is based on mutual aid, and on the free exchange of goods and services, we believe will be able to deal with all the contradictions of living in a society of sovereign individuals.

This means we must have no masters over us and a worldwide revolution, when everybody feels and knows that we all have equal rights.

We must work towards an anarchist society. Without such a simple framework there will never be a sane society. To quote a contemporary opinion: "If anarchism is about anything, it is about the harmony of ends and means."

John Rety

## WE NEED NOT A CHANGE OF GOVERNMENT BUT A CHANGE OF SOCIETY

If we kick out the Tories and put Blair's second eleven in to bat, we would find that ultimately nothing had fundamentally changed. The same exploitation and domination would continue. Poverty, unemployment and all the other evils of capitalism would still exist. Reforms merely enable the system to survive.

The reason for this is that the strength of both the government and the system it upholds rests not with itself but with the people and their belief in it. This is known as legitimisation, and it is this that must be eradicated. All tyrants know that their domination over the people depends upon the superstition of people that it is right to obey. So long as that superstition exists, any attempts to rid themselves of one tyrant would only create another, as we have seen happen. For they have been conditioned and have grown accustomed to rely on something outside themselves.

If we were to attempt to change society before the people have come to understand the nature of present society, it would be vanguardist and would not result in a free society that the people had determined and that was under their control and accountable to them. We would merely be setting ourselves up as a new elite (like the Bolsheviks did). As a result of this imposition the people would become as alienated as they are under capitalism.

On the other hand, if the people have come to understand the nature of society and power, and have organised within the shell of the old tyrannical system to build the framework of a new free society, with a mechanism of accountability built in. Having done so, they bring into being a society under their own collective control based upon delegates subject to immediate recall and collective decision making. Thus having overthrown the present tyranny, it would never again be raised from the dead.

For when a people have themselves rejected a

society based upon power institutions and have of their own volition brought into being a system of liberty under their own control, and above all by doing so have experienced self-determination and freedom, nothing on earth would make them revert back to the former system of exploitation and domination.

Socialism cannot be conferred upon a people by politicians. It can only be built by the people themselves.

Our capitalist masters are not fools, and we must never underestimate their cunning. We must always know them for what they are, for them no trick is too low or atrocity too foul. They would scheme and connive with the devil himself if they thought that getting into hell could be made more profitable than the hell which they already control. They play a pernicious form of power chess with the lives of people.

*They do not care what colour or race you are, provided you work to keep them privileged. They do not care how much you earn, provided you earn more for them. They do not mind you living in a poky room at the top, provided they own the building and collect the rent. They will let you speak out against them, write against them, provided you don't act against them. They will sing the praises of humanity, but always value property and machines more than men. Bargain with them and they will laugh and beat you at it. Challenge their power or right of privilege and they will kill. Sooner than lose the things that they own and control, they would see the world destroyed. Remember as you strive to be free and build your socialist commonwealth, they have already implanted a poison within you called a 'belief in power and leaders'.*

Industrial Workers of the World  
75 Humberstone Gate, Leicester LE1 1WB

## WOMEN STOP GENOCIDE AT ALDERMASTON

On 21st June women from Yellow Gate Women's Peace Camp, Greenham Common, will be in the High Court, London, arguing that the manufacturers of Britain's Trident missile system are preparing to commit genocide. Having witnessed the effects of the bombs dropped on the people of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and more recently the uranium bullets used in the Gulf War, there can be no defence to the charge that the military has its sights set on genocide. The deterrence argument has no validity in a state that has used first-strike nuclear weapons.

Please come and hear the evidence against atomic weapons establishment Aldermaston (where Trident is made). This exciting case is history in the making and, whatever the verdict, is calculated to bring shame on the military and anyone who demonstrates allegiance to the horrific crimes of destruction contemplated and committed throughout the history of nuclear arms.

For more information contact: **Yellow Gate Women's Peace Camp, Greenham Common, Newbury, Berkshire RG19 6HN.**

## ANTI-ELECTION ALLIANCE

### CONSTITUTION

1. The Anti-Election Alliance (AEA) is a network of individuals and autonomous groups seeking to dispel the myth of capitalist democracy.
2. The actions of the network are co-ordinated by meetings of all those involved.
3. All groups and individuals can act as they see best fit to further the aims of the alliance so long as it is in agreement with the political statement and constitution of the network.
4. The AEA meetings will delegate those responsible for funds, mailing lists, public statements and operational decisions. All these delegates will be empowered by general meetings of the network and will be responsible to the whole organisation for their actions between meetings.
5. General meetings of the alliance will be held regularly, specified by the previous meeting, allowing time for minutes to be distributed and considered, allowing for practical deadlines.
6. While aiming for consensus, general meetings reserve the right to defend the network by exclusion of those opposing the aims of the alliance.
7. AEA resources will be available to all groups and individuals if approved by general meetings.
8. The AEA welcomes independent initiatives by groups/individuals in broad agreement with its aims while not under the AEA umbrella.

### GENERAL STATEMENT

- The AEA is an alliance open to all anti-electoral, anti-state, anti-capitalist groups and individuals. We are opposed to racism, sexism, homophobia and the other manifestations of hierarchical power.
- The state is inimicable to a free and equal society. It cannot meet our needs and cannot be reformed. It must be abolished by revolutionary action.
- Electoralism fosters the illusion the state is legitimate. By voting, we surrender our power to the state and consent to its rule. Direct action gives us power over our own lives, not voting. Electoralism is just a diversion from the route to a free and equal society – working-class revolution to abolish the state.

The Anti-Election Alliance can be contacted at  
BM Box 357, London WC1N 3XX.

**GUISEPPE PINELLI** Born 1928, died 15/16th December 1969 in Milan, Italy. A railwayman, Pinelli was active in the Italian anarchist movement since the 1950s, a good organiser of demonstrations, single-mindedly devoted to his cause. Following a series of explosions in Milan and Rome, one of which killed sixteen people and injured a hundred – and which was in fact caused by fascists – the police arrested anarchists in many Italian cities. One of those was 'Pino' Pinelli. On the night of 15th December 1969 he 'fell' from the fourth floor of the Milan police headquarters. The police claimed he threw himself out of the window shouting: "This is the end of anarchism!"



GUISEPPE PINELLI

The portrait, left, is a black and white copy of one of 36 portraits of anarchists drawn in three-colour line by Clifford Harper, included in a set of picture cards each with a potted biography on the reverse and published by Freedom Press. Other portraits include such varied anarchist figures as Errico Malatesta, Marie Louise Berneri, Emiliano Zapata, Noam Chomsky, Nestor Makhno, Pierre-Joseph Proudhon, Michael Bakunin, Colin Ward and many more.

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# PACIFIST MISUNDERSTANDING OF ANARCHIST VIOLENCE

Dear Freedom,

I will not even attempt to reply to Steve Cullen nor his long quote from the Czech novelist Ivan Klima who maintains that Prague was 'liberated' "not with a sword but with a joke" (*Freedom*, letters, 18th May), since if Steve believes that the "velvet revolutions of Eastern Europe" occurred when "the mass of ordinary people changed things despite the powerful" then obviously we have different sources of information about the 'velvet' capitalist take-over in Russia!

All I wish to do is to object to what he considers "as a couple of off-hand comments recently arguing that only violence will bring about change" and to put what I think is a fundamental question to our anarcho-pacifist comrades. What I have, on more than two occasions, pointed out is that violence is the only argument governments respond to. And I am always pointing this out in connection with the struggles in Israel, South Africa, Northern Ireland and in the past in Algeria. None of these movements are or were anarchist. They are not opposed to capitalism, nor to government. They wanted both, and might even end up being as bad as the persecutors once in power.

But as I said, this has nothing to do with anarchism and violence, nor with the anarchist revolution which both Steve Cullen and myself are propagandists for its attainment. Surely we are agreed that the anarchist revolution cannot be achieved by violence, but where we differ is that Steve Cullen, while not accepting my description of "anarchists who are pacifists" hoping "to achieve our ends by persuading the rich and powerful of the errors of their ways", replies:

"Why should the powerful wish to change? Instead we should seek to create the sort of feeling that brought about 'the velvet revolutions' of Eastern Europe when the mass of ordinary people changed things despite the powerful."

I respect Steve Cullen as a good and active comrade, but does he not know that the 'velvet revolution' that he ascribes to the ordinary people of Russia, for instance, has produced a mafia so powerful that its tentacles have spread throughout Western Europe. And is he not aware that the ordinary working people of Russia are today worse off than they were under Brezhnev and Khrushchev because, as we know only too well in the prosperous West, unemployment and homelessness are the 'unfortunate' price some have to pay for capitalist prosperity ... for the others! And Steve Cullen's liberated Russia is paying the price with a vengeance to keep the mafia millionaires living according to Western European standards. I advise my comrade to observe what happens at the coming Russian elections.

One question to the anarchist pacifists: assuming that our anarchist propaganda over the years becomes so successful that millions of workers, who have organised themselves in anarchist or anarcho-syndicalist organisations,

challenge whatever government is in office with demands that are socialist/anarchist and which obviously threaten the whole capitalist regime. Presumably pacifists like Steve assume that in such a situation the government will try to go into exile and the military will give up their arms to the people.

As one who has lived too long to ever cherish illusions about governments or aspirant political revolutionary leaders, it is obvious that, long before such a situation could arise, government would have intervened with violence, not necessarily on the scale of, say, the Franco military uprising of 1936 in Spain, but don't let us forget the British miners' massive demonstration in 1984 to which there was a massive violent response by the police.

To come to my question to Steve Cullen and all the well-intentioned pacifist anarchists: We are surely agreed that the social anarchist revolution will not be brought about by violence because obviously it would be an imposed revolution and would result in an 'anarchist' government! What I am asking is what will the anarcho-pacifists do if on the road to revolution the government in office reacts to our movement with violence - as they did to the miners, who were not anarchists, in 1984? Turn the other cheek?

VR

Dear Freedom,

I think Steve Cullen would have strengthened the case he made in the issue of 18th May if he had made reference to Portugal. The Salazarian dictatorship, which was cruel, grim, arrogant, long-lived and also unbelievably boring, was overthrown by the so-called Carnation Revolution on 25th April 1974 without bloodshed by an extremely well planned and executed revolutionary movement. Certainly the Portuguese did not emerge without a state to exploit them, but they did win a great many concessions, particularly in the realms of freedom of expression and organisation, and of education, that the dictatorship had sworn they would never get. People, including some I know, who had been locked up were released and the country was freed from the burden of carrying on a whole series of vicious and very expensive colonial wars. There was even some long-overdue land reform. The Portuguese people deserve a good deal more praise than they normally get on the left for these achievements.

But the movement of 25th April 1974 also has profound lessons for all democrats, and particularly for movements opposing wars, the curse of our century worse than any other before it. On the left members of the armed forces tend to be shunned, if not despised. Many, in fact, of course 'join up' because capitalist society cannot, or will not, provide them with a job. In most countries many of them are conscripts, in the absence of a strong anti-conscription

movement. Some unquestioningly become brutalised by the military machines that need brutes to fulfil their function.

But the history of Portugal in the '60s and '70s shows plainly that not only rank-and-filers but non-commissioned officials (too airily dismissed as almost inevitably brutal), and right through the officer corps into the high echelons, are quite capable of developing progressive ideas diametrically opposed to those of the government they are supposed to be serving. Intelligent members even of armed forces at war are capable not just of developing ideas of their own, but, as the Portuguese case showed, of cooperating with comrades also moved by ideas and planning revolutionary action in such a way that the mass of the people immediately responded and the collapse of a putrid regime was accomplished without killing.

Soon after the Salazarian regime fell and when new-found freedoms were being consolidated but the mass of the people were showing that it had not yet come to the conclusion that the proper logical conclusion of the April movement was the replacement of state powers by cooperative people power, I met a naval officer who had been prominent in the movement, and asked him how that came about. (To show how things were to the great majority of Portuguese under Salazar, I should add that he had just asked me "Who, do you know, is this Lenin whose name is being painted on so many walls?") His answer to my question was that he was a seaman, passionately interested in all problems of navigation, and that for the past four years he had been dropping on parachutes into African jungles with orders to flush out groups of African guerrillas. One day he had asked himself what the hell he thought he was doing, wasting his life on something so futile, as he had long been coming to realise that neither he nor his comrades had anything whatsoever against the Africans they were supposed to be killing. Shortly afterwards he tentatively told a fellow officer how he felt, and found that he felt just the same. After a few cautious discussions they found themselves talking to colleagues who were already part of the gradually organising movement that permeated the armed forces of Portugal in the early '70s, and so successfully planned the April 25th coup.

I would not pretend to be able to draw all the lessons available from a profound study of the undermining and ultimate collapse of the Salazarian dictatorship, but that there are plenty I am sure.

John de Courcy Ireland

please keep sending in your letters and donations ...

# A STRANGE CONSERVATISM

Dear Freedom,

Harold Barclay is not happy with my views on populism. But my article ('A Strange Conservatism', 20th April) was not about populism *per se*, but about American conservatism. I was attempting to show British readers how some, but not all, of what is called 'conservatism' in the USA has little in common with its European namesake. I tried to explain how this variety originated in a complex evolution involving Jeffersonian democracy, populism, agrarianism, Georgeism and individualism. Nor is this development difficult to discover. There are any number of books on the 'Old Right', 'Isolationism' or 'America First' which discuss the origins of 'American conservatism'. Also the writings of Albert Jay Nock, Frank Chodorov, Murray Rothbard, John Flynn and H.L. Mencken, to name the best known. All of these writers are 'conservatives' but have little in common with European conservatism.

Populism is also extremely complex and cannot be reduced to the old Manichean - Left (good guys) versus Right (bad guys). As I stated in my article, populism cannot be right-wing in the European sense of meaning hierarchy, Toryism and class. What it combines is a hostility to government and corporate concentration (something at one time considered left-wing) with conservative social values. This latter aspect is not surprising since the majority of the population, to a greater or lesser degree, are socially conservative.

Of course there are pseudo-populists with their down-home folksy style and extremely vague politics (like Ross Perot). Then there are the racist parasites like David Duke,

denounced by all real populists. Only a week ago in France I picked up some Front National literature. They claim to be populists and in some ways, such as attacking big business, they are. But they believe in a strong centralised state. Front National is Jacobin, not Jeffersonian. Populists too are like everyone else, they can degenerate or turn sour and reactionary. Tom Watson was not originally a racist demagogue. Father Coughlin was a Roosevelt supporter and reformer. It was only after the failure of the Union Party that he went off at the deep end.

The media are largely to blame for the confusion about populism - they call every politician who sports a drawl and a checked shirt a populist, regardless of content. They try to arouse hatred against the so-called 'right wing' populists. Confusion and hostility are generated to keep the people divided so the corporate/government elites can maintain their control.

Barclay repeats the myth that populists are backward-looking with 'arcadian-yeoman' fantasies. Explain then the industrial workers that flocked to the Greenback and People's Parties. Explain why Northern Italy, one of Europe's most industrialised regions, has the Northern League.

I regret crossing swords with Harold Barclay, since I have always enjoyed his writings, believing him a sensitive and intelligent observer. Quite frankly, I feel let down, expecting more from him than a recitation of corporate liberal propaganda. But in one way I do agree - there is a right-wing threat ... but it is called the US government!

Larry Gambone

# CORRECTING CHRISTIE

Dear Freedom,

I had no personal quarrel with the late Albert Meltzer, but neither have I any wish to perpetuate by silence the fantastic picture presented by the posh press in recent weeks. In the *Guardian* and the *Independent on Sunday*, the seemingly isolated man I knew has been metamorphosed into an arms-running anarchist mastermind at the centre of the action everywhere. The element of fantasy that was always a thread in Meltzer's life seems to have been made the core of the press reports about his life and death, apparently with the enthusiastic support of the romantic imagination of Stuart Christie. This is curious.

I was press officer for the Christie-Carballo Defence Committee, formed largely from LAG supporters and Freedom Press contributors, when Stuart Christie was originally arrested in Spain in 1964. During the weeks we worked 24-hour shifts to save Stuart Christie from what we believed to be execution by garrote we had no contact or help from Albert Meltzer, now being reconstructed as some sort of key figure in the post-war anarchist movement. As I write, I have photographs of the Trafalgar Square demonstration in front of me. I can recognise Pete Turner, Alan Albon, Philip Sansom, John Rety, the late Bill Christopher, Jack Stevenson and a man known always as 'Mr Michaels'. There is no

sign of Albert Meltzer's instantly recognisable bulk. He was not part of our committee, did not draft any press reports or attend any meeting that I can remember.

So this man described by Stuart Christie, somewhat confusedly as "the glue, the arch-stone, the link in the chain", was conspicuously absent from all our attempts to save Stuart Christie's life. The people who went on the marches, got the press coverage, arranged the lawyers and ensured all the sympathetic coverage obtainable, are today dismissed as a "small group of people on the periphery". I have made a few mistakes in my life, but I sometimes wonder if the biggest wasn't the role I played in saving the man who has been so active in actualising Meltzer's fantasy world for the benefit of a press who were in no position to know any better.

John Pilgrim

# WANDSWORTH SQUAT

Dear Editors, Following John Rety's article on the Wandsworth land occupation: the battle for this particular site, with resulting publicity and mass movement, means not so much to get it but what to do with the land.

May I make a plea for a gypsy parking place, as required by law.

Paul Rothwell-Hartmann



## Anarchist Communist Federation

The Anarchist Communist Federation is an organisation of class struggle anarchists. For contacts:

Across Britain, London and surrounding region: ACF, c/o 84b Whitechapel High Street, London E1 7QX

Scotland (for contacts in Aberdeen, Elgin and Glasgow): PO Box 5754 (no other mention), Elgin, Scotland IV30 2ZD

For Merseyside and region: Merseyside ACF, PO Box 110, Liverpool L69 8DP

For Brighton (and contacts in Bognor and Hastings): Brighton ACF, c/o Unemployed Centre, Tilbury Place, East Sussex

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further information from:  
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PO Box 446, Sheffield S1 1NY

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- 14th June General discussion
- 21st June Utopia (symposium)
- 28th June General discussion
- 5th July Anarchy and Psychology (speaker Steve Ash)
- 13th July General discussion

Anyone interested in giving a talk or leading a discussion, please contact Peter Neville at the meetings, or at 4 Copper Beeches, Witham Road, Isleworth, Middlesex TW7 4AW (tel: 0181-847 0203, not too early in the day please) giving subject and prospective dates and we will do our best to accommodate. A collection is made to pay for the £15 cost of the room. Donations are accepted from those who cannot attend regularly but wish to see the continuation of these meetings.

Peter Neville

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24th August 1996

All enquiries to:  
R. Lynn, 151 Gallowgate,  
Glasgow G1 5AX

more details nearer the event

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**June 9th:** Walk leader Jon. Meet 11am at picnic site car park below Derwent Reservoir Dam (map reference SK173893), Derwent Valley, Derbyshire. Circular walk, length 8-9 miles over mountainous terrain.

**July 7th:** Walk leader Jon. Hollinsclough and Chrome Hill. Meet at 11am by phone kiosk in Hollinsclough (map reference SK667065, Outdoor Leisure Map 24) for a 5 mile circular walk in Upper Dove Valley.

**August 4th:** Walk leader Ray. Lost Villages of Leicestershire. Meet 11.15am at centre of Peatling Magna village, Leicestershire (leave M1 at junction 21) for 6-7 mile circular walk.

**September 1st:** Walk leader Mike. Loughborough Countryside. Meet 11am at Forest Gate pub car park, Forest Road, Loughborough, for 5-6 mile circular walk.

Telephone for further details  
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