

anarchist fortnightly **Freedom**

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FIFTY PENCE

**"The capitalist is a thief
who has succeeded
through his efforts or
those of his ancestors;
the common thief is a
would-be capitalist"**

Errico Malatesta

WE ARE MANY, THEY ARE FEW, WHY DO THEY HAVE THE POWER?

Not for the first time have anarchists and 'old fashioned' socialists been pointing to this age-long injustice and seeking to make the victims – the producers of *real* wealth on which the *few* get fat – realise that power lies with them.

Obviously we don't need the capitalist press to remind us of the hard facts of life, but when *The Guardian* (22nd July) covered the front page of its magazine with type which not even their politically short-sighted readers could avoid, it's welcome but at the same time we feel that even the liberal-capitalists are becoming a bit worried not only by global warming but by global capitalism!

The Guardian's hard facts read: "358 people own as much wealth as half the world's population. Victor Keegan on the growing gap between rich and poor".

Keegan bases his article 'Highway Robbery by the Super-Rich' on the

United Nations new *Human Development Report* which states that:

"the total wealth of the world's 358 billionaires equals the combined incomes of the poorest 45% of the world's population – 2.3 billion people."

Yet another statistic to mull over with the cocktails and political party dinners.

Again the media tell us that if you contribute £100,000 to the Tories' funds you can have lunch with Major at 10 Downing Street and, for rather less, lunch with Blair at the Savoy!

Yet this is chicken-feed compared with the man Keegan describes as the "reigning king of the mega-wealthy" – namely Bill Gates:

"... founder of Microsoft, the world's biggest computer software company. He tops the Forbes world league table – the bible of the *Hello-reading* classes – with an estimated personal wealth of \$18 billion, enough to purchase half a dozen poor countries."

Compared with Bill Gates and the other super-dollar-billionaires, Britain's Sainsbury, Paul Raymond, Duke of Westminster *et alia*, are, according to Keegan, "all minnows by the standards of the Forbes first division".

He then makes a statement which, if it does reflect 'public opinion', is surely alarming:

"These days it seems almost impolite, assuredly unfashionable – and even Old Labour – to dare to wonder if such outrageous maldistribution of wealth is 'fair'. People just don't ask that sort of question at parties any more. The Forbes top billionaires table is the virility symbol of post-modern America, the annual proof that everyone is free to use his or her God-given talents to cream off the world's limited supply of dollars. The mantra of the moment is still 'trickle-down' economics: the rich are encouraged to earn as much as they like – buttressed by huge salary increases and fat stock options – in the hope that the poor will be richer than they would otherwise have been from the crumbs that fall off the tables of the rich."

It is alarming for liberal economists like Keegan because, as he recognises:

"In practice it hasn't worked like that. The UN figures show that 100 countries have actually suffered economic decline or stagnation which has reduced the income of a quarter of the world's population. In 70 countries people are on average poorer than they were in 1980 and in 43 countries poorer than in 1970.

Inequality has not only grown between countries but within them."

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HIGHWAY ROBBERY

In the 1980s, to mark the ninth centenary of the Domesday Survey, the economist James Bellini wrote 'Rule Britannia' in which he predicted that far from liberating people the computer would develop a smaller and more powerful élite. This regressive trend would result in two nations: lords in their computerised castles and rack-rent serfs. The intermediate class would be made up of the computer machines themselves and they would control the lives of the serfs who would be needed only to clean and service the machines. A new kind of feudalism without a field in sight.

Nineteenth century anarchists were worried that our working lives would be enslaved by machines, but they could not have visualised the power of the computer which can now know where we go on our days off. The information revolution has the potential to improve the educational standards of people worldwide and thereby lessen inequalities, but figures quoted in *The Guardian* (22nd July) tell us that between 1960 and 1991 "the richest 20% of the world's

population increased their share of total global wealth from 70% to 85%, whilst the poorest 20% saw their global share fall from a meagre 2.3% to a disgraceful 1.4%". It is estimated that fewer than one in four households owns a computer in Britain and that only half a million people have access to the Internet, but it is already evident from job advertisements that the chance of getting work is higher if you are computer literate. Although most classrooms can now boast a computer, the amount of access per child is very limited, especially with the constraints of the national curriculum. Much of the computer skill of young people is channelled off into virtual reality games, where no one speaks to each other and large amounts of pocket money are spent on arcade games, computer games and ever-updated computers. Rather than improving people's lives, the computer industry is creating a small band of computer billionaires. As Victor Keegan aptly calls it in his *Guardian* article, "a new form of highway robbery".

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and much more...

... WHY DO THEY HAVE THE POWER?

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But surely anarchists can be excused for going on pointing out that it has never 'worked like that'. The only times that we 'who are many' have managed to get a bit more of the cake of prosperity is when we have united against the employers, against governments, and for solidarity among the exploited.

With more than twenty million unemployed in Europe today without solidarity among all workers, in or out of a job, the employers can do what they like paywise, employment conditions, hours of work, no insurance, no holiday pay.

Let all workers face up to the capitalist system in operation. The bosses' power is that for their wealth they need to exploit other people's labour and have the backing of the banks and capital – or in the case of Bill Gates, who has "personal wealth of \$18 billion" can stick two fingers up at all his employees and not least at governments.

But when will the millions of workers who keep the Gates and other 357 billionaires, plus the *Sunday Times*' top 500 millionaires (and only last week another seven punters became millionaires on the lottery) realise that all these people would starve if the lowest paid workers in all countries – the farm workers – refused to harvest the crops and all the seasonal fruit and vegetables? And of course all the services which the rich enjoy. And as we write, the papers report that the suicidal (?) Rothschild was staying at the Paris Hilton where he was paying £700 a night!

Anarchists have been saying for more than a hundred years that we, the victims of capitalism, are many, they are few. We have the power if we use our intelligence to make a prosperous and happy world for all (including the 358 dispossessed billionaires).

For a comprehensive collection of articles on 'The Net' see *The Raven* 32 (£3, post-free)

HIGHWAY ROBBERY

(continued from page 1)

The Gulf War may be regarded as the first war to be conducted in cyberspace. The Americans, with their superior technology, set out via the computer network to destroy the enemy's command and communications structure without necessarily attacking it physically. This meant that a private soldier in Omaha could be attacking a computer in Baghdad without actually leaving his or her home-base. The net result was that two wars were being fought side by side and the one that reached our television screens was the sanitised technological one rather than the one of devastating carnage. Some claim that technological wars could make war more humane, but that apparently was the intention behind the use of poison gas – to incapacitate the enemy without killing anyone. The effects of this 'higher form of killing' were yet to be realised. The consequences of a complete shut-down of computers during a war situation could have devastating effects on the positive uses of computers such as hospital monitors.

The Americans are horrified at the thought of cyberterrorism, the planting of a virus in their computer system by liberation groups. The day could come where governments will band together to register every move into the cybernet and establish a computer police force. Computers might only be allowed under controlled circumstances and require licences.

One small blip in commercial computerisation was thrown up this week when thousands of tins of corned beef were cancelled out by computers at Marks & Spencer. Because of their long shelf-life, the year 2001 on the tins was shown up as a mistake and the computer doesn't know about the change of the century. The Minister for Public Service, Roger Freeman, has high hopes that we can soon all be paying our taxes and licence fees and claiming our benefits and pensions via the Internet and computer. Many people cannot yet use the library computer.

THE CARL BRIDGWATER CASE A COCK-EYED PLAYING FIELD

As we go to press, we do not know the outcome of the 'Bridgwater Four' case, but it looks as if four men jailed for murder eighteen years ago will be admitted by the authorities to be not guilty.

Readers in the United Kingdom will be familiar with the case from the national media. Briefly, for readers elsewhere, a thirteen year old boy named Carl Bridgwater, delivering newspapers early in the morning at a peaceful country town, was shot dead when he disturbed a burglary. Four local small-time villains were arrested, and a year later convicted on the confession of one of them, a not-too-bright chap questioned for 56 hours without access to a solicitor, and the evidence of people who met them in the nick on remand, that they had admitted the murder privately.

The chap who confessed alleged he had been knocked about by the police, who had concocted the confession for him to sign. Language experts called by the defence, and a psychiatrist called by the Home Office, think this is true. The man died in prison in 1981. The fellow prisoners who testified said they had lied under police pressure, after they were released in the late 1980s.

But the defence case mostly turns on fingerprint evidence. Carl Bridgwater's bicycle was thrown over a wall into a pigsty. There were fingerprints on the bike which were not those of Carl Bridgwater nor of any of the accused. Police witnesses said that these prints had been found, and defence lawyers could then have asked where exactly they were found but did not. The jury was left with the impression that they were all over the farm and therefore of no real interest.

Lawyers are now saying the defence lawyers were at fault in not asking where the fingerprints were when they had the opportunity. As if a criminal trial is like a game between lawyers, and if you lose through not asking a question you should not ask for the case to be tried again, any more than you should ask for a

chess game to be repeated which you lost through failing to notice something. The prisoners, by this reckoning, are lawyers' pawns and their imprisonment for something they didn't do something the lawyer must in honour put up with.

There was an unsuccessful appeal in 1989, but astonishingly the fact of the strange fingerprints on the bicycle did not come up.

It is up to the Home Secretary to refer cases back to the appeal court. The present Home Secretary Michael Howard is all for putting villains in prison and keeping them there, and perhaps not too concerned whether country burglars are in the nick for local burglary which they did, or for murder which they did not. Anyway, when he got the dossier about the 'new' (i.e. newly admitted) fingerprint evidence last December, he said he was "not minded" to refer the case back. He has changed his mind, apparently under pressure from the prosecutor at the original trial.

After Judith Ward, who served fifteen years for a multiple murder she didn't do, was freed after the appeal court heard evidence which was known to the prosecution but not the defence at her original trial., the judges recommended that the prosecution should have a duty of full disclosure. A commission was set up, and the law has now been changed so that the defence must tell the prosecutors before a trial what the defence will be, and the prosecution must then disclose whatever it thinks might be useful to the defence.

This is how criminal law reform works in societies like ours. Underdogs and do-gooders demand that the abuse of accused prisoners be made less easy. The abusers demand a *quid-pro-quo*, so that prosecution and defence lawyers have a level playing field.

But behind the lawyers are the state on one side and the prisoner on the other, and a level playing field for lawyers will not give equal chances to the state and the prisoner.

ANARCHIST COMMENTS IN BRIEF

WHEN IS A 'TERRORIST' NOT A TERRORIST? Answer: when he becomes head of government! In the same month that John Major was receiving a former Ulster Union 'terrorist', the Queen was sitting in the open carriage alongside the smiling and waving Nelson Mandela, President of South Africa. He spent 23 years of his life as a convicted 'terrorist'. And what about the Israeli war against the British in Palestine. Begin was a 'terrorist' yet it was he who formed the first Israeli government recognised by the British.

I find it ironic as well as amusing that the cartoon of the terrorist is still the bearded anarchist chap with the big hat who appeared in *The Daily Mirror* strip in my childhood, 'Popsky' as he was called, was the symbol of revolution – the Russian one.

I can never understand why some of my anarchist comrades are so concerned to make

anarchism 'respectable'. As far as I know, anarchist 'terrorism' as a kind of philosophy is a hundred years out of date.

Surely there is no comparison between the generous young men who sacrificed their lives in, alas, vain attempts against the lives of dictators such as Mussolini or Hitler and the indiscriminate real terrorism of Islamic fundamentalists and nationalist (for example, ETA in Spain) sects unconcerned about who will be their victims.

ORWELL BACK IN THE NEWS *The Guardian's* sleuths have uncovered more Orwelliana which shows that George had prepared and submitted a blacklist to some MI5 type set-up of writers of the left who should not be trusted in the Cold War propaganda against the Soviet Union (who were, incidentally, Britain's military allies who actually won the war against Germany).

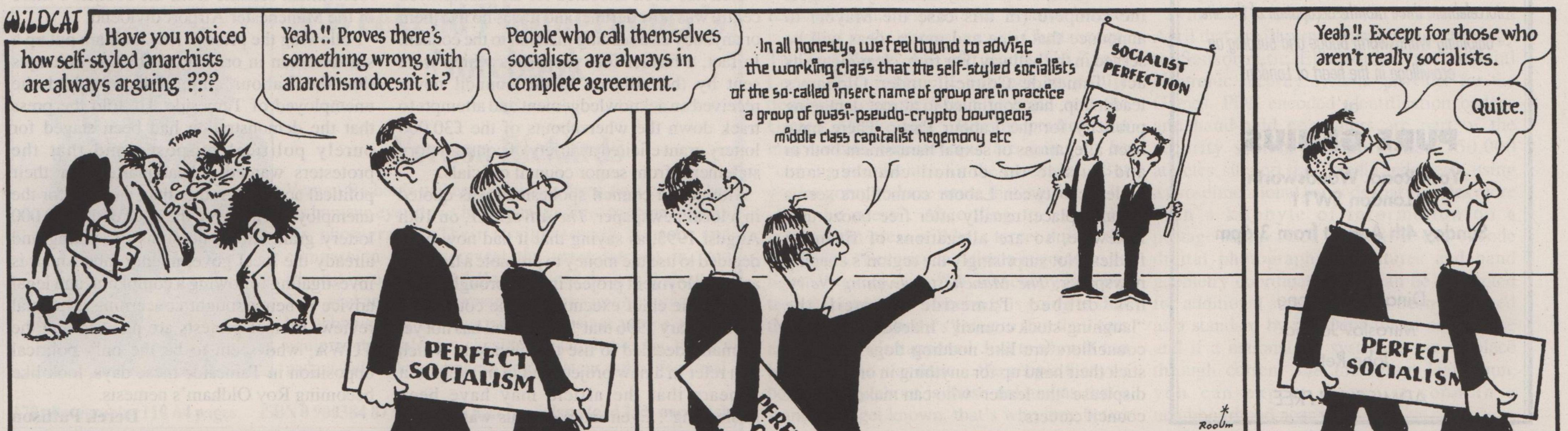
Orwell was a nice chap and a good friend of the anarchists, but the trouble with intellectuals when it comes to politics is that they are completely unreliable. They get carried away by ideas and in a flash are supporting something in complete opposition. For instance, there are published letters between him and Herbert Read where he is saying we should go underground and have stocks of paper and duplicators in view of the imminent war situation (in 1939). Yet when war broke out not only did he support it but denounced pacifists like George Woodcock as *fascists!* To further illustrate my point, he was denouncing the anarchists and Woodcock in *The Partisan Review*, yet when meeting Woodcock on the local bus he would make it clear that he didn't mean any harm! I can't accept this approach. Somebody I denounce as a fascist is surely beyond the pale?

DO THE MPs DESERVE THEIR 26% RISE?

They will argue that it is an independent body that has assessed the rise. I never stop pointing out that percentages are a way of cheating and hiding the actual facts. If I, as an OAP, got 26% on my £61 a week instead of 3% I would be getting not £1.83 but £15.86 a week, compared with the MPs equivalent of £19.62 and now £169 a week extra!

The only argument for MP's extravagant increases is that their jobs are dependent on the whims of the electorate. But most MPs seem to secure jobs on the side to compensate for this insecurity. Nevertheless, to have 'MP' after your name is a very profitable entrée to the City and other money-making jobs. Jobs? Consultancies – yes, that's better!

Hypocrisy, thy name is party politics – all parties. In spite of the fact that some 160 MPs opposed the 26% increase, only four have refused and for some inexplicable reason won't reveal their names. Why the modesty? **Libertarian**



WANDSWORTH LAND OCCUPATION



The thirteen-acre site in York Road, SW11, is still in the hands of the occupiers. Although Guinness have got a possession order, they have not activated it and within the next few weeks the order will lapse. Although publicity in the press and television has ceased and as such the occupation is slowly becoming a fading memory in communal consciousness, the occupation still remains a remarkable achievement. For anarchists it is also an equally remarkable opportunity to observe an embryonic anarchist society in the making. The place is unique, at least in London, with its mixture of the newest and of the oldest technologies. What is so marvellous about 'Pure Genius' is its adherence to strict anarchist dogma with full respect to individual and communal needs.

The intricate wooden structures are mainly designed at the camp-fire, discussed at the meetings and put up by small teams of ever-changing people. There is ample food excellently cooked to the highest culinary standards. The flourishing vegetable plots have begun to produce food for the table.

But what is most appealing to me is that people organise their own timetables yet are also willing to do communal tasks. Whether it is a 'skip run' for timber, metal and other building materials or the daily visit to the nearby Covent Garden fruit and vegetable market, on whose explicit support the occupiers have relied on since 5th May, or work on maintenance or for the putting up of communal

buildings, there are always willing hands.

The need for money has been reduced to the minimum as food is free and the communal store room (a large circular bender well insulated and shelved) is always fully stocked with the choicest fruits and vegetables, bread, rice and condiments.

This is not to say that all the occupiers are anarchists – but that they live in an anarchist society is indisputable.

But look at the shadows, so to speak. A comparison which comes to mind is the

exclusion order round Stonehenge which costs Salisbury Council many millions each year. A council can 'get away' with such a monstrous expenditure to keep out about eighty people intending to visit Stonehenge at solstice time. The permanent population of the Wandsworth 'Newbury on Thames' is about the same figure (although at short notice many thousands would arrive to defend the place) and a similar expenditure by such a large amount by a Stock Exchange quoted company could seriously affect the share value of the

company. So there is a slight feeling that Guinness will at least wait for the decision of the public enquiry on their planning application, together with their old friend Safeways.

As to what Guinness will or won't do is also very interesting to consider. The land, by and large, belongs to them except for four 'plots'. The arches by Wandsworth Bridge are owned by the local authority, the disused large jetty belongs to the River Authority (parts of it standing on the Queen's mud), the disused electricity sub-station is the property of LEB and there is also a very pleasant stretch of land by the river of which nobody, at the time of writing, knows its owner (possibly dear old Shell). In order to gain possession of the whole site it will be necessary for these exemplary authorities to co-ordinate their actions with Guinness and such negotiations are both costly and difficult.

Should Wandsworth Council become part of the eviction attempt then they will have to rehouse all those families with children, for example. The other difficulty for the Guinness firm is the possibility of very bad publicity at the time when the public enquiry's decision is still pending and might not be known for several months.

In the meantime, I urge readers of this paper to visit the site while the going is good. This is an ecologically safe zone for those with a zest for life.

John Retey

If there is a premier league for sleazy councils in the North West, then the Labour controlled council in Tameside, Greater Manchester, must be up at the top of that league.

For the last seventeen years the council has been Labour controlled and led by Roy Oldham, who until recently was a personal friend of the socialist millionaire and convicted rapist Owen Oyston. In recent years the council has been beset by scandals and has appeared on a number of occasions in the *Private Eye* column 'Rotten Boroughs' which seeks to expose sleaze and corruption in local government.

In January 1994 Tameside Council and its links with an 'arms-length' care company, Tameside Enterprises Ltd (TEL), which was found to have debts of more than £2 million, were also the subject of an in-depth investigation by *Face the Facts* on BBC Radio 4. In his introduction, BBC presenter John Waite described the TEL saga as a story of "high office and low politics" and how a civic privatisation has "provided jobs for the boys and bills for the taxpayers".

There is little doubt that on occasions Roy Oldham's leadership of Tameside Council has caused the Labour Party acute embarrassment. In fact, during 1994 he was summoned to attend the Labour Party's headquarters in Walworth Road and told to clean up his act. The showdown between himself and Labour Party bosses came at a time when there was growing concern about Labour's image in

Tameside and, during one period, regional Labour Party officials were actually brought in to police the council. Understandably there have been demands for Oldham's resignation, particularly when it became known that the person responsible for TEL's finances (Councillor Walker) had no financial qualifications but had nevertheless been given a reference for the job by Councillor Oldham.

LAUGHING-STOCK COUNCIL

Despite the fact Tameside Council has fluctuated between farce and fiasco during much of the time that it has been led by Councillor Oldham, Labour remains in control in Tameside and did increase its majority in the May elections. However, if this indicates anything then it goes to show how deeply unpopular the Tory government is around these parts rather than how popular the present council is. Furthermore, as with many other areas throughout the country, less than one in three people in Tameside vote in these elections, which by any standards must amount to a massive vote of no confidence in local government politics. I'm sure that if many of these voters attended a Tameside Council meeting to see representational democracy at work, even fewer would vote. Watching a Tameside Council meeting is rather like being in an old fashioned Northern workingmen's club: any minute you expect the compère (in this case the Mayor) to announce that tripe and mushy peas will be served in the hallway. Far from cleaning up its act, Tameside Council, under Oldham's leadership, has continued to attract damaging publicity for the Labour Party. There have been allegations of sexual harassment both in and outside the council chamber, and violence between Labour councillors seems commonplace, usually after free booze-ups. Likewise, so are allegations of financial fiddles. Not surprisingly the region's evening newspaper, *The Manchester Evening News*, has dubbed Tameside Council the "laughing-stock council". Indeed, most of the councillors are like nodding dogs who will stick their hand up for anything in order not to displease 'the leader' who can make or break council careers.

PUBLIC MISLED BY COUNCIL

Such is the power of patronage that at their July council meeting there was not a whimper of protest from Tameside councillors when it was recommended that the council renege on a £30,000 pledge to the unemployed of Tameside. The money, which the council had donated in 1988 from an extinct lottery fund, had been set aside with the intention of establishing an unemployed centre in the borough. In fact since the early 1980s the local trades council had been campaigning for such a centre and the lottery money was donated in response to this campaign.

Moreover, those properties which the council had in the past offered for use as an unemployed centre proved to be unsuitable. A disused school canteen in Ashton-under-Lyne was refused when it was found to be riddled with asbestos, and a shop was refused because on inspection it was found to be semi-derelict. When a property was found to be suitable the council invariably came up with the excuse of legal complications.

In order to expedite matters, a local unemployed group, the Tameside Unemployed Workers Alliance (TUWA), wrote to Roy Oldham in May 1995 enclosing details of three properties which they considered suitable for an unemployed centre. Much to their surprise, the council leader replied that the £30,000 which had been allocated for an unemployed centre was now defunct and it was no use them or anybody else sending material to the council. In fact, a further four properties which were sent by the alliance to the council never received an acknowledgement and attempts to track down the whereabouts of the £30,000 lottery grant elicited a variety of contradictory statements from senior council officials.

Although a council spokesman was quoted in a local newspaper, *The Advertiser*, on 10th August 1995, as saying that it had now been decided to use the money to promote a training and employment project in the borough, I was told by the chief executive of the council on 7th February 1996 that "the council has not yet formally decided to use the money to which you refer in a new project and in this regard it appears that the article may have been misleading". Even more curious was a letter

which was sent by David Hagg, an assistant chief executive of the council, on 3rd May 1996 to a T&G branch secretary, Jack Crossfield, which advised him that the council had not discussed the £30,000 lottery grant since October 1988. And yet on 20th February 1996 Roy Oldham had written to the secretary of the N/W TUC about the unemployed centre and had stated that "the Labour Group is, at this moment in time, looking at the possibility of now using a sum of money which we had put to one side for this facility, for another purpose".

POLICE EVICT PROTESTERS

Understandably members of the TUWA are incensed at the way in which they have been misled by council officials over this issue and the way in which the unemployed of Tameside have been deprived of a much-needed facility. At the full council meeting on 2nd July 1996, the Mayor suspended the meeting the the police were called to evict banner-waving protesters from the public gallery. Despite the protest, the council agreed to transfer the £30,000 lottery grant to the council's own trainee recruitment scheme, which will only benefit Tameside Council's trainees. Members of the TUWA see this as a gimmick for Roy Oldham to wash his hands of a political problem, and they point out that the council only two months before had decided to fund the trainee recruitment scheme from the council's share of the Manchester Airport dividend.

Following the protest, Roy Oldham put up a smokescreen in order to deflect any charges that the Labour council had robbed the unemployed of Tameside. He told the press that the demonstration had been staged for purely political purposes and that the protesters wanted a headquarters for their political activities rather than a centre for the unemployed. However, the issue of the £30,000 lottery grant shows no signs of abating and already the local government ombudsman is investigating following a complaint, and legal advice is being sought concerning a judicial review. Further protests are planned and the TUWA, who seem to be the only political opposition in Tameside these days, look like becoming Roy Oldham's nemesis.

Derek Pattison

POETRY READING FOR 'LAND IS OURS'

to celebrate three months occupation of the site
adjoining Wandsworth Bridge and building an
eco-village in the heart of London

at

PURE GENIUS

York Road, Wandsworth,
London SW11

Sunday 4th August from 3-6pm

with

Dinah Livingstone

Miroslav Jancic

John Retey

ADMISSION FREE

MORE WORK, LESS PAY

As I write, the Bakers' Union is probably picketing Allbak in Bury, Greater Manchester, over the low pay it is giving its trainee bakers. The firm is paying £60 for a forty-hour week.

Last week, I myself just missed a job cleaning with the Mrs Mopp Cleaning Co. It was snapped up at £100 a week. Now I'm having to settle for pursuing a position as security officer at the Vital UK Security Co., Horwich. That's paying £2.40 an hour for a 55 to 60-hour week. I don't think I'll go for double glazing sales spot with the Rain Seal Window Co. at £70 a week plus 4% commission.

All these jobs were on offer last week at the Job Centre in Bury.

Elsewhere in the country things are looking up. The magazine *Jobsearch*, circulated free at Government Job Centres, has been carrying advertisements offering 'big money' in the sex industry. I can hardly wait to get my copy! A chance to earn £500 a week for 'intimate services'!

Quite rightly, when it first received a complaint the Department of Education and Employment refused to withdraw the magazine. Quite properly, the Department argued, "the unemployed should have the widest access to the widest range of job opportunities possible".

Now, owing to Labour protestations, the Employment Minister Eric Forth has had the publication withdrawn from Job Centres and has launched an urgent investigation in *Jobsearch* magazine.

UNSAVOURY JOBS?

Some are concerned that the Job Seekers Act may end up pushing people into unsavoury occupations. The Shadow Employment spokesman claimed "the current issue of this magazine [*Jobsearch*] invites vulnerable men and women to take up prostitution as a business opportunity".

A recent study by Janet Ford of the University of York shows that up to a quarter of the unemployed take jobs knowing they will be worse off. Her study points to modest wage aspirations among the unemployed.

Main breadwinners were usually after net earnings of between £130 to £160 a week, or had taken jobs paying that amount.

For most that only just covered their bills, food and clothing, leaving them little better off than on benefit. This tendency to accept low-paid work, perhaps after being bullied by benefit officers anxious to hit targets, could raise the risk of poverty, debt and housing repossession.

The Employment Policy Institute estimates that more than four million are out of work – double the official unemployment figures. Almost one household in five has no working adults today, compared with about one household in seventeen twenty years ago.

TRAINING CONFIDENCE TRICK

There is still the idea that a job should pay a living wage. The Joseph Rowntree study *Into Work* shows many don't take up in-work benefits like family credit and housing

benefit. Some want to be free of benefits, others can't face the 'hassle' of claiming.

But it is not just the lower classes that are suffering. The Executive Job Clubs are over-subscribed – full of middle-aged, middle-class former middle managers. The days when they thought they wouldn't need the dole or income support are over.

Today even teachers, social workers and civil servants feel insecure. An editorial in the *Independent on Sunday* (21st July) declared that "hardly anybody can be sure that they will not, one day, need state benefits".

The main political parties have no real solution to this situation. The Tory and Labour parties seem to be planning a system of forced labour through the Job Seekers Act.

All the major parties advocate 'training' as an answer. This has provoked the editor of *The Observer* to declare: "Training is the great palliative of our time. All parties support it and none asks what work there is for the trainees when training ends. As a policy, it has the immense advantage of being far cheaper than building homes or creating jobs." Plus the additional advantage of taking people off the unemployment register for the period of training. Consequently it often has the effect of appearing to cut unemployment.

Mack the Knife

STOPPING THE JSA



Job Centres throughout Britain were picketed on 17th July for Groundswell's first National Day of Action. From Brighton in the south to Edinburgh in the north, taking in Sheffield, Leeds, Manchester and other major cities on the way, groups of demonstrators, both men and women, against the Job Seekers Act were outside Job Centres leafleting and talking to claimants about the coming attempts to force people off the register into very low-paid jobs and what it will be like, with allowances reduced or even removed, if you are unemployed after October.

Cheetham Hill Job Centre in Manchester, already labelled the 'House of Horror', is of special significance in this campaign as it is being used for one of several pilot schemes to test the resistance of claimants to the full government implementation of these new Job Seeker regulations in the autumn. Cheetham Hill has already experienced over ten small demonstrations in which leaflets were distributed to claimants and four major pickets in two of which the Job Centre was invaded and occupied for a time. On 17th July Cheetham Hill was again besieged by campaigners who found that this time security guards on the door had been doubled and they were threatened with instant arrest for violent entry should they attempt to get inside.

With banners unfurled, representatives of the Manchester Anti-JSA Group, Tameside

Unemployed Workers Alliance, Bury Unemployment Centre, Bury Wages for Housework Campaign, The Revolutionary Communist Group and others maintained a presence at the entrance talking to claimants and giving them leaflets as they entered or left the building about the government threats to force them to take low-paid jobs or lose benefit. We have been told of one factory that offers jobs paying £1.50 an hour for a forty-hour week. Who can live on £60?

Groundswell's campaign is gathering momentum and with its slogan 'Three Strikes and You're Out' it has caught the attention of the media and given us valuable publicity. When the full significance of the latest blame-the-victim attack on the unemployed is realised, the dozens demonstrating outside Job Centres should swell to thousands and, if it does, the Act will be defeated and we shall win. Remember the poll tax?

This week the uniformed police kept a much lower profile, out of sight although not far away. But as the picket dispersed at the end of the demonstration, so also did two dark-suited men leave, one from each side of the building, and walk together to their respective cars. Part of the state security system just ever so discreetly keeping an eye on things? But then they were only doing their jobs, whatever they were.

HS

DOLE QUEUE STOP PRESS

'FORCED LABOUR' UNDER REVIEW

The government is to give consideration to a scheme for 'forced labour' for the unemployed. It has agreed to price a scheme to compel the jobless to work on 'useful projects' – for local authorities, voluntary bodies, environmental agencies and private firms – at £3 an hour, maybe less for young workers.

Initially the scheme would start up on a voluntary basis. But Frank Field MP, one of the scheme's sponsors, has said that a successful scheme would eventually lead to a compulsory project.

Some say 'the slave's work is done uncaringly', and even some ministers on the right are opposed to this kind of forced labour called 'workfare'. It turns the state into an employer of last resort. It appeals to a certain type of state socialist like Frank Field. Some ministers think it will distort the job market and put people into subsidised low-paid jobs.

STOPPING BACKDATED BENEFITS

If claimants fail to fill in their applications for benefits properly they may lose out in future. Claimants may be punished for slip-ups, and benefit may cease to be backdated to the date of the original claim if they fail to provide all necessary information when they first apply.

Peter Lilley, the Secretary of State for Social Security, said: "Individuals will need to take proper responsibility for providing relevant evidence to the department". It seems that because of the increasing paperwork involved in making claims, some 60% of income support claims are wrongly filled in.

UNIONS 'UP IN ARMS'

The Employment Service Union – the CPSA – is reported to be annoyed at last month's national 'Day of Action' by Groundswell, the federation of unemployed action groups. The union is upset by the 'Three Strikes and You're Out' scheme being implemented by Groundswell against dole staff who are harassing claimants.

Groundswell says: "The union should get together with the unemployed to resist the Job Seekers Act, but up to now we have had very little support from the union".

Groundswell plans to step-up its campaign against the JSA, as we start the run-up to the full implementation of the Act in October.

ANTI-JSA ACTION GROUP MEETING

At a recent meeting of the group the following decisions were taken:

1. To issue an initial warning to the Deputy Manager of Cheetham Hill Job Centre in accordance with Groundswell's 'Three Strikes and You're Out' policy. The grounds given are:
 - a) impoliteness to claimants;
 - b) rudeness to staff subordinates;
 - c) wasting public funds by making frivolous calls to Greater Manchester Police to promote a policy of intimidation of claimants as part of the Job Centre's pre-JSA pilot scheme.
2. To take action against the Benefit Adviser's 'hit squad' at Cheetham Hill.
3. To follow up recent successful pickets at Cheetham Hill.
4. To spread the campaign against the JSA to Job Centres in South Manchester with a view to setting up a serious and active Anti-JSA Campaign Group there.
5. To approve the plan of the Tameside Unemployed Workers' Alliance to circulate information against the Job Seekers Act on the Internet.

TWO NEW FREEDOM PRESS TITLES

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— ANARCHIST NOTEBOOK —

FROZEN IN ADOLESCENCE

One of the attractive things about the London School of Economics in its rabbit-warren of buildings behind Kingsway and Aldwych in central London is its endless series of public lectures open to all, by visiting lecturers from around the world. I took care to go and hear William Julius Wilson at the end of June, raising the question "Are American ghetto trends emerging in Europe?"

He is a professor of sociology from Chicago, and later Harvard, who in 1987 published a book called *The Truly Disadvantaged: the Inner City, the Underclass and Public Policy*. There he argued that we shouldn't ignore the various theories about the emergence of an urban underclass, pushed around by right-wing politicians in the US, and followed here by a series of Conservative ministers from Keith Joseph to Michael Howard.

He said, on the other hand, that those of us who shy away from this kind of language "fail to address one of the most important social transformations of recent history". For, while in American cities like Chicago, Detroit or Pittsburgh, the pattern used to be of the male breadwinner bringing back the wage to support his wife and family, this image has been pushed back into history by the collapse of traditional industry.

The same thing is obviously true of British industrial cities like those involved in iron and steel, ship-building, heavy manufactures, mining and metal fabrication. Full-time work for men has been partially replaced by part-time and casual jobs for women.

Politicians in both the US and Europe have continually attributed the growth of families headed by women as the result of some demoralising welfare factor, and have sometimes suggested that their habit of producing babies should be controlled by compulsory adoption or publicly-managed children's homes (a recommendation not supported by recent revelations of what actually happens to children in care).

Wilson argued that this wasn't a question of welfare, but of the lack of useful employed men around to be worth considering as partners. It is the result not of any change in sexual behaviour, but of the collapse of the job market.

The answer to the question raised by the title of his lecture is, 'Yes'. Public policy has ensured that housing estates built by local authorities have become "dumping grounds for the poor", as a report from the Institute for Fiscal Studies, *Living with the State*, confirms. It reports a social fact that all but the most cloistered of readers must have noted, that "half of all men in council homes are now unemployed".

We hardly need sociological research to explain that minimum-income families tend to produce minimum expectation children, defeated even before they had battled for a niche in the world of work. Indeed, another LSE character, Professor David Downes, described to me graphically the contrast between boys and girls in the early years of secondary school. The girls were full of vitality and fun. The boys were already withdrawn, sullen and depressed. And you will be aware of the series of studies of the results of GCSE exams, taken at the age of 16-plus, show a far better average performance by girls than by boys.

Findings like these compare intriguingly with the conclusions that in co-educational schools the boys dominated the class and monopolised the teachers' time, to the exclusion of girls.

But the fact is that girls, today, are far more likely to find a job than boys, and far more likely to move on from school into further or higher education. And in a quite different context, 25 years ago Richard Sennett concluded in his book *The Uses of Disorder* that young males in American society were "frozen in an adolescent posture".

In the days of relatively full employment and a host of unskilled, boring but paid jobs, young men were desirable, not only as sexual partners but as home-builders, fathers and breadwinners. They were obliged by circumstances to grow out of pastimes like football hooliganism, joy-riding or ram-raiding, as there were more socially desirable uses of their time. They are frozen in adolescence, as there is nowhere else to go, apart of course from the drug scene.

In the British situation there is a piece of meticulous research by Clive Wilkinson called *The Drop Out Society: Young People on the Margin* (and since, like me, you won't have read about it in the daily papers, I'll mention that it costs £12.50 from the National Youth Agency, 17 Albion Street, Leicester LE1 6GD). Introducing this report, Frank Coffield, professor of education at Durham, makes two vital points. One of them is that there is:

"a significant minority (about five to ten per cent) of young people who are neither in education, nor in training, nor in employment: they have at the ages of 16 and 17 dropped out of official society

altogether and appear nowhere in official statistics. For some of them, secondary school, which they stopped attending on a regular basis at the age of 13 or even 12, was the last contact they had with officialdom; and since dropping out of school that have found neither regular employment nor been on a Youth Training (YT) scheme. For others, YT provided such inappropriate or poor quality training or such low 'wages' that, for instance, 78 per cent of Clive Wilkinson's sample of 250 young people failed to complete the course."

He doesn't see the new harvest of young drop-outs as harbingers of a social revolution, but as victims of a painful and damaging 'tangle of pathologies' and sees Wilkinson's book as "illustrating vividly the struggles of young people on the very margins of society to make some kind of a life for themselves". He blames their plight on malign social trends to be found in all industrialised democracies. The first of these, visible since the 1970s, is that:

"a particular section of the community (roughly the bottom twenty to thirty per cent) has borne the brunt of economic restructuring. Typically, in Spain, Italy and Germany as well as in the UK and Australia, the rate of youth unemployment runs at two to three times the adult rate. As the French express it, the young unemployed have become the shock-absorbers of the economic crisis. The first conclusion which can therefore be drawn is that the persistently high level of unemployment of young adults in western democracies is not a private trouble but a public issue, it is not an individual but a structural problem and so their unemployment cannot be explained away by their alleged lack of either motivation, or of ability, or of job 'readiness'."

But there are so many parallels with the situation that William Julius Wilson raised from the experience in the United States, that, once again, we have to answer his question with the reply that the disasters of the ghetto areas of American cities certainly have emerged in European towns and cities, and that plenty of the young are deprived of the opportunity to grow up.

Colin Ward

FOOD FOR THOUGHT ... AND ACTION!**RECENT ARRIVALS AT THE FREEDOM PRESS BOOKSHOP**

Anarchy: a journal of desire armed, #42, BAL Press. Their move to New York has meant that this issue has come out very late, but they say they expect to be back on schedule by next winter. A report of the eviction of squats in New York is accompanied by a somewhat confused and self-contradictory article on the Unabomber; 16 pages of alternative media reviews; various essays, including an assessment by Hakim Bey of both the anti-tech anarcho-primitivists and the pro-tech anarcho-futurists or 'extropians'; a good piece by Paul Simons on Cromwell's New Model Army; and two others, one on post-Soviet Russia and the other on Mexican rebellions in Baja California by Octavio Alberola. Then there are the usual pages and pages of entertaining letters. 84 pages, £3.00.

Lobster #31, quarterly, Robin Ramsay. The amount of new information emerging on all aspects of the JFK assassination and anything connected with it shows no sign of letting up. This issue contains an extract of Peter Dale Scott's latest book concerned with the connection between the alleged assassin Oswald and the Mexican secret service and Cuba. And there is a run-down of some of the recent publications on events and repercussions surrounding the affair. For Internet fans there's a survey of sites of interest, with a guide to what they offer. They range from the US Government (many) to the UK Government (few) via campaigning groups, cryptography/surveillance, news groups, mind control, censorship/civil liberties, environment and conspiracy. The author also provides a summary of the US Defense Department's strategic assessment of the Internet. These articles may not have been deliberately timed to coincide with the publication of Freedom Press's latest *Raven* (32) on 'Communication' where the Internet is dealt with extensively, but it makes a good marriage. Another interesting article by Peter E. Newell covers the International Centre

of Free Trade Unionists in Exile (a CIA front), and there's a lot more. 42 pages, £2.50.

The Clandestine Caucus: anti-socialist campaigns and operations in the British Labour Movement since the war by Robin Ramsay, a *Lobster* special issue. A fascinating, informative and highly readable investigation into the multifarious attempts to spy on, co-opt, divert and neutralise various elements of the left in Britain - attempts which have continued apace, as Seamus Milne has so convincingly shown in his book *The Enemy Within*, on the penetration and destruction of the miners' union. Some of Ramsay's material has appeared elsewhere in different forms and it obviously makes sense to collect it all together into a coherent document. Areas covered include Aims of Industry, the Economic League, IRIS, Common Cause, Brian Crozier, the SDP and subversion hunters, the Campaign for Democratic Socialism, the CIA and Moscow gold. Its 36 pages include a bibliography and index, and Peter E. Newell's article in *Lobster* 31 (above), and another one on the SDP by Tom Easton that I forgot to mention, both complement it nicely. £5.00.

Alternative Press Review: your guide beyond the mainstream, vol 2/3, CAL Press. This issue was also later appearing, but it's worth the wait. There is a major piece (15 pages!) comprising the transcript of an interview with Noam Chomsky by David Barsamian from his *Alternative Radio* programme, put out weekly on 100-plus stations across America, and a long article by Edward Herman investigating the role of the *Wall Street Journal* as propagandist for statist ideology and corporate capitalism. Either one of these is worth the price of the magazine, but in addition we get Adam Parfrey's revisiting of the Oklahoma bombing, which lists the many unanswered questions and queries the authorities' cover-ups of what happened there and also at Waco, while the editorial advocates investigative journalism rather than conspiracy theory to

explain these events. Other articles of interest include Fred Woodworth on computers, reprinted from *The Match!*, and one on the continuing tragedy of the Mayan population in the Zapatista stronghold region of Chiapas. The usual pages of magazine and book reviews and letters come as a bonus. 84 pages, £3.00.

The Fifth Estate, spring '96, 30th anniversary issue. Part one of *The History of the Fifth Estate: the early years* appears in this special edition and may explain its late arrival. Among the articles and essays can be found nationalism in the Québec referendum; the life and times of Leon Czolgosz (anarchist assassin of President McKinley); Mumia Abu-Jamal's death sentence indefinitely postponed, but a re-trial denied; the Detroit newspaper workers' strike; the complicity of Shell, the IMF and US finance in the judicial murder of Ken Saro-Wiwa and eight colleagues by the Nigerian state; Fredy Perlman and his view of history; and the repression of dissidents in World War One in the USA. Plus letters, reviews and more to get your teeth into. 32 pages, £1.50.

Squall #13, Summer '96, "Necessity breeds ingenuity". The unleashing of MI5 on to 'environmental extremists', fear as the most prevalent form of social control, the new generation of pirate radio, the judicial banning and burning of a book on growing cannabis, an article from prison by one of the 'Swords into Ploughshares' defendants, concerted establishment attacks on the animal rights movement, and an alliance between church groups and squatters to provide support for those caught in the vice of asylum, immigration and social security legislation are just a few of the topics covered in the latest *Squall*. All nicely held together by the regular items: the contacts page, reviews, letters, road wars and the international section. 68 A3 pages, £1.80.

The brand new Freedom Press Bookshop List is discussed by 'Four Eyes' in this issue (see right).

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FREEDOM PRESS BOOKSHOP READERS' ROUND-UP

As subscribers will know by now (and casual readers can discover by requesting one), our new booklist is out and has changed slightly from previous formats.

Firstly it's bigger, and includes for the first time our new 'Backlist and Bargains' feature. This in turn means that pamphlets are no longer listed separately as this would be impractical and too demanding on space. The extra space has been used to add more titles and improve and expand the summary descriptions of many of them.

Secondly, it has not emerged as the perfect triumph of anarchist publishing that it was when our compiler finished it - one doesn't need to be over-observant to notice one or two mistakes in the printed version: the shaded information boxes have come out rather too dark, which is a pity because those pertaining to ordering contain important information and should be read carefully. And whereas some lines of text are strangely repeated, two lines have completely disappeared. Thus the entry under 'Debord and Sanguinetti' at the bottom of page 6 should read *The Veritable Split in the International: theses on the Situationist International and its time*. £6.95; the misplaced entries below the 'Periodicals' box on the back page should be above it, and the description of *Workers' Solidarity* should read: "anarchist-communist magazine of the WSM, Dublin, quarterly, 75p".

A couple of further points: The '#' symbol next to some titles indicates that due to short stock or other reasons trade customers may not get all the copies they want - if any - and may not get the usual trade discount. This is to ensure that our retail customers get priority. And where books, periodicals and pamphlets are reviewed or mentioned in *Freedom* (whether in this column or by our comrade KM or anybody else), please remember that small publishers usually do very short print runs and thus stocks can sell out quite quickly, so if you leave it several months before ordering things you've seen mentioned, as some people do, prepare to be disappointed! Happy hunting.

'Four Eyes'

ACROSS THE GENERATIONS

Land and Freedom, Ken Loach's film about the Spanish Civil War, won last year's International Jury Prize at Cannes Film Festival, and since its release in London last October has been the subject of much controversy (our review by Nicolas Walter appeared on 21st October 1995).

Jack Jones, former General Secretary of the Transport and General Workers' Union, wrote this review in *T&G Record* (February 1996). Jack Jones is one of the 82 British and Irish volunteers to the International Brigades who were given the honour of Spanish citizenship last year. His review, and the ensuing (hitherto unpublished) correspondence, is published here with his kind permission.

The film gives a totally wrong impression of the terrible civil war in Spain which started nearly sixty years ago, in July 1936. It is a pity that film makers have not produced a popular authentic picture of the war in this year of commemoration.

The main core of the film is a tragic diversion including disruption of the anti-fascist struggle by so-called revolutionaries egged on by undercover fascist agents. Ken Loach does certainly not deserve commendation on that point, although technically the film could hardly be bettered.

It could be described as a fascinating and glamorous film and I can well understand how young people, for whom the war occurred well before they were born, have been enthralled by it.

The hero is David, a fictional Liverpool lad fed up with unemployment. He embarks on a remarkable journey to Spain where he gets mixed up with the revolutionary POUM party and lands up in the trenches fighting alongside men and women (although women were not permitted in the International Brigades). They seize a village held by fascists and hold a meeting to decide what to do about the big houses and the land (a very animated discussion that struck a sympathetic chord with me).

David at one stage manages to leave the POUM to join the International Brigade but then leaves to fight again with the POUM against the Spanish government forces. During the fighting, the heroine, Blanca, becomes the lover of our Liverpool lad and is later killed. The pathos and the passion involved lends a keen edge to an intensely moving film.

To believe that the film portrays anything like the essential nature of the Spanish Civil War is to indeed bury the truth. This is especially true of the incidents in Barcelona during May 1937. An uprising did take place at that time when the Spanish democratically-elected government was waging a life and death struggle against the powerful forces of Franco, Hitler and Mussolini.

Whatever the cause, the uprising, at a time when crucial battles were taking place, played into the hands of the real enemy. In my estimation, support for that action – which the film purports to give – cannot be reconciled with the enormous sacrifices made by so many Spaniards and International Brigade volunteers to defend the elected government and hold back the advance of fascism.

The International Brigade members with whom I saw this film were appalled at the way real history was ignored. Especially since there is conclusive evidence that the fascists had a hand in the Barcelona uprising. A dispatch to Hitler from Von Paupel, German ambassador to the Franco regime, stated that Franco's brother had revealed there had been thirteen fascist agents in Barcelona at the time.

There is now little doubt that fascist agents were used to stir up the revolt by playing on the sincerity of devoted anarchists and rank and file members of POUM.

People were encouraged to believe that the elected government was betraying the 'revolution', and the effect was to create disunity when unity was essential to defeat fascism. True, an industrial dispute at the telephone exchange was used as the spark to set off the Barcelona troubles, but appeals from anarchist and socialist government ministers and trade union leaders were rejected.

Much of the story of *Land and Freedom* is based on George Orwell's book *Homage to Catalonia*. Some time after the book's publication, Orwell criticised his own work. "I've given in *Homage to Catalonia* a more sympathetic account of the POUM than I actually felt. I always thought they were wrong", he said.

I guess the same thing could be said about parts of *Land and Freedom*.

Jack Jones, *T&G Record*, February 1996



To the Editor, *T&G Record*, London

Dear Editor,
I read with some dismay Jack Jones's film review of *Land and Freedom* (*T&G Record*, February 1996).

I saw Ken Loach's film in October 1995. Unfortunately, much of what Jack says about this film is not portrayed in the events which unfold in the main narrative, which was written by Jim Allen. I was certainly not aware, when watching this film, that the uprising in Barcelona in May 1937 had been orchestrated by undercover fascist agents, though I am aware that this 'fascist plot' scenario was the line taken by the *Daily Worker* in May 1937.

The main core of the film, which was simple enough, was how a young unemployed Communist (David) from Liverpool went to Spain in 1936 to join the civil war which had just begun. By chance, David finds himself in a unit of the POUM militia on the Aragon front. What we see in the film is one young man's growing disillusionment with the Communists, who he believes are betraying the revolution in Spain, and which culminates in David tearing up his Communist Party membership card.

Whilst undercover fascist agents were in Barcelona at the time of the uprising in May 1937, this is not portrayed in Ken Loach's film and it is far from conclusive, even by Hugh Thomas's account of the civil war, that they were solely responsible for the fighting which broke out at the telephone exchange. According to George Orwell, the seizure of the telephone exchange which was controlled by members of the CNT, an anarcho-syndicalist trade union, was "simply the match that fired an already existing bomb". It is hardly surprising that Marxist groups, such as the POUM, and the Anarchists shared an open hostility to the Communists who openly expressed their intention of 'liquidating' them. Gerald Brenan (*The Spanish Labyrinth*) says that the Russian press never made any

secret about this. Apparently on 17th December 1936 *Pravda* wrote "the cleaning up of the Trotskyists and anarcho-syndicalist elements has already begun, and it will be carried out with the same energy as in the USSR".

I have the greatest admiration for many people who, like Jack Jones, risked their lives during the Spanish Revolution to fight against fascism. However, after watching *Land and Freedom*, one cannot escape the conclusion that for many anti-fascists fighting on the Republican side Franco was the least of their problems at many times during this war. Like George Orwell, the fictional character in this film, David, who was also in the POUM, has to flee from Spain in a hurry, not from General Franco but from the Communist-controlled political police who were purging members of the POUM. Clearly the Spanish civil war was a war on many fronts, as Jack Jones knows only too well.

Derek Pattison
TGWU 6/72 Branch

A Reply from Jack Jones

Dear Bro Pattison,
In reply to your letter of 21st May 1996, my main worry about the film is that it gives the impression that the International Brigades were more involved in in-fighting and not that of defending the elected government, which is totally incorrect.

I understand the revolutionary nature of the attitude taken up by the POUM and even more that of the anarchists (I had a very high regard for the CNT people I met in Spain) but, as I saw it, the need was to unite all the forces against Franco and his German and Italian supporters. From personal experience I can tell you that when we took prisoners they were practically all Italians (regular Italian army men) and Moors. While the bombing and shelling came from German and Italian sources with planes and guns operated by German and Italian professional airmen and soldiers.

I, and most of the International Brigade I got to know, went out to defend a constitutionally elected government in the Spanish War – elected on a programme of reforms, including trade union rights which Franco and his allies wanted to destroy. (I had close contact with the UGT throughout and since.)

It is a long time ago now, but I regard it as a pity that Ken Loach and Jim Allen in their extremely well produced film did not give an opportunity for the other side of the story to be presented.

Jack Jones, President
T&G Retired Members Association

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An Open Letter to Jack Jones

Dear Bro Jones,
With considerable interest I have followed the correspondence in *T&G Record* resulting from your review of the film *Land and Freedom*. My feeling for Spain and curiosity about the Spanish Civil War began in 1963, when Joan Matthews and I went there as part of a 'small English attachment to the FIJL (Federation Iberica de Juventudes Libertarias). Stuart Christie, who was a better known emissary of this anarchist youth federation, was captured by the Spanish police within days of his entering Spain in August 1964.

Like your generation, we too were idealistic, though I do not pretend that our activities, seen in retrospect, were anything more than absurd. In the Christie case it bordered on comedy. In our case of producing tedious propaganda to discourage foreign tourism to Franco's Spain, it bordered on boredom. The only lasting value of that expedition has been my friendship with Jose Netto, the Gibraltarian anarcho-syndicalist and later the District Secretary of the Transport and General Workers' Union in Gibraltar.

Despite my regard for you and the stand you took in the Spanish Civil War, I believe Ken Loach and Jim Allen were right to produce a critical rather than commemorative film on Spain. It tells a tale which, despite the efforts of Orwell and Noam Chomsky, has not been widely understood. In 1940 Orwell wrote to a fellow writer: "My best book, the one about the Spanish war, sold less than a thousand".

I haven't been able to trace your claim that Orwell later went on to say he thought the POUM "were wrong". All I can find is that in his *Notes on the Spanish Militias*, published after his death and probably written in 1939, he says: "Had I a complete understanding of the situation [in Spain] I should probably have joined the CNT militia."

More serious is your allegation that "the fascists had a hand in the Barcelona uprising" in May 1937. In the film *Land and Freedom* the strike at the Barcelona telephone exchange, involving CNT and POUM workers being fired on by Communist and Catalan Government forces, was portrayed as a turning point. Far from 'fascists' provoking the strike, it seems that the incident was staged by the Communists. Raymond Carr, the English historian, says: "Jesús Hernández, a Communist Republican minister at the time, claimed that the Barcelona troubles were provoked by Communist agents [Antonov-Ovseenko and Ernö Serö] in order to force the reluctant Largo Caballero [the Spanish Prime Minister] to liquidate the POUM by implicating them in a revolt".¹ Derek Pattison has shown that it was no secret that the Communists wanted to squash the POUM, and undermine the anarcho-syndicalists.

Of course when you use the term 'fascist agents' we should remember that to Communists like the then party secretary José Diaz, the expression 'fascist agents' and POUM came to mean the same thing. What followed the Barcelona May Day troubles was, in 1938, a shabby little Communist show trial of POUM militants on charges of espionage and treason. The Communist Minister, Jesús Hernández, whose under-secretary was involved in the prosecution, later claimed: "The trial was a crude comedy based on falsified documents".² Anarchists like Federica Montseny and socialists such as Largo Caballero condemned this victimisation of the POUM, and after all these years I am sure you would not want to condone this kind of crass political persecution.

Brian Bamford

1. Raymond Carr, *Orwell and the Spanish Civil War*.

2. Jesús Hernández, *Yo fui un Ministro de Stalin*.

CNT = Spanish anarcho-syndicalist trade union

POUM = Marxist Workers' Party

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TEN REASONS TO OPPOSE ALL OLYMPIC GAMES

... AND STRATEGIES FOR CHANGE

There are lots of reasons to oppose Olympic Games as we know them, not just the 1996 or 2000 games but all of them. A brief outline of ten reasons is given here. The points made here summarise ideas analysed in far more depth and detail in various studies. Unfortunately, critical analyses of the Olympics receive virtually no attention compared to the massive governmental and commercial promotion of the Olympics. No criticism is intended here of dedicated and talented athletes and their supporters. Nor do I claim that there is no value at all in Olympic Games. Rather, my argument is that there are such big problems with them that it would be better to abolish them altogether.

1. Nationalism

The Games are an arena for power politics. The 1936 Berlin Games were used by the Nazi regime to bolster its prestige. The US government led a boycott of the 1980 Moscow Games to protest against the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. The Soviet government led a boycott of the 1984 Los Angeles Games largely as a pay-back for the 1980 boycott. The usual rhetoric is that sports and politics don't mix, but actually the Olympics have been political from the very beginning. Politics is involved in decisions about hosting the Games and about which countries can participate. Boycotts of the Games are used to exert political pressure. It is precisely because sports seem to be neutral that it is so effective to use them for political purposes. Governments, seeking the prestige of Olympic victories, organise the training of elite athletes. At the Olympics, competition between athletes is turned into competition between states. Athletes can't participate if their country doesn't. Victories by individuals and teams are treated as national victories, symbolised by flags and anthems and beamed around the world. Media coverage in particular countries is often biased towards the country's own athletes, reflecting and reinforcing nationalism. The International Olympic Committee (IOC), a highly undemocratic organisation, is composed of representatives from member countries. The IOC is a vehicle for international political struggle. Hosting the Games is seen as an opportunity for promoting national prestige. States of all political complexions, liberal democratic, communist, fascist, military, have embraced the Olympics, suggesting the lack of a moral core to the Games. The IOC has sought participation of all states, without applying any standards.

2. Commercialism

Corporate interests penetrate the Olympics through sponsorship of the Games themselves and through sponsorship of athletes and use of athletes for commercial purposes. The media foster the Games as a giant spectacle, promoting professionalisation and commercialisation. Visible athletes can cash in on lucrative endorsements. Sporting success becomes a means of selling products. Gold medals become a way for athletes and commercial sponsors to make money. Commercialism and nationalism have gradually turned the Olympics into an enterprise only for full-time athletes, professionals in reality if not in name. The Olympics have become big business mainly through television. The mass media use sport to sell programmes to advertisers. The Games, with their image as the ultimate sporting event, are a marketer's dream for reaching a global audience. Through massive television revenues, the IOC has become a major commercial enterprise itself, operating like a transnational corporation. Its decisions are increasingly dictated by money flows.

3. Competition

The Games are exclusively competitive. This means that most competitors are ultimately

losers. The focus is on a few top winners, whereas there are far more who struggle for years only to fail, sometimes due to bad luck or the machinations of sporting bodies. In any case, the nature of competition at an international level means that only a tiny fraction can end up ultimate winners. Competition with high stakes – Olympic medals – means that the aim becomes victory at all costs. The pressure to win encourages illicit drug use, secrecy in training techniques, attempts at psychological manipulation of opponents, and training and competing while injured. The emphasis on competition and victory means that forms of physical activity that are more participatory and cooperative are marginalised. Sport can be satisfying and beneficial, both physically and mentally, for nearly everyone in the community. This can only occur when the primary goal is participation, not victory in competition. The Olympic Games are elite competitions between athletes and between states. The obsession with Olympic success undermines the goal of cooperative, participatory sport.

4. Male domination

From the beginning, the Games have always had many more men than women as participants, coaches and officials. Female athletes have received less funding and have fewer Olympic sports in which to compete. Many national Olympic committees have no women members and send no women to the Games. The events included in the Games are mostly ones that give men an advantage, notably sports emphasising strength and speed. For example, most running and swimming events are over in a matter of seconds or minutes. Women are already much closer if not superior to men in ultra-endurance events, such as marathon swimming, but shorter events predominate in the Olympics. Similarly, events emphasising precision and skill rather than strength would give women a better chance. It would be quite possible to select or design events that would give women an equal chance to win in direct competition with men, but this has never been considered. Instead, women are expected to adapt to male sports. This also helps maintain the emphasis on competition rather than cooperation. Male domination in the Olympic movement reflects and reinforces the predominance of men in the sports that receive the greatest attention in most countries of the world.

5. Racism

The Games were set up by European elites and built on western sports. Through the worldwide publicity for the Olympics and the competition for national glory, more and more of these sports have been adopted in countries where they had no popular following. Many non-western countries have long histories of indigenous sports and games that do not fit the western model. These traditions have been submerged. The IOC is dominated by western perspectives on sport and appears to take no notice of non-western styles and traditions. This is not to mention the racism that can occur within and between Olympic teams.

6. Violence

Many sports, such as boxing, archery and the javelin, are modelled on skills for war. A number of sports involve violence themselves, including ostensibly non-contact sports such as basketball. The intense competition and partisanship linked to sports often cause spectators to become aggressive. On a number of occasions, sporting events have been the triggers for actual wars. In general, competitive sports reflect rather than reduce violence in the rest of society. The Olympics were set up to foster peace and harmony. Instead, they have simply provided another arena for the continuation of violence between

individuals in events and between states in the struggle for power and status. The awarding of the 1896 Games to Athens stimulated Greek nationalism, leading to a war with Turkey in 1897. The Olympic movement is powerless to turn its original goal of promoting peace into reality.

7. Celebrity

The Games foster a culture of celebrity that focuses on stars at the expense of non-elite participants. Spectators identify with Olympic heroes, attributing to them moral virtues such as courage and integrity. Yet the combination of specialist events plus a premium on winning means that Olympic athletes are often not suitable role models. They may develop certain skills and strengths at the expense of overall good health, compete at the expense of other commitments or value personal success more than competing fairly or helping others. This is not the fault of the athletes, but rather a symptom of an elite competition in which victors are glamorised by the media and become potent symbols of national success.

8. Technological intensification

Olympic-level competitions are increasingly a struggle between applications of advanced science and technology to equipment, training, psychology, and drugs (legal and illegal). In cycling, for example, victory goes as much to the swiftest bike as to the best cyclist. Bodies are treated like machines, as means to the goal of winning. The increasing role of sophisticated scientific and technological interventions means that individuals and countries without the most advanced facilities are handicapped, creating another dimension to the racism built into the Olympics. Steps could be taken to overcome this, for example by assigning standard equipment to competitors randomly, but this would not serve the interests of governments with a technological edge.

9. Spectatorship

Watching sports such as the Olympics serves to integrate spectators (especially men) into the dominant value system of competitive striving for success. Under the guise of enjoying entertainment and supporting ones favourite team or athlete, spectators of sport are inculcated with the assumptions that life is a competition, that the rules are fair, that most of the rewards go to the winners, and that losers have only themselves to blame. These ideas are convenient for keeping workers on the usual treadmill. It is because of the similarities between competitive sport and competitive business that sporting metaphors (the level playing field, scoring) are so prevalent in non-sporting arenas.

10. Government repression

Olympic Games are sites of reduced civil liberties. Because of the vast audience and huge symbolic value of the Olympics, various groups try to make their case through disrupting the Games, necessitating special laws and special policing to prevent disruption. Terrorists used the 1972 Munich Olympics as a stage. As the stakes become greater, so does the control over the opportunity to dissent.

A. Reform the Olympic Games

Various ideas have been presented to eliminate some of the problems with the Games. One is a permanent site such as Athens. This would remove the politics of site selection, in which making special gifts to IOC members has become routine. Another is to have multiple sites for the Games, so that the burden (financial and symbolic) on a single city would be reduced. Yet another is to have athletes represent only themselves and not represent countries. They could wear common uniforms. Team sports could be eliminated. This would reduce nationalist identification. These and other such ideas are good, but they are opposed by commercial and national interests and are unlikely to be introduced by the IOC, dominated as it is by these interests.

B. Use the Games as a site for political struggle

Another approach is to accept the Games as they are but to use them as a place for waging various campaigns. At the 1968 Mexico City Olympics, black sprinters on the victory stand gave a black power salute, with tremendous symbolic impact. Generally, though, this strategy is not very fruitful. It requires enormous efforts to become an Olympic athlete, yet opportunities to make political gestures are quite limited. For non-athletes, there are possibilities to make protests, but the Games do not provide a level playing field for political uses. Governments and corporations have the greatest opportunities for using the Games for their own purposes, whether through sporting successes, boycotts or just advertisements.

C. Challenge the Olympic Games

One approach is just to ignore the Games. This sounds simple but can be quite significant if one's relatives or friends expect enthusiasm for the Olympic spectacle. Another approach is to actively oppose the Games, for example by writing letters, circulating leaflets, holding protests, producing satires, boycotting commercial sponsors and many other techniques. This has the advantage of going beyond individual criticism. It would be hard to see quick results, though, given the global forces promoting the Games. A third approach is to promote alternative games. In the 1920s and 1930s, there were workers' games which avoided much of the nationalism and upper-class bias of the Olympics. The problem with this strategy is that any games that become a real alternative to the Olympics are likely to be caught up in the same sorts of problems, such as commercialism, competition and spectatorship. A fourth approach is to promote cooperative games (not Olympic-style Games but games that are actually fun) and other alternatives for the psychosocial functions of sport. Some forms of drama and role play may accomplish this. Much more investigation, including practical testing, is needed into functional alternatives to competitive sport. Presently, though, far more money and effort is devoted to the bio-mechanics of swimming, improved tennis rackets and designer drugs for athletes than to cooperative games.

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In preparation for the Olympics, Atlanta's bourgeoisie has established a new private downtown security organisation, the so-called 'A-Force', to augment the cops. Part security operation, part public relations tool, the distinctively attired 55-member A-Force is one of several Olympics-inspired initiatives by Atlanta's corporate and civic elite to turn downtown into an attraction for tourists and suburbanites. As in other cities strapped for cash because of the state's fiscal crisis, with shrinking tax support, Atlanta's business community is taking control of services that once were considered the responsibility of government. Downtown property owners have formed a special tax district to pay for this private security. Simultaneously, they have gotten local authorities to write laws to clear the streets of the poor and homeless, including one ordinance that makes it illegal to enter a parking lot if you do not have a vehicle in it! Using the excitement generated by the summer Games to push through the transformation of downtown has garnered wide support for even the most repressive measures.

Using the excitement generated by the summer Games to push through the transformation of downtown has garnered wide support for even the most repressive measures.

Central Atlanta Progress, the downtown business association behind the initiatives, unveiled its master plan in March. The centrepiece is the creation of residential and entertainment districts near a privately financed 21-acre park now under construction, in a section called COPA, for Centennial Olympic Park Area. The plan also calls for capitalising on the city's new identification with sports to create a 50-acre 'sports business park', a still-vague scheme to foster sports-related business development downtown. \$2 billion in construction tied to the Games is underway. These are both public and private projects that include stadiums, swimming pools and parks.

Central to the plan's success is overcoming the perception, long cultivated by the media, that downtown and other poor and Black areas are dangerous and frightening places. Business leaders now see this propaganda created perception, which served its purpose in helping to create the booming white enclave collar counties that provide Newt Gingrich with a secure home base, as the city's Number One problem. When the Atlanta daily paper reported that the city had the worst record for violent crime in recent FBI statistics, city leaders quickly forced a re-analysis of the figures and a retraction. "This is not representative of a lack of preparation for the Olympic Games", A.D. Frazier, chief operating officer of the Atlanta Committee for the Olympic Games (ACOG), said. "If people who come here ... follow instructions, I think they'll be in the most secure place on earth", he told the Atlanta Journal-Constitution.

'PAY NO ATTENTION TO THE MAN BEHIND THE CURTAIN!'

THE CORPORATE MEDIA HAND IN GLOVE WITH THE NATIONAL SECURITY STATE

For the moment, the 'war on crime' hysteria fomented by the media has outlived its usefulness. With the need to assuage long-cultivated fears of crime in mind, business leaders pushed an anti-loitering ordinance through the City Council and began lobbying for tougher laws on panhandling. They also are seeking a special court for minor crimes that they say are too often dismissed by Municipal Court judges. The A-Force is an integral part of the effort. The 55 A-Force 'ambassadors', who underwent 200 hours of training, do not carry weapons, but are expected to improve the perception of safety through their visibility as they patrol the streets downtown. The ambassadors carry two-way radios and are trained to call for police assistance.

ACOG has mounted a massive security operation to protect the Centennial Olympics, with as many as twenty thousand guards, ten thousand soldiers and thousands of agents from the FBI, CIA, secret service and Georgia state patrol staff taking part. The committee refuses to disclose the price tag for the operation. Security staff went briefly on red alert late last month when two men were arrested in central Georgia accused of making pipe bombs. Early reports said they planned to disrupt the Games, but police and security officials later denied any Olympic connection.

As was the case with the security planners for the Los Angeles Olympics, ACOG security chiefs have travelled to Israel to receive advice on anti-terrorist tactics. Again as in LA, where police cordoned off the Black neighbourhoods around Olympic venues at USC in 'Operation Cul-de-Sac' (dead end), billed as the city's first foray into so-called 'community based policing', many Olympic venues in Atlanta are close to high-crime areas and public housing projects with substantial gang activity, drug-dealing, and other social ills of colonisation. Given this social tinder, repression must be increased to make sure that neither the vast disparities of wealth, heightened and exposed by the Games, nor the presence of political activists and alternative perspectives, ignite the potential conflagration.

In a 14th May 1996 interview with Elaine Long, editor of the 'zine *Maxine's Pages*, Lieutenant Butch Beach of the Columbus GA Police Department, who is in charge of security for Olympics-related activities in Columbus, stated, concerning demonstrators at the Games: "You really have to be careful where you allow the crowd to gather. What we've tried to do is give them a place where they can do what they want and still get the public exposure. You really can't take them and stick them off in the south forty; you have to give them an opportunity to have the message heard. That's one of the constitutional issues.

It's just another one of those parts to the puzzle that has to be managed."

Managing the demonstrations, the news, and mass consciousness appears to be the key to elite planning for the Games. Ron Martz of the Atlanta Journal-Constitution told Long: "One of the things that we need to do, is be responsible in the types of things we print in terms of security related issues. I have an awful lot of rumours come across my desk about [how] this group or that group is going to going to try to sabotage the Olympics or try to blow up the Olympic Village or try to do this, that, and the other. I think a perfect example of that was with the CBS report that these two guys who were arrested for making pipe-bombs down in central Georgia were targeting the Olympics. There was very little fact to that ... Whether they were actually making pipe-bombs I don't know, but if they were, they were not targeting the Olympics." How Martz knows what he knows, or what he doesn't know, is unclear. "CBS went with what was largely an unsubstantiated rumour about that and it created all kinds of problems for not only Olympic officials but for law enforcement people, and heightened what I think is already a sense of anxiety about security during the Olympics."

However, while Martz has internalised the elite's concern about disturbing the public's restive consciousness with too much troubling information, he also testifies to the increasingly narrow and top-down limits being placed on information, let alone political discourse, as the social contract wears thin. "By the same token", he told Long, "the strange phenomenon that's taking place at the moment, [is] the federal government has really muzzled the local law enforcement agencies that are dealing with the Olympics. When I say local, I'm talking about federal, state and city law enforcement people that have worked Olympic security for the last two years in Atlanta and who know the issue. They

Many Olympic venues in Atlanta are close to high-crime areas and public housing projects with substantial gang activity, drug-dealing, and other social ills of colonisation.

are being told by official Washington to say as little as possible about Olympic security in terms of reassuring the public. The general feeling now is that if you don't talk about Olympic security, people are not going to be concerned about it. What is happening now is that the White House has told the Justice Department, the Treasury Department and the Pentagon that any information about the Olympics will come out of Washington."

Long also interviewed Don Romine, Imperial Wizard of the Militant Knights of the Ku Klux Klan, in April 1996. "Romine's Klan is centred in the general area of Chattanooga, TN; Fort Payne, AL; and Rome, GA," says Long. "He routinely engages in public demonstrations in North Georgia and the Greater Atlanta area". Romine predicts that many white supremacists are going to be "coming into the area for the coverage ... But you're going to have some that's going to be after the press". According to Long, he believes the press will be a target during the Olympics. "Security in Atlanta is going to be tight", Romine says, "but somebody is going to make a mistake. Somebody is going to shut their eyes, somebody's going to shut their ears and boom - it's happened. Just to show it can be done and it was done ... the people that you better worry about is these unknowns that's wanting to get known, that's who they better

watch. ... I wouldn't be close to Atlanta. I'm in my house and that's where I'm going to stay until after the Olympics, because I don't want to be there when something happens."

Long talked with Marc Crandlemire, of the GPSTC Police Academy. Reflecting the realities of the national security telecommunications state, he formerly worked for WRBL-TV, the CBS affiliate in Columbus GA, and is now employed as a tactical instructor at the police academy. Crandlemire has been involved in training officers for Olympics duty. He provides further evidence of the intent to 'manage' and marginalise dissent. Crandlemire apparently

"I wouldn't be close to Atlanta. I'm in my house and that's where I'm going to stay until after the Olympics, because I don't want to be there when something happens."

sees a need to restrain press freedom. He told Long: "In journalism, you have some people who have ethical standards and ... others who just want to abuse their powers of the press and run roughshod over people. The eyes of the world are going to be on Atlanta, Georgia in July and August and the news media from all over the world is going to be here. If you want to make some type of statement, what better place to be? As long as you've got a news media that's going to give them the attention that they are looking for, then they are going to be there to conduct the protest. If the news media ignores them, then they'll go home ... They're in business to print the news ... but in so doing, if what they're printing or broadcasting is a threat to national security, then I don't think that they should have the right to do that."

Just as media corporations are closing ranks to protect 'national security', private security corporations are perfecting, and profiting from, technology that will receive wider applications in police state functions long after the Games end. Researchers at Center for the Application of Science Toward Law Enforcement, or CASTLE, set up a PC-based command, control, and scheduling system for the Atlanta Police Department. Bob Hunter of the company says: "Most events will be concentrated in a three-mile circle. There could be congestion ... crime and terrorism." It's based on JFAST, Joint Flow and Analysis System for Transportation software, first used by the army in Desert Storm. It's funded by the White House Office of National Drug Control Policy. The Office wants the system to be readily transferable to other events that could shatter existing infrastructures - such as a California earthquake, or perhaps, a rebellion.

Symbol Technologies Inc. announced in April that it will provide scanning technology to Sensormatic Electronics, the official electronic security systems provider for the Games. PDF encoded identification badges and hand-held computers are part of the security system for more than 150,000 athletes, support staff, media and guests, using a two-dimensional bar code that encodes more than a kilobyte of information on a postage-stamp sized symbol. It can encode digital photographs, signatures and hand geometry coordinates, and can be encrypted for additional security. It has been approved as a standard by the Department of Defense and if a national ID system is put in place through current anti immigrant legislation, you can expect to see it soon in a neighbourhood near you.

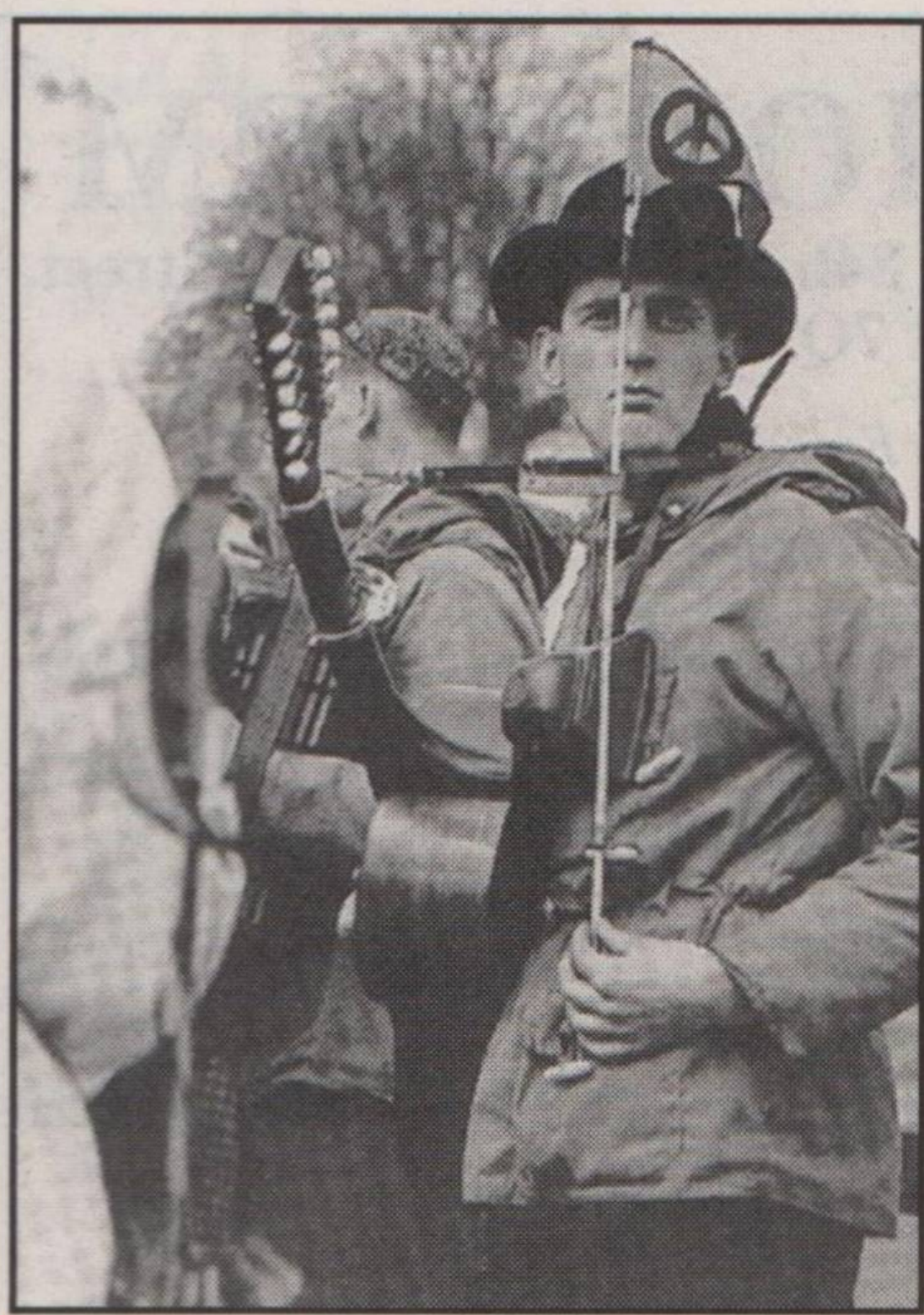
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The newsletter of the Anarchist Research Group can be obtained from Karen Goaman, Department of Communications, London Guildhall University, Jewry Street, London EC3N 2EY. Please send an sae.

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