

anarchist fortnightly

Freedom

Vol. 62 No. 10

19th May 2001

50p



He is not your friend

This man is a policeman. His job is uphold the law, and to maintain what the state calls public order. But these two things, law and order, are not the same.

The order the police maintain is the authoritarian order of capitalism. It is an order which serves the interests of the few over the needs of the many. The bosses are the few; the many are the rest of us.

Law is just a tool the bosses use to keep this order in place. It's usually enough, but not always. It can't be turned to every situation. Its edges are blunt.

This was the case on Mayday. The law, as it stands, was no good at stopping anti-capitalists from giving out toy money on London's Oxford Street. Yet 'order' demanded that they should be stopped.

So stopped it was, by the police, whatever the law said. Protesters were, in effect, imprisoned without arrest for up to eight hours.

That's just the way it goes, folks. The law exists to keep order. The order the state protects is oppression. Both are maintained by the police, and neither exists for our benefit. This policeman is not your friend.

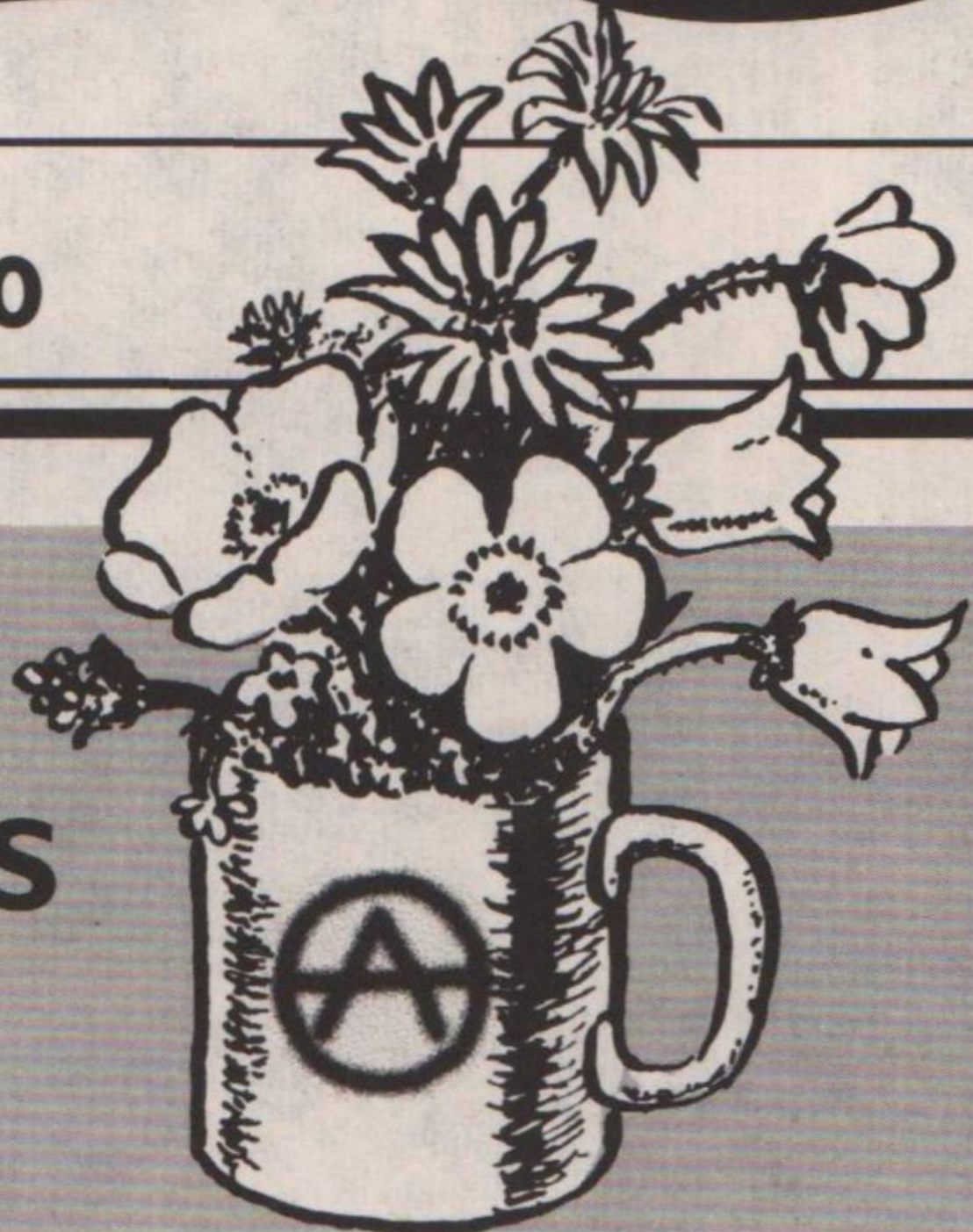
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RECLAIM
YOUR LIVES
NOW



MAYDAY SPECIAL
Reports on national and
international actions

VIOLENT, MASKED
AND DANGEROUS
pages 2 and 3



Human rights activists condemn 'unlawful violence by police'

New attack by British state

Senior cops and their political bosses remained the subject of sustained criticism last week, following their response to London's Mayday Monopoly protests.

Anarchists and other anti-capitalists were joined by human rights groups, as they condemned a decision to corral protesters into Oxford Circus. About a thousand people were detained without charge in the afternoon and evening of Tuesday 1st May. They were held without charge for up to eight hours, with no access to food, water or shelter.

"The police caved in to political pressure", said John Wadham, director of liberal civil rights group Liberty. "This led to unacceptable and unlawful violence by some police officers. The containment of thousands of people was unnecessary, unlawful and will lead to justifiable complaints".

Anarchist activists were blunter. "The people protesting were meant to be violent, so the cops could hit more people", said one. "They didn't have any reason to hit people, so they did it anyway".

"I was shocked at the police violence against the protesters", said another, on her first major demo. "They herded us like sheep, hit people indiscriminately with batons, and detained thousands of us for over six hours. Their aim was simple - to use intimidation and brute force so that they could frighten us into not exercising our rights to protest".

The Oxford Circus event, in which protesters planned to distribute play money to shoppers, was to have been the culmination of a day of protest. Other actions, which were organised by a range of groups and individuals, were held as planned during the rest of the day. Many of these too were heavily policed.

In an earlier development, a disused Southwark factory was the target of heavy surveillance on Mayday morning. The Old Bacon Factory, in Great Suffolk Street, had been used the previous night as accommodation for activists from outside London.

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Success despite the odds

Most media attention after Mayday was focused on the police tactic of corralling protesters into Oxford Circus. There was little reporting of other actions which took place in the morning and early afternoon.

• **Covent Garden** The first event of the day was to have been a protest against 'the privatisation of life', outside the World Patent Protection Summit at Kingsway Hall on Great Queen Street. But the summit was cancelled shortly beforehand.

• **St Pancras** As the Critical Mass bike ride left Kings Cross shortly after 9am, up to

a thousand cyclists and pedestrians blocked Euston Road.

• **Kings Cross** A free veggieburger stall was set up outside McDonalds. The crowd which assembled was joined by careworkers protesting at the state's policies towards the disabled.

• **Angel** A free news stand distributed anarchist papers (including *Freedom* and *Resistance*) as an antidote to the reporting of Mayday in the capitalist media.

• **Pall Mall** Anarchists from Worthing's Porkbolter group picketed the Institute of

Directors in the early afternoon. They unfurled a large banner, denouncing the 'Institute of Greed', and distributed leaflets to passers by.

• **The Strand** Demonstrators were boxed into a small area by three rows of riot cops, as they protested outside Coutts bank. Others, left outside the cordon, were ordered to leave the area.

• **Trafalgar Square** A small group (four dressed as Mary Poppins) fed the capital's famous pigeons, following Ken Livingstone's decision to remove the licence of the square's only birdseed seller.

Freedom

anarchist fortnightly

"I could see who was out on the streets of London looking for trouble yesterday and it wasn't the people calling themselves protesters."

Laura Collignon

in a letter to *The Guardian*, 2nd May 2001

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

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Around Britain

• **Birmingham** Cops successfully closed down a demonstration in the city centre, after the first arrivals found themselves surrounded by police. Protesters who arrived subsequently were unable to get through police lines to join them. The trapped activists were ordered by senior plods to move to a nearby underpass to protest, under section 14 of the Public Order Act.

"It's ridiculous", said one protester. "Nobody came here to cause any kind of disturbance".

There were several arrests, including one for wearing trousers with an allegedly indecent word on them.

• **Bristol** Mayday in Bristol was marked by a series of events, carried out by a collection of individuals and groups. It kicked off around midnight, when anarchists took direct action against employment agencies in the city. No explanation needs to be given to anyone who has had dealings with these bloodsuckers: they are a further attack upon us, the working class. Their premises were painted and their locks jammed. This is the start of a campaign against employment agencies in Bristol. We are taking as our inspiration working class resistance from our history, such as the Luddites. The employment agencies are an integral part of the neo-liberal project ranged against humanity, and we will therefore resist it by any means we see fit.

During the day itself, many Bristolians took part in a 'critical mass', which began at 8am. This ended in the city centre, with tea and biscuits for participants and passers by. Later that day, banners were hung from a ridiculously expensive ornament put up by the council. A direct democratic decision was then taken among those gathered, to visit the military recruiting office. Posters were put up, advertising a job in the RAF ("learn how to kill").

Recruitment agencies were again visited, and also the job centre, where several activists entered the building and ripped up display cards, leaving new cards instead. These advertised "more crap, low paid jobs".

Then, of course, there was the Vote Nobody election campaign in Easton ...

JM

• **Glasgow** Over a thousand people took to the streets of Glasgow, on what turned out to be the sunniest day of the year so far. The protesters gathered on Buchanan Street as the afternoon began, to the sounds of a samba band playing on recycled water barrels. Many of them were in fancy dress,



Mayday in Birmingham, complete with SWP placards

including Bo-Peep (who carried a crook which said 'leave my sheep alone').

Around 2pm, after a crowd of several hundred had assembled, they moved on to the Council Chambers in George Square. One protester explained that they were "angry at the council's plans to shut a swimming pool in Govan, angry at their plans to build a motorway extension through the heart of local communities on the South Side, and angry at their plans to sell off green space in Partick to local developers".

Drummers climbed onto the building's window ledges and struck up a beat, while a massive sound system played techno and dub loud enough for the windows of the building to shake. Nearby roads were blockaded, and some activists tried to get into the building itself.

After 45 minutes, the march continued towards Kelvingrove Park. Members of the

Govanhill Pool campaign joined the protesters as they disrupted traffic. As they passed the army recruitment office, which was closed, one activist tried to break through the window, though without success.

As the march arrived outside the Pitt Street headquarters of Strathclyde Police (see picture, left) the sound system was stoked up again, and dancers performed frantically. Some activists flagrantly ignored the ban on drinking alcohol in public places, others smoked. The crowd grew larger, and surged towards to building, before moving on to the park itself.

In Kelvingrove Park, the sound system was split in two (one dub and reggae, one techno and hardcore), and a huge free party took place. Local DJs took turns on the decks; a bouncy castle was set up; a recycling system was put in place for empty drinks bottles. Infostalls were set up on anarchism, environmental issues and anti-racism, and discussion forums were held.

Cops kept a low profile throughout the day (even when their own base was the focus of the demo), and there were no arrests. One participant said the event had been "an awesome success of a beautiful day, a brilliant expression of hope and resistance".

Don

• **Manchester** A variety of different actions took place in the city on 1st May. About a hundred people progressed through the centre in the afternoon, accompanied by a samba band. As they did so, they gave out leaflets and held up the traffic. Police allowed the protest to continue, though participants reported that they seemed disconcerted by the apparent lack of any plan. At about 4pm, cops surrounded the remaining demonstrators on Stockport Road, where they were held for half an hour. There were no arrests.

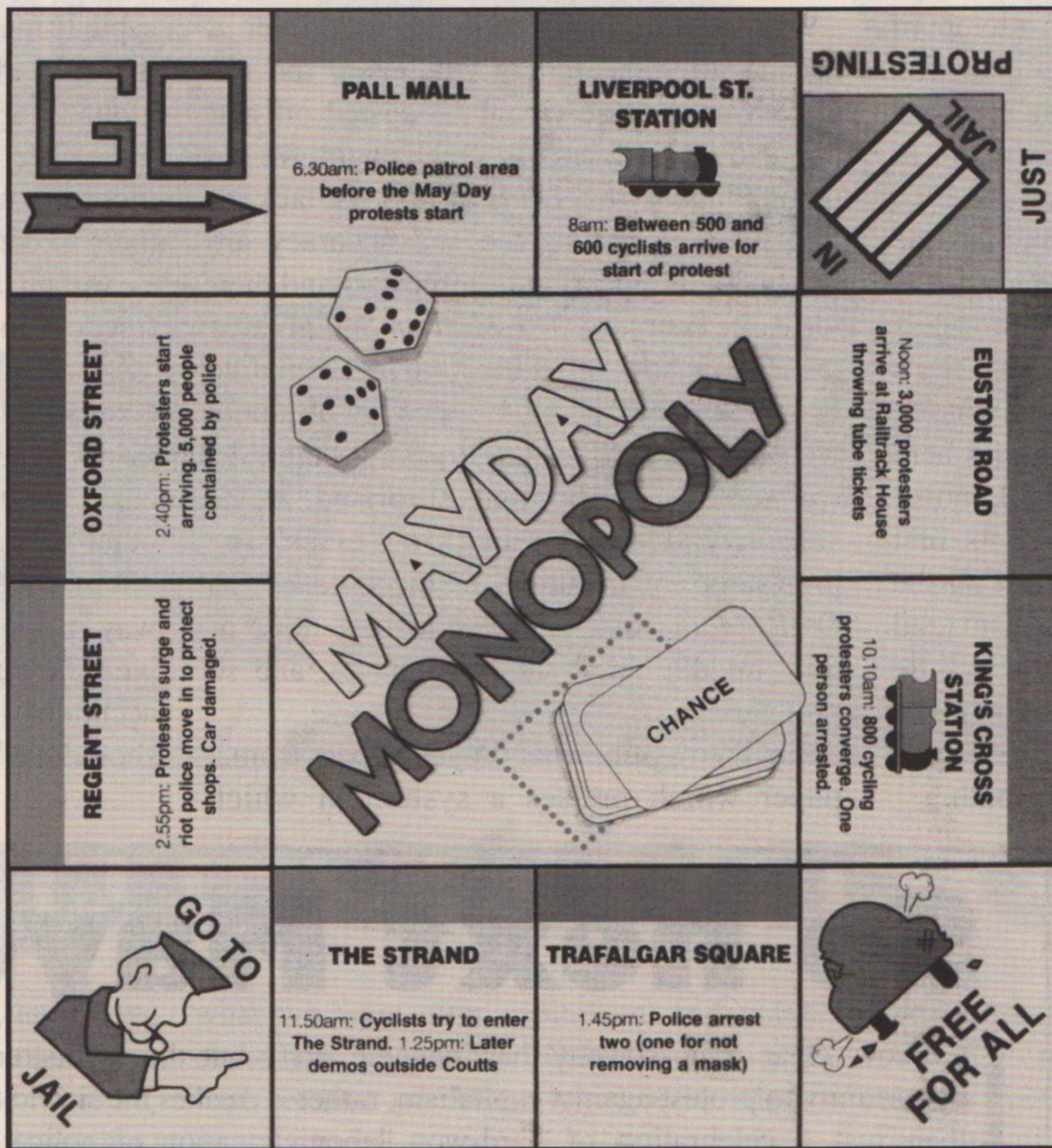
'The police behaved appallingly'

"Police behaved appallingly. At the Elephant and Castle, they attempted to force marchers down the New Kent Road – away from the march. I was searched, I was followed, I was photographed, I was held in corrals against my will. My intentions to protest peacefully were thwarted by the police at every turn." (Rooibard)

"People need to get smarter. If the police keep doing this on demonstrations, soon everyone will be classed as terrorists, and this kind of protest will be unworkable." (Protester)

"A friend said to a policeman, 'you can't be claiming to defend democracy after today'. The policeman's reply was short, honest and to the point. 'We never claimed to be', he said." (Sheffield visitor)

"Towards the end of the fifth hour of my detention at Oxford Circus, I heard a copper explaining to two men, 'there's no point in coming to another demonstration like this, no point. It'll just happen again like this. So there's no point in coming, it's no fun is it?'" (P)



"I feel that the police did an excellent job in controlling a crowd of criminals who have got nothing better to do with their time than act like prats." (Emma)

"The action outside Courts, the bank for the rich and famous on the Strand, contained

about twenty of us, all fluffies, about fifty media people, and about 120 riot police – very intimidating indeed, with the police taking close-up photos and constantly filming us all at close proximity. I had my t-shirt, which had 'peaceful protester' on the front, photographed and filmed numerous times. I left that one quite quickly." (Greenity Hall)

"What surprised me was how incredibly peaceful and patient most protesters were, despite being trapped for so long. It wasn't so bad for me, but I held back my outrage with difficulty." (Doug)

"Some damage was done ages after we had been locked in there, but what the fuck do you expect when you enclose us all in such a small space for that fucking long? People just wanted to get out and go home, but could they? No." (SNN)

"I spent eight hours stuck at Oxford Circus in the rain, with no food, no water and no toilets, being told I was held with the other 3,000 protesters because we might cause a

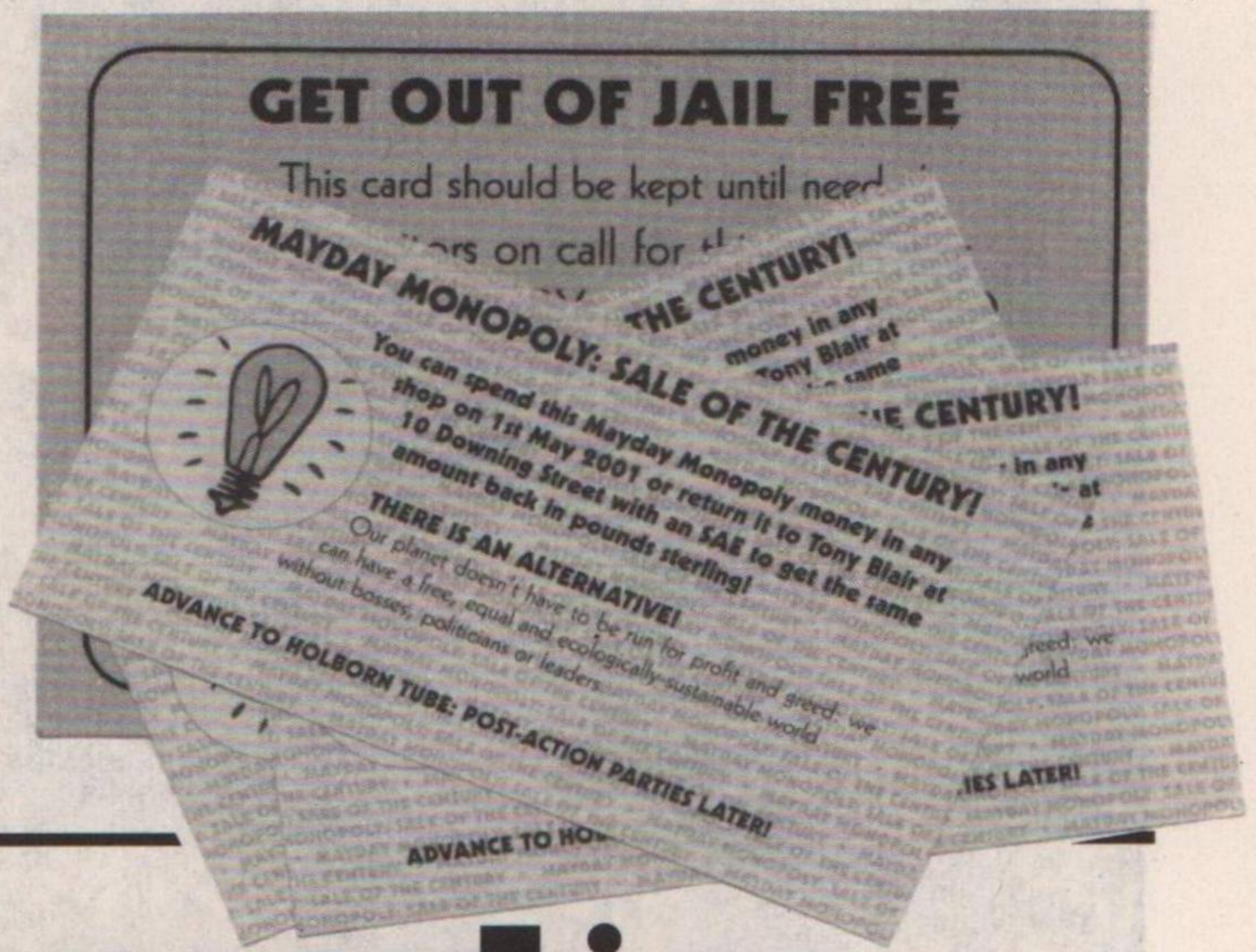
breach of the peace. All this after the dangerous crowd had marched up Regents Street, virtually unpoliced, without a single hint of trouble or a window being broken.

There was, I believe, some outbreaks of trouble thereafter at Oxford Circus, but I wasn't near that bit; and it's not surprising, considering the inhuman treatment suffered. What is remarkable is that so many people showed quite how peaceful they could be, despite such excessive provocation.

I suspect that a lot of fluffies won't be viewing the police in the same light after this kind of treatment." (Happy Hippy)

"The police were there for one reason and one only: to stop us getting our message to the public about how senseless capitalism is.

Those of us who were in Oxford Circus could see clearly how the police were acting – illegally and brutally. They were the violent ones, they were the ones who put the public safety at risk." – Amy



Eros rebels

Report from the Dionysian Underground

At 1pm, in driving rain, a small group of activists from the Dionysian Underground encircled the fountain and statue of Eros at Piccadilly Circus. A single drum played. Claps from some in the crowd supported the advance, while other members of the procession mocked the cops with cries of 'we are terrorists, arrest us!'.

Police were powerless to interfere with this entirely legal and peaceful rally, and stood back, trying to ignore it.

The mainstream media, on the other hand, rushed forward and surrounded the group with cameras and microphones. A colourful banner was fastened to the black hoardings around Eros, which said 'Eros against global capitalism'. Then the action and entertainment began. A magical invocation to the four faces of Eros was performed.

The Lion Eros was passionately evoked in the west of St James's, accompanied by denunciations of the oppressive nature of capitalist society. The Ram Eros was evoked in the north (towards Oxford Circus), with celebrations of Chaos and Night, from which Eros was born. Towards the east and Soho, the Bull Eros was evoked as the horned Dionysos, and the wild bohemian nature of the district was contrasted with its cynical commercialisation of sex. A couple made love amongst the crowd, as the evocation progressed to the south and the Serpentine Eros. This was evoked with a collective hiss, representing the River Tyburn that once flowed freely through the area south of the Thames, but is now a sewer buried under the tarmac, a symbol of our age.

This was followed by a denunciation of capitalism, contrasting the neon adverts of its ghastly corporations with the immiseration it causes. Drummers joined the party on the steps and dancing broke out, to calls of

liberation though 'dance and rhythm', and the affirmation of life and desire.

Poet John Constable arrived to perform a rap rendition of his new Dionysian poem, and a group from Critical Mass demonstrated solidarity by briefly blocking one of the roads, causing panic amongst the cops, and rumours that Piccadilly might be the real 'flashpoint' of the day's protest. Various interviews were given to the press, and the party went on till rain and cold naturally dispersed the crowd.

Prometheus Rex

In the media

"The police did a marvellous job in tackling the Mayday protest. Whatever you might think of the demo by the great unwashed, there is no denying this: Our police men and women are a superb bunch." (*The Sun Says*, 2nd May)

"SchNEWS would never suggest that the media build up was over the top, contradictory and, predictably, rubbish. But apparently 'unorganised – but highly trained – anarchists are intent on causing trouble' under the command of 'hardcore anarchist

ringleaders'. But they'll be difficult to control, as they haven't got any leaders. Police warned all those intent on criminality to stay away, while 'legitimate' protesters should also stay away because of all the violent thugs. Politicians fear a repeat of last year's violence, when 150,000 anti-capitalists rampaged through the streets, causing bloodshed. But then, anti-capitalists are not a threat 'coz there are only a couple of thousand of them. And so the media circus continued until the SchNEWS bullshitometer blew its fuses." (*SchNEWS*, 4th May)



A mauling from the Mail

Unsurprisingly, after the Mayday demonstrations the *Daily Mail* decided to 'praise' capitalism. In the process they did a hatchet job on the 'anti-capitalist' protesters by associating them with those well known 'anti-capitalist' symbols, the Berlin Wall and the Soviet Union.

Of course, the question arises: Is this stupidity or just slander?

After all, it takes some lack of imagination to equate the old Eastern bloc with 'anti-capitalism'. It reeks of stupidity not to ask the protesters what their viewpoints are when you try to criticise their ideas. It is also a sign of ignorance and/or idiocy to argue that anarchists seek a society in which the state controls the individual! All in all, to associate anarchists and 'anti-capitalism' with Soviet Russia suggests a lack of intelligence.

It could be slander, of course. An attempt to smear the protesters and their ideas by associating them with Soviet Russia. Ironically, the paper also compared them to fascists – apparently the protesters seek to dominate the individual just as much as the NF or BNP do – a strange position to take in a paper that in the 1930s supported Mosley's Blackshirts, Fascist Italy, Franco and Hitler's Germany. In contrast, anarchists fought the Fascists in Italy, Spain, Germany and here (and still do). They also resisted Leninist tyranny as well (and were among its first victims). Given this, and that almost all the protesters would have rejected Stalinism (and that the libertarian element viewed it as little more than state capitalism), it may be just a mis-information campaign to discredit radical ideas. Probably it is a bit of both.

Who would have thought that over a decade after the fall of Stalinism, the old Cold War rhetoric would be dusted off and applied to protesters? But then again, we are talking about the *Daily Mail*. Its lack of imagination, intelligence and accuracy are shown by its smearing of protesters and their ideas. In February, *The Mail on Sunday* was explaining how officially "we're all middle class now" (bar the 49.4% who are officially working class, according to the article). So we should not be that surprised at its stupidity. Like the working class, the protesters are unpeople in the eyes of the *Daily Mail*. And, needless to say, most of this 'middle class' are wage slaves, and so proletarians ...

But, then again, what do you expect from a paper which praises a system in which

inequality rises, poverty increases and alienation, unhappiness and insecurity are commonplace? Or one which praises capitalism as a growth machine while ignoring the fact that growth has been less under globalisation than under social democracy. Or equates capitalism with freedom while ignoring the facts that the vast majority sell their freedom to survive and that inequality in wealth and power makes a mockery of freedom for the majority.

Apparently, we are free when it is capitalist bosses and governments which tell us what to do, repress us when we rebel and deny basic human rights but we are unfree when other governments do it. Nice to know!

Why let a little thing called fact get in the way of ideology and a good rant? After all, we should not expect a newspaper to accurately and objectively report events, or should we?

Iain McKay



So next Mayday ...

It's now clear that Mayday has become an opportunity to protest against capitalism, rather than just a celebration of hard-won labour rights. It's also clear that it is an annual protest on a roll, with more and more people realising that they too can take to the streets and protest.

This year's protests were peaceful and positive. The 'Siege of Oxford Circus' proved the protesters right in a number of important ways. First, that it is possible, without too much trouble, to hit capitalism where it hurts most – in the wallet. Thus, Oxford Street was closed for the day, and business was down on its takings to the tune of £2m. A symbolic gesture, a tiny dent in the profit margins of Big Business? Well, maybe. A figure of £2m is barely a gnat's fart compared to the \$2 trillion that flows across the world's foreign exchange markets every day. So let's not get too carried away. But a single day less that Niketown can trade is a day in the right direction.

Second, the only way that the police are able to stop us protesting is by acting illegally. They illegally detained us at Oxford Circus for seven hours – illegal because we were not arrested. They illegally took our photographs, and they illegally inflicted grievous bodily harm on those peaceful and unprotected protesters at the front of the large crowd, who were crushed against the riot police once they began letting small numbers out. From my vantage point, I could clearly see wanton baton strikes and at least one protester wheeled off on a stretcher.

Of course, the tabloids love all this. Hence the front-page photos of a policeman clubbing some defenceless protester over the head, and the headline 'One nil to the Bill'. The tabloids in particular,

but the mainstream media's response in general, makes me sick to the stomach. The tabloids – glorification of police violence and inciteful language, taunting the protesters for not rioting. One gets the impression that the media was disappointed because there wasn't any conflict or juicy fist-fights. Rioting, and the media pans the protesters; no rioting and the media pans the protesters. Give us a break!

So we have next year's Mayday to start planning now. It struck many of us stuck in Oxford Street that the police had actually provided an excellent opportunity for a Reclaim the Streets party. If they're going to help us block Oxford Street, then next year we should just repeat this year but with a sound system, refreshments and street entertainment. Then we could really have some fun, at their expense. It was also clear that the Monopoly strategy worked a treat. It did stretch the police. I've never seen so many hired white vans. So, yes, keep the protests separate and target various key financial institutions. And, importantly, don't believe the hype. First, the mainstream media reported the police message of zero-tolerance just to deter the first-time protester. Now a different message is being put across – that the protests were smaller than last year, and that the protesters were overwhelmed. The message is, stay at home because nothing is achieved by protesting. This is absolutely not the case. The police are cracking down on our right to protest, and they are doing it illegally. Now, you can allow that to happen and kiss goodbye to whatever freedoms you care to support. Or you can come to London next year, and make sure they don't take our freedom away. It's your choice.

Andrew Harmer

Propaganda coup

Rain and extreme police measures prevented most of the billed events emerging, and we never did get to play monopoly at Oxford Circus. But it was hardly the failure cops and capitalist propaganda made it out to be – it was one of the most successful demos to date.

This was the most televised demo in history (with BBC News 24 and Sky News showing live pictures of every event all day). The coverage showed peaceful demonstrators continually baton-charged by police, eliciting sympathy to our side from public and commentators alike. We also allegedly cost business £20m, far more than the trivial 'vandalism' engaged in last time. The West End was shut down, a fact the mainstream media is trying hard to deny.

It may not have been pleasant being corralled in the rain for hours by a bunch of overreacting cops, but they helped us in our main task, which was

publicity for the voices of dissent and disruption to business. And the Wombles proved very effective against them. People will be talking about this for weeks.

Elsewhere around London, peaceful demos went ahead unscathed (though they received little coverage in the mainstream media). True, the voices were not coherent, as some commentators have said. But that's the whole point – the only way forward is through pluralism and unity in diversity, something that has always been an anarchist policy. One cop had to admit to television reporters that "most of these people belong to diverse groups of anarchists. We were expecting deception, disorder and chaos, but they have done what they said they would, and seem extremely well organised". What better propaganda coup could we want? When do we celebrate our victory?

Steve Ash



A question of tactics

The cops were out in force, and they were ready for anything. The government and mainstream press worked hard beforehand to paint us as thugs, so that the nation wouldn't mind too much when they saw us on television news getting our heads kicked in, or kept prisoner for seven hours. In Prague, it was tanks. How soon before the shooting starts? How soon before somebody gets killed?

How soon before anti-capitalism has been entirely discredited by violence, chaos and destruction or the threat of it? When that happens, we've lost, and the working class of the world loses with us.

Anarchists and libertarian socialists are used to having their names dragged through the mud by the state, and it was good that this time we didn't help the bastards do it. In practice, anybody that smashed up a bank or a fast food joint would actually have been working for the state, because they would have handed the state a propaganda victory on a plate. Such people should always be regarded as police agents.

Haven't we realised yet that we can't bring capitalism down on the street? At best, we can temporarily annoy it. Is that worth getting busted, or busted up, for?

The anti-capitalist movement is the brightest hope the world has got, so long as it uses its collective head. That means organising politically. As it is, we've got four problems:

- 1 We're in danger of letting the Socialist Workers Party (and their front, Globalise Resistance), together with other trots, hijack the movement for their own power games.
- 2 We're letting a few people make all the decisions, without any proper democratic process.
- 3 By having no official organisation, we've been unable (for example, after last year's Mayday) to dissociate ourselves from the violent activities of police agents.
- 4 By having no political consensus beyond vague protest, we're too easy to infiltrate and derail. A lot of movements have come and gone over the years. We don't want this to be another flash in the pan.

We shouldn't kid ourselves that we're a real threat to capitalism – yet. Modern states can fight wars with gigantic resources, and they can stand a lot more heat than we can deliver, and they can dish out a lot more heat than we can take. If we really want to be dangerous to capitalism, we have to win the war of ideas, in the mainstream newspapers, on television, amongst our friends and co-workers. And we have to be united about

what we want after capitalism, and united about how we get there. Otherwise, the grim truth is that (as Monopoly has it) we go directly to jail.

Paddy Shannon

It would be a mistake to assume that all anarchists are always fully behind the actions of groups such as RTS, who organised last year's 'guerilla gardening', and others like them. They've actually come in for pretty heavy criticism for the lack of class content in their activities, or for concentrating on single issues without grasping wider problems. Many people, including me, thought that the gardening stunt was an embarrassment. It made us look like 1960s flower-power reruns, putting flowers into the barrels of guns (and similar things happened this year too). The comments from some RTS people after last year's Mayday veered dangerously close to Tommy Sheridan and Steve Nally's threat to name names after the poll tax riot, enough for many people I know to refuse to work with them ever again.

All that said though, activities such as Mayday Monopoly are a good thing. The problem only comes when people simply concentrate on the 'spectacular' events, to the exclusion of the daily, and more essential, groundwork – community activity, prisoner support, getting rid of dealers and the rest. This normally occurs amongst groups who are distanced from the working class communities and workplaces, and as such is a sort of mirror image of the trots' lack of working class experience.

But I'm not going to condemn people for smashing windows, or having a pop at the Old Bill. I know it won't change anything, but it was a process I had to learn through experience, as will those who do see trashing McDs as the answer.

In short, don't tar all anarchists with the same brush.

KAF

Governments make the law. They must therefore dispose of the material forces (police and army) to impose the law, for otherwise only those who wanted would obey it, and it would no longer be the law, but a simple series of suggestions which all would be free to accept or reject. Governments have this power, however and use it through the law, to strengthen their power, as well as to serve the interests of the ruling classes, by oppressing and exploiting the workers.

The only limit to the oppression of government is the power with which the people

show themselves capable of opposing it.

Conflict may be open or latent; but it always exists since the government does not pay attention to discontent and popular resistance except when it is faced with the danger of insurrection.

When the people meekly submit to the law, or their protests are feeble and confined to words, the government studies its own interests and ignores the needs of the people; when the protests are lively, insistent or threatening, the government, depending on whether it is more or less understanding, gives way or resorts to repression. But one always comes back to insurrection, for if the government does not give way, the people will end by rebelling; and if the government does give way, then the people gain confidence in themselves and make ever increasing demands, until such time as the incompatibility between freedom and authority becomes clear and the violent struggle is engaged.

This revolution must of necessity be violent, even though violence is itself an evil. It must be violent because a transitional, revolutionary violence is the only way to put an end to the far greater, and permanent, violence which keeps the majority of humanity in servitude.

The bourgeoisie will not allow itself to be expropriated without a struggle, and one will always have to resort to force, to the violation of the legal order by illegal means.

We are deeply unhappy at this need for violent struggle. We who preach love, and who struggle to achieve a state of society in which agreement and love are possible among human beings, suffer more than

anybody by the necessity with which we are confronted of having to defend ourselves with violence against the violence of the ruling classes. However, to renounce a liberating violence, when it is the only way to end the daily sufferings and the savage carnage which afflict humanity, would be to connive at the class antagonisms we deplore, and at the evils which arise from them.

We seek neither to impose anything by force, nor do we wish to submit to a violent imposition. We intend to use force against the government, because it is by force that we are kept in subjection. Violence is a means of legitimate defence.

Errico Malatesta
(1853-1932)

Violence only hurts the anti-capitalist cause, its critics say. We've got to appeal to middle Britain. Some people, in the run-up to Mayday, were seriously talking about organising a press conference, to get our message 'across' to the mainstream media. That's crap. We do our thing. Whatever we think of it, the media will do theirs.

The things we're fighting against in the world – oppression, exploitation, degradation, war – they're not nice things, and they're only maintained by the forces of the state and the power of the media. If we use force when we fight back, so what? Nothing else will work. If anybody doubts that, they should ask themselves a question: would the World Trade Organisation talks in Seattle in 1999 have been closed down by thousands of people carrying placards and chanting?

The mainstream media will present us as they damn well like, and there's nothing we can do about it. They're owned by capitalism, and they rely on governments and cops (as they did in this case) to provide their 'news'.

We should resist oppression because it is the right thing to do, not because it will or won't play right on television. Leave spin to the politicians.

Terry Costello

Nothing justifies violence. The police are human beings too. Like the rest of us, they're products of their own backgrounds. Circumstances beyond their control made them what they are. It's capitalism we should attack, not the people who uphold it (which we all do in our own little ways). No revolution will succeed that doesn't get members of the police and the army on side too.

Darren Black



More political theory next week

Protests and police go global

German police used water cannon against demonstrators. Berlin saw its most serious street battles for several years, as cops struggled to break down barricades put up overnight. In Australia, stock exchanges in major cities were targeted by anti-capitalist campaigners. In other cities round the world, police and protesters clashed in what is thought to have been the biggest day of action yet against global capitalism.

The protests on 1st May were the latest in a series of demonstrations held against globalisation. They followed the Summit of

the Americas, which was held in the Canadian province of Québec last month.

Different protests had different targets. In Bangladesh, it was the working conditions in the sweatshops of the international clothing trade. In the Netherlands, the multinational armaments industry. In many countries, particularly those at the forefront of globalisation, workers protested against job insecurity. Elsewhere, it was capitalism pure and simple that was the target for attack.

But whatever the particular themes of individual protests, many were marked by a

forceful police response. In Poland, for example, activists condemned the police response to their Mayday march in Warsaw. "The police employed different methods of physical violence and harassment in an attempt to intimidate us and stop our procession", said a statement from the Anarchist Federation. "We started out in a peaceful, festive mood. Then the police started to try to compress us into a smaller and smaller area, usually by means of pushing, grabbing and violently shoving people. They hit or kicked demonstrators who did not want

to be crushed and surrounded by police."

Some activists now argue that, just as the anti-capitalists have learned tactics from comrades around the world, so the cops are now taking advice from their colleagues abroad as well. "You could say it's a compliment", said Daniel, an RTS activist in San Francisco. "They certainly take us seriously. We've all got to keep an eye on developments in police strategy wherever they happen. What they use against me in America today will be used against people in Europe or Asia tomorrow, and vice versa".

Australia Thousands of protesters were out in Sydney, Melbourne and Brisbane. The entrance to Sydney's stock exchange was blocked by



protesters three deep, who chanted "no-one in, no-one out". Around 600 demonstrators tried to storm the Brisbane stock exchange. In Melbourne, traffic was disrupted by a street volleyball game, and a branch of McDonalds was given a makeover.

Bangladesh Garment workers launched a series of strikes, in an attempt to win a paid Mayday holiday throughout the sector. The National Garment Workers Federation estimated that over 85% of clothing factories were shut down, up from around 60% a year ago.

Colombia Several thousand people joined a march, organised in Medellin by the trade unions. Among the demonstrators was a bloc from the city's various anarchist collectives, who chanted "against the state and the bosses, anarchy and revolution" as they marched.

Czech Republic More than 200 people from the Anarchist Federation held a demo in Prague's Palackeho Square, distributing leaflets and food. A sound system provided music. In the afternoon, there was a march through the city centre. This was confronted by a neo-Nazi counter demo on Namesti Miru, and police made one arrest. Around the country, members of the Federation of Social Anarchists ran infostalls in Teplice, Pisek and Brno.

France Thousands of workers, including members of the French CNT, marched through Paris. In Marseilles, redundant workers chanted 'no to layoffs'. Around 100 people attended a meeting of the CNT in Toulouse, and members of the union joined a demo in Beçancon.

Germany Tension was high, after an official decision to allow neo-Nazi marches in six cities round the country, while anarchist events had been banned. A record 9,000 cops were deployed in Berlin, as anarchists, Leninists and fascist groups all held Mayday marches. Barricades were built overnight in Kreuzberg, an eastern district of the city, and police came under bombardment as they moved to remove them. They then turned water cannon on activists, and teargas was fired. In Frankfurt, cops attacked activists who were trying to block the route of the fascist march, and there were clashes between anarchists and fascists throughout the afternoon. In Essen, fascists were attacked as they dispersed after a march.

Holland Over a hundred activists from the Amsterdam collective Wapentuig demonstrated against the armaments industry. This took the form



Demonstrators confront an armoured vehicle in Berlin

of a 'critical mass' bike ride, which targeted several companies implicated in weaponry manufacture and distribution.

Greece Thousands of protesters demonstrated against government plans to reform the social security system. They were joined by hundreds of anti-globalisation campaigners.

Ireland The Dublin stock exchange was forced to shut early, as around 300 protesters gathered outside. Cops did not interfere, except briefly when an activist climbed the front of the building to drape an anarchist flag over the door. At the end of the afternoon, police moved in as demonstrators began to move towards Dublin's main shopping area.

Japan Well over a million workers attended rallies across the country, amid warnings that government economic policies could lead to mass redundancies.

Mozambique Thousands of workers marched through the centre of Maputo, calling for an end to the mass redundancies which (they say) are the result of globalisation. Workers from the cashew-processing industry carried banners which read, 'down with the bureaucrats of Washington and Maputo'.

New Zealand Around fifty demonstrators took part in a mock 'celebrate capitalism' day in



Christchurch. This was followed by an anarchist meeting, and a free meal provided by Food not Bombs. In Wellington, hundreds of people held a 'Carnival against Capitalism', organised by the Committee for the Establishment of Civilisation.

Norway Foreign Minister Thorbjørn Jagland got a pie in the face from Oslo protesters. "Cream pie throwing has become an epidemic", he said after the attack, which was carried out during a Mayday rally.

Poland As many as 1,500 people joined a march in Warsaw, organised by the Anarchist Federation, Emancypunx and Left Alternative. Activists from around the country joined what is thought to be one of the largest anarchist demonstrations in the country for several years. It lasted over four hours, and was accompanied by hundreds of police. The marchers stopped outside the ministries of finance and justice, and outside the EU mission and US embassy. Some demonstrators were beaten up by cops, and one was hospitalised. This however led to support from bystanders, several of whom began to hold 'stop police violence' signs.

Russia Tens of thousands marched through towns and cities across the country. More than 50,000 people took part in rallies in Siberia and the far eastern territories. At least 5,000 people marched through St Petersburg, while over 30,000 took part in Moscow.

Slovakia Over a hundred members of various groups gathered in Bratislava. A representative of Slovakian Direct Action talked about the social problems of Slovak workers, and presented an alternative model of self-organisation. He told the crowd that "the time for a real alternative has come - a self-managed, federalist society of freedom and equality. Anarchosindicalism is the means, anarchocommunist is the end. Without capitalism and the state, without employers, politicians and union bureaucrats".

South Africa The country's most powerful trade union federation warned the government

that unions were planning a nationwide strike against privatisation during the next four months. Speaking at a Mayday rally in Durban, Zwelinzima Vavi, general secretary of the Congress of South African Trade Unions, condemned the 'jobs loss bloodbath' caused by globalisation.

South Korea Around 20,000 workers protested on the streets of Seoul against economic restructuring and a police offensive against striking Daewoo workers last month. Several hundred broke through police lines, to the sound of cheers, but they were halted by a second line of riot cops further down the road.

Switzerland Two hundred people were arrested in Zurich, when protesters clashed with the police. Rubber bullets were fired.

Taiwan Several thousand unemployed workers and activists marched through Taipei. This followed mass redundancies in the country. "We want to tell the government that we really can't take it any more", said Lin Hui-Kuan, of the Federation of Labour.

Turkey Some 20,000 people marched through Istanbul, in solidarity with anarchist prisoners on hunger strike in the country's jails.

United States Protests and parties were held in cities and towns across the USA. Street parties were held in Pittsburgh and San Francisco. A wildcat strike took place in Indiana. In California's Long Beach, demonstrators were



shot at close range by police rubber bullets, and there were over sixty arrests. Bystanders were reported to be "very alarmed" at "cops shooting kids for no reason". A Mayday picnic was held in Boston's Copley Square, followed by a march through the financial district. In Chicago (left), the anarchist-inspired Department of Space and Land Reclamation spent three days up to Mayday itself occupying street corners, supermarkets and subways, in "acts of spatial resistance to the privatised forces controlling our use of public space".

Zimbabwe There were scenes of confrontation, as supporters of President Robert Mugabe clashed with activists opposing his rule. Riot cops cleared 5,000 people from a rally in Harare's Rufaro stadium.

Feed the mind

Catch the latest offerings from these five zines, and pig out on a smörgasbord of different views. All of them can be ordered through Freedom Press Bookshop.

Black Flag, no 220. Published several months late (that's probably why it's undated), this issue reports on football and the way the state uses the game's supporters to test out its crowd-control techniques before turning them on political activists. It also carries articles on the sincerity (or otherwise) of MI5 renegade David Shayler, and his attacks on his once and possibly current employers; on attempts by the Socialist Workers Party to subvert the anti-capitalist movement into a recruiting ground for a new "cadre of bolsheviks" (their words, quoted here); and on the prospects for working class resistance in the UK.

As usual, the paper is well laid out and attractively designed. The only weakness is the inevitable result of its late appearance: the national and international news sections are news in name only. Reports on Prague, or the sacking of CSL staff in Newham last year, may be interesting. But they are definitely not new.

There is useful information on prisoners, and some good reviews. But a lack of detail on the books being discussed might sometimes make it hard for potential readers to know where copies can be found. 40 pages, £1.50.

Direct Action, no 18, Spring 2001. Published by Solidarity Federation, *Direct Action* carries comment pieces, news reports, cartoons and reviews. There is an interview with I.E. Igarrey and Sam Mbah, authors of *African Anarchism*, which focuses on anarchist struggles in Nigeria.

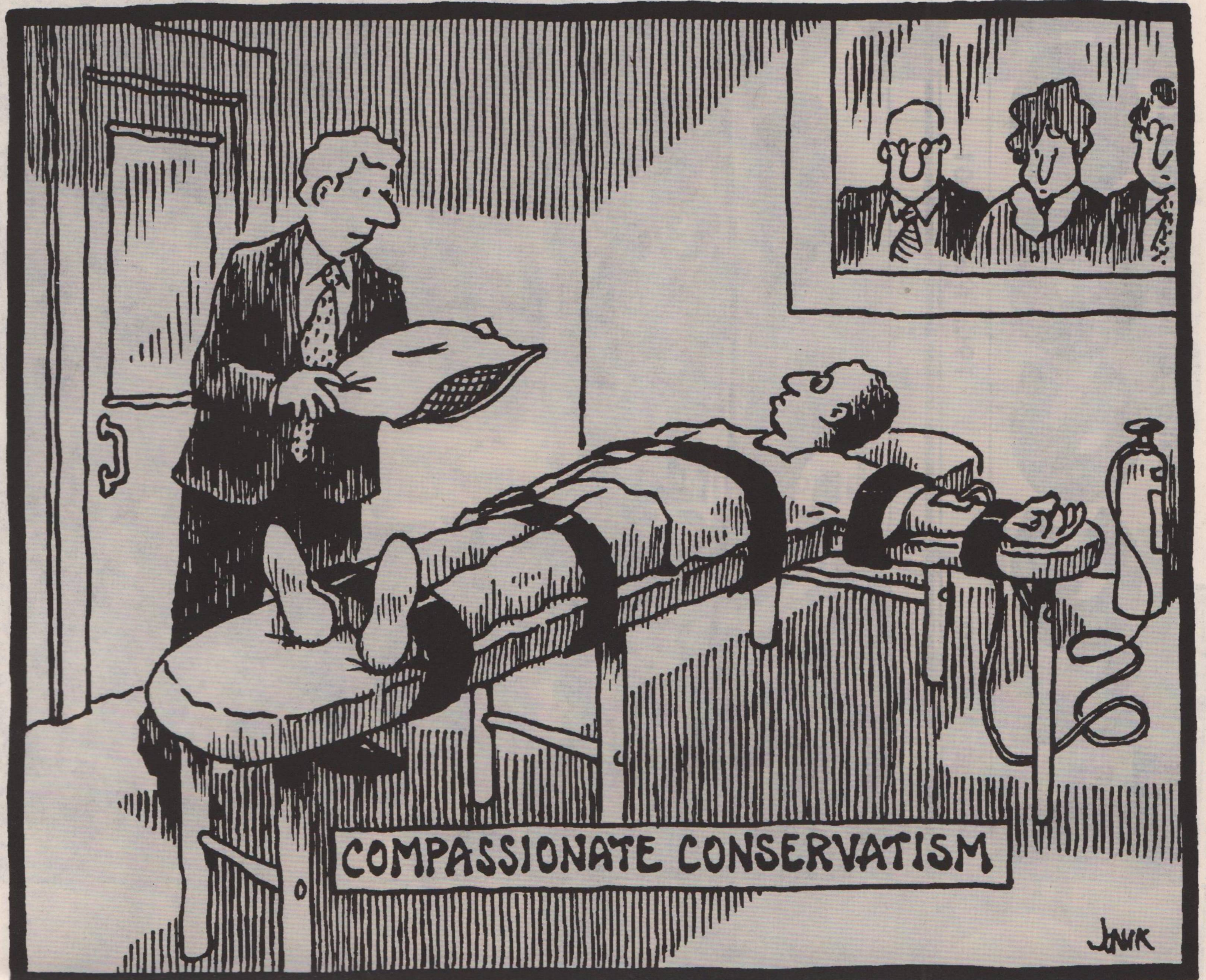
The main articles analyse the Socialist Alliance and its claims for our support (don't); the government's cherished Private Finance Initiative for funding state services; the education system; genetics; economics; and voting. There is a hard-hitting editorial too, which attacks the democracy we're offered under capitalism and gives any politicians who come visiting in the next few weeks some careful advice: "canvassers can piss off".

The reviews are snappy. It's good to see coverage of musical releases. Jello Biafra, Krist Novoselic, Kim Thayil and Gina Mainwal collaborating in a punk supergroup for *The No WTO Combo - Live from the Battle in*



Seattle; the mysterious *Various Artists Live at the Complex 2*, which "moves around drum & bass, to hip hop, through industrial beats and back again via its own little paths". It sounds amazing, and thanks *Direct Action* for bringing it to our attention. But where can we get a copy? 36 pages, £1.50.

Green Anarchist, issue 62, Spring 2001. "It's been a long time a comin'...", says the editor. In the interval, *Green Anarchist* has



Cartoon taken from *Alternative Press Review*

changed its format slightly (it now looks more like a magazine), and the team which produces it has changed – whether this has altered the paper's editorial slant you'll see for yourself.

There's a mixture of news (with an emphasis on animal rights and ecological issues), poetry and reviews. The letters page carries a post from Oklahoma City bomber Timothy McVeigh, arguing for an alliance between anarchists and the right-wing militias in the United States. The editor rightly gives McVeigh short shrift in return; and as he was due to be executed in Indiana on 16th May, it's unlikely he'll be replying.

Green Anarchist no longer stands, by the way, for "the destruction of civilisation" – that proud boast has been replaced on the masthead by the less combative "the best way to protect freedom of speech is to exercise it". 24 pages, £2.00 (but still £2,500 to cops).

Alternative Press Review, vol 5 no 3, Fall 2000. Longer but less glossy than *Black Flag* and *Direct Action*, the *Alternative Press Review* is not as explicitly anarchist as the others. Its aim is to bring radical essays, from a variety of political traditions, to a wider audience. These are reprinted from other zines and websites.

There is a provocative and well-argued analysis by Michael Parenti, of reports in the western media of Serb atrocities during the Kosovo campaign. These, he suggests, were wildly exaggerated and designed much more to soften up the public for NATO intervention than to give a truthful picture of events. "The US major media (and much of the minor media) are not free and independent, as they claim, they are not the watchdog of democracy but the lapdog of the national security state. They help reverse the roles of victims victimisers, warmongers and peacemakers, reactionaries and

reformers. The first atrocity, the first war crime committed in any war of aggression by the aggressors is against the truth".

Other articles examine the racist underpinnings of genetic research, the use of experimental drugs on soldiers during the 1991 Gulf War, and class versus ethnicity in the American Deep South ("side with the blacks, hang the rich, and then go fishin"). There is a long interview with jailed American Indian activist Leonard Peltier.

Alternative Press Review also contains shorter digests of reports from many other publications, and several pages of reviews. 70 pages, £3.50.

Total Liberty, vol 2 no 4, Spring 2001. Much shorter than the other publications, this "journal of evolutionary anarchism" contains an account of science fiction as social criticism, a discussion of anarchism and elitism, and a call to "reclaim the cities" by US academic Cindy Milstein. This last "looks at prospects for moving beyond the confrontation street politics of Reclaim the Streets type protests to the creation of a social movement which could actually reclaim our cities".

There is also a simple (rather than simplistic) defence of a moderate position on elections, by Jean Pollard. "There is a general election coming up – let the people know that there is another way. If it gets people to at least question their environment, then they may come to realise that anarchism is not something to be feared. If anarchism then loses its shock/horror/loony-left profile, we will be getting alongside people, helping them to wake themselves up from the nightmare culture in which they live".

In fact, this issue follows the same ideological trend as earlier numbers of the paper. This will be a strength or a weakness, depending on its readers' own political

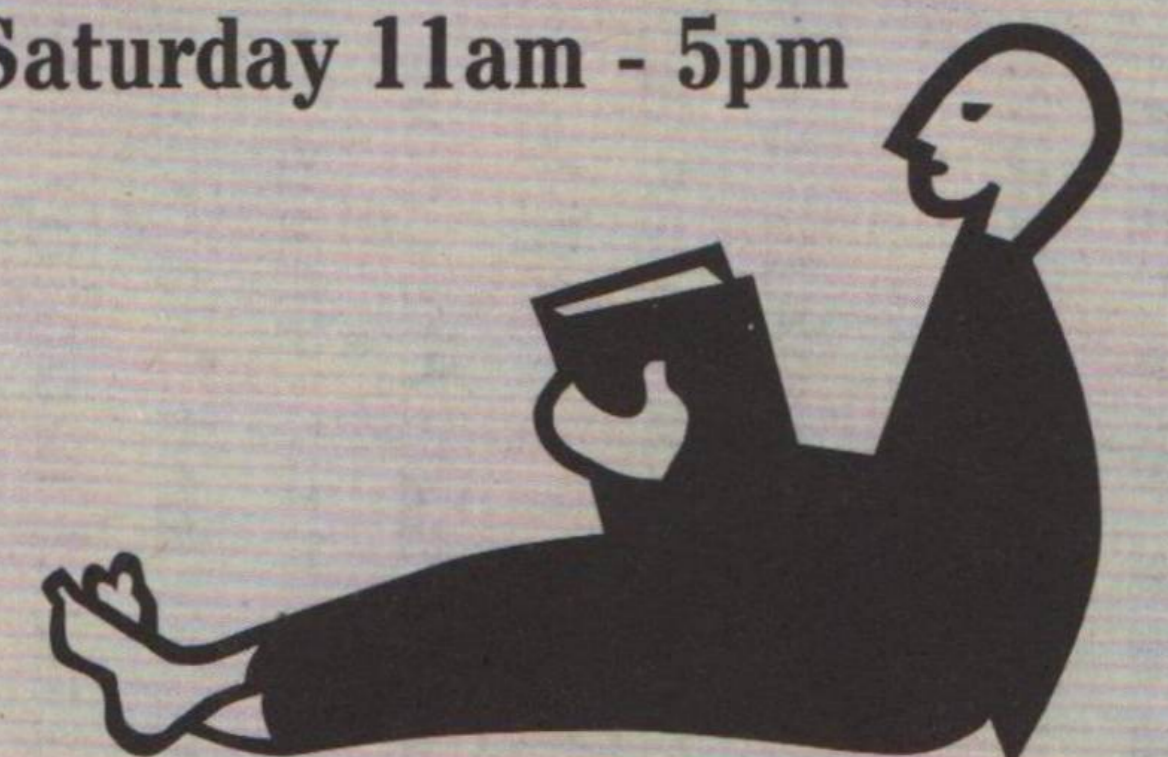
views. It contains, for example, a reprint of an article about nineteenth century US individualist and mutualist Josiah Warren. His ideas of 'equitable' commerce are, in the opinion of the editor of *Total Liberty*, of continuing relevance "in our present age of Green Economics, Credit Unions and LETS schemes". Make of that what you will.

One good thing in this edition is the tiny insert from East Midlands Anarchists, explaining the anarchist position to newcomers. Printed on cream paper, decorated with little pictures of mushrooms and fluffy animals, the whole thing is rather sweet. 12 pages, £1.00.

Freedom Press Bookshop

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84b Whitechapel High Street
London E1 7QX

— opening hours —
Monday to Friday 10.30am - 6pm
Saturday 11am - 5pm



Books can be ordered from the above address.
A booklist is available on request.

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The Raven

We are now preparing three issues of *The Raven* for publication.

This quarterly journal extends our coverage and discussion of ideas and issues in a way which isn't possible in a fortnightly newspaper like *Freedom*. The topics we need contributions for (apart from Anarchism and Marxism, which is published next month) are Food (to be published in September) and Sport (to be published in December).

Those interested in submitting an article for inclusion in any of these issues should contact the editors of *The Raven* at Freedom Press, 84b Whitechapel High Street, London E1 7QX.

COPY DEADLINE

The next issue of *Freedom* will be dated 2nd June, and the last day for copy intended for this issue will be first post on Thursday 24th May. If possible contributions should be typed using double-spacing between lines, or can be sent as text files on disc (with a print-out please) or e-mail to FreedomCopy@aol.com

The London Cannabis march from Kennington Park for festival in Brockwell Park will now be held on

Saturday 16th June 2001

www.cannabiscoalition.org

for info tel: 020 7637 7467 or 020 7738 5148

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Meetings & Events

London Anarchist Forum

18th May Setting Right the System's Errors (speaker Steve 26)

25th May After Mayday: Future Anarchist Demos (a talk led by Sam Buchanan)

1st June Monthly free discussion (debate, analyse, plan or just gossip in a convivial setting with free food and drink)

8th June Women and Anarchy (symposium 3)

15th June Political Correctness (a provocative talk by Peter Neville)

The weekly discussion forum of the London anarchist movement now in its eighteenth year. Every Friday from 8pm at Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, Holborn. For more information see: www.trak.to/LAF or LAF@anarchic.co.uk

Reclaim the Streets

General information on RTS: 020 7281 4621 or rts@gn.apc.org
For info on RTS subscribe to allsorts@gn.apc.org specifying 'subscribe RTS only'.
To receive info on general direct action, etc., stuff subscribe to allsorts@gn.apc.org specifying 'subscribe allsorts'. To have your news action reports, etc., sent out to hundreds of like-minded people all over the country (and bear in mind probably cops too) e-mail it to allsorts@gn.apc.org

Reclaim the Streets, PO Box 9656, London N4 4JY
www.reclaimthestreets.net

Don't Vote - Resist!

The anarchist alternative to the general election
Public meeting organised by London Anarchist Federation
31st May at 7.30pm
William Morris Community Centre
Greenleaf Road, Walthamstow, London
tel 07946 214590 to confirm date

Close Campsfield - Saturday 26th May

assemble at 12 noon at main gates, Langford lane, Kidlington
(Oxford bus 2b/c/d or lifts from outside Debenhams at 11.30am)

Glasgow Peace Carnival June 2nd at George Square, Glasgow

Stalls, speakers, live music
Organised by Scottish CND 0141 423 1222

Red Rambles 2001

Red Rambles walks and rambles for Radicals, Libertarians, Anarchists, Greens, Socialists, Syndicalists, et al. Walkers are reminded to wear walking boots, appropriate clothing and to bring waterproofs, food and drink. See <http://members.tripod.co.uk/ainema/index-2.html>

Sunday 2nd July 2001

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

Sunday 2nd September 2001

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

Sunday 18th November 2001

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

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