

# WOM★BLES

WOM★BLES Summer 03 - Winter 03



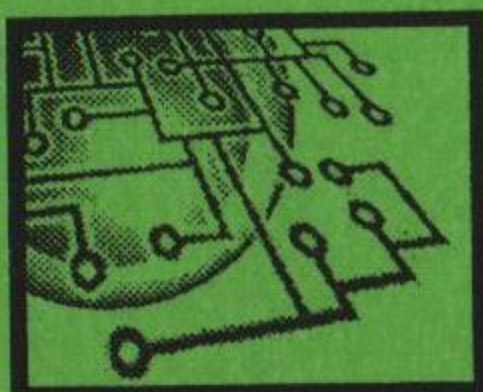
**LOVE & RAGE**  
in the dying days of capitalism

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# WOM★BLES



**Media Hack Lab** - An analysis of what is a Hack Lab and why it is a good idea. London's first Media Hack Lab will be open in early November @ FREEDOM (P2 - P6)



**Padded Bloc** - Every time we get together on the streets the police force us off. Aiming towards a padded movement (P7 - P8)



**WHOSE JUSTICE?** - Article by the 'Internal Enemy' anti-authoritarian group in Thessaloniki about the EU summit in June, 2003 (P9 - P15)



**Hungry for Success?** - David Blaine's hunger strike for £5 million and alone attempt to bring him down (P16)



**Thessaloniki Prisoner Support** - We respond with solidarity and build a campaign for the release of all prisoners arrested and detained (P17 - P23)



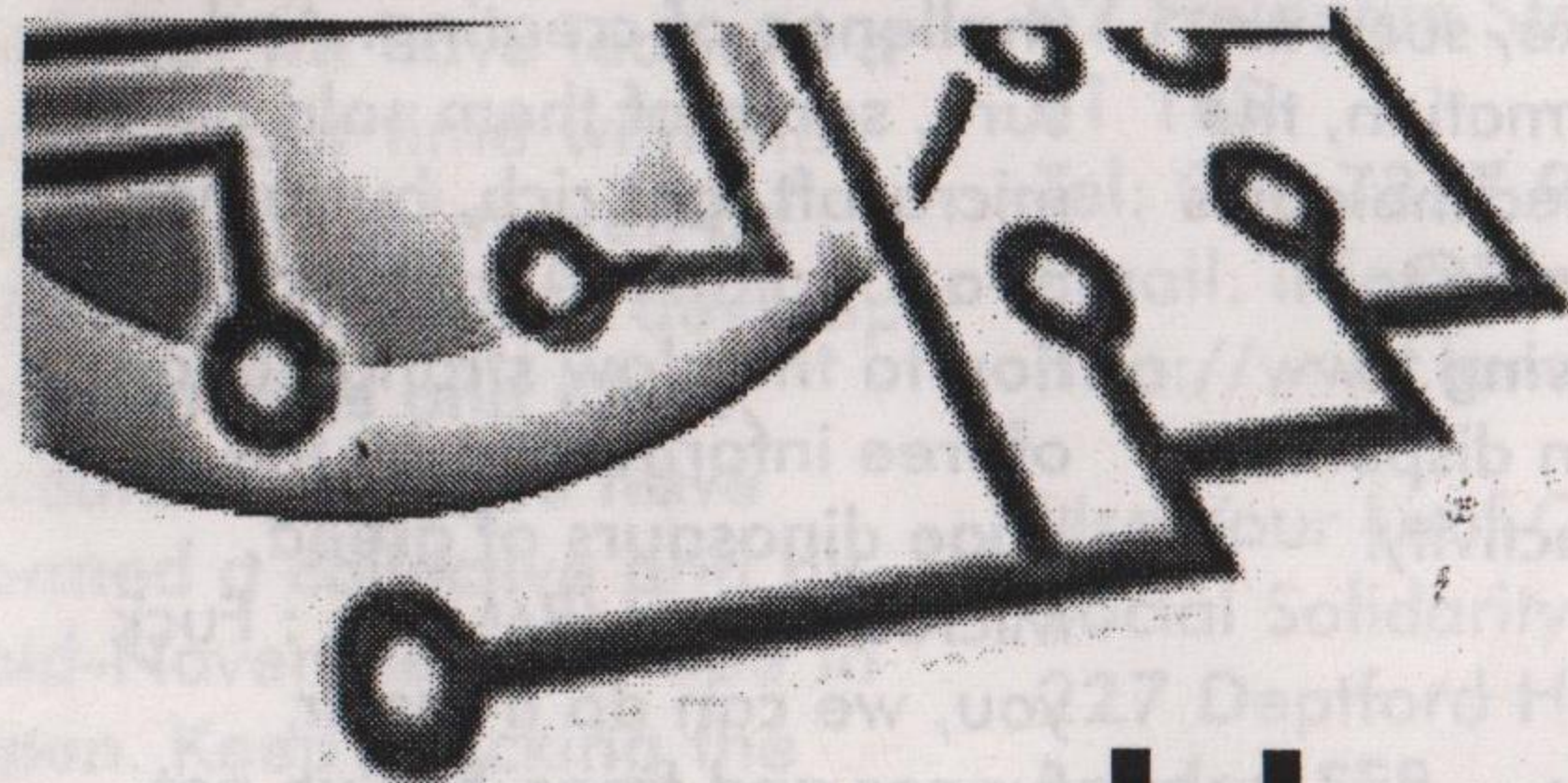
**Days of Action against DSEi arms fair** - Many actions, much running around and much fun and rebellion for those who came down (P24 - P28)



**Social Centres Projects** - Round-up of Occupied and self-managed social centres in London and the new WOMBLES social centre project (P29 - P32)



## MEDIA HACK LAB



"Hacking  
- subversive use  
of technology. To  
cross boundaries  
and borders by  
means of open  
communication  
networks, to freely  
share and exchange  
information and  
ideas."

**H**acking as an attitude:  
this is our vision, not just com-  
puter knowledge.

We are "hackers" all day long,  
even when we aren't using a  
computer, when we fight to  
change what we don't like,  
such as the untrue and forced  
information, the exploitation c  
not affordable but expensive  
technologies, as the unavoid-  
ableness of  
acknowledging information  
without any interaction.

We regard hacking to be an  
attitude that isn't confined to



information technology. Our way of being hackers is apparent in day-to-day life, even when we're not using computers. It reveals itself when we fight to change the things we don't like, such as force-fed misinformation, the use of expensive technologies that are not available to everyone, and having to accept information dispensed without any interactivity.

### **A project of communications:**

In an atomised society where ideas have become "intellectual property", most people know enough about computers to consume but not to create, all communication is mediated through a prism of control. We can use technology to break alienation, communicate with each other directly and challenge the notion of ideas as private property.

### **History:**

Geeks challenged the notion that creation, advance and development could only happen within the capitalist

paradigm of need for profit. These kids did it cos they could, did it cos they loved it, were driven by the love of the new, inspired by sharing new ideas, new information, the challenge of creating. And sure, some of them sold out to microsoft, got rich, but a hell of a lot didn't. And the reaction to the slow strangulation of free information by the huge dinosaurs of greed, Microsoft and IBM was : Fuck you, we can do it faster, funner and freer. You've got Windows - a system that offers no capacity for learning with a prohibitive price tag and viruses galore, we've got GNU/Linux - freeware DIY, stabler, virus-free & cost-free. You've got Sony, we've got Napster, Gnutella & peer-to-peer. Surfing rapidly replaced sailing the high seas as the pirates leisure choice of the future.

As the corporations moved in like vultures, open-source became a movement, kids who'd just been doing it for fun got angry, got organised. Hack-meetings mushroomed

across Europe - meetings of digital communities and countercultures where codes were created and cracked, defiance against surveillance was discussed, skills were shared, information exchanged, net strikes plotted. People talked about technology but also about politics, about free software and related ways of thinking. The logical next step on from these temporary zones of autonomous technology were Media HackLabs - permanent spaces, places for learning, for making your own media, for the sharing and developing of free technologies and software, for battling surveillance and alienation, for ongoing projects and for using new forms of communication in direct action.

### **Our Media HackLab is inspired by communications actions from around the world. Here's a few examples:**

- Project at MIT which created a computer programme that

could map out a safe passage through the CCTV cameras in a given area of a city. (The same project created robots that could go out leafletting and make political speeches as a way of breaking down alienation!)

- Projection of anti-war messages onto the Houses of Parliament.

- Daily pirate radio broadcast to prisoners in Thessaloniki (An action which later escalated to the occupation of national commercial radio stations in Greece to broadcast solidarity messages to the prisoners.)

- Woomera 2002 'No Border: camp - border hack technology which explored ways of breaking down the borders and exploding the silence between protesters inside and outside Woomera detention centre, by use of methods that ranged from noise actions to Indymedia Phone Indymedia Patch technology (PIMP) where detainees could make a phone call that



was automatically transferred into an mp3 file for upload onto the Desert Indymedia website.

- Indymedia - network of collectively run media outlets "for the creation of radical, accurate, and passionate tellings of the truth. Working out of a love and inspiration for people who continue to work for a better world, despite corporate media's distortions and unwillingness to cover the efforts to free humanity." Accessible, democratic and decentralised - anyone can log on with their own news-story.

- East London Wireless Project, one of many wireless projects capable of providing free internet usage to all buildings in a given area. Faster than broadband & cost-free.

- Pirate TV - one Rome social centre set up their own TV station, then went round their neighbourhood knocking on doors, and tuning people's TV's into the station.

## So what are we actually gonna do?

- \*Free internet/computer access
- \*Video/Audio editing suite radio/internet TV
- \*Making films
- \*Hosting hack conferences
- \*Using/ making radio transmitters
- \*Free software freeshop
- \* Participation in wireless internet projects

## workshops in:

- internet/email/ basic computer use
- GNU/Linux freeware
- Graphic design/web design
- Filming
- Video + Sound Editing
- Computer assembling/ recycling
- Setting up internet radio

In addition to using and learning existing technology we also wish to participate in creating ecologically sound alternatives

## Links:

*History of hacking -*

<http://www.stallman.org/articles/on-hacking.html>

*Free Software -*

<http://j12.org/sb/freesoft.htm>

[http://ourmayday.org/cgi-bin/wiki.pl?Free\\_Software](http://ourmayday.org/cgi-bin/wiki.pl?Free_Software)

*Learning resources:*

<http://www.fraw.org.uk/>

*Free Software philosophy:*

<http://www.gnu.org/philosophy/free-software-for-freedom.htm>

<http://www.gnu.org/philosophy/categories.html>

*Try Linux for free:*

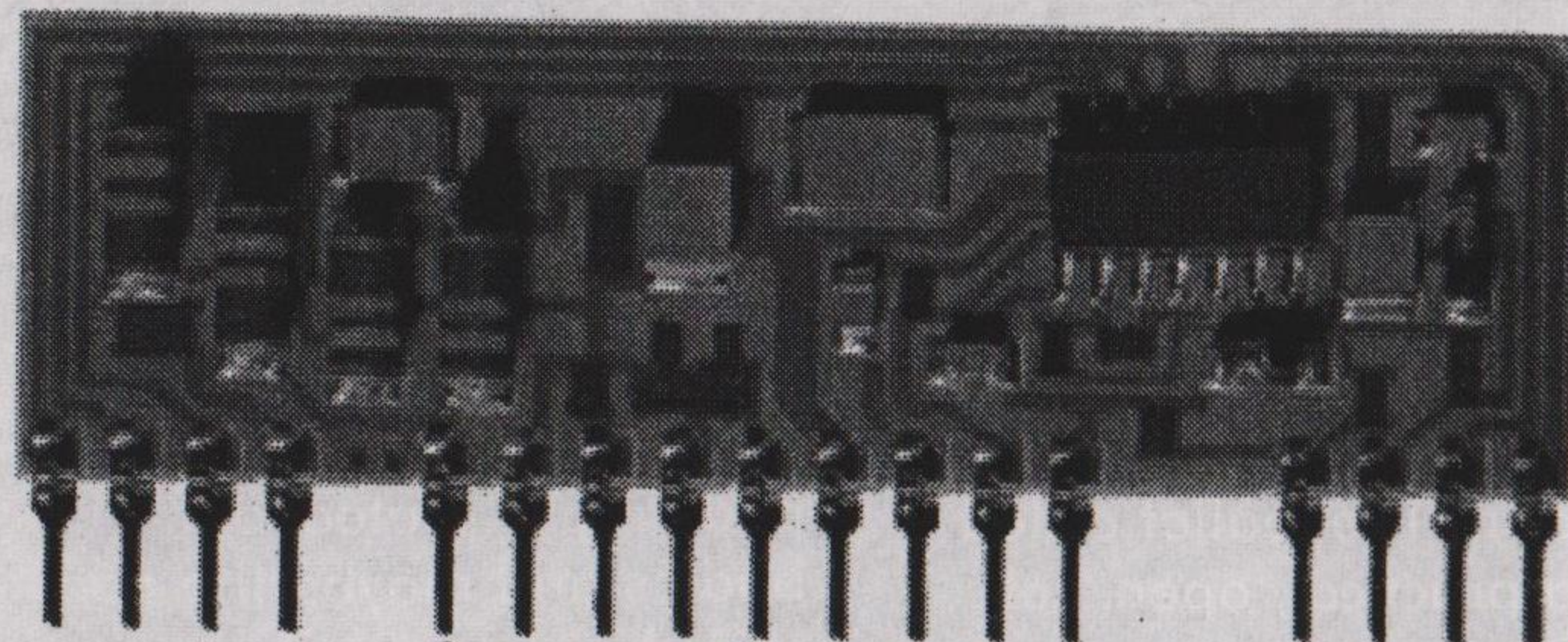
dyne:bolic

<http://distrowatch.com/table.php?distribution=dynebolic>

*Woomera 2002 No Borders:*

<http://antimedia.net/desertstorm>

To get involved with the Media Hack Lab [www.wombles.org.uk](http://www.wombles.org.uk)



media hack lab  
84b whitechapel high street, London E1





**T**hree years ago we circulated a leaflet at the anarchist bookfair in London. The leaflet called for a practical, open, self defence on street demonstrations which were under threat of being cordoned, surrounded or faced with baton charges by

the states bouncers. We suggested that it might be a good idea if we turn up prepared, with helmets to protect our heads, with padding to protect our bodies and maybe the odd shield or two. So if we or anyone around us was to be hurt then we could defend them or indeed they could defend themselves. The tactic, like the

movement didn't take off, and three years later we are faced with the same obstacles. The lack of co-ordination, militancy and size of mobilisations which dare to go beyond the state/trot sanctioned A to B routes has led to the need of this tactic, this politics to seem irrelevant. But this has more to do with communication than any 'problems' of the tactic. The WOMBLES were criminalised by the police and the media (people still think it is illegal to wear padding or helmets on demonstration!) and there is a hesitation to be associated with us or the tactic. But self-defence has always been crucial when faced with a police state like the UK.

Self-defence can be seen on many levels. From defending social centres or squats from bailiffs to breaking through police lines on demonstrations - it should be an integral part of who we are and what we do.

As WOMBLES has developed, we still stay true to the form of defence we are so publicly associated with. A few more people and groups taking the tactic on from around the country could provide a focus for its development. The idea is about being responsible, individually and collectively to the demonstration/action. A new booklet will be produced in the next few months with some suggestion about tactics, building body armour, shields and police tactics. An additional CD-ROM will be produced in the new year with film footage of white overalls action from Italy, Prague and Halkidiki, Greece. Stay tuned for more information





# WHOSE JUSTICE?

*by internal enemy group, Greece*

## **Insurrection against the EU summit in Greece**



**A**lready a year before June 2003 we had decided to take part in the actions against the EU summit meeting in Thessaloniki. We never considered the summit meeting an isolated moment that could magically condense our struggle or bring it to its ultimate climax. For us, the whole summit affair, as any "mass anti-globalization" business would be one battle fought in an everyday war, one of many moments in our struggle for autonomy and freedom, a chance to meet more people and become exposed to other people's ideas and practices. Our goal was to openly raise the issue of social subversion in its totality and variety, in all areas of everyday life. We were aware of both the

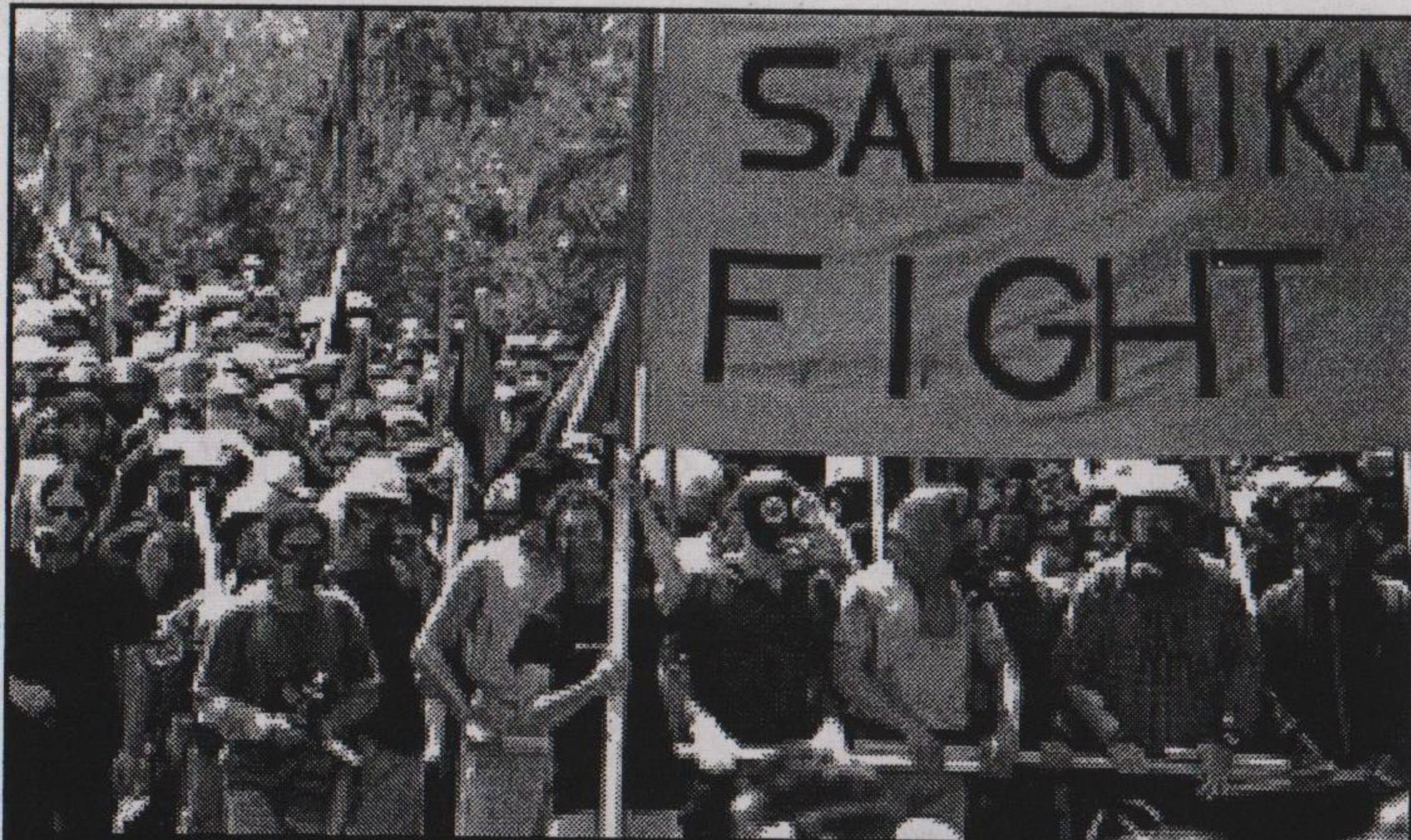
dangers and the inherent problems in participating at such events (they can be predictable; they can be transformed into meaningless spectacle, they can allow too much disorganized mass direct action at the expense of conscious and well-prepared confrontation, they can be coopted by power, they can leave behind prisoners and repression).

During that adventurous week last June, we didn't stay at home: we were on the streets and in the occupied buildings on the university campus. There we met with thousands of others. Any triumphant celebration of what happened would be pretentious -and wrong - as much as any condemnation would be unfair. It is true that there were many shortcomings and many problems that even cancelled out liberatory and libertarian visions. Yet the whole event did confirm our faith in the force of collective organization and action. The game is far from over.

There are many things to be said about the days of June, none of them heroic. For on thing everything happened against the backdrop of a conspiracy of the police, the media, the innocent citizens all of whom knew beforehand how they would judge the paranoid destroyers and how they should all be exemplarily persecuted. There was a sense that the whole world was united against the four thousands of people who show no respect for the new religion of security and private property and are thus the arch-enemies of the system. Anarchists became isolated before they even showed up. Even on Thursday, after a huge black and red demo, the climate did not change.

It is interesting to note certain tactical moves by the State and the police during their preparation for the summit meeting. Choosing Marmaras in Halkidiki as the location for the meeting, which is a holiday resort





## Against the Europe of Capital Salonika, June 19-21, 2003



(mostly for people living in Thessaloniki) actually handed Thessaloniki over to the demonstrators without a red zone. The prerequisite was of course a fully consenting and cooperating Left. Indeed, the Left had no problem accepting housing and facilities by the State. What interested the various parties and Social Forum organizations was merely to show off their numbers and force to each other. The result was a boring parade of weakness, lack of imagination, inspiration or numbers. If such is the movement "against globalization", then the bosses can easily find their place within it. In order to put to use the ideology of security, the chosen ideology of domination on a global and a regional level, the bosses require important social support. The presence of thousands of policemen in every corner of the city was complemented by security light steel sheets shielding larger and smaller shop windows from expected attacks. It is true that the

police sold the steel, alongside the insurance companies' salesmen - but they were not alone. The warning visits to the shops were accompanied by the cries of the media, happy to oblige with yet another emergency situation. Yet what matters is not just who sells security, but also who buys it, what makes up this mixture of multiplied fear, indivisible loneliness, private property, ridiculousness, TV addiction, ice-cold resignation, dead time. There remained only those people who are against any kind of negotiation with the institutions of power and cannot walk along the party lines. They were thus isolated, and they stayed alone. All moves of power were designed with them, with us in mind. When we managed to shock, as we did at the huge demo in solidarity to immigrants on Thursday, we unfolded passion, reason and determinacy. Yet on Saturday, we were unorganized, with no actual political goal, had to a large extent



incorporated spectacular stereotypes about ourselves and about such "anti-globalization activities", and were thus painfully predictable.

In a city practically occupied by the police, with an atmosphere loaded with terror for the awaited paranoid destroyers, some chose to go out into the street or defend the squatted university buildings on campus as if ready all along. We are not willing to devalue this very choice. Fully or less aware of what we were doing, with a clear or a muddy view of our possibilities, each carrying with us different negations and contradictions, some chose to be out there. Some just needed a break, others just sought a thrill to get away from the misery of everyday life, some wanted an instant clash with the police at whatever cost, some wanted nothing, some would go for all of the above. All those people, whatever one calls them, comprise a tidal wave of negation within society.

And that becomes all the more important, at a time when antisocial individualism and the ethics of property and security are reigning and are leading people at an astonishing pace to side with State power and identify with commodified relationships.

Capitalist society cannot avoid friction and resistance this resistance can at times be unexpected, or even entirely predictable. The \_expression of "rage", (add or omit the inverted commas, that is really not the point) on Saturday the 21st of June was such an instant of friction, unfortunately a very predictable one. We feel that any negation that does not find a conscious and collective \_expression, any negation that does not point towards the creation of structures and relationships that are competent and competitive towards existing capitalist relationships, that does not recreate community structures, whether in struggle or in response to

everyday needs, will ultimately come to face the void of its own purposelessness.

And indeed, many people were on the streets led by an imposed stereotypical understanding of the event, or by the spectacle of their own desire. Our criticism is directed against ourselves too, those of us who joined and those of us who didn't join the demo, since we actually failed to make a difference. We failed to invest with meaning and quality a demo that in the end was erratic to say the least. Worst of all it was joined by lone individuals everybody was there for themselves, or at best with their pals, reflecting a society of private and individualised choices, which pushes one deeper and deeper into isolation and apathy. In other words, we are not really concerned with the technical aspect of the streetfight. The issue was not just a lack of arrangements that could have saved the battle. There

is a crucial social and political issue at the heart of this whole affair. And our solidarity to the arrested is a first move in dealing with it.

The thirty comrades arrested at the demonstrations in Thessaloniki, Greece, again: the bosses' EU summit meeting held in Halkidiki last June are guilty of some of the greatest crimes of our times. In a world that has fallen silent, they chose to cry out. In a world that has gone inert, they decided to act. They had the nerve to stand up against power mechanisms that should be feared as overwhelming and "invincible". We are not on the side of power and its institutions. We are on the side of our comrades, guilty of the same crimes, in solidarity with them, having attempted to live one of the most worthy adventures of our time, the struggle to demolish this ageing world and to create society free of exploitation. We share this dream with thousands of others on this



planet, consciously conspiring against repression, against having our lives taken away from us drop by drop.

Our solidarity to the seven prisoners of Thessaloniki and to the 23 demonstrators with the same charges, is inextricably linked to this struggle. Prisons are not wide enough for us all. The passion for freedom cannot be locked up and buried -it's getting stronger and stronger, adding force to the tide of resistance.

Solidarity is not charity. It is the mark of a life that does not accept profit and consumerism as real social values. The seven prisoners are victims in a war against society that is being fought overtly and covertly on all fronts of everyday life: Before the TV set, at the computer screen, on the factory chain band, in the army camps and hospitals and sweatshops, on all production lines of the industry of alienation,

loneliness, exploitation and death that is capitalism.

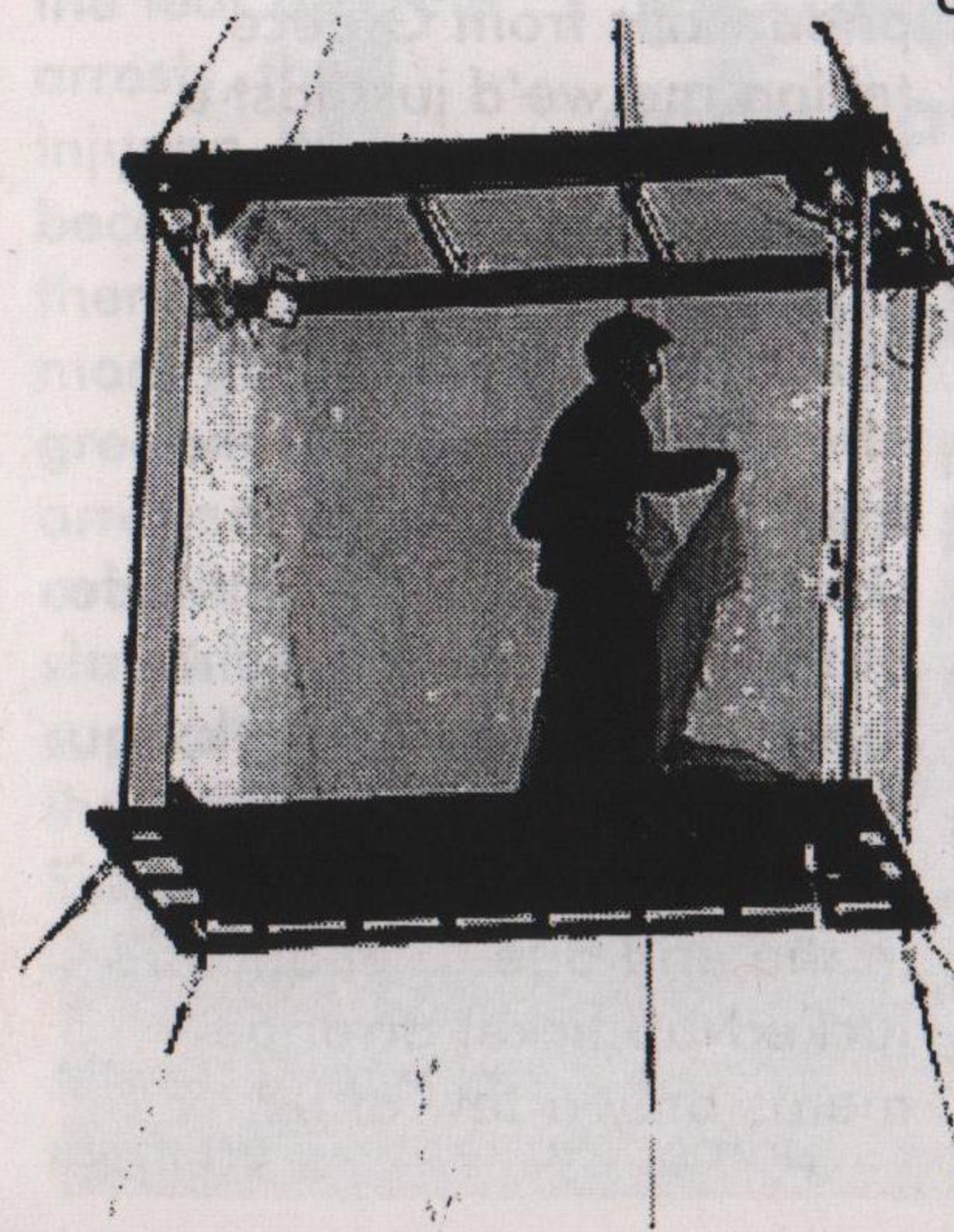
No one has the right to remain indifferent in the face of this reality. When society chooses neutrality in the war of control, and discipline fights against society itself, then society is consenting to its own slow death

# Hungry for Success?

After celebrating my birthday with comrades at various bars in old street, I set off home when I was cycling over Tower Bridge and glanced over to see about 150 people staring up at the pathetic spectacle of **David Blaine** sitting in a glass box. I don't know what I intended to do but set off down to try and bring him down. After arguing with some of the crowd I decided to try and make my way towards Blaine's cage. I thought maybe I could cut his water pipe or get into the cage, so I walked along the outer fence saw my opportunity, leaped over the two fences and then towards the cage. Then they came, the thug security. I dodged two but alas another three came.

They had my head in a armlock and kindly started kicking me in the back of my legs, back and stomach

They took me to a deserted car park where I was kicked some more. After a few minutes they handed me over to the police, who took me to Peckham police station and charged me with drunk & disorderly. People ask me was it all worth it and yes it was! Drunk or sober, Blaine is still disrespecting hunger strikers everywhere. People are starving whilst he is using his hunger strike to make money!





# Thessaloniki Prisoner Solidarity

"I have no idea if I'll be able to post any more news before we return, but this is going to be something to remember."

- Simon Chapman's last email, June 20th, 2003

It starts, as all these things tend to do, with an unexpected phone call at an unfamiliar time of the day. "Simon's been nicked". It was a strange surreal moment not because I couldn't imagine Simon getting arrested (to be honest he's one of the few of us I could fully imagine getting on the wrong side of the law) but because not 24 hours earlier he'd been round my flat to pick up some money on the way to the airport telling me how he'd planned to be back at work within 2 days, unconcerned about the

potential for trouble in Thessaloniki, and now here I was the exact same place getting grainy hurried phonecalls from Greece telling me we'd just lost a Womble to the forces of the Greek state.

Thessaloniki was talked about a lot previously, the idea of meeting up with Greek anarchists, the attitude of the police to demonstrators, the nature of Greek protests, the relationship between the state & radicals, in the end due to finances & fucked-up ticket arrangements only a few of us

managed to go. The irony being because of the Greek air traffic controllers strike half of us cancelled our tickets with only Simon rebooking on another later flight.

The next few days was a pulse of phone calls,

information passed from

Greece to here, to people we knew, details emerged in sketchy fragments, the riot, the tear gas, the arrests, the injuries. It became clear there was a lot more going on in

Greece than simply chance arrests. A few Wombles still over in Greece decided to stay & help coordinate support, keeping us back in the UK informed about Simon & the others arrested in Thessaloniki.

Almost immediately a meeting was set up, mainly

just people we knew, practical things were decided there & then; a bank account was set up, through the old ABC London account, for donations to help raise bail money, a postal address secured, details of other support groups to be

**"we felt we were the only ones who knew about it & feared nobody else would give a fuck about another dodgy anarchist getting put behind bars"**

informed, people were already offering to put on benefits gigs to raise money & awareness. A regular update was to be written & posted via e-mail. Media contact to be arranged, both

mainstream & radical. The important thing was to get the information out there. It seems odd now but those first few days we felt we were the only ones who knew about it & feared nobody else would give a fuck about another dodgy anarchist getting put behind bars.





Artwork by Suleiman "castro" Dakduk  
Thessaloniki Political Prisoner and Artist

Everyone went away from those initial meetings determined to get something done. Firstly though, in grand Womble tradition & out of our respect for Simon, we did what we do best, we went to the pub. And so in a backstreet east end pub after that first meeting amongst the debris of beer & drunken conversation, sombre reflections & past Simon stories the Thessaloniki Prisoner Solidarity group was born.

First thing we did was to hold a solidarity demo outside the greek embassy on the following Sunday, leaflets were designed, written, photocopied, given out. Everyone we could think of informed & invited down. Two people from norwich anarchists came down looking exactly like you'd imagine two norwich anarchists to look like. (And that alone restored my faith in our ability to actually get off our arses). Mad ideas flew around about what we

should do, but Simon's lawyer in Greece insisted it should be a peaceful demo simply with photographs and banners showing support for Simon. To that end & despite provocation we fulfilled our obligation. It is to my eternal shame (& I can only apologise for this) I insisted everyone should get in the police pen (the one & only time I shall ever do that, promise people) outside the embassy for a photocall.

Due to lack of any Womble summer activity it was decided that Thessaloniki meetings should be weekly, with report backs, updates, ideas for actions & benefits, generally drinking Simon's health in the pub afterwards. We held a public meeting at LARC to show the infamous 'molotov rucksack' film footage of Simon being nicked & fitted up. The place was packed not just activists but people we'd never seen before. Word was getting around & we maintained a strange momentum despite



getting little or no feedback from the press. What had begun as an urgent need to get things done was transforming itself into a sustained campaign. Every political event now, as well as having a Wombles stall, had a Simon stall. Laminated photos of Simon getting beaten & fitted up, information about the other prisoners, who to write to, where to send donations, future events, a laptop showing the Greek TV footage. The benefits too had taken on a life of their own. Every Friday night at the Eton Mission social club (london's finest, if oddest, social centre) was to Thessaloniki benefit night. Old RTS banners shared space with old Wombles banners & new Thessaloniki banners, Max's famous cocktail bar once again resurrected, bands & dj's offering their services for beer money, an odd mix of dodgy punks, dodgy anarcho's, dodgy munters & just plain dodgy. It was, & remains, a perfect Simon

venue. The best & most successful night was to see the Lams/Headjam/Gertrude pack the place out drilling home their frenetic guitar punk noise, with fights not quite breaking out everywhere & a strange girl getting naked & accosting everyone in sight.

Another strange event was the Thessaloniki jumble sale. Church hall in Hackney full of second hand clothes & half recognisable stuff & the sight of dodgy anarcho's serving tea to grey haired old dears from the back of the hall whilst trying to stop kids running around nicking the toys at the front at the same time as haggling with vicious old ladies who won't pay more than 50p for a clock that doesn't work is one that will haunt me for a long time to come.

The one thing that was missing was press attention. Within the group there were continuing disagreements about dealing with the

mainstream media, compromising the political nature of the arrests & imprisonment, (political prisoners in general, & Simon's background) for coverage (which could turn out to be negative anyway). Most people's overriding concern was to highlight just what was going on with the Thessaloniki prisoners, whichever medium was most effective. A greater degree of urgency came into it when the 7 decided to go on hunger strike. This was something else. This needed to be advertised publicly, openly to as wider audience as possible. We needed press.

The David Blaine thing I think came from Joe. He'd already previously tried to storm the crane & cut off Blaine's water supply & nearly got beaten up by security for his trouble. Basically he wanted revenge. The idea was publicity by any means & Blaine up in his glass box starving himself for

money while Simon & the others starved themselves for freedom seemed too good to let slip by. In the end despite furtive desperate plans of action the banner drop from tower bridge got us the publicity we'd been missing, relegating Blaine to a passive spectator. Two incredible, massive banners were strung across the south side of tower bridge with the resultant news coverage, press attention & interest from people who had previously kept their distance.

It's hard to describe the Thessaloniki campaign without getting overly sentimental or necessarily joyless. New people coming on board & getting involved the openness with which everyone was determined to make the effort, the weird emotional extremes that somehow held people together rather than tearing them apart, the crap catchphrases that WILL disappear once Simon's



home, the amount of energy & commitment shown. It's been a long 4 months, as I write this now Simon, along with 4 thessaloniki prisoners, is still on hunger strike (something very few of us will ever dare to imagine never mind experience), & yet every time i speak to him he still sounds like the same Simon Chapman, the same upbeat unavoidable clarity, the same positive political will. That mental strength is frankly awe-inspiring.

The support of prisoners shouldn't be one of duty, it should be essential, a necessary part of our make up & outlook. The fact of imprisonment is one of power, controlling by moral authority, someone's everyday reality. To place someone in prison, to confine them, deprive them, limit their activity, restrict their humanity, is the most naked expression of power, a power exercised & legitimised by the state.

The fact that Simon, Castro, Carlos, Fernando, Spiros, Dimitris, Michalos were fighting, and are fighting still, against that very power makes it all the more essential. It defines their humanity, and reflects ours. It ceases to be a struggle for ideas but one of existence, for all of us, collectively.

## **DSEi DESTROYED?**



*A few reflections on the days of action against DSEi arms fair, held in London September 9th - 12th, 2003*

**O**ften our successes are hard to measure. DSEi is a case in point. How successful could we be when we are matched one to one with police when the state spends one million pounds of our

money to protect an illegal gathering, as DSEi was when actions are taking place on weekday mornings rather than weekend afternoons, such obstacles must always be borne in mind when reflecting on that week. Couple this with the recent revelations of a well-funded and deep-rooted spy network operating inside CAAT, EFi, RTS and CND and we get a picture of what we are up against.

On a personal level, it was frustrating to know that DSE was going ahead largely unhindered by our efforts. It was depressing to see so few turn out, but it was good to be part of the occasional fieriness with those who did. The response from the local community was good. I overheard a gang of local kids argue with police over the ethics of the arms trade. These kids outshone a lot of us, pushing back at police lines, chucking the occasional half-brick. Despite a massive police



presence, we managed to mushroom up all over the area, sometimes blocking roads with the fencing the police provided. Compared with the last DSEi, we were more spontaneous and wildcat....and then the inevitable happened..

The RTS was surrounded by hundreds of the fuckers and Sectioned. We were stationary for about an hour and then "chaperoned" into a nearby side street (Freemasons Road – oh the irony). At this point I looked up and over the lines of police and noticed a young girl, about 10 or 11, looking out her bedroom window at the throng below. Me and a few others began waving to her and she responded, quite happy to see such a large and noisy crowd gather outside her house. After a few

minutes of mutual smiling and waving, she disappeared. And then one of the funniest and sweetest things I've seen in a long time happened. Two glove puppets of Sooty and Sweep appeared

**"Two glove puppets of Sooty and Sweep appeared at the window, and for the next ten minutes or so the crowd were treated to an impromptu puppet show"**

at the window, and for the next ten minutes or so the crowd were treated to an impromptu puppet show.

The girl would pop her head up every so often to make sure she wasn't imagining this captive, cheering audience. Show was over when the puppets of

the State moved us into a nearby park, to be individually filmed and photographed. auto

The demo around the delegates hotel the next night was more upbeat. Plans to evacuate the hotel came to nothing, so we were

left to chant and surround the hotel, blocking streets as we went. No sectioning this time, apart from one occasion when the cops tried to cordon a group of about thirty of us as we approached the hotel from Hyde Park side. A quick hop over the fences and a run through the park ensued. All the fun of the fair.

I suppose the only way I could have come away from DSEi really happy was if the place had burned to the ground. But it's nice to know our enemies think we have such potential. That's why a woman is paid £120,000 a year to co-ordinate a spy ring throughout our movement. That's why they paid for 3,000 State bouncers to stop us getting anywhere near them. That's why they abused their own "Anti-Terrorist" laws to harass and detain us. Nice us to know someone's got faith in us.

## **Day out at DSEi**

The morning of September 10 was gray and grim. It did not look a promising day to shut down an arms fair! Still as 'my' affinity group assembled we looked forward to a successful day. However, our carefully laid plans began to fall apart as we arrived near Canning Town. Within minutes I was almost alone, having managed to lose the vast majority of the affinity group. Pursued by a police helicopter, a mate and I were forced to trek to Beckton.

Nothing daunted, we got the DLR back toward the ExCel Centre. Meeting up with more demonstrators, though still without most of the affinity group. We decided - after trying to get to a Chinese bar/restaurant - to head for that excellent refuge, the pub. A quick Coke was all there was time for as a mass of protesters passed our pub. Out the door and off again... and



into Canning Town.

Canning Town's mazy lanes had confused me when I'd done my recce. As we raced about the streets and alleys of the estate the police, who hadn't had the benefit of reconnaissance, looked increasingly bewildered. The running protesters too were hazy on where they were going: and after a while people stopped and separated and I found myself alone, in the middle of Canning Town. It was eerie to see so many people vanish so quickly.

As I cast about in an attempt to find a posse of demonstrators, I was helped to evade the police by people living on the estate. The number of alleys and cut-throughs on that estate is vast! In comparison Soho and the City of London are simple to navigate. Time and again a truanting youngster or a granny would point me away from the police. Only once did I have to ask for help:

and that was willingly given.

After a while I fell in with a mate, and we were joined by two girls. Carefully and surreptitiously we made our way out of the relative safety of Canning Town to points unknown north of the A13. Circling cautiously through the backstreets we got to another main road, and decided to catch our breath in a pub. We hadn't been there long when a load of Critical Mass went past, followed by a couple of hundred protesters. Again, out the door... we returned to duty.

We ended our way back to the A13. The A13 was filled with concrete barriers, mesh fences and building paraphernalia. Behind us were shed loads of cops, and as people walked and jogged along they began to devise a plan. We decided to change direction, and it was bikes up and over the barriers, fences trampled down and head towards Canning Town.

Moments were lost as people thought and while a cycle sound system tried to find a way round. The police continued moving...

Towards Canning Town, walk, jog, trot, run! The police are on the left, getting out of vans, about to close the way to Canning Town DLR and the estate. Sprint left, past the cops, look back they've formed a line. Vans heading to the A13 from the estate. I look about and I'm about the only person to have escaped the cordon.

More wandering. I'm beginning to know the estate quite well! The pen on the A13's fucked the traffic. I slink into another pub for a Coke, and listen to the locals slagging off the police. Drift out, up towards Canning Town DLR. A couple of LDMG tell me there's about seven hundred cops penning people in on the A13. At the DLR there's lots of riot vans and TSG. All sorts of police are about: City police, transport police. A bit

of pushing and shoving and some stuff thrown at the cops. I'm over the wall and back into the estate, circling round to see what I can. I stayed opposite the DLR for the next hour or so. Cops penning various groups in, a couple of antagonistic arrests. I have my picture taken [again! how many do they want?]. Will anything happen? After a while I decide it won't and head off home. Lots of running about but I saw little action. Later I'm told about all sorts of fu and games I'd missed. Gutted!

For more reports see:

[www.indymedia.org.uk](http://www.indymedia.org.uk)  
[www.dsei.org](http://www.dsei.org)  
[www.destroydsei.org](http://www.destroydsei.org)  
[www.schnews.org.uk](http://www.schnews.org.uk)





## SOCIAL CENTRES PROJECT

"A movement to create physical space, to organise, to conspire, to make alternatives to the domination of Capitalism and Statism"

### Update on the London movements Social Centre project

**S**ocial Centres as a concept should be the integral part of any serious anti-capitalist movement and since the last issue of Love & Rage (only 4 months ago) things seem to be looking up.

Firstly **Eton Mission Social Club** which has been squatted for over a year now has been supporting various initiatives like the Thessaloniki Support Group and have hosted over half a dozen benefits for it. As well as other campaigns like the anti-Coca Cola campaign, palestine refugee campaigns and DSEi street party benefits. It has had support from locals despite harrassment from the police - usually comprising of Forward Intelligence Teams

and other provocations. The Mission is planning to expand the use of the space with film nights and discussions and now has a theatre collective practicing there every week.

**ETON MISSION**  
**91 Eastway**  
**Hackney Wick**  
**London E9**

**Black Start Collective** is based in Camberwell, South London and have been developing their skills and outlook to what Social Centres are for. Everyday they run a soup kitchen for the local homeless population and have been offering drug rehab information to the many drug addicts in the area. Apart from the usual events you would see organised by Anarchists and anti-authoritarians (benefit parties, banner making..etc) there has been an attempt to connect with the issues which effect the local working class communities. Mainly because



they are open and non-exclusive. At the time that I'm writing this article, the current Black Start Social Centre is facing eviction but people know that the Black Star Collectives project will continue and a new building nearby has been occupied in case they lose the eviction.

**Black Start Social Centre**  
**67 Crawford Road**  
**London SE5**  
**[www.theblackstarcollective.co.uk](http://www.theblackstarcollective.co.uk)**

**Freedom** has been situated in London's East End for over 60 years. A three story building tucked away behind the modern Whitechapel High Street. Six months ago some people involved in WOMBLES discussed that the space it self - which is mostly used for storage - was under used. And since we had just been evicted from the Radical Dairy we felt that it did do a dis-service to the social centres project. Therefore the second floor was gutted and redecorated to provide a much more

social hang-out/meeting space. Sofas and chairs were skipped, magazine racks bought and shelves built. The room was nicked name the Autonomy Club after the original Yiddish Speaking Anarchist club of the same name which also was based in the east end. Many groups, including the WOMBLES, meet there very week and the space will also develop into a gallery space for local artists and infoshop.

Another project that we started at Freedom is featured in this booklet and called the Media Hack Lab. Details of which are already explained in full and hopefully be open in mid-November, 2003. This will add to Freedom's tradition of publishing books as well as there new look Freedom newspaper.

**Freedom Anarchist Books & Autonomy Club**  
**Angel Alley**  
**84b Whitechapel High St**  
**London E1**

## **WOMBLES social centre**

To support the Social Centres project, we are currently going to occupy a building for use as a social centre. We feel that we have learned a lot from our time with the Radical Dairy (as well as others) and seek to develop the concepts and ideas. Around 25 people have formed a collective and by mid-November we hope to open. Keep checking the wombles website at [www.wombles.org.uk](http://www.wombles.org.uk). For those of you who live in London, there is always a need to for new people with new ideas so the time is now for some participation!

### **List of other Social Centres and self-managed spaces:**

• 56a Infoshop  
56 Crampton St (near  
• Elephant & Castle), London  
SE17 3AE  
[infoshop56a@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:infoshop56a@yahoo.co.uk)  
<http://www.safetycat.org/56a>

Emmaz Social Centre  
Emmaz, BM Active, London

WC1N 3XX  
[info@emmaz.org.uk](mailto:info@emmaz.org.uk)  
<http://www.emmaz.org.uk>

London Action Resource  
Centre (LARC)  
62 Fieldgate Street, London  
E1 1ES  
Tel: 020 7377 9088  
Email: [info@londonarc.org](mailto:info@londonarc.org)  
<http://www.londonarc.org>

Use Your Loaf Centre for  
Social Solidarity  
227 Deptford High Street,  
London SE8  
Tel: 07984 588807  
[xsynthesisx@ekno.com](mailto:xsynthesisx@ekno.com)  
<http://www.squat.freeseve.co.uk/useyourloaf.htm>

For more information on  
Social Centres the wombles  
website. A discussion forum  
has been set-up on the  
excellent 'enrager' site at:  
[www.enrager.net/forums](http://www.enrager.net/forums)





For more copies of this booklet or for the first issue please send an A5 SAE with £1 to: **Alt.Press, c/o 84b Whitechapel High Street, London E1** WEB: [www.wombles.org.uk](http://www.wombles.org.uk)

Thanks to all our comrades around the world who never give up the struggle for a new world. We will win!

# WOMBLES