

FREEDOM

anarchist fortnightly

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50p

'WORKERS OF THE WORLD UNITE' FOR IT'S NOW OR NEVER

One does not need to be an expert in the complex world of insurance, pensions, investments et alia, to realise that they are all part of the capitalist system, and by definition capitalism, whether it's production of worthwhile goods or of manipulating currency, is production for profit. So how can one ever imagine that such a system can operate in favour of the people of this country or of the European Community, indeed the world.

Anarchists have been saying this until they are purple in the face, but wait a moment, socialists were also saying this but most of them naively believing that good government would deal with these problems. That distinguished the authoritarian socialists from the libertarian, revolutionary anarchists.

This year the weekly *Tribune* celebrates its sixtieth anniversary. Not only does this centenarian (that is *Freedom*) maintain an exchange arrangement with our socialist/trade union financed colleague, but one asks oneself what else would one be reading, assuming as everybody does that the Labour Party wins the next election? *Tribune* is a fence-sitter politically. It has one or two permanent critics of the Labour leadership, but then also publishes a regular feature by Blair's political adviser on 'New Labour' politics. It is surely pathetic that *Tribune* has only a circulation of 7,000 when it is also said to have the support of the unions – the 'millions of organised workers'.

Our interest in the *Tribune* is not just that they recently celebrated their sixtieth anniversary with a £50 slap-up dinner in a "fashionable London hotel" (*Independent*, 8th March 1997), but to refer to the editorial in the 1937 launch issue by their then editor, William Mellor, the opening paragraphs of which would surely be received with welcoming cheers by anarchists. Listen to this music to our ears:

"The world system that is destroying hope in the world is capitalism. That it means the destruction of democracy, Italy and Germany are there to show. That it means



THE VOICE OF FREE DEMOCRACY

Taken from *The March to Death*, a book of anti-war drawings by John Olday (Freedom Press, £3)

war, Manchuria and Abyssinia and Spain are there to bear their tragic witness.

It is capitalism that has caused world depression. It is capitalism that has created the distressed areas. It is capitalism that is piling up vast armaments now for the war whose shadow bestrides our lives. It is capitalism that divides out people into the two nations of rich and poor. Either we must defeat capitalism or we shall be defeated by it."

Search for such ideas today in *Tribune*, or ... where else? Workers, the wage-slaves, are their own worst enemies. They could hold society to ransom. They provide not only the food that we all consume but all the services that provide a civilised and more or less healthy environment. Only the anarchists tell them to get off their knees. All the others tell them to put their cross on the ballot paper next time.

When will it be realised that govern-

ments – Labour, Liberal or Tory – believe in the capitalist system if for no other reason than that they have no control over the financial and economic system. Global capitalism has taken over and no government dares, or can, challenge it. Once again anarchists have to remind the naive but well-intentioned socialists who still believe in government that capitalism is monopolistic and not competitive. It only believes in competition when it is engaged in defeating competition. Take-overs are the order of the day. And when that is not possible 'mergers' – in which a few top heads roll, but with golden handshakes – are 'negotiated' to their joint advantage, apart from the hundreds of thousands of employees who are made redundant in the reorganisation.

(continued on page 3)

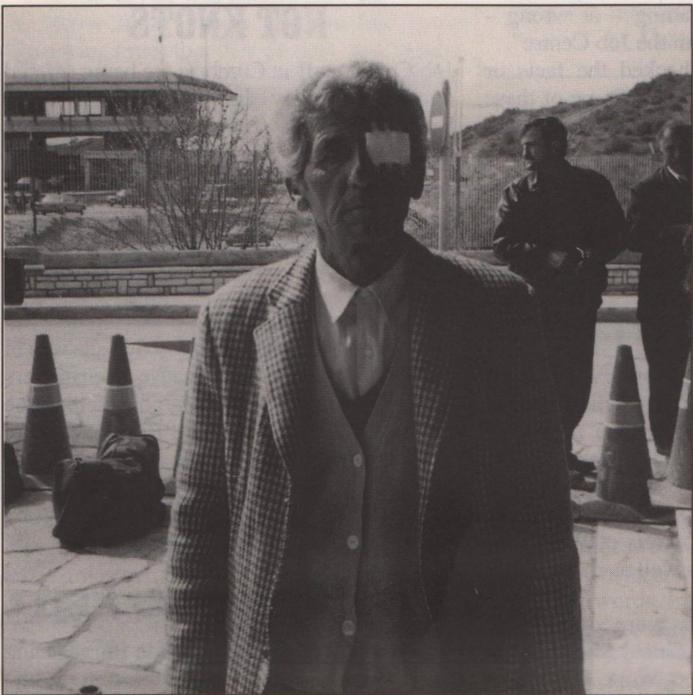
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CONTINUING FREEDOM'S EXCLUSIVE REPORT FROM ALBANIA **SCANDAL UNDER THE SUN**



Sherif Korroneci: sufferer sent back to suffer some more



Silvouies Korroneci: "We are all dead"

Last week, the last of the European Security Force led by the Italians landed in Albania. The multinational force, some six thousand strong, is going in to protect aid supplies and presumably create some stability for the coming elections in June.

It is a dodgy operation in which the overall aims are far from clear. Both Greece and Italy wanted Europe to put a force in to stop the flow of refugees into their respective countries.

Below we report on the frontier politics of fear and despair at the Greek border. Perhaps an even greater tragedy struck in the Adriatic Sea off the Italian coast, when an Italian warship struck and sank a refugee ship last month. Naturally there is great anger in Albania over this incident.

The fear that this anger may lead to attacks of the Italian forces in the Security Force split the Italian government coalition and nearly brought the Prime Minister down. Only the support of centre-right opposition saved him.

An editorial in the *Washington Post* on 4th April warned: "Italy, France and other likely providers of peace-keepers (the United States is indisposed) accept a responsibility to restore stability. They are ill-prepared politically to pay hard casualty costs."

See page 4 for 'Taking Care of Gangsters' and also 'Gypsies Expelled from Greece', with photographs

WHO WILL SAVE SILVOUIES?

I'm a sucker for a teenager with tears in her eyes. I'm a bit of a soft touch for a man with an empty socket where his left eye should be – an eye recently removed by a ricochet bullet.

That's how I came to meet the Korroneci family outside the Greek passport office. The daughter, 15 year old Silvouies, was overcome with emotion. She was pleading with one of a pair of Greek television cameramen. The cameraman had a stony expression on his face.

I asked: "Do you speak English?" She turned towards me and I took her photo. The Greek police went mad. "No photos!" they cried, "No photos!"

I took details of their case put by the girl in clear English. She said her father and mother had visas in their passport, and that she and her brother were on her father's passport. The problem had cropped up because the Greek police suspected she was over 15 years old, and therefore required her own passport and visa. Her brother is 12 years old and also on his father's passport.

Silvouies says: "We are all dead, and all because of me!" She claimed the whole family would have to return to Giashtë (Qafë) near Saranda, because the rest of the family couldn't enter Greece and leave her to return home alone.

I offer to help, and ask her to write down her address on my pad. In high feeling, she scribbled: "We are all dead if they don't let us go to Greece". She gave her brother's name as Klement, and her father's as Sherif Korroneci. I took her address, but she told me they had no telephone. I promised I would put their case to the Albanian Consul in Ioannina.

She said the Greek television man had said he thought they should be allowed into Greece,

Sarandë
We are all
dead.
if they don't let
us go to Elavoy

The hasty note scribbled to *Freedom* readers by Silvouies. She says that: "We are all dead if they don't let us go to Elavoy [Greece]", 4th April 1997

but claimed he could do nothing for them. Not an issue which would help his ratings.

She demurred: "They will not let me in because they think I am older as I am not beautiful". I thought – but being an Englishman, did not say – that perhaps the Greeks will not let you in because you are too beautiful. This thought afterwards nagged me, at least I could have told her that and it would have helped her face the journey home to Giashtë.

When, preoccupied, I later board my bus back to Ioannina in Northern Greece, the policeman who had earlier detained me and help to send the Korroneci family back to Albania approaches me to do a last minute check of our passports. "What did the girl have to say?" he queries.

I said she seemed quite plausible. He maintained it was the second time she had tried to cross into Greece, and each time with a different father. He added: "We have to be

careful, very careful, it is like Mexicans trying to get into the USA – we have to keep these people out!" My heart sank.

THE ALBANIAN CONSUL

Since this frontier incident I went, as promised, to see the Albanian Consul in Ioannina. At first he claimed that he didn't have the right to intervene, but when I explained about the father Sherif having a visa he said he could do something, but would require two passport photos of the girl.

–Now for the problem! The area Giashtë does not have a telephone line to it, so the family can't be contacted by telephone. Nor can they be reached by the post, he claimed, because of the disruption of services.

The Albanian Consul himself can't travel to Giashtë as he is employed by the government in Tirana and would be *persona non grata* in the rebel south of the country.

He says that I should try to ring Nico Kanellos, the Greek Consul General in Gjirokaster – and tell him the situation. As I am a citizen of the European Union, it seems my efforts will carry more weight. It proves impossible to get through to Mr Kanellos. A week earlier the *Herald Tribune* had reported that gunmen had entered the Greek Consul in Gjirokaster demanding visas, and the Consul may have closed down.

I say that I will try to contact the Greek authorities on my return to England.

Postscript: *Freedom* has contacted the press office at the Greek Embassy. A Mrs Laycock was unable to help, but promised to get back to us. The telephone number of the Greek Embassy in London is 0171-229 3850.

FREEDOM REPORTER HELD

A *Freedom* correspondent was detained at the Greek/Albanian frontier when a row broke out over his interviewing and photographing Albanian refugees outside the Greek passport control building.

The Greek police seized his passport on 4th April, just after he photographed Silvouies Korroneci. He was taken into the passport control building protesting that the authorities had already examined his documents. A police officer said we want to do yours twice.

Inside the building he sat down while the police fiddled with his papers. All around him there were groups of refugees arguing the toss with uniformed functionaries. The police at the Kakavia bridge are tough in their dealings with the Albanians crossing into Greece, and lax with holders of European Union passports.

The Albanians queue for ages outside a closed door, while those of us with EU passports are waved through. The Albanians are taught to queue properly by a police officer wielding an eight-foot long stick or rod, such as one might use to control animals. Thin, and longer than a shepherd's staff, it can prod and poke even the most recalcitrant Albanian into a straight line.

It is an item I once saw used in Africa by the Moroccan police against their own citizens. It shocked me then, and it outrages me now when I think of its use by the Greek police on the Albanians.

In the case of *Freedom's* correspondent, his passport was returned and he was released after he flashed his *Freedom Press* card.

RECLAIM THE FUTURE

When Robbie Fowler and Steve McManaman wore 'support the sacked dockworkers' t-shirts for a Cup Winners' match at Anfield, it brought a media response described by McManaman as "almost hysterical".

There was talk of UEFA taking action against them on the grounds of "unsporting behaviour" – a threat perhaps conjured up by journalists looking for a story.

"I was given the t-shirt by a friend of my dad's who was one of the five hundred workers sacked" wrote Steve McManaman a few days later. "I thought I would wear it under my shirt, merely as a small statement of support for people, some of whom are friends, not as a grand gesture".

At the dockers' rally in Liverpool on 22nd March, Mersey Port Shop Stewards Committee chairman Jimmy Nolan said any disciplinary action against Robbie Fowler and Steve McManaman would lead to a massive picket of Liverpool football ground: "There's only one proviso – no Evertonians are allowed to participate in that picket".

THE ENGLISH SICKNESS

It says a lot about the British media that footballers wearing dockers' t-shirts can be given saturation coverage while international strikes in support of the Liverpool dockers in January went unreported – despite making the front-page of the *Los Angeles Times* for two days running.

International Dockworkers' Committee representatives meeting in Liverpool over the weekend were among the speakers at the rally.

Robert Irving from the International Longshore Warehousemen's Union in San Francisco said: "One of the proudest moments of my life was on 20th January when we voted to go out in support of this incredible strike which has electrified the entire West Coast – the entire Pacific Rim – the Japanese went out. It has electrified the entire world".

A Japanese dockworkers' union banner hung from the speakers' platform on the steps of St George's Hall.

"Privatisation, casual labour and individual contracts – that's what they are fighting against" said a speaker from the German Federation of Trade Unions. "We used to call it the English sickness – but that was ten years ago. Today we know very well that it's a European sickness – that it's an international sickness".

Eusebio Penalver, a Spanish anarchist dockworker representing the Coordinadora, said: "The fight of the dockers of Liverpool is the fight of dockers everywhere ... This fight is important to the dockers of all the world".

Ian Crammond from the 350 sacked Magnet workers in Darlington thanked the dockers for their help and said: "Without the support from the dockworkers, I believe we would have failed a long time ago".

It's nice to come here and see so many smiling faces" he added. "When you go around the country and you talk to people about the

different disputes – they're all miserable faces, they're all sad. They don't realise that the support is there for everybody in dispute. We've found that. The Hillingdon workers and all the other workers in dispute ... we all need the support of people like yourselves. We cannot win without your support".

Malkiat Bilku from the Hillingdon Hospital strikers said: "It's not just asian or black or white or woman or man, but a struggle for all our class who can change this system to live in dignity with a decent life for all". She condemned Unison's withdrawal of support from the Hillingdon dispute.

NEVER MIND THE BALLOTS ...

TGWU general secretary Bill Morris has repeatedly tried to impose postal ballots on the dockers – ballots that would exclude the Torside workers, whose sackings started the dispute, while offering sacked Mersey Docks & Harbour Company employees up to £28,000 each.

"Over the past number of weeks" said Jimmy Nolan, "we have had nothing but skulduggery from the general secretary and the senior officers of the Transport and General Workers Union. We say to you Mr Morris – we said it before and we say it now – we are prepared to confront you and your senior officers. Because we will not allow postal ballots to take place in the Port of Liverpool".

Decisions about the dispute are made at weekly mass meetings where all the sacked workers can vote.

The dockers have suggested setting up their own labour supply company, an idea criticised by sections of the left. Jimmy Nolan said the proposal was conditional on Drake International leaving the port along with scabs and other employment agencies.

There was a call for support groups to picket Argos, the catalogue stores, who are still shipping through Liverpool. Withdrawal by Argos would put pressure on shipping lines to withdraw from the port as well.

Jimmy Nolan called for the reinstatement of all five hundred sacked workers and the removal of all anti-trade union legislation. He added: "We'd also like to say that the job seeker's allowance is an insult to the British people".

Tony Blair MP (an anagram for 'I'm Tory Plan B') has made Labour's position on unions clear: "Even after every change we are proposing, Britain would remain with a more restricted union legislative framework than any country in the western world, including the USA. There will be no going back to the past and there will be no favours for the trade union movement".

Jimmy Nolan summed it up: "I think that the nation's people must examine their own consciousness. They must ask themselves 'Why should we vote? Why should we put people in the Houses of Parliament for them to legislate against the nation's people?' It is wrong. Because if this government, and indeed if a Labour government, doesn't change all this legislation we are going to continue to be oppressed. And so therefore, brother and sisters, we would hope that we can all unite against the common enemy – that is politicians and employers".

RECLAIM THE STREETS

The Liverpool dockers and the Women of the Waterfront organised a march for social justice in London on Saturday 12th April. Reclaim the Streets organised a two-day festival of resistance to coincide with the march.

A Reclaim the Streets statement explains the thinking behind it: "With the increasingly meaningless ritual of the general election drawing near and with the main political parties committed to 'more of the same' or 'tinkering with the details' at best, what can be done by those with a vision of a liberated, green society? 'Vote for the lesser evil'? Work for change 'inside the system'? Reclaim the Streets believe there is another way: take direct action in the streets, in the fields and in the workplace to halt the destruction and create a direct democracy in a free and ecological society.

DOLE QUEUE DAYS

BURNLEY: TOUGHIE DUFFY TAKES A FALL

Madam Duffy, boss of Burnley dole, lost a case at the Social Security Appeal Tribunal earlier this month. It must have been a bitter pill to add to her other worries.

The case involved anarchist militant Reg Hall, who had had his benefits stopped for two weeks last November. Madam Duffy claimed he was not "actively seeking work". But for once Mrs Duffy picked on the wrong man. Mr Hall not only appealed, but almost single-handedly set up the Burnley Benefit Action Group – now one of the best groups in the region.

The Tribunal decided that Reg "was actively seeking employment" and that the adjudicating officer's decision had been "clearly based on misleading – or wrong – information received from the Job Centre".

Mrs Duffy had not checked the facts or followed her own regulations. Some of these dole decisions are clearly far too cavalier, and are clearly not being challenged enough.

FIDDLED FIGURES

Job Centre job creation figures may be being fiddled by staff harassed and anxious to hit targets, according to reports from union sources. It is claimed that job creation figures are being double and even triple counted in a bid by North London dole staff to make themselves look good, and no doubt get their incentive bonuses.

Last month the *Independent* journalist Matthew Brace wrote: "The Employment Service is investigating claims that managers at Job Centres bullied clerical staff into falsifying computer lists by making up the names of people said to have gained work".

Which is what Groundswell, and this paper, has been warning about for yonks.

NOT KNOTS

Job Centre staff in Cumbria are being offered clip-on ties so they can't be strangled by angry benefit claimants (from the *Guardian*, 16th April 1997). **Unemployed Worker**

BURGER KING GETS MINCED

TAMESIDE

Tameside Unemployed Workers' Alliance (TUWA) organised a day of action against Project Work on 2nd April as part of a Groundswell national protest. A picket was set up outside Burger King – one of the providers – at Ashton's new shopping mall. Tameside Trades Council and supporters of Wages for Housework turned up, as well as members of the TUWA.

Two hundred leaflets were distributed pointing out the links of Grand Metropolitan and Burger King to Project Work. The leaflet implored other possible Project Work providers to have no truck with the scheme.

As soon as the picket was in place a plain-clothes security arrived. He asked us to move as, he claimed, Burger King owned the pavement. No one took any notice, and two more Burger King employees appeared. Perhaps they were mall managers. One said we were upsetting Burger King.

Next the police were on the scene. The usual advice – 'Don't cause an obstruction'. This was a successful picket and hardly anyone went into Burger King. A large audience gathered owing to the crescendo of noise from

the pickets.

A young girl came out to say that she was in danger of losing her job because no customers were going in. It was pointed out that she might lose her job for good if Burger King are able to get claimants off the dole to do it for benefits plus £10.

It was obvious Burger King was put out by the action. (Report from JB)

MANCHESTER

There was a small demo outside Burger King in Piccadilly, Central Manchester, at the beginning of the month.

OLDHAM

Oldham Against the JSA mounted a picket on the afternoon of 2nd April at Burger King on Yorkshire Street. Again the fast-food chain did bad business, and there was a frantic exchange on the doorstep with one of Burger King's managers.

Later the JSA protesters went to the Job Centre and got an enthusiastic reception from the claimants. This group has now received some support from the local Trades Council.

STUDENT UNION TRIES TO WRECK JSA CONFERENCE

The National Union of Students gave up on the idea of student grants and free higher education some time ago. It now appears to be in favour of the job seeker's allowance, along with student loans.

A conference on JSA and workfare on 15th March had to change venue when Manchester Metropolitan University Students' Union cancelled the booking at the last minute.

The conference, organised by the Welfare State Network, was moved to a small room in the Mechanics' Institute. Workshop sessions had to be abandoned, including a planned discussion of direct action with a speaker from Groundswell.

This follows the TGWU's cancellation of a North West Against the JSA conference booking at Transport House in Liverpool last year after pressure from Alan Manning of the North West TUC.

An NUS speaker said she supported the conference fully herself and apologised for being unable to bring the support of the NUS executive. She added that the JSA 16-hour rule is having a devastating effect on students and college courses.

Nigel Williams from the CPSA agreed with Groundswell supporters that his union was doing

little to oppose the JSA. He said that Contract for Work pilot schemes, operated by private agencies rather than Employment Service staff, are to start soon in parts of Manchester.

There may be a legal loophole allowing the unemployed to choose to sign on at a different job centre. This could provide scope for a boycott of the pilot schemes.

Keith Sinclair from Hull Trades Council said that Oxfam is now a Project Work provider in Hull and is considering adopting the scheme nationally. He called for activists to put pressure on Oxfam locally to oppose workfare.

Project Work providers receive £40 a week for each person they take on and it may be difficult to persuade voluntary agencies to give this up once they are involved.

There was talk of setting up a national unemployed network, but no discussion of what form it would take or how it would be organised.

Overall there was still a surprising amount of support for electing a Labour government – surprising considering that Labour are committed to extending workfare and have ruled out repealing the Job Seekers Act.

Labour MPs approached by the Welfare State Network were unwilling to speak at Manchester. Apparently taking a stand against workfare is too controversial so close to an election.

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Next Groundswell meeting is on Saturday
10th May at 12.30pm at East Oxford
Community Centre, Princes Street, Oxford

'WORKERS OF THE WORLD UNITE' FOR IT'S NOW OR NEVER

(continued from page 8)

This is not wishful thinking. It's happening all the time. Global capitalism is consolidating its power all the time. As we write these words "BT's shareholders back £12 billion merger deal" with the US MCI group (*Guardian*, 15th April), and the industrial editor explains that BT hopes will secure its position as one of only a few big global players in the expanding telecommunications market.

We apologise for the indelicacy of the next item but how can one not resist mentioning that under capitalism there is no delicacy. Procter & Gamble "the consumer products giant" (*Guardian*, 10th April) are "the makers of products ranging from Tide washing powder to Pringles crisps and a virtual strangle-hold on feminine protection products" – until the other day Procter & Gamble also made Always sanitary pads which already had a 36.3 share of the US market. Not content with that, they have now taken over Tambrands, US maker of Tampax, for just £1.14 billion. The only losses in these gambles will be workers and a few top boys who will get a better handshake than the workers made redundant.

The German engineering giant Siemens have taken over parts of Rolls Royce's Parsons steam turbine generation business in Tyneside. For the time being jobs are assured rather than being lost, but is it not extraordinary that a German giant is the largest industrial employer in Tyneside and nobody objects – why should they? – but the patriotic Britishers are objecting to the single currency or even the European Union.

One thing is certain, capitalism is consolidating its *global* strangle-hold. Technology has raised living standards in the industrial nations and created a new 'middle class' (still dependent on an employer, however). What is also certain is that capitalism cannot survive without a divided working class (by which we mean *all* those who are dependent on an employer to provide the means of survival at the end of the week or month. No matter whether you are paid cash at the end of the week or by cheque at the end of the month, you, we, are all wage-slaves).

We repeat, there is no question but that the capitalists worldwide have formed their own union to dominate and consolidate. No government will be able to resist their control over the whole economy ... other than the workers who produce the material basic necessities of life, the services which we need for health, shelter, mobility and all those extras which contribute to a civilised material life and allow the leisure time to enjoy it.

For a large section of the human community the *haves* have more than their share and the rest go on struggling for theirs. It would not be so if the latter realised that *they are the producers of wealth*. Money, the money markets, the City and the rest are the exploiters. The exploiters of what could otherwise be human happiness for all humanity.

The anarchists have been saying this for a very long time. The capitalist media instead spend their time playing the various political games from sleaze to sexual adventures, but never ever attempt to point out that *capitalism* is the undermining element in our society. Capitalism by definition is production for profit, so you produce armaments if you can produce them profitably, and workers will work for you if the wages are okay or if they can't find other jobs. So what?

The answer will only come when enough of us *condemn the capitalist system and privilege* and fight them. How? This will depend on the intensity of the opposition. We can well imagine that governments (of all stripes) would react with force to a thoroughgoing opposition. So?

What is certain is that the past eighteen years of Tory government have emasculated the unions *legally*, but that massive

unemployment has virtually destroyed *solidarity* among the workers themselves. After all, there are more workers than jobs – which exposes the weakness of the unions as other than wage negotiators with the bosses instead of developing *solidarity among workers* to ensure that, for instance, employers pay the right wage – and this can only be possible if there are not ten other job seekers prepared to work for less money.

We know this is elementary text-book argument, but, dear comrade workers, you are now up against a worldwide organised capitalist mafia which has no respect for argument and least of all that of governments, and since finance – banks, pension funds, insurance – operates worldwide, uncontrolled by governments, theoretically there can be no opposition.

Only the anarchists point out that what is vulnerable to capitalism is that the value of their currency is *nil* without all the goods and services humanity needs but which are *produced and provided* mainly by underpaid, underprivileged workers.

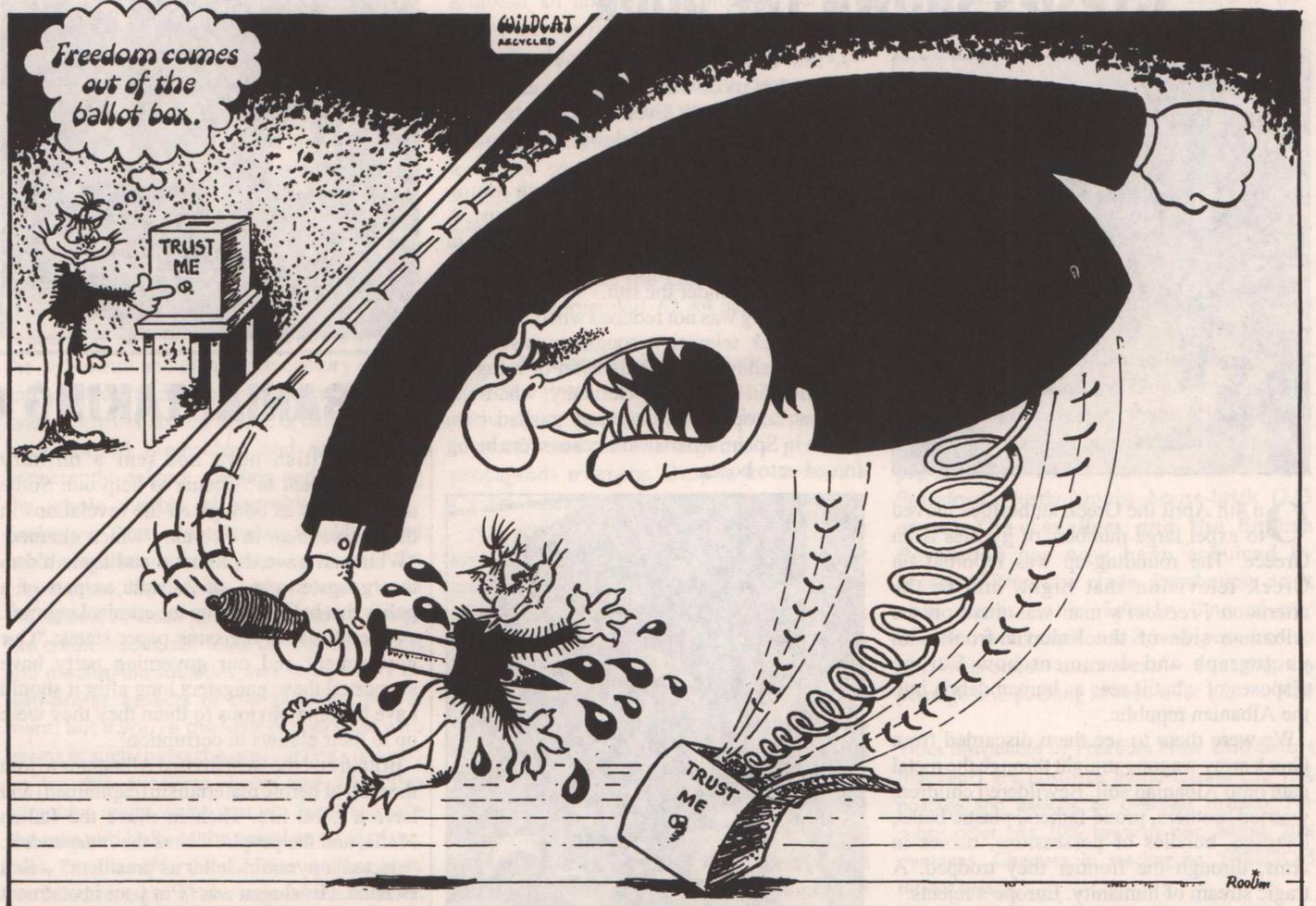
And anarchists ask the workers: When will you realise that the power is in your hands the moment you organise to overthrow the capitalist system of privilege?

They are few, you are many, and you have the *real power*. You are the producers, and we are sure that all the artists and people of goodwill are with you.

McLIBEL ON THE INTERNET

Hearings in the 'McLibel' case – the libel suit by the catering chain McDonalds against a pair of impecunious anarchists, and the longest English trial ever – were completed last December. Judgement is expected shortly, and *Freedom* will comment whenever it is published. Meanwhile, for those who have access to the Internet, all 19,000 pages of court transcripts may be inspected with a search engine at:

<http://www.mcspotlight.org/case/>



NORTHERN IRELAND

SOUND BITES FROM A WAR/PEACE PROCESS

We've had a bit of good fun here recently over a row about who should be on the civic list of the city. This is the most sought-after invitation list in the city, allowing people on it to feel they have really arrived. The fun we've all had has arisen over attempts by Sinn Féin to get Martin McGuinness, their chief negotiator, onto the civic list and the furore this has caused among local unionists. The argument has been that he is entitled to be on it because he is an elected representative. The upshot of these social climbing and political posturing antics is that Martin McGuinness is now on the civic list along with senior RUC figures in the city and the Queen's Representative, which means they can all get together at the annual Mayor's Ball, for instance. But the plot thickened when unionist Mayors across the North of Ireland announced that they would be boycotting the next Ball because of a row over the mayoralty of Derry and this addition to the civic list. We the citizens of the city look on ...

But in fact we *get on* with our lives, as in the formation of a community association in my area, arising primarily out of the need to

do something about late-night noise and disturbance to older people. Lower Rosemount is a network of terraced houses and an estate of public housing that originally grew up with the late nineteenth century shipping industry in the city. The connection with Scotland is evident in such names as Argyle Street and Glasgow Terrace. Recently it has been students and not ships that have concerned the residents. The area is changing with an influx of penniless students and cash-rich young workers in the new American-backed plants of Seagate, Stream International and Fruit of the Loom. So late-night ya-hooing has become more prevalent and houses are being sold up and snapped up by landlords who are filling them for quick profits. At a meeting in my local community centre I saw anarchy in action when one man said he was there to do something about it because he had a personal interest in it and he thought the best way to deal with it was to work together with his neighbours. The ad-hoc steering group formed includes long-time of the student bodies and representatives of the student residences. Everybody's on that list, the real civic list.

Dave Duggan

TIMES PICKS UP ON PANSIES

The *Times* has picked up on a piece of Employment Service jargon first reported in *Freedom* last year after a Tameside anti-JSA activist was told he must be 'one of those pansies'.

"For Animal, Muppet Dave and the other moles back together again in order to undermine the second runway for Manchester Airport, pansies are an acronym" wrote Philip Howard on 28th March. "They stand for protesters denied the job seeker's allowance because they are 'political activists not seeking employment'."

A Manchester Reclaim the Streets activist told *Freedom* there is now a serious problem with runway protesters losing their JSA.

Protesters identified or photographed by the media in the current spate of Swampy fever are being told they are resident at the protest camps – and failing to actively seek work by attending their job centre three times a week.

It is thought that police and security guards may

be pooling information with the Employment Service.

It all seems even more draconian than the widely publicised JSA 'get your hair cut' rule. Protesters are left with the choice of leaving the camps or surviving without an income.

For the under-18s life without benefits is nothing new. "There's been a lot of publicity about us, and some of it negative" said 17 year old Animal, quoted in the *Times*, "But I don't mind being called a dole-scrounging anarchist because I am a dole-scrounging anarchist, except that I don't sign on".

The situation is set to get worse under a Labour government with under-25s given a choice of workfare, training schemes or the loss of all benefits.

Police legal tactics took a bizarre turn on 24th March when Animal was arrested for allegedly obstructing a bulldozer driver and charged with secondary picketing under the 1992 Trade Union and Labour Relations Act.

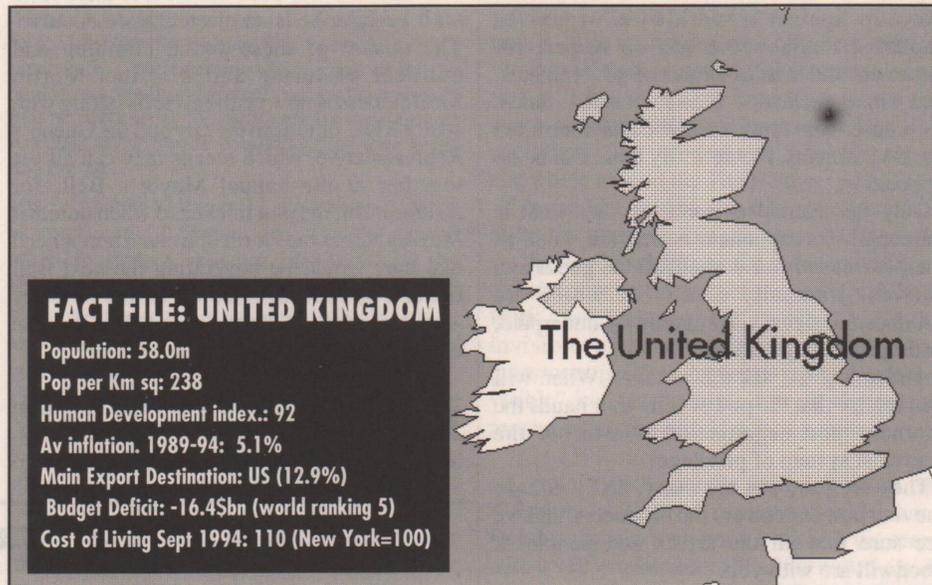
FOCUS ON ... THE UNITED KINGDOM CHARLES DICKENS ... SLIGHT RETURN

The OECD and the IMF are singing the praises of the UK government, calling her global economic performance 'enviable and the result of extremely healthy policies' and in particular praising the fall in unemployment. Such praise merits closer examination ...

Perhaps the lowest on the ladder these days are the homeless. Theirs is a life of constant insecurity, often with no public assistance, in a country that saw the biggest freeze for many years this winter. The number of homeless in the UK has doubled in the last twenty years and various politicians have noted that they are unsightly for the tourists. These are the ones who cannot even afford a lottery ticket in Mr Major's Britain.

There is a growing crowd on the next rung up. The number of children in the country who are dependent on social benefits has risen from 7% in 1979 to 26% in 1994 and the number of people who are now officially living below the poverty line (defined as half the average income) has gone from five million in 1977 to 13.7 million today (*The Guardian*, 25th November 1996). Among these will be many of Mr Major's pensioners, almost half of whom face financial hardship when they retire (*Financial Times*, 13th February 1996). It is their fault of course as Ruth Lea, the head of the policy unit of the Institute of Directors – an employer's organisation – points out: "This is further evidence that people do not look ahead", she said, "If the government is serious about lifting the burden of care costs that will be created for the tax payer it must introduce compulsory pensions". Let's hope we can all afford them so the employers won't have to be made to feel guilty when they don't want to make their contribution.

But the figure of 13.7 million also points to the rung above it. With recorded unemployment just under the two million mark, clearly many of those in employment are on poverty wages. In industry job insecurity is growing with the possibility of extremely short dismissal periods and periods of trial employment which can extend over two years. There are no restrictions on fixed term contracts and the number of contracts that can be made between an employer and his/her employee is unlimited. In addition to this there is no fixed limit to the working week nor any right to paid holiday leave. According to the Banque Paribas (July 1996): "In 1995 nearly 300,000 were earning less than £1.50 per hour and about 1.2 million were earning less than £2.50".



International capital is wetting itself. The crypto fascists in the Referendum Party take on the garb of one-eyed man in the kingdom of the blind and point at Brussels whilst Hyundai Electronics and the LG Group – both from Korea – move in to soak up a cheap labour force in European record breaking financial moves. The UK pulls in 40% of both Japanese and US investment in Europe and more than half of all Korean and Taiwanese projects.

The French journal *Le Monde Diplomatique* (February 1997) interviewed an employee at a Japanese firm in Wales who works from 8am until 5pm during which time she must repeat the same manoeuvre 10,000 times. This procedure can be broken down into three stages – the full operation lasts some three seconds. Most of the employees are women because men's fingers are too big. She gets about £2.00 per hour. She doesn't mind because her friends are getting £1.50. They get two ten-minute

breaks and then a 'long' 25-minute one. They don't ask for a wage rise or a change in working conditions. The company signed an agreement with the company union and in seventeen years there hasn't been a strike.

It's hardly surprising that with or without monetary union European capital is coming to the country also in order to take advantage of the low wages. They are encouraged by the Invest in Britain Bureau who explain to overseas investors that "regulation of working conditions is far less rigorous than in other European countries ... overtime, team work and work on Sundays are subject to no restrictions". One Olivier Cadic took the hint and moved his company from Calais to Kent thus saving himself over a million French francs in national insurance payments. There are others like him and they are not waiting for the Referendum Party.

Indeed Goldsmith is a prime example of those who stand at the top of the ladder – the millionaires. Simply since 1992 the number has doubled to some 200,000. Surprised? Don't be. Perhaps ultimately the main aspect of Mr Major's Britain that will be mentioned in his obituary will be the introduction of the National Lottery in November 1994. This has proved so successful – it made £5.2 billion in 1996 – that on the 5th February it was introduced on a Wednesday to give two weekly draws. So far it has created some 600 millionaires – over 50% of the growth overall. The corollary of all this, of course, is that gambling is on the increase in the UK. Since 1993 the percentage of GDP devoted to gambling has more than doubled – a voluntary tax, as one writer in *Freedom* called it. The new 'Winsday' draw is expected to fill the coffers by a further 20%. As *The Economist* (8th February 1997) says: "the lottery is having a perceptible effect on the economy and, increasingly, on the election campaign".

Did we mention the election? It has been said of the National Lottery that more than 90% of the population has played it. The people know where to place their bets indeed. For their chances of climbing to the top of the ladder via the national lottery look to be a better bet than bothering to turn up on polling day to say they endorse the IMF and the OECD.

SCANDAL UNDER THE SUN

EXPULSED FROM GREECE TO ALBANIA: GYPSIES SHOWN THE DOOR



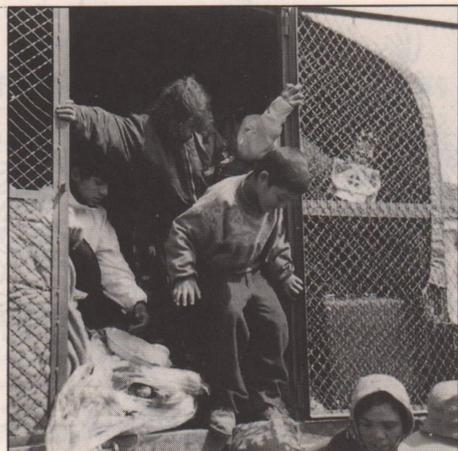
A few of the men queried my use of the camera, but most were too deeply engrossed in their own tragedy. Eventually they huddled together and crouched on the ground surrounded by their belongings.

Human beings treated like so much refuse. One couldn't help but feel a certain disgust. A self-loathing for our own smug, sleek lives in the heart of Europe. What we were witnessing was a scandal under the sun.

This feeling was not reduced when, the night after, Greek television sought to justify its action by showing the expulsion of refugees elsewhere in Europe. In Germany, where the eastern Europeans were being pushed onto trains; in Spain, where Moroccans were being forced onto boats.

On 4th April the Greek authorities moved to expel large numbers of gypsies from Greece. The rounding-up was reported on Greek television that night, and in the afternoon *Freedom's* man was there on the Albanian side of the Kakavia frontier to photograph and document how Europe disposes of what it sees as human debris into the Albanian republic.

We were there to see them discarded from Greek army wagons straight through the metal gate onto Albanian soil. Bewildered children, worried mothers, proud fathers, plastic baths, baggage, bundles of possessions, babies in arms, through the frontier they trooped. A tragic stream of humanity. Europe's rejects.



UPDATE ON SHERRY WORKERS' DISPUTE

The dispute at the Jerez plant of Pedro Domeque ended in total victory for the workers there.

As *Freedom* reported on 22nd March 1997, four hundred workers protesting at the dismissal of twelve fellow employees blockaded the main gates of the bottling plant leading to their lock-out.

After three weeks of motorway blockades, demonstrations and the winning of support of the large majority of the Jerez citizenry, Domeque caved in and agreed to accept an offer of arbitration from the local labour authority. This face-saving device allowed them to cave in to the demands of the CGT-led workers committee.

Guy Cheverton



ALBANIA: TAKING CARE OF GANGSTERS

The British have not sent a military contingent to Albania to help out. Some may see this as odd, given the revelations in the *Independent* in February which claimed: "Whitehall gave diplomatic and trade aid to the 'gangster state' of Albania as part of a policy that helped prop up the criminal regime".

An editorial in the same paper states: "Our government and our governing party have supported these gangsters long after it should have become obvious to them they were up to their elbows in corruption".

Britain and the west invited Albanians to join the club of heroic materialism (capitalism) and have a good life. Then in move the Italian Mafia, and the people, claims the *Independent*, "elected a pyramid-seller as president" – Sali Berisha. His slogan was "Put your investment

in the Democratic Party. It can only go higher".

This month I saw the wrecked office of the Pyramid Investment Company in Saranda, looted by a poor people who had lost their money in such schemes. Yet Sali Berisha is still in power in Tirana, or rather still in office, for the rest of the country is outside his control.

Our government, and many others, took a short-sighted line to back Berisha and his regime because they were right-wing. Now we have vast political harm done to a small country, a refugee exodus and a possible overflow of unrest across the Balkans.

So far as I can see, the only sensible thing the European states could now do to restore some credibility with the Albanian people would be to arrest Sali Berisha and exile him and his family to Sicily or somewhere.

Reading is a singular thing and if the scribbler panders to our prejudice then there exists between the writer and the reader a secret knowledge that only we two are privileged to share – why? Because we are two intelligent people. I have lived through that happytime period when I was informed that every Pope was a sexual degenerate, wealthwise corrupt, a villain holding a high unworthy office over a theocratic mafia-style organisation with an exclusive toe-touching hell-endorsed contract with the Godhead. But Hollywood in its commercial collective wisdom has changed our unchangeable belief, for we now know that every elderly priest is a lovable old believing young with a mother in County Cork, every young priest is a solid US of A citizen with a permanent horn and every young nun a tomboy with the hots for the young priest. And castration in spirit if not in fact needs the Holy Water like a hooked fish on a riverbank needs the flowing stream or a drunk in a Coca Cola warehouse needs the exit. Don't tell me the facts, tell me, rightly or wrongly, the plain unvarnished truth that I may control the conversation in the White Hart with a clear conscience.

All culture in the main is the product of the social middle class and, over the long years, consciously or unconsciously conditions our attitude and our thinking in relation to the society of the day, and every social grouping in or out of office is consciously or unconsciously right-wing and authoritarian, so slap my wrist and call me comrade. Who would deny that we the children of the labouring classes are emotionally tied to the romantic cavaliers, the Scarlet Pimpernel and all those slightly war-wounded millionaires permanently draped in full evening dress who between hunting the stag hunted 'greasy middle eastern types' and we were conditioned, for that is the treason of labouring class poverty that we seek our escape in the world of those who hold us in bondage.

After the First World War a vast cottage industry came into being as history and as entertainment, and from those two arms of illusion a myth was created that became an acceptable truth. Historians became

EYE RIGHT, YOU REED

propagandists raging like cats in a sack as they proved their own false reasoning, while the Hollywood entertainment industry poured out its laughable lovable 'make more with the blood above the eyebrow Doris' and we sat in the cinema seats knowing that the whole of France was one sea of mud and barbed-wire and no one had a leg blown off in a 'pre-war' film cinemawise and no one pig stuck a bayonet in any member of the loyal opposition. And it was all good money-making propaganda, never deliberate, but that is what we paid for, to escape from our drear daily lives. There was no sea of mud, just great areas given over to war and trench areas littered with the shredded bodies of men rotting in those areas of mud or hot sun.

Professor Brian Bond in *The First World War and Military History* (Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1991) may answer some of the questions that have long festered in the mind and, while one is willing, nay happy, to accept his findings, one waits for the next historical authority to cut us both down with his blunt sword. He disposes of the repeated story that British infantry had to walk slowly in a line towards the German guns in that the pattern changed according to the sector and if one is advancing openly to enemy guns then walking, running or dancing is not an ideal way to spend the morning.

In the matter of the Hollywood films on trench warfare the point is made that during their time in France the "56th (London) Division spent 330 days at rest, 195 days in acknowledged 'quiet sectors', 385 days in 'active sectors' and only 100 days on actual active operations". True or false, and I accept the figures, but a million men were slaughtered in those four years, and for a single figure 57,000 men were slaughtered or wounded in one day of the 1916 Somme battle. Of Haig I can only, constantly, ask: If he was incompetent then who gave him the job? Ian Beckett the Professor of Modern History at the University of Luton, has written

that "Again there is a seeming public obsession fuelled by some popular works with the relatively *minor* matter of 312 wartime executions: there is even a current campaign resulting from the publicity accorded these executions to apply modern morality to the past by pressing for parliamentary pardons". As one who was in the guard-house in the Second World War as part of that group type of bang-bang charges, I feel that the writer has a grim charnel-house type of humour with or without the firing squad.



GEORGE GROSZ & ARTHUR MOYSE

And all this, comrades, leads us to the matter of George Grosz starring within the Royal Academy in 'The Berlin of George Grosz'. Acclaimed as this month's world's-greatest kaput artist, George is packing them in with the Town and his degenerate-seeking frau heading the pack to the booking office. Of my shame I feel that the long queue *outside* the Royal Academy are good-time happy voyeurs in which the greatest 'artist' of the month takes second place, for Grosz was a fair run-of-the-mill black-and-white cartoonist who could have filled a slot in any national newspaper, but if one seeks public approval then one must conform to the fashion of the employer. All culture is protest and the largest outlet for any type of artist is on the left and I will not accept that the Berlin of Grosz's 1920s were what one would wish it to be – a depraved swamp of moral and sexual depravity – if only it were so. There were millions of Berliners living out their miserable labouring lives who never met the golden-hearted whores, listened to Marlene clearing her throat or drank beer in a smoky underworld underground café.

Grosz sketched his grotesques and it is only when one reads the titles that one is informed what swine they were, yet any mis-shapen sad sack could be a kindly and decent person. For in this damning by appearance we are back in the days of full evening dress and the boys hunting the 'greasy middle eastern type fellows'. The sliced throat and the pig kissing the woman is a common stocking-filler within the Amsterdam catalogues, and name a war and the intercourse between a woman and a donkey or a pig was common back-street entertainment for the army of the day. Remove Grosz's thick-black-line skilful drawings and one is left with a cheerful coloured abstraction that bears little relation to the black-and-white drawings, but Grosz made no claims for them, only to quote "while workers suffered" his work was an "embodied hatred of Germans in general". I hate no social grouping, except my relations, but George Grosz's enjoyable drawings and water-coloured abstractions are the work of an angry man, not angry with his society but with himself.

Arthur Moysé

FOOD FOR THOUGHT .. AND ACTION!

Goodies from Freedom Press Bookshop.

Social Policy: an anarchist response by Colin Ward, London School of Economics. "What is taught about the origins of the welfare state implies that twentieth century state universalism replaced the pathetic, unofficial, or voluntary and patchy pioneering ventures of the nineteenth century". This latest addition to Colin Ward's anarchist writings demonstrates that 'what is taught' is often bullshit, whether it concerns health, housing or education. In the early 1900s the Fabians and Marxists ensured that centralised state provision first eclipsed and then killed off working class mutual aid and self-help initiatives in health and education, and "the socialist ideal was re-written as a world in which everyone was entitled to everything but where nobody except the providers had any actual say about anything". Fortunately, thanks to a revival of interest in popular history, particularly local and oral, forgotten and suppressed episodes of the people's past are at last being excavated. From the myriad of cooperatives, clubs and friendly societies funded and run by and for the members; to the non-state schools set up by the working class in their neighbourhoods; to the self-governing district medical societies like the one in Tredegar, Wales, which "at one time employed five doctors, a dentist, a chiropodist, a physiotherapist and a hospital to care for about 25,000 people". Ward explains why such medical schemes did not achieve a country-

wide network: before World War Two workers' wages were below the tax threshold so they could afford to contribute to their voluntary welfare schemes, "but ever since PAYE was introduced ... the Treasury has creamed off the cash which once supported local initiatives". In other words, the state stole both their contributions and their right to decide how they were spent. In his central section 'The Hidden Social History of Housing', the field for which Ward is best known, he paints a wonderful picture of a diverse, colourful patchwork of unofficial settlements over time in many parts of Britain. Using a variety of sources (all referenced) he shows how, from the eighteenth and nineteenth century cotters and squatters to the post-war squatters, plot-landers, gypsies and travellers, ordinary people have housed themselves and each other, persistently defying, evading and subverting the whole dustbin of property legislation: Enclosure Acts, the planning, building and health regulations, and many branches of the criminal law. Yes, it may be fun to run riot in the streets or trash police cars, and no, things like credit unions, self-build, LETS, free schools and medical aid societies may not be sexy or high-profile aspects of the anarchist movement, but if you're the kind of anarchist who yawns at such things the possibilities conjured up by this excellent, hefty and attractive pamphlet might wake you up. For these are the nuts and bolts of the social control of our lives, of what Ward calls "the welfare road we failed to take" at the turn of the century,

just as the state's institutions are *its* nuts and bolts. If we want to abolish the state and establish an anarchist society we need to invent our own – and they don't grow on trees. The last chapter, 'Anarchism in the 21st Century', makes many valuable observations on this topic. 'Water and the Gift Relationship' is another chapter than emphasises the need for *social* control of this vital resource, as against state or private control, and serves as a taster to his new book on water (reviewed in last issue of *Freedom*). Compiled from seminars given at the LSE, this pamphlet is highly recommended. 62 A4 pages, £4.

The CIA's Greatest Hits by Mark Zepezauer, Odonian Press. "The idea that the CIA is primarily an intelligence-gathering operation is itself one of the Agency's greatest propaganda triumphs. Despite its name, the Central Intelligence Agency's main purpose is – and always has been – covert operations involving economic warfare, rigged elections, assassinations and even genocide." This nifty little book summarises 42 of its biggest crimes and lists sources for each of them where you can find more details. Hit #35, for example, recounts its role in the bombing of Pan-Am flight 103 over Lockerbie. Not only were its own agents killed in the explosion, but the plane was bombed precisely because they were on board; Hit #5 is the continuous series of mind-and-behaviour-control experiments since the 1950s code-named MK-ULTRA, using radiation, electrode

implants, microwaves, ultrasound, LSD and a panoply of other drugs, germ warfare and more, often on involuntary subjects (for suspected use of some of these against the Greenham Common women's peace camp protesters, see issues of *Lobster*). NATO's 'Operation Gladio', Haiti, Yugoslavia, BCCI and Zaire's President Mobutu (from under whose feet the CIA has just smartly pulled the rug) are just a few of the Agency's other jobs covered here. Nicely produced, with amusing illustrations. 96 pages, £5.95.

Briefly: One book recently dropping on to our doormat and which we hope to review later is **The Rape of Socialism: how Labour lost the millennium** by Donovan Pedelty, published by Prometheus Press. It is described as an anarchist critique but it looks, at 512 pages, more like a house-brick. £13.50. Brailsford's justly-famous house-brick (715 pages) **The Levellers and the English Revolution** has now been acquired by Freedom Press for trade distribution, so it now comes under Section One of our booklist, which means it is now post-free to UK mail-order customers – a saving on postage and packing of well over £2. **KM**

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— ANARCHIST NOTEBOOK —
**COPING WITH JOBLESS
 CAPITALISM**

I was invited to take part in a discussion in London last Thursday around an article by the German left-winger Ulrich Beck on 'Capitalism Without Work' which originally appeared in the magazine *Der Spiegel*, no. 20, for 1996, and in translation in the New York quarterly *Dissent* for Winter 1997. I can't predict what I will have learned from that meeting, but I can repeat my own reflections.

We can be grateful to Ulrich Beck for raising the contradictions of what he calls jobless capitalism. As he says:

"The directors of multinational corporations ship administrative functions off to South India but send their own children to the great publicly financed universities of Europe. It would never occur to them to move to the places where they are creating low-paying jobs and paying low corporate taxes. Without a moment's hesitation they lay claim to the costly political, social and civil rights whose public financing they are torpedoing ... May we ask where they or their children intend to live when the costs of maintaining the democratic state can no longer be met?"

The answer to his question is, of course, that they will live in their protected and guarded enclaves, just as the affluent already live in the United States. They won't be moving to Bangalore in India, even though they blame unemployed people in the UK for not having the new computer skills that are far cheaper in Bangalore, because e-mail and satellite communications enable tonight's software problem to be solved there and beamed in before the office opens tomorrow morning, by highly skilled workers earning a fraction of the American or the British wage for software engineers (*The Economist*, 23rd March 1996). Bangalore itself has a power problem. Radio 4 reported on 10th December 1996 that one-third of the electric power generated there is used for pumping in the city's water supply. But these are public costs, serving the city as a human environment, and consequently seen as a drag on the economy (*Freedom*, 12th April 1996, page 6). An American critic Bill Boisvert (writing on 'Apostles of the New Entrepreneur' in the Chicago magazine *The*

Baffler, no. 6, 1995) remarks that "business élites hold entire regions of the world hostage under threat of capital strike". And we all know this to be true as the multinationals decide to switch production to some other bit of the globe where labour costs are lower. This author makes another interesting comment when he remarks that:

"Even in the high-tech sectors, Workplace 2000 looks less like the twenty-first century than the nineteenth ... the gleaming office parks of Silicon Valley rest on a foundation of Dickensian assembly plants, staffed by poverty-stricken immigrants working under unsafe conditions, for long hours and low pay."

His reference to the early nineteenth century is significant, I think. This was the period when in Britain peasants, displaced by the Enclosures and the inability to earn a family wage, moved to the industrial towns and cities, expanding like mushrooms in the period of unsafe conditions, long hours and low pay.

Despite poverty and insecurity, this new industrial working class built up vast networks of non-profit friendly societies based on self-help and mutual aid. There were sick clubs, coffin clubs, consumer-controlled medical societies, penny savings banks, provident societies and mutual insurance bodies. And there was the building society movement, developed to house its members (sometimes with the aim of obtaining that property-qualification for the vote), and, most obvious of all, the huge structures of mutual support represented by the retail and wholesale co-operative movements and the trade unions.

But the version of socialism that captivated the political left, both Fabian and Marxist, was the conquest of state power and the nationalisa-

tion of both public services and welfare services was centralised under their control. After decades of bureaucratic control, the politicians re-invented the economic liberalism of the early nineteenth century and withdrew their investment from European or North American industries where some degree of worker-protection was built into legislation, in order to find unregulated markets in the East. As Ulrich Beck correctly puts it: "We are headed for capitalism without work in all the post-industrial countries". And you will be aware that Japan has joined the ranks of post-industrial nations as Japanese capitalists find unregulated labour markets elsewhere around the Pacific rim.

I'm just like anyone else. I have no idea at all about the strategies that can be used effectively by the displaced labour force in a country as old and outworn industrially as Britain. Ulrich Beck's article is, he says, "a plea to take the invisible practice of social self-help and grassroots political organisation and make it visible" but his three models all depend on manipulating the state's taxation system.

Another of the people worrying about the globalisation of capitalism is Richard Douthwaite in a new book I haven't yet seen, with a self-explanatory title. It is called *Short Circuit: Strengthening Local Economies for Security in an Unstable World*, just published by Green Books of Devon. He argues, I am told, that the global market economy can no longer be relied upon to provide the basic necessities of life for increasing numbers of people, even in the advanced industrial countries.

So he argues that local communities should attempt to short-circuit the supply chains that currently dominate the world economy by

developing their capacity to meet at least some of their needs from local sources, and to decouple localities from the global economy and the market pricing it involves, offering instead local transactions via local exchange trading systems.

I am certainly not expecting that transformation of politics which Ulrich Beck calls a "citizen-state alliance for civil society, if need be in opposition to work and capital". Indeed, as a long-term non-participant watcher of politics, I find in it dangerous assumptions about the relations between the citizen and the state which we all know about from this century's history.

But all the same, I am searching the horizon for those local independent initiatives that will weaken the automatic links with international finance capital, with its new magic formula which Beck describes as "capitalism without work plus capitalism without taxes". Richard Douthwaite, similarly, remarks that "the most worrying aspect of the present crisis is that, for the first time in history, the rich no longer need the poor".

You and I know that this isn't quite true, for apart from those 'poverty-stricken immigrants' in the assembly plant, we know that the poor of the world are harvesting the fruit and vegetables, not only in Africa or central America, but as illegal immigrants in Britain located by sleuths from the Department of Social Security, the Inland Revenue and the immigration section of the Home Office, in the wide-open fields of East Anglia. The rich no longer need the poor because they can search the global horizon to seek out the even poorer, and in the process can destroy the whole fabric of personal and social security.

One interesting thing is that these vital ideas are not remotely within the scope of the politics of the rival parties in their electoral confidence trick.

But of course, another is that we, in the various factions of the political left, have no idea, beyond the old shibboleths of workers' solidarity, of strategies to cope with the collapse of work. **Colin Ward**

— ANARCHIST COMMENTS IN BRIEF —

SAVE ME FROM THE BRAVE NEW WORLD

CLONING SHEEP: THE NEXT STEP? The next step will be humans. So be it, if humans are so stupid and insensitive to believe that human procreation can be reduced virtually to animal procreation but, if I understand it aright, to no intercourse between the sexes. I lamented this recently in this column, but the latest news is even more horrifying. Both my quality dailies, the *Guardian* and *Independent*, feature the news of a sex pill for women which will produce an orgasm without any assistance from the hand or from the male. "A thrill pill that's short on fringe benefits" is the *Independent* headline, while the *Guardian* describes it as "Fake orgasm a hard pill to swallow".

Apparently it's again American scientists who claim to have found "the chemical which produces the female climax". And the researchers from "prestigious Rutgers University say they have identified the so-called neuro-transmitter which causes the sensation in the brain of aroused laboratory rats".

Delighted to learn that rats have been given orgasms by our scientists, and even the admission by them that "some women with spinal injuries could still have orgasms, which doctors had believed was impossible". I say to hell with the scientists, and without being a scientist but appreciating in a long life women as at least equals, I say surely most women unhampered by religious parents have learned early in life, without male assistance, how to produce an orgasm — just as I did as a male without female assistance.

I cannot resist quoting from the *Times* (21st April 1997), in their 'Verbatim Column', Professor Barry Komisunuk's comment: "Suppose one day you could just take a pill that would simulate a steak dinner, but wouldn't you rather eat the steak?"

I would add another more motivated suggestion: suppose you could read bits of *Freedom* on the Internet, wouldn't you rather receive *Freedom* every fortnight for a song?

THE ALTERNATIVE FOR THE TIRED MALES

According to the *Independent*, "middle aged men are turning into a generation of 'Alf Garnetts with hormone patches trying to be Ziggy Stardust — hoping to solve their mid-life crisis by turning to hormone replacement therapy". Having long ago left behind mid-life, but no crisis or knowing what 'Ziggy Stardust' is all about, this column can't give advice other than to those on the way to mid-life, and which would be less career and more love-making. After all, more and more men, according to the *Independent*, are turning to HRT "which costs around £700 a year to boost their sex drive". And to think that this old man has difficulty finding outlets for his modest drive. It must be that there are already too many of those magic female-orgasmic pills on the market.

FARMWORKERS REPLACED BY ROBOTS

I can't believe it but, to quote a *Guardian* report (27th March):

"Robot farmhands could bring a new agricultural revolution as space-age technology causes rural unemployment 'on a massive scale', the Country Landowners' Association forecast yesterday.

Hay-cutting robots, designed by American space scientists, are expected on a vanguard of transformed tractors by the end of this year, said Ian Kibble, the association's Yorkshire regional secretary. "Within a matter of years farmers could be able to plough their fields, sow seeds and harvest crops from the farm office", he said."

I refuse to waste *Freedom*'s valuable space to reproduce the while of this report on a roboticised agriculture. Nevertheless, it is worth reminding the new human generation what the prospect is for them:

"The system will eventually operate equipment automatically, 24-hours a day, using either a satellite system or one established round the fields where the equipment is working, said a spokesman for its developers, New Holland.

"This [technological innovation] obviously signals the start of an agricultural revolution and politicians will need to show how they will help rural areas meet the sort of challenges this space-age technology will bring to the countryside", Mr Kibble said."

Whether this happens or not, the victims are again the farm workers as well as small farmers who won't be able to compete. Indeed the *Guardian* report draws attention to the fact that "full-time agricultural employment slumped from 149,000 in 1985 to 102,000 in 1995" and not because more were employed part-time — in fact the relative figures of part-time workers were 95,000 in 1985 and 82,000 in 1996. Today at all levels those who have a job are being over-worked and are going to the doctor because of stress, and millions who

want and need a job to make ends meet cannot find a job whatever the government says about 'prosperity'. All I know is that I shall go on growing as much as I have the energy to on my plot, which would be more rewarding if I could find a young person the share the hectare — so far no luck.

THE £31 BILLION TIME-BOMB I quote the *Guardian* headline (13th April) on a subject for which the new millennium is a major crisis: IT (Information Technology, for those as ignorant as I am). It's all a question of numbers, which I am glad to say the technologists have failed to allow for. For the ignorant like me, the millions of computers were okay so long as we lived in the twentieth century, computers recognising only the last two digits to define the year (e.g. 97). The moment we get into the year 2000 (year 00) the computers can no longer cope. What I am pleased to learn is that worldwide computer-wise the year 2000 is going to create the greatest crisis — a "£31 billion millennium time-bomb" (*Guardian*, 12th April) to make all those machines able to convert the 1900s to 2000. There will I, assuming I live to the year 2000, be able to wake up that New Year's Day and be able to say that it's 1st January 2000. I couldn't care less whether I get there, but millions of computers won't unless an estimated £31 billion are spent making them cope in the twenty-first century. And to think that hospital wards are being closed down because they are short of the odd million pounds.

WHAT ABOUT OPTING FOR THE SIMPLE LIFE AND MAKING LOVE? As more than an 'oldie' I don't think of the past nor look forward to the future described above. I live from day to day and still look forward to planting out the vegetable seedlings in the plastic tunnels and eventually reaping the harvest. Yes, and I enjoy the leisure rewards of going on loving. **Libertarian**

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RICH AND POOR RUMINATIONS BY A NON-VOYTER

Although this old voyter has lived in this country for the past 49 years please don't assume that this voyter has earned the dubious right to vote in the coming General Election.

Whereas in the all too picturesque past slaves also did not have the vote, so is the old voyter a remunerated slave?

The vote is the last of the old voyter's worries, I can tell you. However, the voyter has to put up with the jabber of electioneering as the keepers are doing their tedious best in prognosticating as they choose the next slave-master. Although in the aforementioned picturesque times of yore, the old voyter at least knew the master's name.

The old voyter was heard muttering 'I used to know other slaves and we had some rollicking times together, I assure you. Hardly see them now, though. I sometimes wonder whatever happened to my old pal QWERTY'.

Fun and games in Trafalgar Square. Reclaim the environment. Instead of dancing with Emma Goldman, an altogether ill-tempered day. Walking down the deserted Whitehall in a kind of no-man's-land reminded me of an Eisenstein film crossed with a Hollywood epic. But those were the days when directors were directors and the poor extras were at least paid. The Lions in the Square. And why is Nelson always looking the wrong way?

This week's column is indebted to comrade Yakov Perelman's exquisitely written and marvellously explained calculations from his 1957 *Figures for Fun*. But hidden in Perelman's didactic examples is a calculation which has taken me forty years to verify for myself. That is the exact share for each individual of the Earth's surface area which I can now verify to be correct. It seems that I (and everybody else) should have received about 7km². Perelman gives the area of the Earth's surface at about 500,000 billion square metres, so if this interesting number is divided by the number of claimants (myself included) we should all receive a little over 7km² to call our very own. Judging by what was going on at Trafalgar Square I am not sure when this distribution of land will take place.

This voyter realises that some readers may wish to have nothing to do with their own share of 7km² on purely doctrinaire grounds or will even question the usefulness of owning a stretch of perilous ocean while others can have Eldorado.

Put this in your diary. Invited to a debutante party on 31st October 1998. A good old Class War do. What's happening *this* Halloween?

This being Anarchist Mathematician's year, here is a corollary from Yakov. He also calculated that the surface area of our red corpuscles in our body is 1,000 times bigger than our outside skin and stretches, if laid on the ground, to 1,200 square metres. Which again if it were the criterion of allocating every woman, man or child with land according to the number of red corpuscles in their equally distinguished bodies, then their share of the plot of land would amount to the boundaries of a sweet little garden of Eden about forty metres long by thirty metres wide.

Finally, the good thing is that the Temple of Benares is now on the Internet. Readers and old scholars will remember all that amazing work that was done there. But it was arduous and happily there is now no necessity for people working incessantly transposing 64 graduated gold rings from one diamond stick to a second one with the help of a third stick in the right order, never putting a bigger ring on a smaller one. It is all done electronically now and we are expecting the task to be accomplished within 500,000 million years. Life is not the same without QWERTY.

John Rety

Those 'Obscene' Posters

Dear Freedom,

When we produce posters, leaflets, magazines, etc., what is it we are trying to achieve? It is not merely to draw attention to the fraudulence, injustices and contradictions of capitalist society, surely we are seeking more. Any ill-produced, negative propaganda designed to sensationalise, shock and alienate serves the interest of the enemy, who readily use it to deter people from even considering the mature rationale of the anarchist case (see 'Obscene Posters', *Freedom* 22nd March 1997). It certainly does not enhance the anarchist cause when our case is equated with perverse licence. Obviously our aim must be

"I want to tell you about anarchism, because I believe that anarchism is the finest and biggest thing man has ever thought of."

(from the introduction to *ABC of Anarchism* by Alexander Berkman)

to win the support of the people for the more ethical anarchist case.

There is a vast gulf between liberty and licence. Liberty does not exist in a social vacuum, it entails responsibility to the community in which we live. As Rudolf Rocker wrote in his book *Nationalism and Culture*: "True freedom exists only where it is fostered by the spirit of personal responsibility: Responsibility towards one's fellow men is an ethical feeling arising from human associations and having justice for its basis. Only where this principle is present in society is society a real community."

Our propaganda must, by its very nature, be distinct from the political filth of politicians if we are to win public support. As Kropotkin himself understood, it must be in plain simple language that there will be no misunderstanding.

In other words, in our propaganda we try to destroy the false stereotype of the 'mad' anarchist which has been deliberately built up by the ruling class, and in contrast to those who claim to be 'anarchist' we know that the achievement of an anarchist society is not the work of a group of alleged revolutionaries no matter what they may call themselves, but it will be achieved only by the conviction and constructive organisation of the people by the people themselves.

For as anarchists we cannot seek to impose an anarchist form of society on people. This would be self-defeating and would only result in a 'bolshhevik' elitism which would only serve to alienate people and would be diametrically opposed to everything we believe in.

As Giovanni Baldelli wrote: "Anarchy will come if, and when, and in so far as, it is wanted. To want it is the first step and, in a sense, that step is the first towards the realisation of anarchy. For the will to anarchy not be wasted, divided, turned against itself and betrayed, ideas concerning an anarchist society and the essential condition of freedom should be as clear as possible. Clear ideas are the surest basis against fraudulent and malicious nonsense."

Anarchism moves towards its goal in direct proportion to the understanding of the people of it, and its desirability. To adopt a 'nihilistic' standpoint is not constructive. There are no short-cuts, it is what we build up that counts, and this can only be done by winning the willing cooperation of the people.

As individuals and as anarchists we have no right to take unilateral action without considering the repercussions and consequences to others, otherwise the society to which we would give birth would be as immoral a jungle as the present capitalist society. The circled 'A' symbol is not the prerogative of a single group - when used it is in effect saying that this is what all anarchists stand for. Even though the group may call themselves 'anarchists', that in itself is not enough and any misinterpretation must be guarded against.

It would appear to us as significant that *prior to an election when the people are about to be conned and betrayed yet again, that this of all times is a time to choose, posters appear designed to cause repulsion on the part of the ordinary public against anarchism and thus reinforcing the stereotype.*

It is further significant, as we have been informed by the local police that Special Branch has been brought in and has taken over the case. Such a move is unusual to say the least for mere fly-posting. We wonder why? We leave fellow anarchists to draw their own conclusions.

Aberystwyth Anarcho-Syndicalists

Anarchism Today

Dear editors,

With interest I read François Coquet's articles 'Anarchism Today'. From my own experience I can say that many people in the different social movements are interested in anarchist ideas and many ideas - such as consensus decision making, networking without hierarchy, etc. - are widely accepted and put into practice in parts of the anti-nuclear movement or the youth environmental movement in Germany. This is a good basis to work on, but on the other hand I think only very few people are really interested in the great utopian idea anarchism provides. Many people see the points we have to make and share our criticism of the state or capitalism, but although many try to work along anarchist principles in their campaigning, they don't see themselves as anarchists and - much more important - they don't share our utopian dream. Although we never had anything to do with the sort of state-socialism in the Soviet union, the crash of this sort led to a crisis of utopian thinking which heavily influenced all social movements and therefore anarchism as well.

Just to add some thing on the international level: it is certainly easy to communicate via the Internet (and we do have our own webpage as well: <http://www.comlink.de/~graswurzeln/>), but we shouldn't put too much emphasis on the Internet. There are still many people without any access to it (especially in the so-called third world), and it will never be a substitute for face-to-face discussions and printed papers. It's just a tool, and not the most important one.

Andreas Speck
editor of *Graswurzelnrevolution*, Germany
Kaiserstrasse 24, D-26122 Oldenburg

please keep sending in
your letters and
donations ...

Why the secrecy?

Dear Editors,

I would like to complain about the almost obligatory use of pen-names in *Freedom*. Why are contributors so secretive about their identities? Are they ashamed of their opinions and thoughts? For anarchists not to want to take responsibility for their own ideas seems very strange to me. If it is not important who says what, then *Freedom* should publish articles without any names at all if the editor is willing to support the ideas put forward. One of the pseudonyms was a woman's name used by a man, which is not a very truthful way of presenting the fact that *Freedom* has very few woman writers. Down with secrecy!

Emma Goldman, aka Emily Johns

Election Jinx

Dear Freedom,

My family history has been stalking the Tory Party. When I was at school we lived in Bebington (note the 'B'). Recently under a new constituency name of 'Wirral South', there was a massive by-election swing against the Tories. The family later moved to Beaconsfield. The Tory candidate in some sort of general election which appears to be going on, Tim Smith, has had to resign over allegations of fashionable 'sleaze'. I now live in Beckenham. The Tory candidate, Piers Merchant, trying to disguise the link by altering his spelling, has had some difficulty with a different sort of 'sleaze', allowing the *Sun* newspaper to set him up for compromising photographs with a seventeen year old 'night club hostess'.

I scan the road for Central Office hit squads.

David Peers

Our next issue

The special report and pictures received from our correspondent in Albania as we go to press, together with our final message before the forthcoming British general election, means we have had to hold over several features, including an article on 'Black Britain Today' by Milan Rai, the promised 'Welcome of Saranda' report and interviews, and an account of Freedom's anti-election advertising campaign. These will appear in our next issue.

Editors

Calling St Kilda

Congratulations to the residents of St Kilda, who have inadvertently declared themselves an election-free zone. All 29 members of the community have failed to register to vote, saving Western Isles council £5,000.

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March for Social Justice

Dear Freedom,

I was present on the March for Social Justice on 12th April and the street party in Trafalgar Square, planned by the Merseyside Port Shop Stewards' Committee in collaboration with Reclaim the Streets.

This peaceful and very joyous event was marred only by small sporadic clashes which seemed to be, as far as I could see from my vantage point on the National Gallery, the result of the police sealing off the area and making it impossible for people to move freely to and from the square. Also the police were quite unnecessarily intimidating, all being dressed in full riot gear and apparently numbering over a thousand, including mounted officers.

I was most surprised by subsequent press coverage of the event, which informed me that I had been present at a 'riot' and seemed to concentrate purely on the few negative aspects of the day. Home Secretary Michael Howard said: "I condemn these disgraceful scenes and congratulate the police on the swift action they took to deal with the situation. I am delighted that the government has provided the police with the necessary powers to deal with lawlessness of this kind." Can he really be talking about the same event that I attended?

I would like to thank the supporters of the Liverpool Dockers and Reclaim the Streets for a wonderful day out for the thousands of peaceful protesters and hope for many more.

Jayne

PORT IN A STORM

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includes moving scenes of:

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OLDHAM ANTI-JSA

meet every fortnight at

Hark to Topper, Oldham, at 8.15pm
Tel: 0161-628 6182 for further details
next meeting Wednesday 30th April

MANCHESTER ANTI-JSA GROUP

meet every Wednesday fortnight at
The Vine, Kennedy Street, Manchester
contact: Dept 99, 1 Newton Street,
Manchester M1 1HW

BURNLEY BENEFIT ACTION GROUP

next meeting at 2pm on 7th May
The Advice Centre, St James Street,
Burnley

North West Anti-JSA Dole Bully Hotline: 0161-338 8465

East Midlands Anarchists

bookstall will be at the
Picnic in the Park
Queens Park, Loughborough
Saturday 17th May
from noon to 4pm

Red Rambles

A programme of free guided walks in Derbyshire, Staffordshire and Leicestershire for Socialists, Libertarians, Greens and Anarchists. All walks are on a Sunday unless otherwise stated. All walkers are reminded to wear boots and suitable clothing and to bring food and drink. Walks are 5 to 8 miles in length.

May 4th: Walk leader Jonathan. May Day Camp walk. Meet 11am at roadside next to New House Farm, Kniveton, Derbyshire (off B5035 Ashbourne to Wirksworth) for circular walk via Bradbourne.

Telephone for further details
01773-827513

London Anarchist Forum

Meets Fridays at about 8pm at Conway Hall, 25 Red Lion Square, London WC1R 4RL. Admission is free but a collection is made to cover the cost of the room.

- 1997 PROGRAMME -

25th April Towards a Stateless Economics: the Case Against Anarchist Communism (speaker Dave Dane)

2nd May Anarcho-Nihilism (speaker Steve Ash)

9th May General discussion

16th May Anarchism: Theory, Methodology and Lifestyle (speaker Peter Neville)

23rd May General discussion

30th May Theory: What For? (a debate between John Griffin and Carol Saunders)

Anyone interested in giving a talk or leading a discussion, please contact Carol Saunders or Peter Neville at the meetings, or Peter Neville at 4 Copper Beeches, Witham Road, Isleworth, Middlesex TW7 4AW, giving subject and prospective dates and we will do our best to accommodate.

Peter Neville / Carol Saunders

MAYDAY WEEKEND ANARCHIST CAMP

Friday 2nd until Sunday 4th May
Site near Ashbourne, Derbyshire
Cost: £3 per night

(situated on bus route, lifts from Cromford railway station available by arrangement)

To book contact:

Box EM/ 3, 88 Abbey Street, Derby

Dales Red Rambles

A series of guided circular walks in the Yorkshire Dales and surrounding area for Socialists, Libertarians, Greens and Anarchists. Walks are between 5 and 8 miles long. All walks are on a Sunday unless otherwise stated.

18th May - Lower Airedale: Walk around Cowling. Meet Cowling village centre at 10.45am.

On all walks bring walking boots, waterproofs, food and drink.

Telephone for further details
01756-799002

— MEETING —

VOTING CHANGES NOTHING, THE STRUGGLE CONTINUES

Thursday 1st May at 8pm

Kings Cross Neighbourhood Centre,
Argyle Street

Organised by ACF (London)

Manchester

Solidarity Federation

public meetings first Tuesday of the month
at 8pm

at The Brow House, 1 Mabfield Road,
Manchester M14

(off Wilmslow Road, opposite Owens Park)

Tuesday 6th May: The International Workers' Association and internationalism

Tuesday 3rd June: Direct Action readers' meeting

For further details contact:

PO Box 29 SWPDO, Manchester M15 5HW

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