

anarchist fortnightly **Freedom**

Vol. 62 No. 9

5th May 2001

50p



Capitalism sucks

We don't like capitalism. It's a system of human organisation in which our activities are directed towards one end: the creation of profit. Enterprises which do not make a profit go to the wall. In other words, this quest for profit becomes more important than satisfying human need. In any conflict between the two, the need to make a profit will win over the rights of

human beings. This is reason enough to hate capitalism, you might think, but there's another one too. Profits aren't created by the bosses – they just tell us what to do. Profits are created by the rest of us, who actually do the work. In other words, the profit system relies on the exploitation of the many, for the satisfaction and pleasure of the few.

Luckily, when Thatcher said that there

was no alternative to capitalism, she was wrong. There are many alternatives to the oppression and degradation it forces us to endure. These alternatives are the dreams we carry in our heads when we talk of a free society, and towards which we work every time we protest against the system, as thousands of us have been doing in the last couple of weeks. We demand the right to be free.

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**WARNING:
THIS BEE
STINGS!**



**ANTI-CAPITALIST
ACTION**
pages 1, 3, 4 and 6

**KILL CAPITALISM
BEFORE IT KILLS
KENNY!**



Mass resistance in Québec



Scenes of confrontation in Québec City

Protesters successfully disrupted the third Summit of the Americas when it was held in Québec City last month. The deliberations of political bosses, who came from every state in the western hemisphere except Cuba, were delayed. Some other participants, from leading multinational corporations, were forced to leave early. In a significant development, President de la Rúa of Argentina said that the next summit, which he will host, would welcome protesters. This followed reports of massive brutality from members of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police.

The summit, which began on 20th April, was protected by the biggest police operation in Canadian history. Almost seven thousand security personnel were put on standby, and a provincial prison was emptied of its usual inmates in readiness. Cops had also built a four metre high fence around the area where the summit was held, which ran for almost 5km.

It was held to finalise plans for the Free Trade Area of the Americas, which will be the world's largest free trade zone when it begins in 2005. This will cover the entire continent of America, and will include the Caribbean.

Huge protests accompanied every day of the summit. Large numbers of activists had travelled up from the United States; and others came from Central and South America. Many more were denied entry at the Canadian border, and some were detained there. In what was seen as a pre-emptive strike, several activists were arrested in the week leading up to the summit.

By Sunday 22nd April, the last day, some two hundred people had been injured. Police representatives said that this number included 46 cops. The widespread reports of police brutality included one from an activist who is a doctor. He said that it was more severe than he had ever seen. Medics had to treat burns, broken bones, tear-gas related injuries, head injuries and spinal injuries. One man had his arm broken by a teargas canister fired from half a metre away; another was in a critical condition after being shot in the neck with a plastic bullet.

The protests in Québec followed the pattern established by Seattle in 1999 and Prague last year. "We expected this", said one senior US official. "You can't have a trade summit these days without teargas; it would be like having a cheeseburger without cheese".

Editorial on page 7, and see also page 4

Time to decide

The formal general election campaign will begin the week after next, if not before. Blair and his friends will go through the motions, confident of victory. The Tories will become more unpleasant by the hour, as their desperation grows.

For the last two issues, we've argued the anarchist position on elections in this column. At its most basic, we don't participate as voting is the act of delegating to others the power of making decisions over our lives. Even if we lived in the happy utopia promised by media, school and politicians alike, in which our representatives are dedicated servants to our wishes (not the slaves of big business at all), we'd refuse to elect bosses to

govern over us. We stand for freedom; by submitting to government we are made slaves.

By refusing to vote, we refuse to endorse the authoritarian social structures that try so

ELECTION VIEWPOINT

hard to squash us. It is a protest at the denial of our liberty.

But to protest is never just to react. While we do it, we at the same time assert our demand to live a better way. Our rejection of the vote proclaims our desire to govern our-

selves, in a society based on free association between equals. This won't be delivered to us by elected representatives, nor will it arrive through the good intentions of the state.

This is why apathy alone is not enough. A better world has to be built through organisation and direct action. A network of free, self-managed community organisations, based on solidarity, is the only thing that will be able to resist attacks by capital and the state. Ultimately it will transcend them.

The only limit to government oppression is the power with which we show ourselves capable of opposing it. We can't oppose it if we carry on voting for it – it's one thing or the other.

Freedom

anarchist fortnightly

"You felt you didn't have to attend meetings, just give them your Visa number."

Ken Loach

the film director, on leaving the Labour Party

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

Freedom Press is an independent anarchist publisher. Besides the fortnightly newspaper *Freedom*, we also produce *The Raven* quarterly journal and many books on all aspects of anarchism. We also run Britain's biggest anarchist bookshop.

Our aim is to explain anarchism more widely and to show that only in such a society can human freedom thrive.

The Raven

anarchist quarterly

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Liverpool meeting discusses appeals process

Record of court appeals

Over fifty lawyers, together with representatives of various legal campaigns, met in Liverpool last month to analyse the role of the Court of Appeal in the state's criminal justice system.

This followed the court's refusal to consider new evidence in the case of Eddie Gilfoyle, currently serving life for a murder he could not have committed. The meeting was called by his support campaign and defence team.

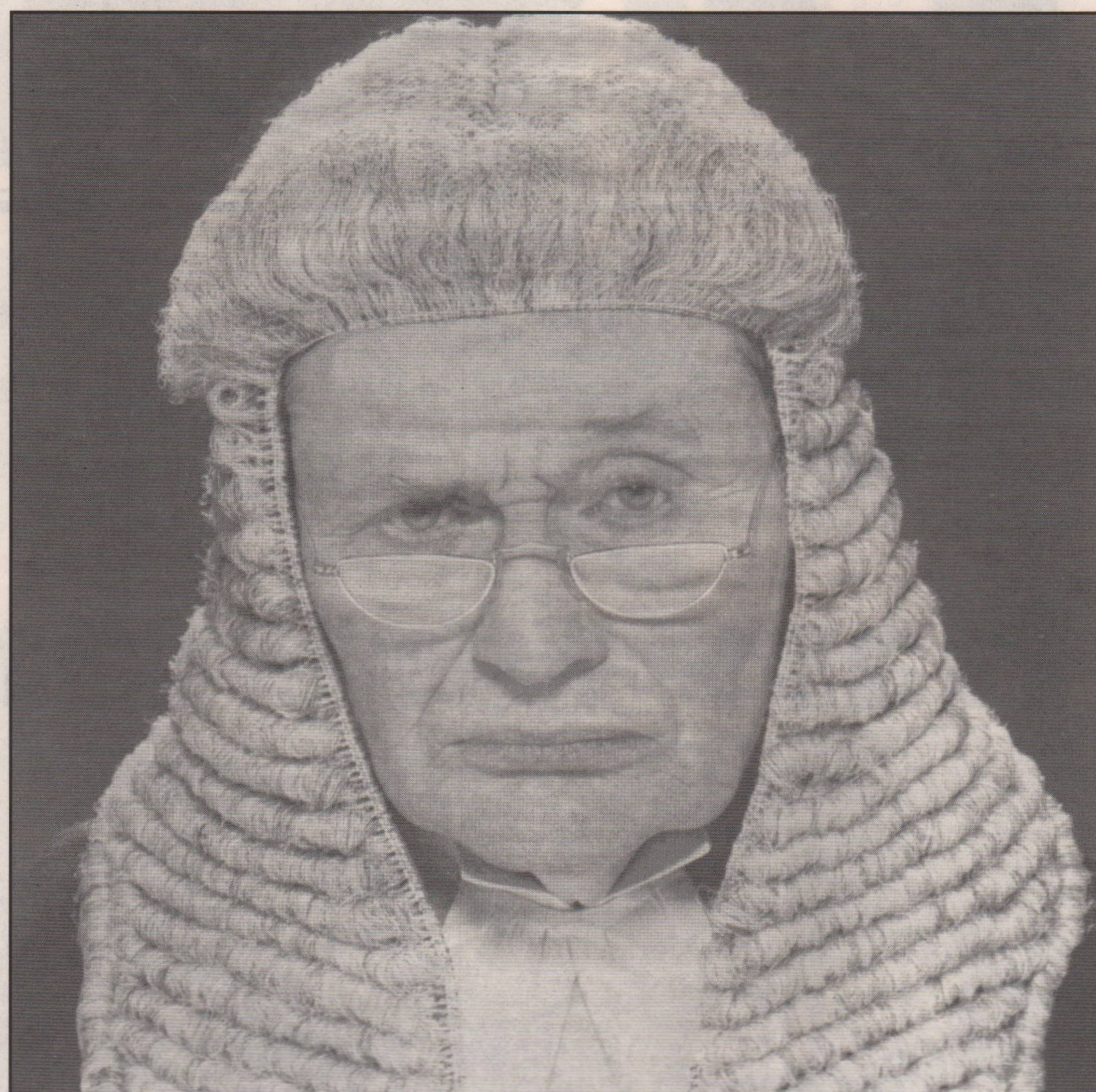
Lawyers and representatives of other campaigns, including those of Eddie Gilfoyle, John Taft, Mark Barnsley and Ian Thomas, turned up to hear guest speaker Campbell Malone, a solicitor, give his concerns on why the appeals system fails.

Part of the problem lies in the appeal judges' opinion that new evidence, although admissible, wouldn't have made any difference to the jury's decision at the original trial. It becomes clear that trial by jury, supposedly the cornerstone of British 'justice', has been usurped by a panel of judges sitting in appeal cases.

For instance, in the Eddie Gilfoyle case, an inquiry in 1994 by Lancashire Police found that their Merseyside colleagues had planted and interfered with evidence. In both appeals to date, 1995 and 2000, the judges ruled this revelation would have had no bearing on the jury in the original case. The Appeals Court seems to exist in order to protect the reputation of the police and judiciary rather than to overturn miscarriages of injustice and to this end, they are prepared not only to replace juries, but to second guess them as well.

The reputation of the Court of Appeal was at such a low ebb in the 1970s and 80s, that even the Tory Government of the day was forced to set up a Royal Commission in 1985.

Under the present Labour administration, the clock seems to be turning back to the bad old days of the 1970s. This is because politicians are in competition to outdo each other in the 'law and order' stakes and also because British judges see their own power under threat from Europe. Apart from Eddie Gilfoyle's case, the cases of Sally Clarke and Sean Jenkins are also going to the European



Picture posed by model

Courts for adjudication. Needless to say, this erosion of power by Europe is deeply resented by the judicial hierarchy in Britain.

Present at the meeting were John Kamara, released after serving nineteen years for murder and Michael Davis of the M25 Three. In the case of John Kamara, the police withheld 201 witness statements backing up his alibi that he was nowhere near the murder of the manager of a bookmaker in Liverpool. No apology has been forthcoming and no policeman has been charged with any offence relating to the fit up. In the M25 Three case, the defendants were convicted on a statement given by a police informer. It is encouraging to see that once they regained their freedom, people such as these and many others – notably

Paddy Hill and Gerry Conlon – have thrown themselves wholeheartedly into the campaign to overturn miscarriages of justice.

John Kamara called for solidarity between the various campaigns and called for them to work closely in order to coordinate events. The cooperation between the Eddie Gilfoyle campaign and the Mark Barnsley campaign has become closer with the passage of time and if the general mood of the meeting was anything to go by, this spirit of solidarity is set to be extended across the whole range of miscarriage of justice campaigns. Given the determination of the families and friends of those wrongfully imprisoned, the old men of the bench are going to have their hands full in the near future.

Ronnie W.

News in Brief

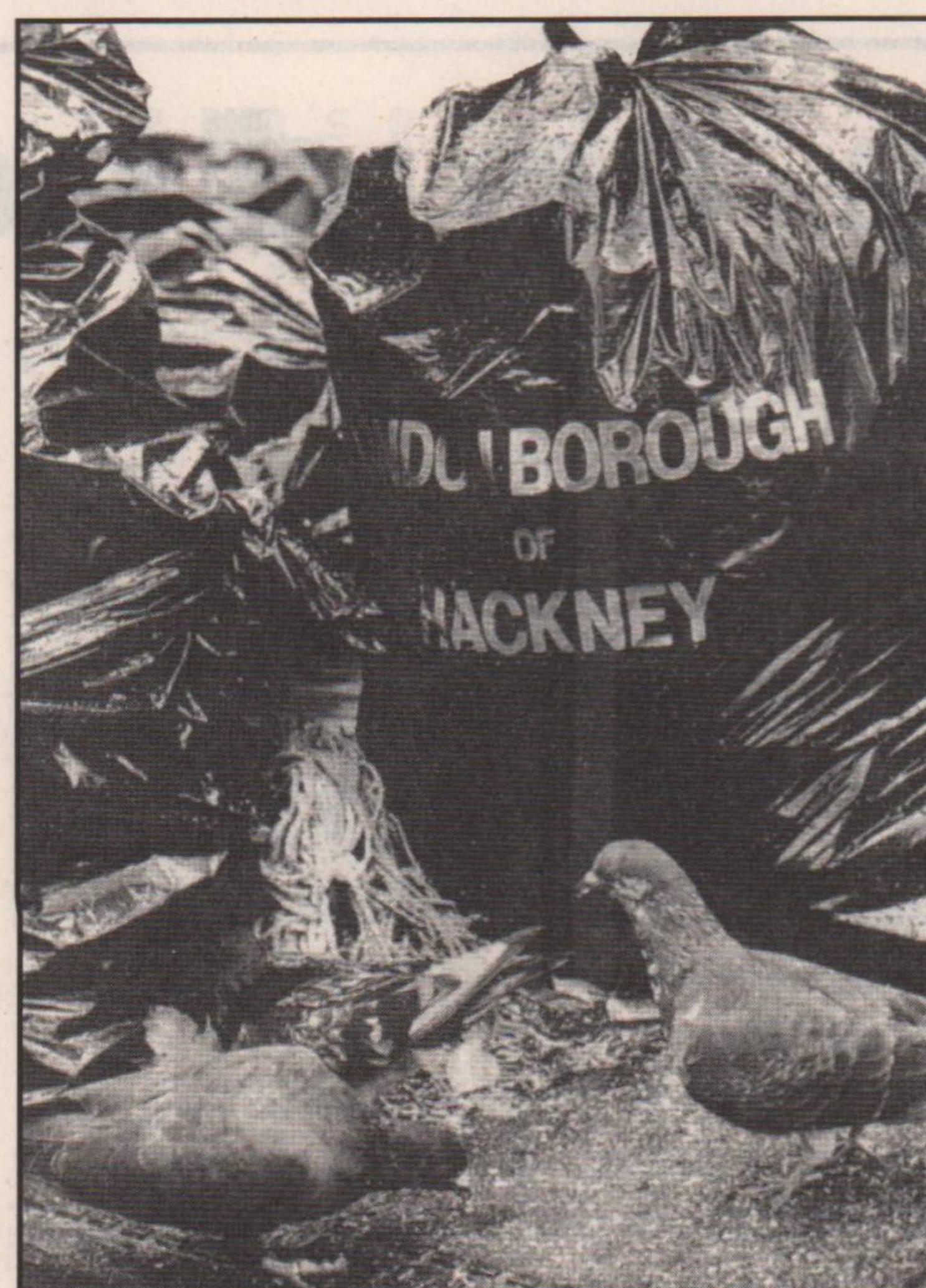
• **Tyneside** Women squatted a closed-down social centre in Newcastle city centre on 23rd April, as magistrates granted leisure group SFI a licence to use it as a lap-dancing venue. The activists then reopened it, with a café, music and cabaret. Visit: Electric City II, Manors Social Club, Carloli Square, Newcastle NE1 6UQ. Call 07833 646228.

• **South East London** BBC transmitters at Crystal Palace and Wrotham were jammed by an unknown source at lunchtime on 27th April, which broadcast instead the words "stand by for hostile action". The mainstream media did not report the incident.

• **Glasgow** Protesters against the closure of the Govanhill swimming pool were due to hold a meeting on Monday, to plan the next move in their growing campaign. This followed a poolside vigil on 25th April, when a large crowd gathered to sing folk songs. They're still looking for volunteers to join the 24-hour picket. Email: saveourpool@aol.com

• **Hackney** The local branch of Unison were due to hold Hackney's sixth official

day of strike action within six months on Tuesday. This followed a strike ballot, in which members rejected an ultimatum from council managers to sign new contracts. John Page, of Hackney Unison, said, "across the council, there is a growing mood of



anger and defiance". A protest march was due to leave Hackney Downs at 12pm, arriving at Hackney Empire for a rally at 2.15pm. As well as these official actions, there have been numerous unofficial stoppages, and many workers have refused to attend interviews for their own jobs, which they had been told they must now reapply for.

• **Bristol** The city's 'vote nobody' campaign was ready to go ahead with its local election plans for Easton ward on 3rd May. "Following the decision of the Blairite junta to cancel the May local elections, NOBODY has announced some spirited resistance to the Labourite dictatorship. Since the local councillors are only elected for a fixed term, it stands to reason that between 3rd May and 7th June, the councillors have no authority to continue in office". It was planned to distribute over five thousand ballot papers door to door, with the simple question, "do you wish to be governed by the council or by nobody?" In the event of a NOBODY victory, Easton was set to be declared an autonomous free zone around 9pm that night.

Rabid anarchists in Mayday riot



... and here's one we prepared earlier

Although *Freedom* went to press before Mayday, roving reporter Ronald J. MacDonald was able to join representatives from the mainstream media at police briefings beforehand. After senior cops had promised him that they were completely impartial he was able, in common with many of his media colleagues, to write this report in advance:

There were scenes of chaos in London on Tuesday, as police were confronted by thousands of rioting anarchists. Brave cops struggled to contain several hundred 'Wombles' as they ran wild along Oxford Street. Shocked businessmen looked on as activists in fancy dress gave out pretend money to innocent passers-by, in a clear incitement to smash up chain stores in the area.

In another development, hundreds of militant cyclists were apprehended for violent peddling outside two railway stations, as they took part in a so-called 'critical mass' bike ride against lawful London traffic.

Politicians from every party were united in their condemnation of the rioters. "All reasonable people will be appalled by these terrible events" said the Prime Minister Tony

Blair. "These aren't just attacks on property. They're attacks on all of us, on democracy itself". He promised a tightening of anti-terrorism laws, to ensure that such a thing could never happen again.

But the Tories also laid the blame at the door of the government. "These shocking attacks on police and shops just go to show the complete failure of the government's policies on law and order", said shadow home secretary Ann Widdecombe.

Metropolitan police commissioner John Stevens said that his officers had shown great courage, particularly when confronted by an organised gang of pigeon-feeders in Trafalgar Square. "London was the target of sustained criminality. We must have new powers to ensure that people can go about their lawful business".

We are intending to publish reports on Mayday activities around the UK and abroad in our 19th May issue.

Please send reports, photos and comments to reach us by first post on Thursday 10th May, or e-mail us at FreedomCopy@aol.com

Around the UK

Anti-capitalist activists were due to carry out protests around the UK on Tuesday, to mark this year's Mayday. The biggest event was expected to be London's Mayday Monopoly, but anarchists in other towns were also expected to take to the streets.

London's Mayday Monopoly

Here are some of the activities which autonomous groups had planned.

At 7.30am, 'critical mass' bike rides were due to leave Marylebone and Liverpool Street railway stations, converging on Kings Cross for a late breakfast.

During the morning, an office invasion was planned for Pall Mall, called by the Campaign against the Arms Trade. The Kings Cross branch of McDonalds was going to be venue for a giant veggieburger giveaway. At 11am, Mayfair was going to be host to hotel-building, using cardboard and sticky tape to highlight the problem of homelessness in the capital.

Over lunchtime, a picket of Coutts bank had been organised outside the Strand offices of these bankers to the rich and royal. There was going to be a fancy dress game at the Elephant and Castle in South East London. Activists from the No Sweat campaign were also planning a demonstration on Haymarket against Nike sweatshops. They explained that "Nike are a particularly bad exploiter of child and sweated labour and a very prominent target".

During the afternoon, planned demonstrations included a 'protest to protect the planet' at the Angel in Islington, and a solidarity demo outside Pentonville Prison. There was also going to be a protest against hoteliers Accommodata Ltd., profiteer contractors to the Home Office in housing refugees. Organisers promised "a fluffy protest, aimed at showing the neighbourhood the true nature of these money-loving low-lives".

At 4pm, Oxford Street was to be scene of 'Sale of the Century', which was designed to "challenge the role of money in consumer capitalist culture". Activists planned to distribute pretend money to shoppers.

Also in London, a TUC march was due to leave Highbury Fields at midday, marching

to Clerkenwell. Squatters in Hackney's Atherden Centre planned to open up the building up as a Mayday social centre.

National actions

In Belfast, a series of events was planned, including a film showing at Giro's on Donegall Lane. In Glasgow, a street party was due to take place in Buchanan Street.

In Newcastle, Mayday marchers were intending to converge on Exhibition Park in the afternoon, while Swansea activists were planning their own game of Monopoly. There was an ideas fair in Manchester, and a picket of Sheffield's GAP store.

Activists in Bristol had planned a 'critical mass' bike ride, and a carnival, while on Birmingham's Corporation Street, the Virgin Megastore was set to be the centre of that city's anti-capitalist protest.

Getting away with murder

Report from the Liverpool workers' commemoration rally

On 28th April 1987, 28 building workers were killed in an accident on a Connecticut construction site in the USA. Across the world, people have begun to commemorate the deaths of these workers by using the anniversary to highlight health and safety concerns in all industries. The International Labour Organisation estimates that there are over one million work related deaths every year. Across the world, work kills more people than war. Work related diseases kill tens of thousands of people every year in Britain alone.

A rally took place outside Liverpool's Church Street police station on 28th April, to draw attention to these preventable deaths.

Despite the near-freezing weather and strong wind, the crowds were drawn from their shopping to hear several speakers point out that just 1% of major injuries result in prosecution, and only 18% of deaths. In the North West, the average fine for a workplace death is under £10,000.

Large photographs of Simon Jones, Ged Eden and Rob Dawber (all victims of the profit motive and the oldest only 48) were displayed on the podium and several hundred leaflets were handed out to the public. Many organisations were represented including People Not Profit, the Merseyside Hazards Centre, the Liverpool and District Asbestos Victims support group as well as several anarchist groups.

The main message of these events is 'fight for the living – commemorate those killed.'

RW



Dark days at Canadian summit

Eyewitness report from Québec City

The province of Québec is a beautiful land of gently sloping hills and mountains. The morning of Saturday 21st April was calm and quiet, as the sun beamed down on Québec City, the provincial capital. The smell of fresh ground coffee permeated the area. One would have thought that it was a European vacation rather than a major anti-capitalist action that one was attending, but the headlines on the morning newspapers betrayed the true nature of the purpose behind so many visitors. Vendredi Noir, read the headlines, Black Friday. If Friday was black, then Saturday was darker, and bloodier as well.

The day began jubilant and festive, as at least 35,000 protesters took to the streets to show the people's resistance to the secret negotiations going on in a locked-down perimeter behind a wall. It looked more like a rainbow march than a march against free trade, as violets intermingled with oranges and yellows. And then there were the black-clad kids, that the union-organised security disdained openly. At the beginning of the march, one anarchist was pointed out by the red-vested security personnel, and whisked away by police. A few minutes later, a break-away occurred as members of one Canadian trade union joined black bloc activists who were again trying to break through the four-metre high perimeter fence. This led to a round of teargas being released.

The march continued below the confrontation, as gas clouds drifted over the parade route. The most impressive section was a group of a hundred people dressed as businessmen, who would pantomime check their watches. Their mouths were covered over by computer scanner bars you see on every product you buy in the mass market.

This was the height of the festive atmosphere of the day. From that point on, more and more militant anti-authoritarian anti-capitalists began attacking the fence. A more severe police response came on non-violent protesters and stone-throwers alike with each challenge.



A protester throws a teargas canister back at police in Québec City

We found out that you could buy gas masks at the local army surplus store. We went to get a couple. On our way back, we heard that rubber bullets were being shot at people attacking the fence nearby. Hurriedly, we figured out how to use the new gas masks.

When we got there, the scene at the fence was utterly surreal. A large number of militants were beating out a metallic rhythm on the side rails, of 'so... so... so... solidarity'. A Québécois punker was dancing in front of the fence, as tear gas canisters went off nearby. Moments later, as he danced and flashed peace signs, he was intentionally shot in the leg with a rubber bullet. Several rounds of rubber bullets were fired at non-violent protesters, their only

offence daring to stand in front of the fence defiantly. To my left, there was a group of stone-throwing militants. The Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP), who had the rubber bullet guns, stayed behind the fence. A group of local cops in riot gear protected a street that was outside the protection of the fence. Even the Quebecois local police were second class to the RCMP. Militants hurled stones at these unprotected police. A stone would bounce off their plexi-glass shields, but even if one got through it would bounce off their bullet-proof padding.

To my right were the peaceful protesters, people sitting cross-legged 20 metres away from the police. A young woman danced around a cop, who took aim at her with his

gun. I got my camera into position to film the cop, and he lowered his rifle. Several times this happened. Suddenly, to my left, a wave of stone-throwing militants hit the unprotected police with a barrage of stones. As I filmed them, I heard a rubber bullet whizz past my ear. As I panned back towards the RCMP marksman, another round went off, hitting me in the head. The impact knocked me backwards. I fell to the ground, having been spun round by the impact. I put my hand on my forehead as blood drained over the gas mask and down my hand. The doctor later said I was lucky that I wasn't hit on the side of my head, without elaborating. He stitched me up and let me go.

Salim

Solidarity actions

A series of actions took place throughout north and south America last month, to show solidarity with protesters in Québec.

On 10th April, more than 10,000 people converged on Buenos Aires to march on the sixth Business Forum of the Americas, which was being held in the Sheraton Hotel. They were met with tear gas, rubber bullets and water cannon.

In Brazil, 15,000 people were attacked by Sao Paulo cops, as they demonstrated against the Free Trade Area of the Americas on 20th April. Many were beaten up. One woman was hit in the eye by a rubber bullet.

Sunset Place in Miami, Florida, was the scene of a street party on 20th April. Traffic was blocked, as street artists and performers entertained passers-by.

Activists in Buffalo, New York State, tried to get onto the Peace Bridge which links Canada and the United States on 22nd April. This followed a large rally.

On 23rd April, around 150 demonstrators gathered outside the world headquarters of CNN in Atlanta, USA. Some managed to get inside. "They have shitty coverage, and it's always told from the side of the police", said



Anti-FTAA marchers in Buffalo, just a few hundred yards from the Peace Bridge

one demonstrator.

The same day, almost two hundred people met in New Orleans. After speeches, they marched through the city centre to the Trade Mart building, where foreign consulates and federal trade agencies are located.

Protest diary

Friday 20th April

At least 10,000 people demonstrated as political leaders from 34 states arrived in Québec City. Several anarchists were arrested early in the day, before protests had begun. This followed the arrest of seven other activists during the week.

A large contingent of people from Washington DC arrived, though many others trying to enter from the US were detained at the border.

The first day's march was made up of different contingents, each colour-coded according to the type of action its participants intended to carry out. These converged at the security fence, where several groups managed to breach the police defences. The cops began to fire tear gas, then charged. Within the perimeter of the sealed area, they used dogs against protesters. Water cannon were deployed, though activists attacked the water trucks and broke the windows. There were also reports of tear gas being used in residential areas.

Saturday 21st April

Up to 60,000 people were estimated to have taken part in Saturday's march, which was peaceful. Many others began a fresh attack on the security fence. One man was left in a critical condition, after he was shot in the neck by a plastic bullet. There were reports, later confirmed, that

protesters had been detained on three buses, without access to food, water or toilets. They were kept outside Orsainville Prison for ten hours.

On Saturday evening, cops raided the protesters' medical centre. With guns drawn, they forced medics and patients to leave the premises. It was alleged that police were particularly targeting medical personnel.

Sunday 22nd April

Dr Rosen, an activist who is also a qualified medical doctor, and who was providing medical assistance to injured protesters, said that the police response in Québec was the worst example of police brutality he had ever seen.

CBC reported that at times, as many as thirty tear gas canisters were fired per minute. Bean bag shot was also reported to have been used for the first time.

In a tactic developed by cops at Seattle and Washington (January 2001), there were over a dozen targeted arrests. In one case, witnessed by legal observers, two vanloads of undercover police picked up three activists as they walked in the street. The widespread use of undercover police as agents provocateurs was also reported.

On the Sunday night, police used percussive grenades as Molotov cocktails were thrown.

Film festival demonstrates artful practice of esperpento tradition

Essential blasphemy

When I first lived in Spain, in the 1960s, the two areas where opponents of the Franco regime could legally gather were in football clubs and religious organisations. Both football and religion figure in the current VIVA festival of Spanish film, now doing the rounds of the country's art cinemas.

Nadie Conoce a Nadie (*Nobody Knows Anybody*) is not the best film in the festival, which I saw in Manchester, but it is a troubling one. It hits at the idea of friendship, comradeship and community. The message is a bit like that in Ian McEwan's *The Comfort of Strangers* – that you can't trust anybody, and those who appear to be being nice may end up mutilating you in some way.

This film is an adaptation of a novel by Juan Bonilla. It is the first full-length work from the young director Mateo Gil, who also wrote the script. He says, "my work as scriptwriter focused on elaborating a plot that would, on the one hand, maintain the suspense throughout the film and on the other, reflect upon the lack of belief of any type (religious, ideological, political, etc.), which constitutes the main characteristic of my generation".

Because the story fixes on Semana Santa in Seville, it allows the director to have the main character witness a priest murdered in his church, to have nerve gas released in another, and to take pot shots at the virgin during a religious procession. A kind of necessary blasphemy, if you like, against religious relics, but one that also encourages distrust in personal relationships.

The festival guide says, "the key to everything lies with boredom". In Spain, religion has always fed on the boredom. As a foreigner there in the 1960s, I was struck by this at Holy Week, as was Sapo, a character in the film, who says, "what do you expect from a city where half a million people come out every year to walk around behind a piece of wood?"

Gerald Brenan wrote about this in his book *Spanish Labyrinth*. Religion has, he said, "sanctified tedium and idleness because they kill the appetite for life". But still, "all of Spain runs behind the Church, half carrying a cross, the other half a whip". Spaniards brought up to expect a lot out of life often ended up feeling disillusioned and deceived. This conclusion that 'life is a cheat', I suspect, lies at the root of Spanish anarchism. Hence the character Sapo in his critical demolition of the religious essence of the Seville life



Spanish syndicalist poster, 1930s

paradoxically challenges the anarchism which springs from it.

Se Quien Eres (*I Know Who You Are*) is a political thriller about how the post-Franco elements penetrated a leftist group in the 1970s, and used it to stir up tension through terror and political murder. *El Portero* (*The Goalkeeper*) is a lightweight political comedy, which deals with the life of a Real Madrid goalkeeper, forced to get money by travelling from village to village doing penalty shoot-outs against the locals when the civil war of 1936 cuts his career short.

The Spanish civil war also figures in *El Mar* (*The Sea*), a film about two lads growing up in Mallorca. This film, together with *El*

Bola (*Pellet*) and *Barrio* (*Neighbourhood*) centres on the relationships between a group of young men.

All this is authentic Spanish stuff, but it is doubtful if the problems of urban youth; the difficulties of the history of Spain during the transition from the Franco dictatorship to democracy, or even the civil war, give these films much of an international market.

Some aspects of 'Spanishness' sell outside Spain – things connected with Carmen, Don Quixote, Goya or Garcia Lorca have some international appeal. Even Ken Loach struggled to get *Land and Freedom* distributed in mainstream cinemas in the UK, and this civil war film went out mostly through art cinemas. But while films presenting Spanish life in folkloric caricature in an effort to win an international audience is one danger, another worry is the production of bland europuddings, for what Barry Jordan in his book *Contemporary Spanish Cinema* calls "an increasingly nondescript, homogeneous transnational audience".

Just now, there is some reason for optimism. There is a certain cheeky humour and uniqueness to many Spanish films. In 1953, Gerald Brenan wrote, "Spain will be the last country in Europe to surrender to cosmopolitanism". Last month, Dr Carmen Herrero in Manchester argued that though "Spanish cinema seems to have become very cosmopolitan", there are directors who "following Almodovar's example ... have been able to make internationally successful films without losing their identity", such as Julio Medem, Fernando Leon, Benito Zambrano and Iciar Bollain.

Spanish attitudes to Hollywood are mixed.

Boca a Boca (*Mouth to Mouth*) from the director Pereira, who made *Entre las Piernas* (*Between the Legs*), challenges Spanish fascination with Hollywood. However, Penelope Cruz, the darling of the current new wave Spanish cinema, starred in Hollywood's *Woman on Top* last year, and is now co-starring in *Captain Corelli's Mandolin*.

Of course, even Luis Buñuel spent some time in Hollywood, and during the Manchester Festival, the centenary of his birth was commemorated in the documentary *A Propósito de Buñuel* (*Regarding Buñuel*), and in an introduction from director and anarchist Alex Cox. The festival blurb describes "his contribution to cinematic surrealism and politically committed filmmaking as unrivalled".

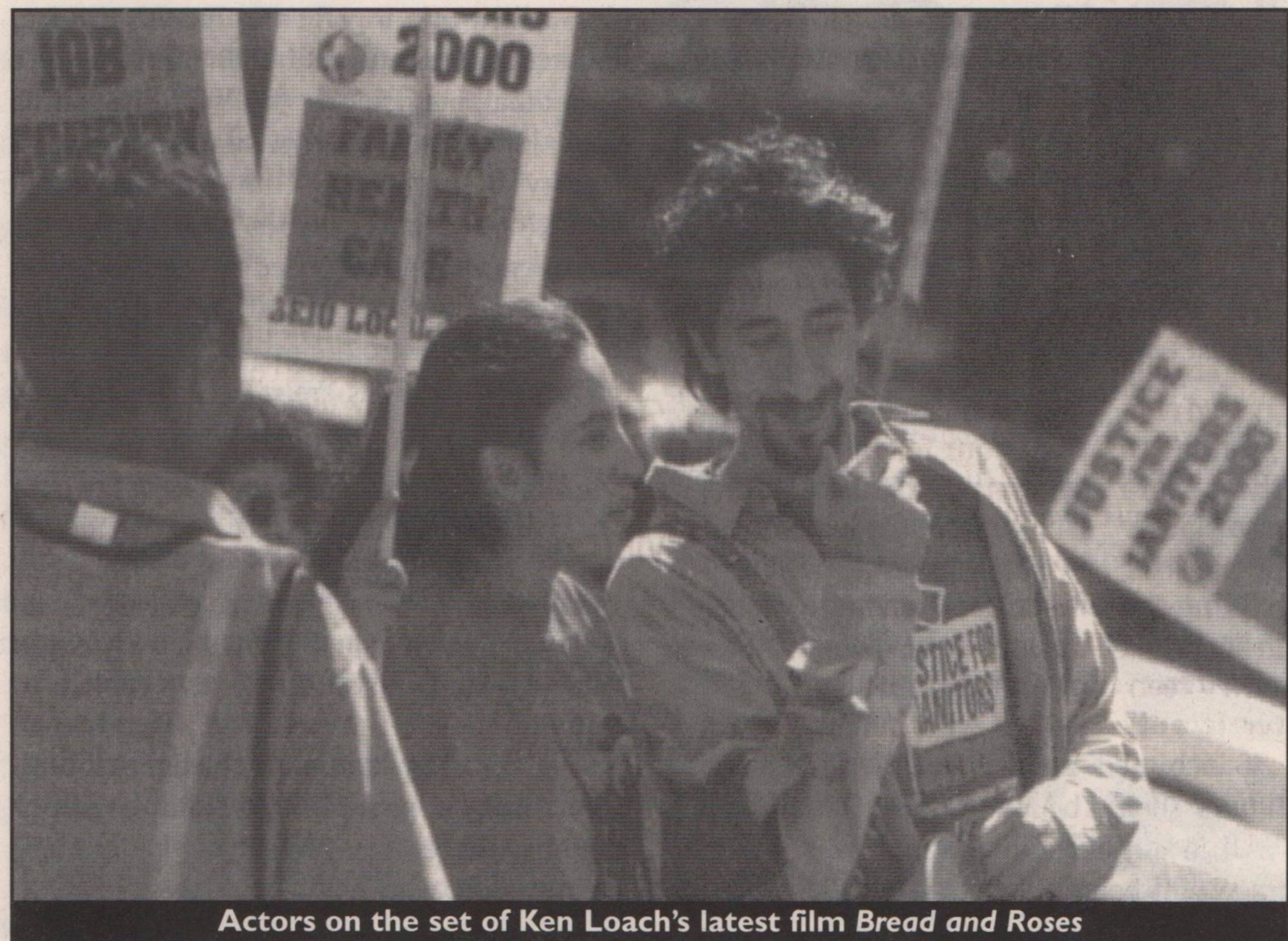
Alex Cox quoted Buñuel as saying, "I wish, if people learn anything from my work, it is that we don't live in the best of all possible worlds". Cox said that he thought Ken Loach would agree with those sentiments. But Buñuel, unlike Loach, says he has no use for neo-realism, because "it films the immediate and rational reality".

Buñuel falls into the 'esperpento tradition' of Spanish cinema, with his obsessions with religion and sexual frustration. Barry Jordan writes that the esperpento tradition "is the filmic exploitation of a long-standing aesthetic of Spanish black humour, vulgarity and bad taste". In contemporary films, this tradition of using caricature, the grotesque, the farcical and the absurd as a way of mocking national customs and institutions has been continued by Berlanga, Ferreri and the anarchist director, actor and screenwriter Fernando Fernán Gómez.

This rascally aspect to Spanish life has been summed up by Buñuel, who says, "the Spanish language is certainly the most blasphemous language in the world. Unlike other languages, in which curses and swearwords are, as a general rule, short and separated, Spanish swearwords easily assume the form of a long discourse, in which tremendous obscenities related principally to god, christ, the holy spirit, the virgin and the apostles, not forgetting the pope, can link together and form impressive and eschatological phrases. Swearing is a Spanish art".

That is what the Spanish film festival is about. It's about the swearing and mocking at sacred things, something at which the Spaniards are perhaps the most artful practitioners.

Brian Bamford

Actors on the set of Ken Loach's latest film *Bread and Roses*

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And the protesters are missing the point?



The *Guardian* (21st April 2001), just hours after the battle of Québec began, had a leader entitled "New battle of Québec: But the protesters are missing the point." Unfortunately for the *Guardian*, it was a case of the pot calling the kettle black. It is really the *Guardian* expressing wishful thinking about globalisation, not the protesters.

According to the *Guardian*, "the alternative to a world in which countries trade with each other in a rules-based multilateral system is not the sort of pre-industrial idyll that some

of the protesters imagine, but a law of the jungle in which the richest nations use their power to impose their will on the weak and poor."

And yet the *Guardian* thinks that the multilateral system will not reflect the interests of the richest nations. Will the ruling classes of the US, for example, not seek an agreement that protects and enhances their interests, vetoing any that does not?

It is the capitalist class, the state bureaucrats and their hired politicians who are

represented at these meetings. They have already used their power to impose their will on the weak and poor at home. Will they really be so altruistic as to sign an agreement that harms their position now?

Any contract between a stronger and weaker party will benefit the stronger. As Proudhon argued, the "manufacturer says to the labourer, 'You are as free to go elsewhere with your services as I am to receive them. I offer you so much' ... Who will yield? The weaker." He, like all anarchists, saw that domination, oppression and exploitation flow from inequalities of market/economic power and that the 'power of invasion lies in superior strength'. Free trade is based precisely on this 'law of the jungle', by which the stronger party dictates the terms to the weaker party. Capital does far better out of it than labour, as is to be expected from simple logic. North American big business is hardly being altruistic when it lobbies for 'free trade', as the *Guardian* seems to be arguing.

Unsurprisingly, the *Guardian* stresses that "the idea that trade is intrinsically bad is economic nonsense, and dangerous nonsense at that."

Economic nonsense? Depends what is meant by 'economic'. Is it economic theory or economic reality? In theory, of course, economics has argued that free trade benefits all concerned. In reality, of course, it has always benefited the stronger more than the weaker.

Look at the effects of economic liberalisation in the Americas. The expansion of trade in Latin America in the last two decades has not been accompanied by increased economic growth. According to World Bank data, per capita GDP growth in Latin America slowed from an average of 2.8% annually in the 1960-1980 period to just 0.3% annually in the last twenty years.

Specifically, according to the World Bank's 1999 World Development Report, per capita GDP growth in Brazil from 1990 to 1997 averaged just over 1.0% a year. In Mexico, per capita GDP growth was barely positive over this period. By comparison, in the years from 1960 to 1980, annual per capita GDP growth averaged 4.7% in Brazil and 3.7% in Mexico.

If increased trade is so good, then these figures should be reversed.

All in all, economic reality says that free trade will benefit the stronger of the parties involved.

The *Guardian* argues: "The protests in Quebec are not going to halt trade, let alone bring about the demise of global capitalism."

True words, but then again, no anarchist thought they would. Rather they are a sign of our strength and solidarity, a warning to the powers that be that they ignore us at their own risk.

The *Guardian* complains that the protestors "are good at highlighting the defects of the global market but less convincing when describing their own vision." Given that this vision has been almost totally excluded from media reporting, only the myopic could blame the rebels. Moreover, anarchists have been quite clear about our vision.

Firstly, we must organise ourselves to defend our interests by direct action and solidarity. This involves, for example, workplace and community organisation linked together in a global federation. In this way, capital cannot move to escape 'restrictive' labour or environmental laws or protests. Only by international solidarity and direct action can we tame, and finally destroy, the power of capital and its willing servant the state.

Secondly, we must create a new world. A world without rich and poor, master and servant. Such a society will be decentralised, based on individual, community and workplace self-government. Each workplace will be run by its workers, each community by its inhabitants. Individuals and communities will work together as equals in free federations run from the bottom up. Free individuals associating freely to meet their needs, sharing the world and its resources. A society fit for humans, not automatons. It would be created from below, by the majority, and not imposed by and for élites by tiny minorities hiding from their subjects behind three metre high fences.

These two visions are related. By fighting oppression in the here and now we gain the experience, confidence and power required to transform society. By resisting and organising against global capitalism we will be creating the world that will replace it. Our vision is one created from below, by the actions and hopes of those who dare to be free.

It is only by complementing the anti-globalisation protests with anti-capitalist organisation at the grassroots that we can create a new world.

Iain McKay

Industrial commentary

Workers' control?

Last month was a mixed one for anti-privatisation campaigns. First, we had John Prescott, the minister for privatisation, selling off the sky for a mere £800m. You'll remember how Labour in opposition pledged never to privatise air traffic control. Well, now they have, and guess what ... they've flogged it off to a group of airlines (no clash of interest there then). Following the sale, the air traffic controllers' union, IPMS, immediately backed off from their threat to take industrial action. Their general secretary said that his members would instead "work with the airlines". This is a missed opportunity to fight Labour's mad policy of privatisation. Britain now has the only privatised air traffic control system in the world.

On the tubes, it was a different story. Members of the RMT effectively shut the network down in their fight against privatisation. Despite just 43 of a possible 540 trains running, the union had wide-scale public support. One commuter said, "better a day of disruption than a crash". The dispute saw members of the train drivers' union, ASLEF, refusing to cross RMT picket lines. Further action was scheduled for this week.

The Dudley health workers' dispute, featured in previous issues of *Freedom*, also continues. April saw a further three-week strike against the privatisation of hospital services and the transfer of jobs to a private sector company through the Private Finance Initiative (PFI).

Recent reports of more than fifty hospitals failing to reach basic cleaning standards show the reality of NHS support service privatisation: dirty wards and poor standards. PFI means profits before care.

It is, of course, important that anarchists inside and outside trade unions continue to

support workers in their fight against privatisation. But we also need to make the case for workers' self-management and organisation as the real alternative to private and state control.

Anarchists can also use the examples of privatisation to expose the folly of voting. In opposition, Labour opposed and campaigned against PFI in health, air traffic control and the tube. Many on the left voted for them because of it; but in power they have taken privatisation further than even the Tories dared.

Seattle IWW strike

America leads the world in union-busting, to such an extent that union membership in the private sector is now below 10%. Now though, it is moving into the voluntary sector. Since February, almost all the workers at Seattle's Association of Community Organisations for Reform Now (ACORN) have been on strike, as the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) demand recognition from boss Wade Rathke. Despite promoting labour rights for working people, ACORN is refusing to recognise IWW membership for its own workers. The IWW is asking for support from *Freedom* readers: Seattle IWW, 5215, Ballard Avenue, NW, Seattle WA 98107.

Strike threat to opera

Bad news for the ruling classes this, but Covent Garden members of entertainment union BECTU have voted by 80% to take industrial action, following management attempts to discipline a BECTU branch officer. Expect to see picket lines outside the Royal Opera House.

Richard

What we say ...

In the end, we'll win

What lay behind the laughter? "You can't have a trade summit these days without teargas; it would be like having a cheeseburger without cheese", joked an official from the US delegation at the Summit of the Americas, held in Québec City at the beginning of last week.

He may joke, but his bosses are getting very panicky about the anti-capitalist movement which has grown up in recent years. Our very own mayor here in London, cuddly Ken Livingstone, said of this week's Mayday Monopoly action, "those who organise this activity act against the interests of the causes they claim to represent". The truth is, he couldn't be more wrong.

Opposition to capitalism is quickly entering the mainstream. This has been achieved only by protest and resistance, not by voting for the likes of Ken. And the bosses don't like it one little bit. They've responded, as usual, with a combination of brute force and smear, in Québec and almost certainly (though we went to press before Mayday) here too. The closer Mayday came, the thicker were the scare stories in the British media (we featured a few in our recent 'Towards Mayday' column).

We can't say how the anti-capitalist movement will develop from here. As a movement of resistance, it will always be conditioned by the efforts of governments and capitalists to destroy it. But in this struggle, anarchists will retain the advantage, because anarchism is based on autonomy and decentralisation; whereas our opponents know only control and command. We hold all the aces.

So, while we can expect wilder scare stories and more repressive laws, we also know that our ideas will spread. The anarchist argument still needs to be put, against those who will say that capitalism would be better if only they were in charge. But it's the strongest argument around, comrades, and with it we know that in the end we'll win.

Thought required

Anarchism is the process of taking responsibility for ourselves. Capitalism is the act of giving that responsibility away. This is why we say that only direct action against the sources of our oppression can make us free – no boss is ever going to do it on our behalf, because the realisation of their interests relies on ours being denied.

What, in view of this, is the function of a newspaper like *Freedom*? It cannot be, as the papers of the mainstream press are, a mouthpiece for the establishment; nor can it be, like the Marxist press, a mouthpiece for those who would be the establishment, if only they were given the chance.

Our paper exists to spread anarchist ideas. But no less importantly, it exists to generate discussion and reflection. Anarchism is not a monolithic slab of knowledge, to be consumed whole. It is an intellectual process which determines the actions we take to resist oppression in the real world.

That is why we published Jim Delaney's appeal, aimed at generating support for the Socialist Alliance at the ballot box; and why we published Richard Garner's (anti-anarchist) justification of what one of our correspondents calls 'capitalism red in tooth and claw'. We don't endorse either, of course. We oppose them. But they deserve our consideration nevertheless.

Our mission, if you like, is to encourage people to become anarchists. But in order for that to happen, they've first of all got to think.

Readers' letters

Wrong decision

Dear *Freedom*,

I was a little disturbed by your decision to print the letter from Jim Delaney in your issue of 21st April. Such straightforward propaganda from the Socialist Alliance containing, as it does, a directly anti-anarchist proposal (i.e. to vote in the general election) really has no place in an anarchist paper.

Having a wide-ranging approach – particularly in your letters column – is one thing, but a line has to be drawn somewhere and, in my view, Jim Delaney's letter is the wrong side of it.

I am opposed to censorship, but every editorial decision you make involves selection of some kind and I am against giving free publicity to people that I, at least, regard as the opposition.

Jim Huggon

Anarchist position

Dear *Freedom*,

What the hell made you publish the article by Richard Garner, printed in the last issue of *Freedom* (21st April). It is perfectly clear to anybody reading his piece that he isn't an anarchist, but what (in the United States) they ridiculously call a 'libertarian'. He wants to abolish the state, to be sure, but he's got no problem with capitalism. But capitalism is an ugly repressive thing, with the state or not.

Garner may not like Jennifer Ivens's meanderings. He's quite right not to, neither did I. But that doesn't make him a friend of ours, or more importantly, a friend of freedom.

At least you printed John Andrews's article too, which did put the anarchist position.

Angry Baz

Dear *Freedom*,

I think it was unfortunate that you published Richard Garner's pro-capitalist polemic without any sort of editorial comment. I understand that you don't endorse everything you publish, particularly on a page entitled 'comment and analysis'; but don't you think there's a risk that anybody picking up *Freedom* for the first time would think that Richard was giving the anarchist point of view?

Jennifer's original letter did demand an anarchist response, and John Andrews did a good job of providing it. But Richard's article, in which he tries to defend capitalism red in tooth and claw, is surely wrong. He says, "Jennifer's problem is really that she lacks imagination enough to try to solve the problem" of living without a state.

He then goes on to prove that he is equally lacking in imagination himself, except that his problem is that he cannot imagine living without capitalism or a means of exchange.

He's right to say that Chechnya is not anarchism in action, but "two groups battling to be sovereign governments over a particular territory". He's wrong to say that Somalia is any different.

He's also wrong when he says "there are plenty of anarchists who look with hope" at that suffering country.

What are the features of Somali society he's so intoxicated by? Heads of families – invariably men, by any chance? I wonder...? 'Customary' law? A 'holy respect for private property'? An attitude to business which is 'strictly laissez-faire'? The fact that 'business is booming'?

All this goes to show is that Richard likes capitalism a lot. He wouldn't know about anarchism if it punched him on the nose.

Robin

Dear *Freedom*,

Richard Garner says that "anarchism is not, has not always been, and need not always be communist".

Let's take communism to mean that society abolishes property, and its people live instead according to the maxim 'from each according to ability, to each according to need'.

Until society is communist (by this definition), the individuals within it will not be free to get the things they need to live (they will be rationed according to what they earn), and they will still have to sell their labour to a boss. In other words, it will not be an anarchist society, because its people will not be free.

So Richard is wrong. Anarchism must be communist, after all. In the rest of his article, he goes on to show precisely why that is the case.

Nel Finn

See editorial, bottom left

Carnival appeal

Dear *Freedom*,

I'm looking into the idea of carnivals as a conscious mode of resistance, as exemplified by the carnival against capitalism, and was wondering which ideas and theories brought this thing to be. (Maybe this is directed at those who were at the Bradford conferences?) Who had the idea? I'm suspecting the motivation behind this is Hakim Bey or Raoul Vaneigem, but if anyone has any other ideas for anarchist things on using carnival, I'd be grateful. Actually, anything remotely relevant would be appreciated, in the forms of any texts, electronic or other-wise, you think would be worth having a look at. You can email me at gavin@cyber-rights.net

Gavin

Donations

late-April 2001

Freedom Fortnightly Fighting Fund

London NW8, AC, £5; M&A, £3; Reading, BR, £10; Plymouth, SN, £3; Isleworth, AS, £3; London NW2, NB, £9; Liverpool, CM, £2; Coventry, LW, £5; Leeds, TD, £1.

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London NW2, NB, £9.

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Total for 2001 = £399.00

CONTRIBUTIONS WANTED FOR THE RAVEN

We are now preparing three issues of *The Raven*, for publication later in the year. This quarterly journal exists to extend our coverage and discussion of ideas and issues, in a way which isn't possible in a fortnightly newspaper like *Freedom*.

The topics we are seeking contributions for are Anarchism and Marxism (to be published next month), Food (to be published in September) and Sport (to be published in December).

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

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The next issue of *Freedom* will be dated 19th May, and the last day for copy intended for this issue will be first post on Thursday 10th May.

If possible contributions should be typed using double-spacing between lines, or can be sent as text files on disc (with a print-out please) or e-mail to FreedomCopy@aol.com

The Anarchist Alternative

Humankind is one

The level to which political debate in Britain today has sunk could scarcely be illustrated more clearly than by the exchanges over ethnicity which have filled the press as we come up to the general election.

It makes headlines in the national press when the foreign secretary, Robin Cook, declares publicly that "the British are not a race", not so much in an attempt to create a more multi-cultural and egalitarian society, as to gain support for his party by accusing his main opponent, William Hague, of encouraging the use of racist language, a charge which Hague naturally denied.

Meanwhile, the Commission for Racial Equality, a government-funded quango, on the one hand denounced Cook's 'chicken tikka masala' speech as "insulting and absurd", and on the other hand tried to get election candidates to sign an anti-racist pledge, which Michael Portillo and others refused to do. As a result, the CRE's own activities have been denounced as a 'racist conspiracy', comparable with the 'communist conspiracy' of McCarthyite America, or the 'Jewish conspiracy' of Hitler's Germany, with calls for the abolition of the CRE.

In Oldham, the scene of confrontations between ill-educated and jobless youths in predominantly Asian and white neighbourhoods, the head of the British National Party has taken up residence in an attempt to legitimise what he calls 'race' as a political issue. In his own statements, he adroitly uses the reaction to Cook's 'chicken tikka masala' speech to arouse feelings against ethnic minorities, by confusing the issues of ethnicity, immigration and asylum.

Fifty years ago, *Freedom* published a leading article under the heading 'mankind is one'. This phrase was taken from a UNESCO report entitled 'statement by experts on race problems', the experts being an international team of leading biological scientists. The paragraph from which the phrase came reads in part, "scientists have reached general agreement in recognising that mankind is one: that all men belong to the same species, *homo sapiens* ... the likenesses among men are far greater than their differences". And the report went on to state specifically that "the English, the Americans, the Jews, the Indians or the Chinese are not races".

Since then, we have seen the retreat of colonialism and the end of the cold war, yet politicians from all parties continue to erect new barriers between the peoples of the world.

We say now, as we did back then, that if humankind is one, then the responsibility for conflict between human beings lies in the social institutions, political, national and economic, which divide us and by which we are ruled. We denounce them all.

All the politicians who are likely to get elected claim to deplore racism. But we want to abolish it, by tearing down national boundaries and uniting the human family in freedom and equality.

The London Cannabis march and festival will now be held on

Saturday 16th June 2001

www.cannabiscoalition.org

tel: 020 7637 7467 or 020 7738 5148

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Meetings & Events

London Anarchist Forum

4th May May events: general debate

7th May Monthly discussion and social (bring a little food and drink)

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

Reclaim the Streets

General information on RTS: 020 7281 4621 or rts@gn.apc.org

For info on RTS subscribe to allsorts@gn.apc.org specifying 'subscribe RTS only'.

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Reclaim the Streets, PO Box 9656, London N4 4JY

www.reclaimthestreets.net

Demonstration against the Terrorism Act

Tuesday 8th May 2001 at 12 noon

Home Office, Queen Anne's Gate, London SW1

organised by Liberty

Close Down Harmondsworth Campaign

on Wednesday 9th May at 7.30pm

at Fountains Abbey pub, 109 Praed Street, London W2

(close to Paddington Station)

Meeting to bring people together to organise a huge protest to mark the opening of the new detention centre at Harmondsworth

Industrial Workers of the World

Public meeting to re-launch the London IWW branch

Monday 14th May at 7.30pm

Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London WC1

IWW, PO Box 4414, Poole, Dorset BH15 3YL

www.iww.org.uk info@iww.org.uk

Blockade and demo at Aldermaston

on Monday 14th May starting at 7am

For further information contact NVRN at 020 7607 2302

or Trident Ploughshares at 01603 611953

Red Rambles 2001

Red Rambles walks and rambles for Radicals, Libertarians, Anarchists, Greens, Socialists, Syndicalists, et al. See <http://members.tripod.co.uk/ainema/index-2.html>

Mayday bank holiday 7th May 2001

Meet at 12 noon outside Hurt Arms Hotel, Ambergate, Derbyshire, on the A6 road (also on bus route R1 for Nottingham to Manchester, 100 yards from Ambergate railway station) for a short and easy walk four miles in length through Shining Cliff Woods. Walk concludes with a Mayday picnic, so bring food and drink to share, musical instruments, blankets to sit on, etc. Walk leader Jonathan.

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