

NOTTINGHAM ANARCHIST NEWS

NUMBER 7 APRIL/MAY '86 AT LEAST 10p.



RIGHT, YOU, ...
... CARRYING AN
OFFENSIVE WEAPON
... WEARING A PARA-
MILITARY UNIFORM...

Happy birthday to you, happy birthday to you. Yes that's right, Nottingham Anarchist News is one year old this issue, all pressies to the box number below, ta.

Being spring, and the time of change, the dynamic 8.00 friday evening SMASH meetings have become the dynamic 7.30 wednesday evening meetings, so remember to alter your diary.

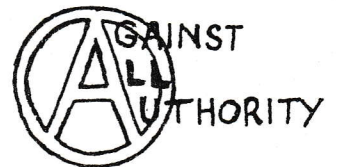
We are all sorry to hear that Earthwise, the environmental fact shop on Mansfield road has closed down. It is very sad to know that another source of useful information for changing this bloody system has disappeared, especially as they sold Class war and twice as many copies of Anarchist News than any other shop in Nottingham.

In this issue there are four longer articles. We are sorry (ish) normally the number of longer pieces is held down, but in this case they are all important, and we hope you take the time to read them all.

Also inside there's articles & bits on the Midlands Anarchist get together in march from which has come the midlands anarchist federation, there is an article on the scandal of Broxtowe council's peanal cottages. There are reports from Wapping, and from local activists on local activities, and of course an exclusive on the Trader's exposure of that "vitriolic" anti-state newspaper whats its name?

In the coming weeks we've got Mayday near at hand, keep an eye out for us on the trades council march, and our stall at the rally at the Queens walk communiy centre. Also the video showing on the real Mayday. And in june there is the Stonehenge free festival/gathering in Wiltshire.

Please send in any contributions we've all got something to say, so why not say it. The deadline for number 8 is friday 30 may. Oh yes, you can subscribe if you like, just send us your adress and some money to: Box A, Mushroom Bookshop, 10 Heathcote street, Nottingham.



INSIDE:

- BRICKYARD COTTAGES (BROXTOWE'S SHAME),
- WAPPING,
- REMEMBER MAYDAY,
- MIDLAND Ⓐ NETWORK,
- MUSHROOM DISPUTE,
- PLUS HOW THE TRADER BUMBLED ABOUT RUMBLING SOME JUMBLE!

EVENTS

REGULAR EVENTS

EVERY MONDAY 2PM: PEACE ACTION NETWORK WORKING ON THE CHILWELL ACTION. RING 472556 MONDAYS IF YOU'D LIKE TO GET INVOLVED.

EVERY MONDAY 6PM: PEACE ACTION NETWORK MEETING TO PLAN CHILWELL ACTION. NCND OFFICE, 3 KING STREET.

EVERY TUESDAY 7.30PM: WOMEN FOR PEACE MEET AT THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY CENTRE.

EVERY TUESDAY 7.30PM: NOTTINGHAM IRISH SOLIDARITY GROUP MEET. DETAILS FROM BOX 5, 118 MANSFIELD ROAD.

EVERY WEDNESDAY 7.30PM: SMASH MEET AT INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY CENTRE, MANSFIELD ROAD., TO PLOT THE OVERTHROW OF CAPITALISM AND ORGANISE JUMBLE SALES. ONLY BY GANGING UP CAN WE BE EFFECTIVE IN OVERCOMING OUR OPPRESSION - TOGETHER WE ARE STRONG. ALL WELCOME.

EVERY THURSDAY 2PM: CLAIMANTS ACTION CAN BE FOUND AT THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY CENTRE.

LAST SUNDAY 7.30PM: ANIMAL RIGHTS CONFEDERATION MEET AT THE NARROWBOAT, CANAL STREET.

APRIL

MON 14 - SUN 20: NATIONAL TRADES UNION WEEK OF ACTION AGAINST APARTHEID. CONTACT YOUR UNION OR ANTI-APARTHEID TEL. 472440.

SAT 19: PARTY AT MENWITH HILL PEACE CAMP, NEAR HARROGATE, YORKSHIRE.

MON 21: ROCK & REGGAE FESTIVAL PLANNING MEETING. FOREST FIELDS COMMUNITY CENTRE, STURTON STREET, FOREST FIELDS.

SAT 26: NCND "CAMPAIGNER'S CABARET". NARROWBOAT, CANAL STREET. 8PM. £1.75 & £1.25.

SAT 26 & SUN 27: LONDON ANARCHIST FESTIVAL. DETAILS FROM "ALL SYSTEMS GO", 121 RAILTON ROAD, LONDON SE 24.

MAY

THURS 1: VIDEO OF "LA CECILIA" AT THE ARTS AND CRAFTS, 39, GREGORY BOULEVARD. LA CECILIA IS A SUCCESSFUL ANARCHIST COMMUNITY BUT HOW FAR CAN YOU GET AWAY FROM IT ALL? THERE'LL PROBABLY BE A PARTY AFTER THE VIDEO TO CELEBRATE THE REAL MAYDAY.

THURS 1: WOLFE TONES (IRISH BAND) AT THE PALAIS.

FRI 2: TRADES COUNCIL BENEFIT AGAINST SOUTH AFRICAN REGIME.

MON 5: TRADES COUNCIL ANNUAL MARCH ON THE GOVERNMENT-SPONSORED MAYDAY. ASSEMBLE OLD MARKET SQUARE 10.30AM TO MARCH TO RALLY AT QUEENS WALK COMMUNITY CENTRE IN THE MEADOWS. SPEAKERS: JABU SINDANE & MAIRE O'SHEA. STALLS. ALL OUT FOR SANCTIONS AGAINST SOUTH AFRICA.

MON 5: EVENING EVENT AT THE YORKER, MANSFIELD ROAD WITH MAIRE O'SHEA, PRESIDENT OF THE IRISH IN BRITAIN REPRESENTATION GROUP.

FRI 9: CLOSING DATE FOR EXPRESSING YOUR OPINIONS OF THE MUSHROOM DISPUTE TO MUSHROOM/CHRIS ENQUIRY, 2 PREMIER ROAD, FOREST FIELDS.

FRI 16: DEFEND MOLESWORTH BENEFIT. LIVE MUSIC, FOOD, BAR, CHILDRENS ROOM, FUN. INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY CENTRE, MANSFIELD ROAD. 6PM - 10.30PM.

SUN 18: PUBLIC MEETING ORGANISED BY NOTTINGHAM IRISH SOLIDARITY GROUP TO COMMEMORATE THE HUNGER STRIKERS. SPEAKERS, VIDEO. ACNA CENTRE, HUNGERHILL ROAD.

FRI 23: NCND CEILIDH. INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY CENTRE. 6.30PM - 10.30PM.

SAT 24: MIDLANDS ANARCHIST NETWORK "DELEGATE" MEETING AT LEAMINGTON.

JUNE

SUN 1: 1.30PM PICKET OF ALBANY & PARKHURST PRISONS (ISLE OF WIGHT) IN SUPPORT OF IRISH REPUBLICAN PRISONERS.

TUES 17: NATIONAL LOBBY OF PARLIAMENT (:) TO DEMAND SANCTIONS AGAINST SOUTH AFRICA.

SAT 28: NATIONAL ANTI-APARTHEID DEMONSTRATION IN LONDON. "MARCH FOR FREEDOM".

JULY

SAT 5: (PROVISIONAL): PEACE ACTION NETWORK ACTION AT USAF CHILWELL: DON'T SIT ON THE FENCE, CUT IT.

FRI 11: SETTING UP OF A CAMP FOR ANIMAL LIBERATION OUTSIDE HAZLETON LABORATORIES, OTLEY ROAD, HARROGATE, YORKSHIRE.

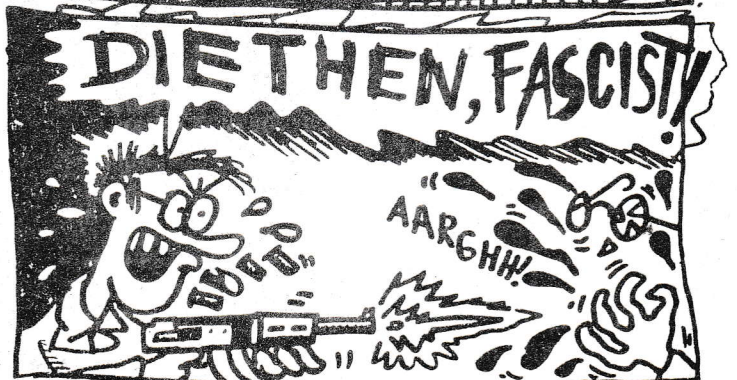
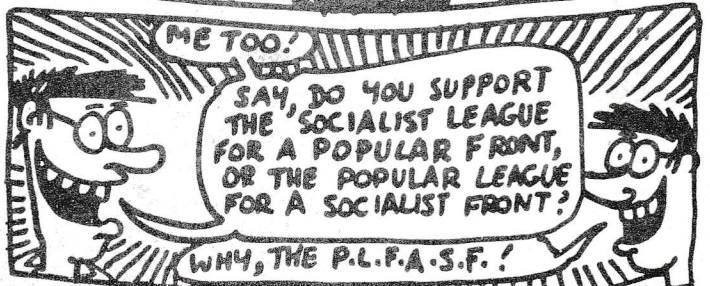
SUN 13: NCND'S ANNUAL PEACE FESTIVAL

SUN 13: 1.30PM PICKET OF GARTREE PRISON NEAR MARKET HARBOROUGH IN SUPPORT OF IRISH REPUBLICAN PRISONERS. THERE MAY BE TRANSPORT (+ CONTACT NISG, BOX 5, 118 MANSFIELD ROAD.

OCTOBER

SUN 12: 1.30PM PICKET OF LEICESTER PRISON IN SUPPORT OF IRISH REPUBLICAN PRISONERS. THERE MAY BE TRANSPORT.

DON'T FORGET TO SEND US YOUR DETAILS OF EVENTS SO THAT YOU TOO CAN TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THE WIDE READERSHIP THIS PAPER REACHES.



There Have Been too many Jokes about Wapping

This is not intended as a slag-off of those involved with the dispute or on the picket line on Saturday night (22nd Mch). As a person who is not directly involved (i.e. not a sacked worker or member of SOGAT/NGA) what right have I to criticize or judge. But as a person who took part in a picket I should be able to say how I feel about what happened.

There was a march from Tower Hill to the News International plant in Wapping. Then there was to be the usual Saturday night picket. Many groups came, sacked workers and fellow union members, Miners, Railway workers, Lesbian and Gay youth, the usual variety of left wing groupings (all trying to sell their paper), Womens groups and bands. It was a good turnout, 8000 people taking part, though numbers started to drop later in the night. This was largely due to boredom, sobering up or "couldn't be arsed".

The Police were also there in large numbers, well over 2000, including SPG in full riot gear and mounted police. Not that they were really needed as the Stewards did a "wonderful" job of crowd control. There were plenty of sheep to allow it.

There are six gates which lead out on to three roads around the plant. Only two of these roads had pickets. When a steward was asked why, the "troublemaker" was informed, "we know what we're doing and have everything under control".

People were milling around between the two road selling papers, nattering, singing, shouting at the filth and scabs. A lone bagpiper was regurgitating Scottish patriotism.

Loads of obnoxious remarks were to be overheard or were shouted: "I'd rather be a pouf than a copper" sick A.I.D.s, anti-women and racist jokes were being cracked. It was fucking depressing. No connections were being made about issues. The vast majority of people there, thought that if the sacked workers got their jobs back everything would be ok. But how long would it be before another printing dispute broke out? Would they strike to help others try to get their jobs back or improve working conditions or pay? Whilst screaming at the scabs, how many times had they scabbed?

The organisation was good, stewards had C.B.s and there was a spy working inside. But it didn't seem to be put to much use. Especially when the road, which they did eventually bring the papers out of, didn't have a picket. It felt like a con-job and tokenistic. The stewards didn't want that road blocked. There was not much communication between pickets and stewards. They weren't interested in what people wanted to do or felt. They gave orders which had to be obeyed.

Just before they brought the papers out steward -s were hassling us to sit down in the middle of the road that they might have used en-route for the lorries to get out of the area. People were running up saying that the lorries were obviously going to come out of the unpicketed road. They were told to "fuck off" to stop interfering" -the stewards "had everything under control". When the lorries did come out (out of the unpicketed road of course) people were 1/4 mile away. By the time people had run down most of them had gone. Angry skirmishes with the police broke out. Bottles and stones were thrown. Filth on horses were wading through the crowd, hitting anyone near enough with riot truncheons. Many random arrests were made. At one point 20 or so people broke through the police lines and tried to escape into a church yard. 50 SPGs ran in after them and shut the gates, I don't know what happened to them. Your guess is as good as mine.

The police moved back to their lines but the whole area was still sealed off. People were herded back to another picketed road by stewards. Anyone seen throwing bottles at the filth were quickly pounced on and warned that their health would be endangered, not by the police but by stewards.

Once again at the other road we saw the lorries go out but were too far away to even attempt to get there. People were fucking angry.

One man was screaming at this copper and a steward walked over to him and told him to cut it out and to stop making trouble. I asked the steward, if it was not his decision what he did. He asked me what paper I worked for and when I said I didn't he told me to fuck off, go home and to let them get on with sorting out the dispute as it was no concern of mine. I felt a lot of this was may be true and feel very wary of trying to hi-jack others demos ect. But if it was no concern of mine why were there posters up all over London and ads in papers and mags asking union and non-union people to come and support the picket? Why were Miners considered acceptable pickets but an unemployed woman was not? Why do they ask for support from other groups who have similar dilemmas but yet slag them off? Maybe I was interfering but should we be sheep and not question the union bueracrates?

The whole dispute is a mass of contradictions. But I still feel it should be supported. The situation is still the same, some rich bastard crapping on those he's exploited to get there. Using Bully Boys to protect him, his assets and his property.

• DON'T GET CAUGHT.

REPRINTED FROM
"SNARK" - LEEDS
ANIMAL LIBERATION
FRONT.

Below are some precautions to bear in mind if you are going out on an action. It is by no means a definitive list, and precautions used obviously depend on the type of action being undertaken and the conditions at the time. It is simply a list of things which have been brought to our attention during our experiences. Don't let the extent of the list put you off - much of it is commonsense, and for that there is no substitute.

- 1 - Always wear gloves to avoid leaving incriminating fingerprints. Wipe clean all equipment to be used before-hand, even if you don't intend leaving it, as things can be forgotten or dropped in the heat of the moment.
- 2 - If equipment is easily replaceable (hammer, paint etc.), it may be better to leave it at the scene of the action (non-fingerprinted of course), rather than risk being stopped with it on the way home.
- 3 - Dress to suit the occasion. Don't go out with ALF sprayed on your back!
- 4 - Try to avoid carrying equipment late at night. If possible, hide it near the target(s) beforehand. Somewhere where no one will find it and wait for you to pick it up.
- 5 - Avoid telling everybody within a three mile radius what you are going to do!
- 6 - Think carefully about the time it is to be done. Bear in mind pub closing time, security patrols etc.
- 7 - Be on the lookout for cameras (i.e. town centre major roads, large premises). If you are forced to be in their gaze, dress in unidentifiable clothing (destroy them if necessary) and cover your face.
- 8 - Always prepare an escape route, and know it well. Alternatives are also a good idea, in case anything goes wrong. If you can, check that your escape route is clear beforehand.
- 9 - Depending on the target, it may be advisable to do a dummy run (without equipment) to check that no one has got wind of what you are going to do and is waiting to catch you red-handed. For example, this was done before smashing the windows at Lewis's in June. Because of the scale of the action (northern ALF hit in several cities), there was always the possibility that the police would get hold of what was happening - so one of the activists went up and rattled the doors beforehand.
- 10 - Empty yourself of unnecessary items before you go out, the less there is to drop the better. Avoid carrying I.D.
- 11 - It is advisable to have a story ready, in case you are stopped before or afterwards.
- 12 - Wash or destroy any clothing which may hold valuable forensic evidence after the action, i.e. glass splinters, paint, paraffin, animal hairs.
- 13 - It also pays to be prepared for bad weather, utilise it to your own benefit. Fog is ideal. Rain can muffle sound, diminish visibility, and give you an excuse if caught running away ("I don't want to get drenched, officer.")
- 14 - Don't be predictable.
- 15 - Make sure your house is clear before you go out.
- 16 - If you are going to a press release, make sure that you disguise your voice over the phone, and don't stay on it too long. If you send in a letter, make sure it is untraceable to you (fingerprints, writing, postmark etc.).

After saying all this, the majority of direct action is successful, and many of the above precautions prove to be unnecessary. Still, better safe than sorry?

Good luck and don't get caught.

CAMP FOR ANIMAL LIBERATION HAZLETON LABORATORIES

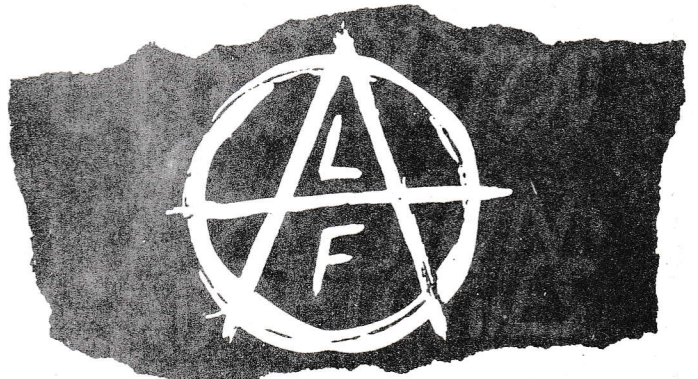
HAZLETON LABORATORIES ARE NEAR HARBORGATE

EVERY YEAR MILLIONS OF INNOCENT ANIMALS ARE TORTURED, BRUTALISED AND MURDERED IN YOUR NAME; THIS GOVERNMENT PERMITS HORRIFIC, UN-NECESSARY EXPERIMENTS TO TAKE PLACE, FOR THE TESTING OF COSMETICS, DYES, CHEMICALS, DRUGS ECT. MORE OFTEN THAN NOT, TESTS WITH DRUGS ARE DUPLICATED. THERE ARE LOTS OF DRUGS ON THE MARKET THAT WOULD DO THE SAME JOB. DRUG TESTS ARE NOT ALWAYS RELIABLE - REMEMBER PHALIDOMIDE? OFRAM? THE LIST IS ENDLESS. THE WEEDKILLERS AND INSECTICIDES THAT WERE TESTED ON ANIMALS AND PROVEN TO BE SAFE, CONTINUE TO POISON OUR FOODS, ALSO KILLING THE LAND AND THE ANIMALS THAT LIVE ON IT.

LET US COME TOGETHER AND MAKE THEM HERE THE CRIES OF LIBERATION.

A GROUP OF PEOPLE WILL BE SETTING UP A CAMP ON FRIDAY JULY 11th, TO LAST FOR AT LEAST A WEEK. WE HOPE TO PROVIDE A BASE FOR DISCUSSION ABOUT WHAT ACTION WE SHOULD TAKE AGAINST THIS LEGALISED (?) TORTURE TOWN. THROUGHOUT THE WEEK THERE WILL ALSO BE DISCUSSIONS MEETINGS TO SHARE IDEAS, FEARS, CONFIDENCE ECT. ON THE CAMP THERE WILL BE PRESS LIASON PEOPLE AND LEGAL SUPPORT. PLEASE COME SELF SUFFICIENT (AS AN INDIVIDUAL OR PART OF A GROUP) COME FOR THE WHOLE WEEK OR HOWEVER LONG YOU CAN MAKE IT.

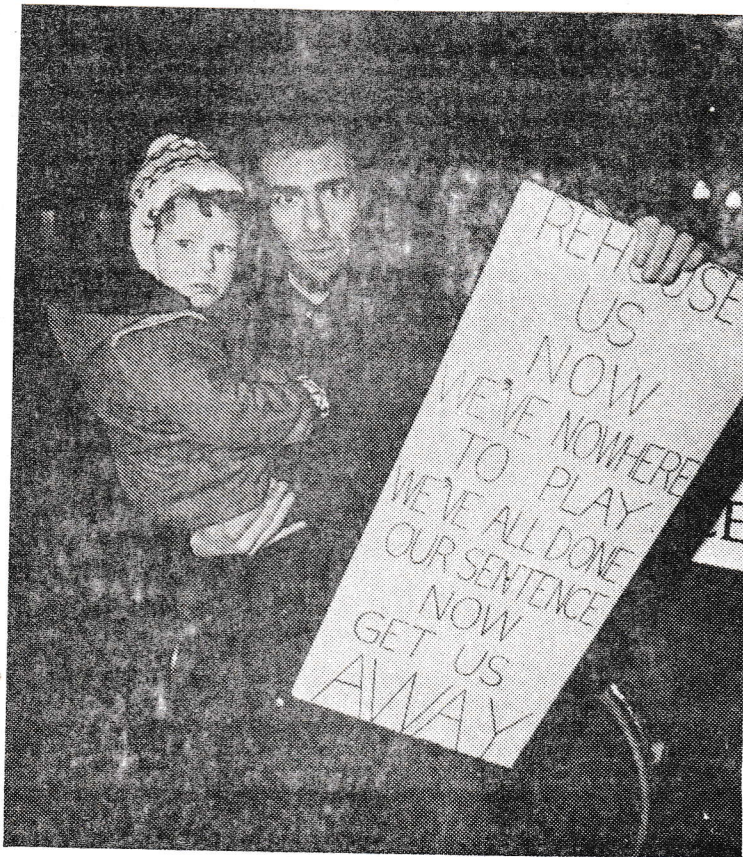
IF YOU HAVE GOT A TENT BRING IT ALONG, IF YOU HAVEN'T GET IN TOUCH WITH US NEARER THE DATE. WE MIGHT HAVE A TARPULIN TO BUILD A BENDER WITH. (CAN'T PROMISE THO!)



On Wednesday, March 26th, we went down to Debenhams. Taking our glass etching fluid with us, we wrote on five windows at the front of the store. This was an attempt to try and dissuade them from participating in the obscene fur industry. "FUR IS MURDER", "DEATH MONEY", "DEBENHAMS PROFIT FROM DEATH", "A.L.F.", and "SCUM" were written on the windows. Each at a cost of about £500, we could have done more, but we were getting paranoid. It's a very effective way of getting a message over to the public and we did this when there were a lot of people around, yet no one tried to stop us. It takes a few hours to work, so there's a problem if someone tries to wipe it off. If you support our work and want to do anything, then go out and claim A.L.F. responsibility. Send a report to the A.L.F. supporters group, Box no. in Mushroom, and it will be put in the Newsletter.

STOP PRESS...STOP PRESS...STOP PRESS...STOP PRESS...
ON TUESDAY 8TH APRIL, FIVE MORE WINDOWS WERE ATTACKED. DEBENHAMS WEREN'T SO QUICK TO REPLACE THEM THIS TIME. THESE ACTIONS ARE COSTING THEM THOUSANDS OF POUNDS.

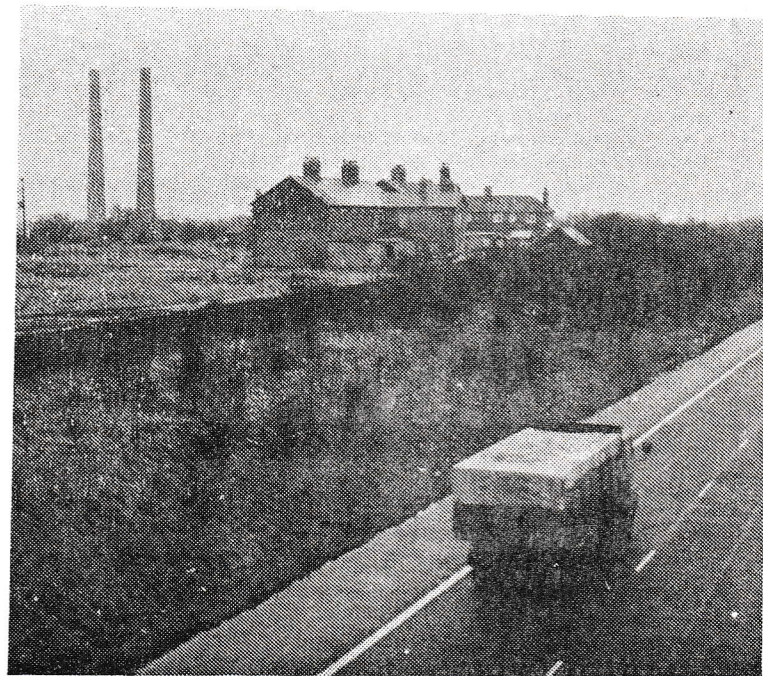
BRICKYARD COTTAGES



The tenants group at Brickyard is organising a campaign against Broxtowe, to close down the slums. Councillors and MPs have been petitioned to try and enlighten them. Housing Welfare Groups, social workers, and even teachers have condemned the council's policy. The media has taken a small part in giving them some publicity, but so far the council has dug their heels in and things are moving slowly. Pickets have been organised outside meetings of the council and the tenants group have asked for support. These pickets are getting progressively larger and more effective, though more people are still needed to make the picket successful. In the face of increasing police harassment and the 'hit and run' driving tactics of many of the councillors, our joining the picket line is one of the few ways in which we can support the tenants struggle for what is theirs by right. DECENT HOMES FOR ALL..

LITCH.

We have news of Broxtowe council's revolutionary scheme to improve housing conditions, tenants rights & welfare services... called Brickyard Cottages, its a few semi-derelict buildings by a disused brickworks, just 30 yards from the M1, but a mile from the nearest access road. Hardly the sort of place you'd expect anyone living, yet Broxtowe Council, in their infinite wisdom, send families with babies and young children to live in these buildings - where the only heating is a single coal fire, where the windows leak, the doors won't shut, black mould covers the walls and parents are frightened to let their kids outside into what is literally a minefield of old shafts, crumbling buildings, deep holes, and only a single poxy fence before the M1. Since they were sent there, people have lost their jobs, their kids, their health....all for what reason? Because council tenants have got into rent arrears. Instead of offering welfare advice, the ever-enterprising Broxtowe have rehoused them in these slums - part of their punishment code for 'bad' tenants. While decent council houses stand empty the Brickyard tenants are forced to live in hell while they skimp and save to pay back 'their' council and then wait for the housing dept. to 'find' them accomodation.



DALE SPENDER

About one hundred woolly-jumpered women met in the Central Library to hear Dale Spender speak. The discussion centred mainly around her new book and the many women whose whose writing has been ignored, lost, or not reprinted. It was women who invented the novel and in the nineteenth century there was a network of women writers who read and criticised each other's work. For every Jane Austen there are another ten or twenty who aren't in print.

At the moment there are women's publishing houses and a lot of women's books are in print - but are womens' writings safe? Dale seemed to think that it was hopeful that so many women were

aware and had come to the meeting, yet the majority of women there were middle class, probably some of them professional, hardly representative. The majority of women are working class and heterosexual, stuck in mindless jobs, married with kids, 'just' a housewife. Working class women live much as they always have, womens' liberation has been a limited liberation for middle class women.

After the meeting I spoke to a working class woman who said she felt she hadn't fitted in, the language and the tone of the meeting were strange to her. If the womens' movement alienates so many women in this way, how can we ever be liberated or womens' writers be safe? Only a movement which includes all women and works for a total change in society can gain and keep true freedom for women.

Yet, when I mention class, I am accused of being divisive or a 'male identifier'. Working class women live in a totally different culture to middle class women and cannot relate to womens' movements, working class women have no maternity leave, are rejected by the education system, many are isolated in the home. The womens' movement is no longer a campaigning or political organisation; if they don't care or can't relate, shouldn't anarchist women?

MAGIC M.

MIDLANDS ANARCHIST GET-TOGETHER

The Midlands Anarchist Conference was held on a rainy weekend on the 15th & 16th of March. About one hundred and fifty anarchists turned up mainly with the intention of forming a midlands network, but also to attend workshops, get to know each other and eat and drink alot.

There were organised workshops around issues such as the Peace Movement, Ecology, industrial struggles ; but many 'spontaneous' workshops were suggested at the introductory session which made for about fifteen in all.

There was alot of discussion generated in the workshops, but perhaps everyone was a little too polite since there were no real arguments even though some people held some pretty controversial views. A certain Green Anarchist, for example, seemed to have the idea that the revolution would start in the mountains and jungles, we will come down from the hillsides - our loin-cloths flapping and waving our service issue hand guns - to 'erode' government from the edges. There was one moment in the Industrial Struggles workshop when a 'council communist' was trying his best to bait the D.A.M speaker but at least it raised the issue of the Trade Union Movement - T.U's as a hierarchy or as rank and file organisations? Should we involve ourselves with the 'bread and butter' issues of the T.U'S or should we be calling for revolution ?

A 'What is Anarchism ?' workshop took place in which some of the participants seemed a bit confused themselves, and no-one could quite agree Perhaps the most popular workshops were those

about Stonehenge(what to do and how to help) and the dreaded debate.....Violence vs Non-Violence. It sometimes surprises me how violent pacifists can be in defending their point of view

The usual arguments were thrown up - what constitutes violence, do revolutions have to involve violence? The violence of men was also raised and how women can cope with it, no real answers seemed to come out, perhaps because there aren't any.

The glorious social arrived, everyone ate all the food and I didn't get any. There were a couple of complaints about the music, apparently a couple of pacifists had got hold of the tape machine, after fighting everyone off they insisted on playing Madonna, throwing cans and shouting 'violent scum.'

It perhaps wasn't wise to schedule the Network meeting for first thing on Sunday morning but everyone turned up and looked enthusiastic in a very hung-over sort of way. The Network is now in existance! Marked by regular newsletters compiled by a delegate meeting, and two conferences a year, one a summer camp, which this year will be in that restful resort - sunny Sheffield.

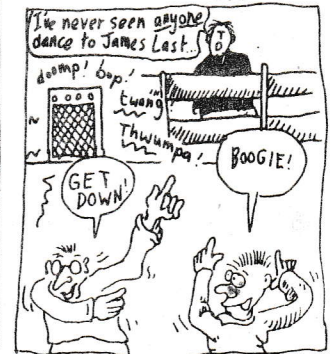
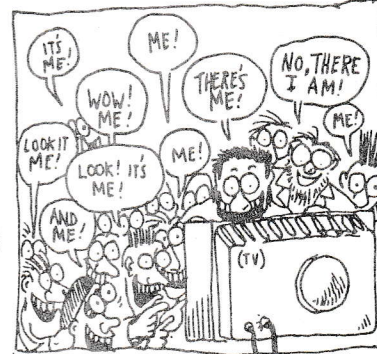
It was decided not to have aims and objectives for the Network since no-one would agree anyway but simply to have it as a means of mutual support and contact. Perhaps what was most marked about the weekend was the variety of anarchists there; from the Peace movement to animal rights, to syndicalists, semi-marxists and even some workers ! Maybe they had to be polite !

There were alot more workshops than I've mentioned - women's space and mens workshops on both days, lots of people 'spontaneously' doing the washing up and people sitting in the corridors with funny hair do's. There were also videos all weekend, plus workshops on the @ media and art, lots of bookstalls and copies of Green Anarchist.

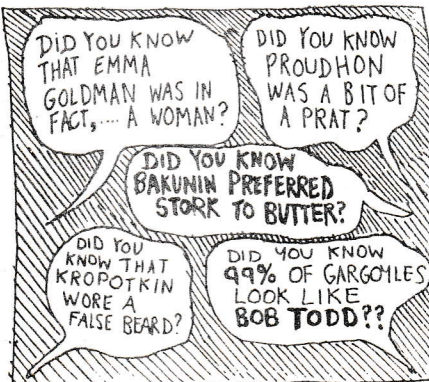
Everybody drifted off on the Sunday after eating enough to keep them going for a while, on the whole it was a good weekend although I wish I'd had a good argument with someone - but there is always the Summer Camp.

GOOD THINGS ABOUT THE AN CONFERENCE

MEETING NEW, EXCITING "PEOPLE", THE EXCELLENT FOOD, THE 'STOP THE CITY' VIDEO, THE SOCIAL....



THE INTERESTING INFORMATION... THE POST-SOCIAL HANGOVERS... AND THE CONSTRUCTIVE PRACTICAL RESULTS!



ONE HUNDRED YEARS AGO THIS

MAY

During the '860's in America began the struggle for the eight-hour working day. After pressure the government half-heartedly passed laws granting the eight-hour day. The laws were not enforced and were completely ineffectual. The trades union organised a national campaign which was to culminate with a series of strikes and protests on May Day in 1886 - exactly one century ago.

Chicago was the main centre for agitation for the shorter day, and in the city the Anarchists were in the forefront of the movement. Since February 1886 a strike had been in progress at the McCormick Harvester Machine Company in Chicago. When on May 1st strikes for the eight hour day swept Chicago, the workers there joined in. On Monday May 3rd a mass meeting was held which was joined by McCormick strikers. Whilst the meeting was in progress it was brutally attacked by the police who killed one striker and injured many more.

A protest meeting was called for the next day. It was quite peaceable but as it dispersed the police again intervened. Suddenly a bomb was thrown from out of the crowd at the police. The police opened fire on the crowd. One policeman died instantly from the explosion; six died later and seventy were injured - many apparently wounded in the confusion by police fire. Typically how many spectators were murdered by the police was never found out.

In the weeks following, the police rounded up all known anarchists and socialists. Finally in June, eight men were charged with conspiracy to murder: Albert Parsons, August Spies, Samuel Fielden, Michael Schnab, Adolf Fischer, George Engel, Louis Lingg and Oscar Neebe. No proof was ever offered by the state that any of the men had thrown the bomb. Indeed, only three of them had actually been at the meeting on May 4th. The prosecuting attorney made it quite clear why they had been arrested.

"Law is on trial. Anarchy is on trial. These men have been selected, picked out by the grand jury and indicted because they were leaders. They are no more guilty than the thousands who follow them. Gentlemen of the jury; convict these men, make examples of them, hang them and you save our institutions, our society."

On August 19th they were all found guilty and five sentenced to death. In his speech Spies, who was one of those to be executed said,

"If you think by hanging us you can stamp out the labour movement ... the movement from which the downtrodden millions, the millions who toil in want and misery expect salvation - if this is your opinion, then hang us! Here you will tread upon a spark, but there and there, behind you and up in front of you, and everywhere, flames blaze up. It is a subterranean fire. You cannot put it out."

Field, Neebe and Schnab who were sentenced to life imprisonment were ultimately pardoned - as if the state could wipe clean the years they spent in prison - in June 1893 with rabid opposition from the respectable press.

Louis Lingg committed suicide in prison the day before the execution. On November 11th 1887 Parsons, Spies, Engel and Fischer were hanged. On the scaffold Spies cried out one last sentence

"There will come a time when our silence will be more powerful than the voices you strangle today!"

REMEMBER MAY DAY

MOLLY
McQUIRE

HEDGEHQ

BOGVILLE CONFERENCE

THERE'S SOMETHING ABOUT THE REDDITCH DELEGATES THAT I DON'T LIKE...

WONDER WHERE THE ANTI-TANK WEAPONS WORKSHOP IS?



peace

THROUGH

NATO

IN NOTTINGHAM, ON APRIL 7TH, ROY GRANTHAM (GENERAL SECRETARY OF APEX), FRESH FROM SELLING OUT TO WEAPONS-MANUFACTURERS PLESSEYS, ADDRESSED AN EAGER MEETING OF SUITS, TWINSETS, CNDERS AND ANARCHISTS ON PEACE THROUGH NATO. HIS TALK WAS ENTITLED "A TRADE UNIONISTS VIEW OF DEFENCE", AND, ALTHOUGH HE NEVER ONCE DISCUSSED UNIONS OR WORKING PEOPLE (AND BECAME QUITE MARDY WHEN IT WAS SUGGESTED HE DID) IT WAS A FASCINATING EVENING. MR. GRANTHAM'S MAIN WORRY IS THAT "LOOPY LITTLE NATIONS (HE MEANT PAKISTAN, NOT BRITAIN) WILL GO LOOPIER AND BLOW US ALL SKY-HIGH, IN HIS VIEW, RUSSIA, AND CERTAINLY AMERICA, ARE MORE TRUST-WORTHY - ESPECIALLY AS THEY'LL PROBABLY GO A BOMB (?) FOR HIS NEW BRILLIANTLY SUETBRAINED SCHEME, GIVE ALL YOUR NUKES TO THE UNITED NATIONS, WHO WILL THEM USE THEM TO ELIMINATE THE WINNER OF ANY NUCLEAR WAR, WITH DETERRANCE LIKE THAT, WE'LL ALL BE ABLE TO SLEEP SOUNDLY. (PLEASE SEND ALL YOUR UNWANTED CRUISE MISSILES, TRIDENTS, SS20s ETC TO PEACE THROUGH NATO, C/O I FLORENCE BOOT COURT, NOTTINGHAM. DON'T BOTHER WITH STAMPS.)

BUT ROYBOY CLAIMS WE DON'T HAVE ALL THAT MUCH TO FEAR; NUCLEAR WEAPONS ARE DOING A GREAT JOB, THEY'VE GIVEN US PEACE IN EUROPE SINCE 1945 (DID SOMEBODY SAY IRELAND?) AND WHO CARES ABOUT HIROSHIMA, EL SALVADOR, VIETNAM, NICARAGUA ETC ANYWAY?

SOME OF THE AUDIENCE FOUND IT UNBEARABLE TO KEEP QUIET THROUGHOUT THIS REACTIONARY TWADDLE. IT HELPED A BIT WHEN THE PEACE THROUGH NATO BANNER FELL OFF THE WALL, BUT STILL THERE WERE POINTS TO MAKE AND FACTS TO PRESENT VERBALLY. THE SUITS AND TWINSETS HAD WELL THOUGHT-OUT REPLIES TO OUR COMMENTS. THEY WERE ABLE TO SIMULTANEOUSLY SPIT AND HISS "GO BACK TO RUSSIA", "FENIAN FILTH "SHUT UP" AND "DON'T COME BACK". ONE MAN WAS INFORMED THAT HE HAD BEEN A STALINIST UNTIL THREE YEARS BEFORE HE WAS BORN, POSSIBLY, EVEN LONGER AGO, MR GRANTHAM WAS ONCE A TRADES UNIONIST.

ALTHOUGH WE'D LIVENED UP A POTENTIALLY DEADLY BORING MEETING NO END AND BEEN VERY ENTERTAINED, WE MUST REMEMBER THAT THIS PEACE THROUGH NATO MOB ARE MORE THAN SELF-CONGRATULATORY IDIOTS - THEY'RE ALSO RICH, POWERFUL AND DANGEROUS. THEY'RE GOVERNMENT SPONSORED, DEDICATED TO PRESERVING THE WORST OF THE STATUS QUO (THE "PEACE") AND THEIR OWN PRIVILEGE - AND DOING SO BY THE MASSIVE ACCUMULATION OF WEAPONS OF DESTRUCTION. NATO IS AN AMERIKAN CONTROLLED MILITARY ALLIANCE OF 16 NATION-STATES DESIGNED TO PROTECT AMERIKA'S IMPERIALIST ROLE. IT KEEPS US ON THE BRINK OF NUCLEAR DESTRUCTION. ONLY JUSTICE BRINGS PEACE. IF WE WANT A FUTURE, THESE PEOPLE MUST BE OPPOSED EVERY STEP OF THE WAY.

I'LL LEAVE THE FINAL WORD TO CHAIRMAN PROFESSOR REGAN'S SLIPPERY TONGUE: "WHATEVER YOUR OPINIONS, I'M SURE EVERYONE HERE HAS BEEN VERY OPPRESSED BY MR. GRANTHAM."

N.B. WHAT WAS THE MECHANIC'S INSTITUTE THINKING OF WHEN IT LET PEACE THROUGH NATO HIRE A ROOM FROM THEM? ASK THEM AT BIRBECK HOUSE, TRINITY SQUARE. RED SCUM

Stonehenge

Having read several anarchist papers lately all of which have commented on the march against police repression and how violent the police are etc, blah,blah same old story, and most of which commented on the Feb 6th demo at Molesworth saying, yet again, how ineffective CND are and how pointless the whole thing was, I get the impression that we (as anarchists) have got an awful lot of criticisms to make (verbal of course) but when it comes down to getting out and directly confronting authority large numbers of anarcho cynics are nowhere to be seen.

Last June in Wiltshire, the wiltshire police mounted its biggest operation to date, the brutal destruction of a convoy of people on its way to enjoy itself at Stonehenge. Road blocks, riot shields, riot helmets, truncheons, helicopters, all the things we've moaned about in the past and will probably moan about in the future, but where were the keen anarchists, the true spirited revolutionaries defiant of everything, the people too direct and switched on for CND; at home, at Knebworth with Tommy (I understand the kids) Vance or amongst the 2CV's and pop stars at Glastonbury Anything but a free festival. Oh yes we all condemned the police afterwards - fascists, pigs, nazis etc. echoed round the cynical ghettos. Stonehenge is important to us as anarchists, what right have the authorities

got to tell anyone where to go? What right have they got to unleash their bully boys in blue (yet again) on a bunch of hippies, punks, pregnant women, babies etc, off to have a good time and to celebrate or pray to their personal gods (sic)(and sic to you too.-typist). We all know the answer, Stonehenge 1986 is on and needs to be supported, a festival was held at the Westbury White Horse, there were a couple of thousand of us at one point (in my estimation) but I got the feeling of defeat, with more support we could have made it to the stones, we could have shown the authorities that some of the people they profess to govern aren't going to simply lie down and take their fucked up law and perverted system, Surely this is what we've been TALKING about for so long.

Let's go for it and take back an inch of our dignity, and maybe, just maybe some day that inch may become a mile. TAKE BACK THE LAND. CREATE ANARCHY HERE AND NOW much love peace and positivism the lincoln anarchists (well two of us anyway)

Stonehenge road closed for hippies

WILTSHIRE County Council yesterday agreed to a request from the chief constable, Mr Donald Smith, for an order closing the A344 at Stonehenge from May 19 to June 29 in a bid to prevent a repeat of last year's clashes between police and hippies attempting to hold an illegal pop festival at the monument.

English Heritage, the National Trust and 20 local landowners are seeking High Court injunctions against named people to prevent trespass.

GUARDIAN 10. APRIL 86

ANARCHY eh?

It's interesting to note the reactions of the people to whom we try and street sell this paper. Some pass by and smile benignly ("Ah, Idealists"), whilst others are barely able to conceal the belly-laughter that the word Anarchy often seems to provoke. Occasionally people will snigger or become hostile. But after indifference and disinterest, by far the most common response is that look of quiet shock, revealed in the quick "No", the shake of the head and the raised eyebrows. "Anarchist News...but that means Anarchy! ANARCHY!!". And with an "Oh, my God" your affable street seller is transformed into a horned anti-christ, the bringer of hell and destruction.

Obviously these are 'respectable' citizens, so I wonder how they'd react to the following assertion - Anarchy is all around us. Insistent and irrepresible it emerges often when we least expect it. Beryl and George, it lurks on every street corner!

But first let's get some idea of what we mean by Anarchy. Anarchism takes as it's ideal a society where it is the communities and the individuals within them who take the decisions affecting their lives. Where power and authority are so decentralised that we can all take part in their exercise. In other words anarchism means self-management and self-control. People control their own communities, workers manage their own work-places, individuals exercise control over their everyday lives. Individual and Communal self-management furthermore implies Individual and Communal self-responsability. A reasonably congenial ideal I would have thought and not the stuff of anti-christs at all. Of course, such a short definition raises innumerable more questions than it answers. But it's an adequate starting point, for if we take this as our model of Anarchy then it's not difficult to see 'Anarchy In Action' all around us.



Old age pensioners taking up the cudgels on their own behalf. From the Gulbenkian Foundation's annual report, 1981. Photo: Caro Webb.

Kropotkin once gave as an example of Anarchy the Royal Lifeboat Institution. How ironic that all those well meaning folk who drop their spare

ten pence pieces into the tins on flag days are contributing to an Anarchist organisation! And recently I read that in response to the suggestion that the lifeboats would be best left to the Government, a crew member replied "Good God no! It's far too important."

The point is that not only should people organise things without the interference of the



Government, bureaucracy and so-called expertese. But that they can and do, efficiently and effectively.

Often we read in the local press stories of 'Militant Mums' organising in their neighbourhood. They might have taken over spare land on which to build a playground, or have squatted an empty building to use as a local centre. All too often such action is taken in response to a tragedy, maybe a child has been killed by some pillock who took a short cut through the backstreets where she or he used to play. And unfortunately it's often taken only because the usual 'channels' have proven ineffective or indifferent, rather than something done as a matter of first choice. Of course, it's always patronised in the local paper with the logo 'human interest' story tagged on just to show that it's not so very important. And then there's the councillors who leap on the bandwagon offering sympathy and support after the event and "...er, by the way the elections are next month."

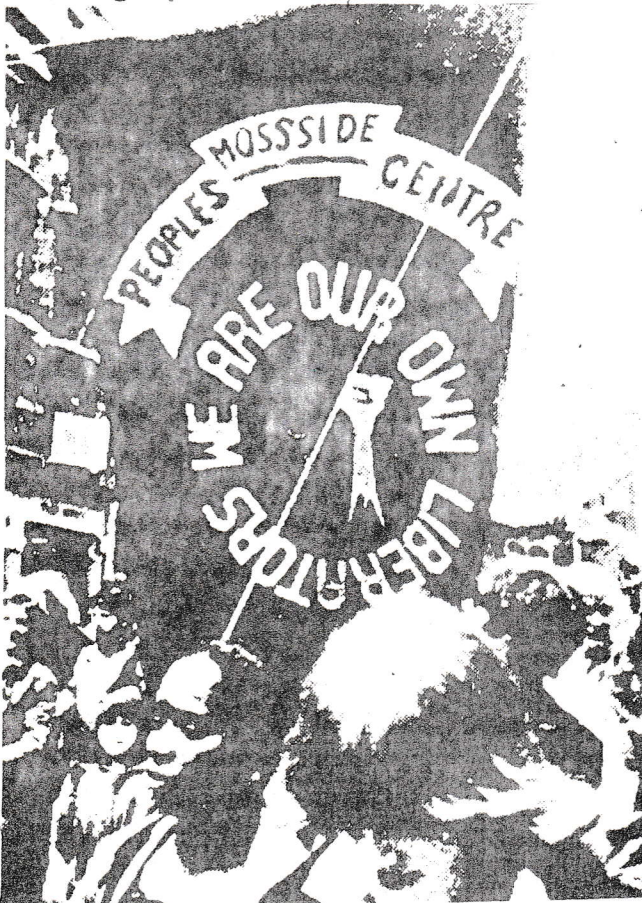
But this is Anarchy. Here we have people organising for themselves, without the mediation of parties or officials, often facing great hostility from these people. But people can do it and people do do it.

Yet, not only are people able to organise around their needs, they're far better at it than the local authorities (or indeed any Governmental institution) anyway. In fact I doubt whether human needs figure particularly highly as a priority when councils come to make decisions. Human beings are meesy and unpredictable and the bane of the administrators life. Administrators prefer files, statistics, numbers, charts in fact anything that they can manipulate, control and store away in the office computer. People, well yeah, they're unfortunate inevitability, but they're a damn pain in the arse.

When I lived in Hull there was a case, probably typical of many others, just coming to it's final and disappointing conclusion that illustrates all this. Now Hull has a pretty shitty housing situation and quite rightly the council had got around to doing something. Though it had taken them a long time to even notice the problem (not much chance of loosing the election you see, Hull is a Labour rotten-borough).

The solution they adopted with all the subtlety and finesse we might expect, was that of the sledge hammer and the bulldozer. Knock the fucking things down and never mind the residents, they're 'rehousable'. Now, unbeknown to the council, houses however shitty are also homes. And streets, however run down and neglected, are also communities with a sense of identity and a fellow-feeling. But sentiment can't be filed away in the cabinet, so it's put on the side as an unknown 'variable' and an irritant, and forgotten about.

Also unbeknown to the council some people didn't agree with the proposed solution. They quite liked their neighbourhood and preferred to stay there. In Walton Street they organised a survey, arranged a public meeting and started a tenants group. How awkward.



Now amongst the residents was a man with some architectural experience, a Norwegian bloke who'd moved in a few years before. The skills he was able to muster were made available to the residents and alternative plans were drawn up. Detailed and based on extensive research (including a feasibility study) they reflected the needs and wants of the people themselves. Notice that as Anarchists we're not against 'expertise' as such, only against so-called 'expertise' that is used over people's heads. Here the residents were fully involved and not merely informed afterwards. Armed with these alternative plans the group entered into a long and exhausting fight with the council (ultimately reaching the European Court of Human Rights). Ultimately they lost and their community was destroyed. They lost despite the fact that their own proposals would have worked out far cheaper than did the councils own. The council didn't want to know, they refused even to take them as a basis for discussion. It seems that people just don't matter, what matters is that officials and councillors make decisions and woe betide anyone who challenges that right. But councils take decisions like children paint by numbers, the human element counts for Sweet F.A.

But here again we have 'Anarchy In Action'. People organising and planning for themselves, efficiently and effectively. The Walton Street plans were not only reflective of need, which should always be our overriding concern, but were also practicable. Furthermore, they represented less of a drain on resources (they were cheaper and emphasised rehabilitation rather than demolition), which as we're constantly being reminded by apologists for the status quo, are in short supply.

The housing problem is one of the major crises of contemporary Britain. Shortages are widespread, and yet, because either property is regarded as a profitable commodity or else local authorities don't like to loose control of it, a great deal of this property stands empty. And here we encounter some more 'Anarchy In Action'.

Squatters arn't the people the popular press crack them up to be. They're not the squalid, louse-ridden elements some proverbial Granny is always finding in her retirement bungalow. Shelter is a basic human need, it shouldn't be a luxury dependent upon your ability to pay. Squatters provide themselves with that need, and there's plenty of wasted property out of which they can do it. You see that because the local authority's main concern is control and the landlord's is profit people go without housing. Squatters, who are it seems far more rational and able than either of these, organise this necessity for themselves.

If i were to say that in the Miner's strike we witnessed Anarchy, the unconvinced cynic might reply "Yeah. 'Course we bloody did" and they might bleat on about picket line disorder, violence and intimidation. But the more intelligent will realise that this isn't what i mean by Anarchy and that our detractor is no doubt confused. It appears that people have this odd notion that Anarchy somehow equates with chaos. But like the miners or loath them, support their cause or damn them, no one can but be impressed by their struggle. Yet the best thing about that year wasn't the length of time they stuck it out, but rather it concerns the kind of activities we saw emerge. Support groups sprang up the length and breadth of the land, people voluntarily got together to help the miners, materially, financially and morally. We witnessed a sense of community second to none, the strike wasn't fought by individual strikers but by whole communities, miners, miners' wives, the children and supporters all fought together. Whether it was against the NCB, the police who laid seige to their villages, the Government who waged a propaganda war, or the scabs who undermined so viciously the strike effort, the mining communities worked, fought, organised and lived as communities. And they did this without any controlling authority, party leadership or union baron dictates. They did it because it was natural that they should do so.

In the light of this example perhaps we can redefine Anarchy as being the most 'natural' form of social organisation.

So, Mums and Miners, Squatters and Residents are all at one time or another Anarchists. I could real off a whole load of other examples, in fact we all could. For nearly every day of our lives finds us at some activity or other organising and acting outside of any Governmental channel or bureaucracy or recognised authority. Often acting in spite of these. Underneath it we're all Anarchists and the little devil's trying to get out.

The term we give to activity undertaken by people themselves, which stands opposed to action taken by others on 'behalf' of people is Direct Action. Now admittedly these few examples of Direct Action are isolated, and are taken as last resorts or one offs. Yet they happen all the time. As Anarchists we want Direct Action to be considered, not as a final act of desperation or as a temporary thing 'whilst we're in struggle' but as a matter of first principle. Anything else leaves us wide open to manipulation and subordination, by parties, managers, bosses, bureaucrats, in fact by anyone with a mind to telling folk what to do.

Compared to the resources available to the authorities, those that can be used by people wishing to act independantly seem so pathetic. Yet, with bags of enthusiasm, muscle, brain and perhaps an old duplicator, people have and always will creata small pockets of Anarchy. One day they'll get pissed off with the small space and demand the whole caboodle. Then things will really start happening.

ROB



EMMA'S ANARCHISM

"Anarchism: What It Really Stands For" is the title of an essay written c1911 by Emma Goldman. I believe it offers us some important insight into questions still asked by and of anarchists:

"Why do you not say how things will be operated under anarchism" Goldman asks of herself:

"Because I can not believe that anarchism can impose an iron-clad program or method on the future. The things every new generation has to fight, and which it can least overcome, are the burdens of the past, which holds us all in a net. Anarchism, at least as I understand it, leaves posterity free to develop its own particular systems, in harmony with its own needs. OUR own vivid imagination can not foresee the potentialities of a race set free from external restraints. How, then, can anyone assume to map out a line of conduct for those to come? We who pay dearly for every breath of pure, fresh air, must guard against the tendency to fetter the future. If we succeed in clearing the soil from the rubbish of the past, we will leave to posterity the greatest and safest heritage of all ages!"



Goldman argues that through out history all new progressive ideas have been met with huge opposition and that:

"Anarchism could not hope to escape the fate of all the other ideas of innovation. Indeed, as the most revolutionary and uncompromising innovator anarchism must need meet with the combined ignorance and venom of the world it aims to construct."

Goldman then explains two of the principal objections to anarchism, ones that will be familiar with us today:

"First, anarchism is impractical, though a beautiful idea. Second, anarchism stands for violence and destruction, hence it must be repudiated as vile and dangerous"

Goldman questions Shaw's notion of a practical scheme that already exists or could be carried out under the present conditions, pointing out that these conditions are precisely the problem and any scheme that accepts them is either foolish or wrong:

"Anarchism is indeed practical. More than any other idea, it is helping to do away with the wrong and foolish, more than any other idea it is building and sustaining a new life"

Centering the "violence" argument Goldman describes ignorance as the most violent element in our society, and the one which anarchism always opposes, and goes on:

"Anarchism... destroys not health disease but parasitic growths that feed on the life's essence of society?" Goldman then gives a definition of anarchism as:

"the philosophy of a new social order based on liberty unrestricted by man-made law; The theory that all forms of government rest on violence and are, therefore wrong as well as unnecessary"

We now come to a crucial element, one that further separates anarchism from other left-wing theories:

"While all anarchists agree that the main evil today is an economic one, they maintain that the solution to that evil can only be brought about only through the consideration of every phase of life-individual, as well as the collective: the internal as well as the external Phases."

To do this:

"Anarchism has declared war on the pernicious influences which have so far prevented the harmonious blending of individual and society."

The three main obstacles to freedom, according to Goldman, are religion, property and government:

"God is everything, "man" is nothing, says religion.... break your mental fetters, says anarchism to "man" for not until you think and judge for yourself will you get rid of the dominion of darkness, the greatest obstacle to all progress."

"Property is robbery" said Proudhon. "Yes, but without risk to the robber", adds Goldman. She continues

"The only demand that property recognises is its own gluttonous appetite for greater wealth, because wealth means power: the power to enslave, to outrage, to degrade.... people are being robbed not merely of the products of their labour, but of the power of free initiative, of originality, and the interest in, or desire for, the things they are making."

Anarchism seeks a society where people can choose the mode of work. The conditions of work—so it's economic arrangements most consist of voluntary productive and distributive associations, gradually developing into free communism, as the best means of producing with the least waste of human energy. Anarchism however realises the right of the individual, or numbers of individual, to arrange at all times for other forms of work, in harmony with their tastes and desires"

This state of affairs can only come to be in the absence of the third and most powerful enemy of social equality—the State.



Goldman quotes Emerson - "All government in essence is tyranny."

AND adds:

"It matters not whether it is government by divine right or majority rule. In every instance it's aim is the absolute subordination of the individual."

But don't governments maintain social harmony?

"Order derived through submission and maintained by terror" Argues Goldman,

"Is not much of a safe guaranty; yet that is the only "order" that government has maintained."

True social harmony grows naturally out of solidarity of interests. In a society where those who always work never have anything, while those who never work have enjoy everything, solidarity of interests is non-existent; hence social harmony is but a myth. The only way organised authority meets this

grave situation is by extending still greater privileges to those who have already monopolised the earth, and by still further enslaving the disinherited masses. Thus, the entire arsenal of the government - Laws, Police, Soldiers, the courts, legislatures, prisons - is strenuously engaged in "Harmonising" the most antagonistic elements in society."



But what about crime? In Britain at the moment all the main parties seem keen to be identified with "law and order" and the reduction or at least punishment of crime. Don't we need governments to deal with crime? Goldman points out that the state is itself the greatest criminal of all, stealing in the form of taxes, killing in the form of war and capital punishment. She continues:

"So long as every institution of today, economic, conspires to misdirect human energy into wrong channels; so long as most people are out of place doing things that they hate to do, living a life they loath to live, crime will always be inevitable, and all the laws and the statutes can only increase, but never do away with, crime."

The alternative?

"In destroying government and statutory laws, anarchism proposes to rescue the self-respect and independence of the individual from all constraints and invasion from authority."

Now comes a familiar retort - what about human nature?

"Every fool, from King to policeman, from the flat-headed parson to the visionless dabbler in science, presumes to speak authoritatively of human nature. The greater the mental charlatan, the greater their insistence on the wickedness and the weaknesses of human nature. Yet can one speak of it today, with every heart fettered, maimed and wounded?"

Just as an experimental study of animals in captivity is useless, worse than useless, so we can not gauge the potential of human nature when people are now so confined:

"Freedom, expansion, opportunity, and above, all, peace and repose, alone can teach us the dominant factors of human nature and it's wonderful possibilities."

So now do we arrive at this stage, what methods must be used?

"Methods must grow out of economic needs of each place and clime, and of the intellectual and temperamental requirements of the individual.... Anarchism does not stand for military drill and uniformity; it does however stand for the spirit of

the revolt in whatever form, against everything that hinders human growth. All anarchists agree in that, as they also agree in their opposition to the political machinery, as a means of bringing about the great social change."

Even if the workers have their own representatives?

Goldman is emphatic:

"Anarchism... stands for direct action, the open defiance of, and resistance to all laws and restrictions, economic, social and moral. But defiance and resistance are illegal. There in lies our salvation. Everything illegal necessitates integrity, self reliance and courage."

Goldman argues that it was direct action that brought about votes for all, the liberation of North America from the English king, the ending of slavery and the forming of trade unions. What she wrote 75 years ago is equally true today-

"Every great strike, in order to win, must realize the importance of the solidaric general protest."

Not just in industry:

"Direct action is equally potent in the environment of the individual. Direct action against the authority of the shop, direct action against the authority of the law, direct action against the meddling authority of our moral code is the logical, consistent method of anarchism."

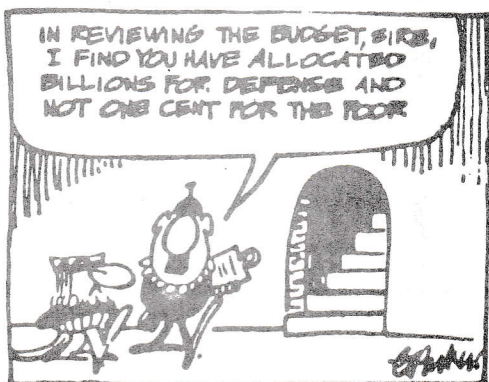


I'll end with Goldman's reply to the last objection will it not lead to revolution?

"Indeed it will. No real social change has ever come about with out a revolution. People are either not familiar with history, or they have not yet learned that revolution is thought carried into action."

(The full essay is in "Red Emma Speaks," published by "Welpwood House")

Dave B.



RIGHT



Mushroom

— For the
last time?

ATTEMPTS ARE BEING MADE TO ARBITRATE IN THE DISPUTE BETWEEN MUSHROOM, CHRIS COOK AND THE ANARCHIST GROUP. WE ARE TAKING THIS ARBITRATION SERIOUSLY. THE ARBITRATORS HAVE WIDELY CIRCULATED A LETTER: 'THE MUSHROOM BOOKSHOP DISPUTE'. THE ARTICLE WHICH FOLLOWS IS AN ATTEMPT TO GIVE A FULLER HISTORY OF THE DISPUTE, AND TO EXPLAIN WHY SOME OF THE INCIDENTS REFERRED TO OCCURRED. WE REJECT ANY CLAIM THAT WE HAVE INTIMIDATED OR THREATENED VIOLENCE TO ANY OF THE MUSHROOM WORKERS.

BACKGROUND

MUSHROOM WAS SET UP IN 1972 BY CHRIS COOK AND KEITH LEONARD. CAPITAL USED WAS PERSONAL SAVINGS, ABOUT £600 IN ALL. MUSHROOM WAS SET UP IN THE WAKE OF HIPPIY PHILOSOPHY (THUS SELLING JOSS STICKS AND INDIAN BEDSPREADS AS WELL AS BOOKS) BUT WITH A STRONG ANARCHIST LEANING AS, AT THE TIME THE BUSINESS WAS SET UP, BOTH PARTNERS WERE ANARCHISTS. FOR THE FIRST FEW YEARS, PARTNERS' PAY FROM THE SHOP WAS ALMOST NON-EXISTANT - THEY GOT BY ON SOCIAL SECURITY AND PART TIME WORK.

IN 1978 CHRIS WAS PREGNANT, FURTHER MEMBERS JOINED THE SHOP AND CHRIS AND KEITH WITHDREW AN AMOUNT OF MONEY EQUIVALENT TO THE INITIATING CAPITAL PLUS INFLATION. THE BUSINESS WAS A LEGAL PARTNERSHIP, AND WE AGREED VERBALLY THAT ALL WORKERS WOULD BE PARTNERS, AND PEOPLE JOINING THE PARTNERSHIP WOULD NOT INTRODUCE CAPITAL AND PEOPLE CHOOSING TO GO WOULD NOT WITHDRAW CAPITAL. EVERYONE WAS PAID THE SAME WEEKLY AMOUNT, REGARDLESS OF PERSONAL WEALTH, FAMILY COMMITMENTS ETC.

DISAGREEMENTS

GRADUALLY AT THE END OF 1984/EARLY 1985, IT BECAME APPARENT THAT THERE WERE SOME FAIRLY FUNDAMENTAL POLITICAL DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE WORKERS. THESE HAD TO DO WITH SUCH THINGS AS WHETHER OR NOT WE WERE A POLITICAL SHOP, WHO WE WERE AIMED AT, WHAT OUR IMAGE WAS/SHOULD BE, HOW MONEY SHOULD BE SPENT. BY THIS TIME THE SHOP HAD BEEN DOING VERY WELL FINANCIALLY, WITH PARTNERS' PAY BEING £85 TAKE HOME PER WEEK. THIS WAS PARTLY DUE TO THE INTERVAL WHEN STRAIGHT BOOKSHOP COMPETITION IN NOTTINGHAM WAS ALMOST NONEXISTANT, AND MUSHROOM HAD THE MARKET JUST ABOUT TO THEMSELVES. A LOT OF EMPHASIS WAS ALSO BEING PLACED ON LIBRARY SUPPLY. WHEN PENGUIN AND WEBSTERS OPENED BRANCHES IN NOTTINGHAM, THERE WERE DISAGREEMENTS ON HOW TO HANDLE THE COMPETITION. MOST PARTNERS THOUGHT THEY HAD TO BE BETTER CAPITALISTS THAN THE CAPITALISTS; CHRIS THOUGHT MUSHROOM COULD AND SHOULD NEVER DO THIS, BUT INSTEAD SHOULD CONCENTRATE ON BEING A GOOD RADICAL SHOP. MORE EXPENSIVE "COFFEE TABLE" BOOKS AND ACADEMIC TITLES WERE STOCKED; CHRIS OBJECTED. A LOT OF MONEY WAS SPENT ON ITEMS TO IMPROVE THE SHOP'S IMAGE TO

MONEYED BOOKBUYERS - E.G. NEW SHELVING, ELECTRONIC CASH REGISTER, CLOCK, £12 SELLOTAPE DISPENSER, VAN ETC. ETC. MEANWHILE, SOME GROUPS ASKING FOR DONATIONS WERE BEING TURNED AWAY.

MUSHROOM HAD HAD A LOT OF SUPPORT FROM THE "RADICAL COMMUNITY" IN THE EARLY DAYS: PEOPLE HAD HELPED OUT WITH SERVING, MOVING PREMISES, DECORATING, STOCK-TAKING, PUBLICITY, DEFENDING FROM FASCISTS, SENDING CUSTOMERS ALONG ETC. BUT SOME OF THESE PEOPLE FELT THAT THEY AND THEIR POLITICS WERE NO LONGER APPRECIATED: NOW MUSHROOM WAS MORE CONCERNED WITH WEALTHIER PEOPLE.

ALL THESE THINGS CAUSED DISAGREEMENTS BETWEEN CHRIS COOK AND THE OTHER PARTNERS. MEETINGS BECAME VERY DIFFICULT, CHRIS FREQUENTLY FEELING OBLIGED TO GIVE WAY ON IMPORTANT ISSUES FOR THE SAKE OF CONSENSUS, AND BEGINNING TO FEEL ANGRY ABOUT THIS; BUT DECIDING SHE SHOULD STAY WITHIN MUSHROOM BECAUSE HER POLITICAL PERSPECTIVE NEEDED TO BE REPRESENTED.

THE CRUNCH

THINGS CAME TO A HEAD IN SPRING 1985. AT A MEETING WHICH CHRIS HAD BEEN UNABLE TO ATTEND, THE OTHER PARTNERS BANNED THE BEST-SELLING ANARCHIST PAPER "CLASS WAR". THEY CLAIMED IT WAS SEXIST AND VIOLENT. THEY HAD YET TO MAKE OUT A CASE THAT IT WAS SEXIST (THE FACT THAT "CLASS WAR" IS ANTI-THATCHER AND THATCHER CLAIMS TO BE A WOMAN WILL NOT DO) AND ARE QUITE HAPPY TO STOCK PLENTY OF OTHER VIOLENT MATERIAL (THOUGH MUCH OF IT IS MUCH MORE PROFITABLE) E.G. SCIENCE FICTION, JAMES BOND, TROT WRITINGS, IRISH REPUBLICAN BOOKS ETC ETC. THEN THEY BANNED THE ANARCHIST/SQUATTERS MAGAZINE "CROWBAR" - IT CONTAINED INSTRUCTIONS ON MAKING PETROL BOMBS AS WELL AS BRILLIANT ARTICLES ON CHILDCARE.

CHRIS COULD NOT ACCEPT THESE DECISIONS HAPPILY.

NOTTINGHAM ANARCHIST GROUP

THE ANARCHIST GROUP FIRST BECAME INVOLVED IN THE DISPUTE WHEN THEY WROTE MUSHROOM A LETTER ASKING FOR INFORMATION ON SHOP POLICY ON THREE MATTERS. THEY WERE ASKING AS CONCERNED AND INTERESTED CUSTOMERS. THE THREE MATTERS WERE: 1) STOCKING POLICY AND CENSORSHIP, THERE SEEMED TO BE SOME INCONSISTENCIES 2) DONATIONS, WHO WAS LIKELY TO GET THEM AND WHY 3) WAS MUSHROOM'S MARK-UP THE SAME FOR LOCALLY PRODUCED CAMPAIGN GOODS AS IT WAS FOR MASS-MARKET PRODUCTS, AND IF SO, WHY?

ALL THE PARTNERS EXCEPT CHRIS DECIDED IT WAS NONE OF THE ANARCHIST GROUP'S BUSINESS - MUSHROOM WAS AN INDEPENDENT AUTONOMOUS SHOP ANSWERABLE TO NO-ONE. CHRIS WAS HORRIFIED BY THIS ATTITUDE. THE ANARCHIST GROUP ASKED FOR A MEETING TO DISCUSS DIFFERENCES - MUSHROOM REFUSED TO ORGANISE ONE. THE ANARCHIST GROUP FELT THE ISSUES NEEDED DISCUSSING, SO SET UP A MEETING ANYWAY, INVITING MUSHROOM WORKERS ALONG. MUSHROOM AT FIRST SAID THEY WOULD COME, THEN DIDN'T. THEY DENOUNCED EFFORTS MADE TO PUBLICIZE THE MEETING WITH A LEAFLET WHICH WAS SO NEUTRAL THAT THEY FELT OBLIGED TO WARN PEOPLE THAT IT WASN'T AN "OFFICIAL" MUSHROOM LEAFLET. IT SEEMED THAT THEY WANTED TO FORBID US DISCUSSING THE SHOP.

THE SACKING

MUSHROOM SAY CHRIS RESIGNED. CHRIS SAYS SHE WAS SACKED. IT ALL HAPPENED IN MAY/JUNE 1985. PARRALLEL TO THE DEVELOPMENTS DESCRIBED ABOVE, A WORKERS MEETING WAS PROGRESSING AS USUAL, WITH PEOPLE (INCLUDING CHRIS) TAKING ON JOBS TO BE DONE IN THE FUTURE. THE FINAL ITEMS ON THE AGENDA WERE "CROWBAR" AND "LETTER FROM THE ANARCHIST GROUP". THESE ITEMS SOON TRANSFORMED THEMSELVES INTO "CHRIS", AND ONE PARTNER SAID TO HER THAT IT WOULD BE BETTER IF SHE LEFT THE BUSINESS. CHRIS WAS THEN HEAVILY PRESSURISED TO LEAVE BY ALL THE OTHER PARTNERS; SHE BECAME ANGRY AND EVENTUALLY SAID THAT SHE DIDN'T WANT TO WORK WITH PEOPLE LIKE THEM ANY MORE. THEN HER BABYSITTER PHONED AND SHE HAD TO GO HOME, WHERE, CALMED DOWN, SHE REVERTED TO HER PREVIOUS BELIEF THAT SHE MUST REMAIN IN MUSHROOM TO INFLUENCE IT. THE NEXT DAY SHE HAD TO STAY AT HOME TO LOOK AFTER HER DAUGHTER. THE DAY AFTER THAT SHE RETURNED TO WORK WITH A LETTER STATING THAT SHE DIDN'T WANT TO LEAVE. SHE WORKED AS NORMAL FOR THE REST OF THAT WEEK, EXCEPT THAT ON SEVERAL OCCASIONS SHE WAS LEFT RUNNING THE SHOP ON HER OWN WHILST THE OTHER PARTNERS TALKED TOGETHER ON THE PAVEMENT. A MESSAGE APPEARED IN

THE SHOP DIARY "NOTICE TO ALL: EMERGENCY COLLECTIVE MEETING JUNE 10TH, CALLED BY . . ." IT WAS CALLED BY ALL THE PARTNERS EXCEPT CHRIS AND ONE OTHER. CHRIS FOUND HER WORK FOR THAT WEEK VERY UNCOMFORTABLE AS THE OTHER WORKERS HAD MORE OR LESS SENT HER TO COVENTRY.

THE MEETING STARTED WITH COFFEE (BEWARE OF MEETINGS THAT START WITH COFFEE) AND THEN ONE OF THE PARTNERS TOLD CHRIS THAT SHE'D RESIGNED THE PREVIOUS WEEK AND COULDN'T CHANGE HER MIND. HER LETTER SAYING SHE DIDN'T WANT TO LEAVE WAS DESCRIBED AS A "RESIGNATION LETTER". CHRIS SAID SHE WANTED TO RECORD THE MEETING, THE OTHERS REFUSED, CHRIS ASKED WHY, THEY WOULDN'T EXPLAIN WHY, BUT AFTER CHRIS FELT SHE'D BEE INSULTED TOO MANY TIMES SHE SWITCHED THE MACHINE ON ANYWAY, THE OTHER PARTNERS TURNED THE POWER OFF, CHRIS SAID SHE WOULD RETURN TO WORK THE NEXT DAY AND WAS TOLD SHE COULDN'T, SHE SAID SHE WOULD AGREE TO GO IF GIVEN HER SHARE OF MUSHROOM'S ASSETS - THIS PROPOSAL WAS GREETED WITH HORROR.

CHRIS LEFT THE PREMISES BEFORE 8PM, THE OTHER PARTNERS STAYED IN THE SHOP ALL NIGHT, SOON AFTER THIS THEY CHANGED THE LOCKS TO KEEP CHRIS OUT (OF PREMISES FOR WHICH SHE IS STILL LEGALLY JOINTLY RESPONSIBLE) - SURELY AN UNNECESSARY ACT IF SHE HAD RESIGNED.

THE LAW

CHRIS FOUND HERSELF WITH NO INCOME: LEGALLY SHE OWNED 1/5TH OF MUSHROOM SO SHE COULD NOT RECEIVE SUPPLEMENTARY BENEFIT UNLESS SHE COULD PROVE THAT SHE HAD NO ACCESS TO HER ASSETS, SO SHE CONTACTED A SOLICITOR WHO WROTE HER A LETTER, HE ALSO WROTE TO MUSHROOM POINTING OUT THAT IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO SACK A PARTNER AND THAT THERE WERE THREE POSSIBLE LEGAL OUTCOMES: 1) CHRIS'S REINSTATEMENT 2) DISSOLUTION OF THE BUSINESS (SELLING UP AND DIVIDING THE ASSETS) OR 3) BUYING CHRIS'S SHARE OFF HER.

MUSHROOM FOUND SOLICITORS WHO THREATENED LEGAL ACTION IF CHRIS DID NOT SIGN A WITHDRAWAL SLIP FOR THE BUILDING SOCIETY, MUSHROOM HAD £15,000 IN THIS BUILDING SOCIETY, (THEY HAD TRIED TO WITHDRAW MONEY WITHOUT CHRIS'S SIGNATURE BUT WHEN THE BUILDING SOCIETY REALISED THEY'D BEEN PARTY TO AN ILLEGAL ACT THEY'D RECLAIMED THE MONEY AND FROZEN THE ACCOUNT.) CHRIS DIDN'T SIGN AND A FEW DAYS LATER FOUND HERSELF BEING CHASED AROUND BY SOLICITORS WHO EVENTUALLY SERVED A DOCUMENT INITIATING TWO COURT CASES: ONE FOR ACCESS TO THE FROZEN BUILDING SOCIETY FUNDS AND ONE ATTEMPTING TO DISINVEST CHRIS OF HER PARTNERSHIP INTEREST IN MUSHROOM.

THE FIRST COURT CASE OCCURRED IN AUGUST 1985, MUSHROOM HAD A BARRISTER WHO EXPLAINED THAT SOME OF THE MONEY WAS REQUIRED TO PAY PARTNERS' WAGES (.), CHRIS REPRESENTED HERSELF - HER SOLICITOR WAS ON HOLIDAY, HER LEGAL AID HAD NOT COME THROUGH AND MUSHROOM REFUSED A REQUEST FOR AN ADJOURNMENT, MUSHROOM WON ACCESS TO £7,500 - THIS CASE COST THEM £1,500.

THE SECOND CASE HAS YET TO GO AHEAD, AT THE MOMENT OF WRITING MUSHROOM HAVE REFUSED TO DROP IT, ALTHOUGH THE COSTS IT WOULD INCUR COULD CLOSE THE SHOP, ARGUMENTS AGAINST CHRIS IN THE AFFIDAVIT SWORN BY ONE OF THE PARTNERS INCLUDE HER ANARCHISM, AS CON-

TRUSTED WITH THEIR OWN RESPECTABLE PACIFISM. NOWHERE IS THERE ANY MENTION OF MUSHROOM'S USE OF ANARCHIST SYMBOLS AS PART OF THEIR ADVERTISING.

OUT-OF-COURT ARBITRATION

HAS GONE IN FITS AND STARTS, MANY PEOPLE HAVE BEEN CONCERNED AND TRIED TO MEDIATE AND GOT NOWHERE. AFTER THE SUMMER MEETING WHICH THE ANARCHIST GROUP ORGANISED, SEVERAL ANARCHISTS AND OTHERS WENT TO TALK TO THE PARTNERS, ONLY TO FEEL FOBBED OFF, THEY FELT THAT CLASS WAS A CENTRAL ISSUE, AND WAS NOT UNDERSTOOD BY MUSHROOM WORKERS WHO NOW HAD A COMFORTABLE LIFESTYLE FROM WHICH THEY FELT ABLE TO DICTATE OTHER PEOPLES' MORALITY.

A PEACE NEWS WORKER WAS CONTACTED BY MUSHROOM TO ACT AS A GO-BETWEEN, HE ACHIEVED AN AGREEMENT THAT HE, CHRIS AND SOMEONE FROM MUSHROOM WOULD GO TO SEE MUSHROOM'S ACCOUNTANT TO FIND OUT ABOUT THE VALUE OF THE BUSINESS, THE NEXT HE KNEW, MUSHROOM HAD GONE TO SEE THE ACCOUNTANT WITH THEIR SOLICITOR AND WITHOUT HIMOR CHRIS.

MUSHROOM PROMISED SOME PEOPLE THAT THEY WOULD ORGANISE A USERS' MEETING FOR SEPTEMBER 1985, THIS DIDN'T MATERIALISE, TO PRESS FOR A MEETING, AN ANARCHIST BEGAN SPEAKING OUT IN THE SHOP ON SATURDAYS, INFORMING CUSTOMERS OF THE ISSUES AND READING OUT RELEVANT MATERIALS: "CLASS WAR" (WHICH MUSHROOM HAD BANNED), JAMES BOND (WHICH MUSHROOM STOCKED) AND MUSHROOM'S AFFIDAVIT, HE HANDED OUT LEAFLETS WHICH SUMMARISED THE SITUATION AND EXPLAINED THAT HE WOULD CONTINUE SPEAKING IN THE SHOP ON SATURDAYS UNTIL MUSHROOM AGREED TO A FULL PUBLIC DISCUSSION.

EVENTUALLY A GROUP OF PEOPLE PERSUADED MUSHROOM TO ATTEND A PUBLIC MEETING, THEY INDEPENDENTLY ORGANISED AND PUBLICISED THIS MEETING FOR EARLY NOVEMBER, OVER 100 PEOPLE ATTENDED, BOTH SIDES GAVE THEIR VIEWS, MUSHROOM LIST'D A NUMBER OF THINGS WHICH HAD HAPPENED TO THEM SINCE CHRIS WAS SACKED/LEFT - THE IMPLICATION BEING THAT CHRIS AND/OR THE ANARCHIST GROUP WERE BEHIND THEM.

THE GENERAL VIEW OF THE PUBLIC MEETING WAS THAT A SPLIT HAD OCCURRED WITHIN MUSHROOM; AND THAT BOTH SIDES SHOULD TALK TO EACH OTHER OUT-OF-COURT, A GROUP OF THREE PEOPLE WAS NOMINATED, WHOSE BRIEF WAS TO FIND AN ARBITRATION PANEL ACCEPTABLE TO BOTH SIDES, THIS ATTEMPT GOT BOGGED DOWN WHEN MUSHROOM STILL HADN'T HANDED IN THEIR PROPOSALS OF ARBITRATORS AFTRE CHRISTMAS 1985.

AFTER MUSHROOM HAD CALLED THE POLICE TO ARREST AN ANARCHIST WHO HAD VISITED THE SHOP TO TALK TO THEM, THEY APPROACHED ANOTHER INDIVIDUAL AND ASKED HIM TO BEGIN NEGOTIATIONS, THESE NEGOTIATIONS ARE NOW IN PROGRESS - HOPEFULLY THEY WILL NOT GET BOGGED DOWNTHOUGH THERE HAVE BEEN UNHELPFUL SIGNS: E.G. TO SHOW THEIR COMMITMENT TO ARBITRATION, BOTH SIDES AGREED TO "COOLIT", NOT TO PROVOKE THE OTHER SIDE, SHORTLY AFTER THIS, NOTTINGHAM WAS FLOODED BY YELLOW LEAFLETS CLAIMING THAT "MUSHROOM MATTERS" AND THAT THE ANARCHIST GROUP WAS TRYING TO CLOSE THEM DOWN, THEY HAVE THE MONEY AND CONTACTS TO BE ABLE TO SPREAD THEIR SIDE OF THE STORY EASILY, THE SIGNS ARE NOW THAT THEIR CAMPAIGN HAS GONE NATIONAL, AND STILL THEY HAVEN'T DROPPED THE COURT CASE.

CHRIS COOK.

MUSHROOM GOT BIG BY ITS ASSOCIATION WITH RADICAL POLITICS AND THE SUPPORT OF PEOPLE INVOLVED IN THOSE POLITICS. IT HAS A LOT OF POWER AND MONEY, AND ITS EXISTANCE HAS MADE IT VIRTUALLY IMPOSSIBLE FOR ANYONE ELSE TO SET UP A RADICAL BOOKSHOP IN NOTTINGHAM.

THOSE WHO SELECT WHICH LITERATURE IS MADE AVAILABLE HAVE A LOT OF INFLUENCE ON WHICH ISSUES ARE GIVEN PROMINENCE ON THE RADICAL AGENDA - THEY SHOULD BE BOTH INVOLVED IN THE POLITICS THEY PROFIT FROM AND OPEN TO DISCUSSION WITH THE MOVEMENTS THEY SELL TO. MUSHROOM ARE UNWILLING TO DO THIS, AND SHOULD MAKE AVAILABLE SOME OF THEIR ASSETS SO THAT A NEW BOOKSHOP CAN BE SET UP.

THE MONEY IS THERE, AND SHOULD BE USED FOR RADICAL BOOKSELLING TO BENEFIT THE WHOLE OF RADICAL NOTTINGHAM (INCLUDING THOSE ELEMENTS WHO MIGHT LOOK A BIT SCRUFFY AND NOT HAVE MUCH MONEY)

The Mushroom Bookshop Dispute

This is a letter to as many groups and individuals as possible who may be concerned about the on-going dispute between Mushroom Bookshop and Chris Cook, a former worker at Mushroom.

We are Rachel Adams and John Waller, and we have been asked to set up an enquiry to solve the dispute. We are asking you to read the summary of the situation that follows and then, if you are prepared to help, please put your views and any relevant additional information to us in writing. It will then be presented to a panel of 6 individuals acceptable to both sides, who are being asked to make a judgement about the situation based on their understanding of all the opinion and information that they receive. They will suggest a way to resolve the dispute and then we ask everyone to respect the outcome because it will be coming from all the people who participate, not just those individuals who make up the enquiry panel.

Both sides are making a strong commitment to abide by the decision of the enquiry.

THE BACKGROUND.....THE BACKGROUND.....THE BACKGROUND.....

The issues are complex and the arguments bitter, but to summarise the history first,.

Before June 1985 there were disagreements in Mushroom about stocking policy, ways to spend money, who the shop was aimed towards etc. There had been a long standing verbal agreement that anyone leaving the collective would not take a share of the assets to prevent asset-stripping or the accumulation of personal wealth through Mushroom. The business was however considered a partnership which meant that legally 5 persons owned Mushroom in equal shares.

Nobody seems to have discussed, in advance of June 85, what should happen if a political split occurred within the collective which might mean for example, one or more individuals feeling obliged to leave so as not to work against their own beliefs, or one or more individuals being forced to leave because of political conflict.

By June 85 Chris was in a minority of one on many issues. There was a lot of arguing in meetings, and things came to a head over the Anarchist papers Class War and Crowbar. The rest of the collective refused to stock them, saying that they were sexist and that the violent images in them encouraged gratuitous violence. Chris disagreed with the decision not to stock them.

In a heavy and acrimonious meeting Chris said she would resign. She then returned having changed her mind to find that the rest of the collective didn't want her back. She wanted to return or have money made available for another radical bookshop, or alternatively suggested that the other members of Mushroom should resign. Mushroom offered her £3000 as a goodwill gesture to start another project and said they could afford no more. Chris asked for more money stating first £15,000 then later £17,500 (her estimate of one fifth of Mushroom's value) as a starting point for negotiations

In the following months a lot of incidents occurred which caused serious upset to one party or the other. We list below some of the major ones:-

- Mushroom's solicitor asked Chris by letter to sign for a withdrawal of money from Mushroom's building society account to enable the business to continue running. She refused knowing that no money could be withdrawn without her signature. Mushroom took Chris to court to gain access to the building society account. Mushroom gained access to some of the money but the case continues with legal fees mounting and threatening to reach financially crippling levels.
- Some Anarchists not happy with Mushroom's behaviour asked for a meeting and leafletted the shop's customers. Mushroom workers did not attend a meeting consisting of Anarchists and others, and didn't say why not. An Anarchist spoke out publically several times in the shop.
- The shop had its locks glued up, and meat was delivered there, by persons unknown.

And then came the public meeting in November 85 which was organised independently and attempted to give the dispute a public hearing and invite feedback. More than 150 people came, showing how much general concern there was. Both sides attended and spoke out about their views of the conflict. At this stage there was a commitment to arbitration and people tried to set this up but the attempt got bogged down with initial problems. By January things had not improved. Now there is another attempt at arbitration and here is your chance to become involved.

DO YOU THINK CHRIS IS ENTITLED TO A PAYMENT FROM MUSHROOM TO SET UP AN ALTERNATIVE BOOKSHOP REFLECTING DIFFERENT VIEWS ?

So far the argument goes like this: Chris was a founder member of Mushroom who worked in it for 13 years. She feels strongly that Mushroom has the responsibility to ensure that all aspects of the radical community are catered for, particularly given the support Mushroom has had over the years from that community including Anarchists. She says it has confirmed its unwillingness to meet this responsibility by, she says, forcing her out, and so should enable another bookshop to do the job.

Or: Mushroom workers feel strongly that all should abide by the agreement to come with nothing and leave with nothing in order to ensure that Mushroom survives for those who stay and for customers loyal to the shop. They say that Mushroom retains its long standing links with the radical community including many Anarchists and that it is Chris who has changed her views. Also another Mushroom worker has recently left because of the distress she felt at the actions of some Anarchists. Should she be compensated ?

HOW MUCH WOULD A NEW VENTURE COST ?

WOULD MUSHROOM BOOKSHOP SURVIVE A FINANCIAL SHARE-OUT ?

We are asking Chris to present costings for the new venture, and Mushroom to make available their accounts for the enquiry. so far Mushroom have said that more than £3000 would damage the shop and £17,500 or anything near would force them to close. Chris is saying that the figure of £17,500 is a starting point for negotiations and that Mushroom has more room for financial manouevre than they have previously argued.

ARE YOU CONCERNED ABOUT RADICAL BOOKSELLING IN NOTTINGHAM ?

We know from the public meeting that there is widespread concern about the issues involved and the threat of Mushroom having to close. We hope that you will find the time to write your views down for the enquiry. We believe that all of us who work in places which service and support the radical community should listen to its views, and that when conflict becomes impossible to resolve within a restricted situation it is important to look wider for advice and help.

This dispute has raised many issues:-

- How should a coop/collective be accountable to a wider community, especially when the individuals involved bear the financial responsibility.
- How do collectives split or otherwise deal with conflict
- What is the role of the law and/or direct action in resolving differences
- What defines a radical bookshop
- What is the status of verbal or written agreements between friends/colleagues

All these issues and more from a backdrop to what in the end may become a decision about amounts of money as well as principles and politics. We are open to comments on these wider issues as well as the questions of money.

Please write to:-

Mushroom/Chris enquiry
c/o 2 Premier Road
Forest Fields
Nottingham

By Friday 9th May

Please state whether you are writing as an individual, or expressing a group or organisations viewpoint.

NOTE - This leaflet/letter attempts to neutrally summarise the issues. Probably nobody is entirely happy with the account given. Both Mushroom and Chris are prepared to give fuller details and their own viewpoint to people. Mushroom can be contacted at the shop, Chris on 624742

LETTERS

Dear Anarchist News

Being one of the three involved in painting the 'Feb 6th' mural, I was able to help P.C. Mensa compile the following reply to the article featured in last months issue, just to put everyone right.

The Mural - The Official Report
Nottinghamshire Constabulary

I was proceeding, in an orderly fashion, along the Mansfield Road, when I observed the three female caucasians, in boiler suits, painting on a wall.

I had been tipped-off by a passing CND steward who thought their action a bit extreme. However, on questioning, the subjects produced a task card and explained that they were 'Community Collective Arts', working in conjunction with 'Duke of Edinburgh' clean-up campaign. I knew the landlord of this pub well, often lets me beat up any troublemakers on a quiet Friday night, so I adopted a less aggressive stance and allowed them to get up off the pavement.

They then informed me it was to be 'Les Femmes de Dance' by 'Muro'.

'I can see that', I replied, 'but we get a bit of "Ban the Bombers" scrawling on walls, you see, so I had to check'.

They were very sympathetic, and even commented on how shiny my buttons were.

At 14:00 hours my colleague and I were doing a bit of proceeding and happened to pass the scene.

'Blimey, strike a black person, well, that don't half look like 'Les Femmes de Dance' by old Muro, don't it, Brian?'

'Blimey, I'll knock a suspect down to the foot of our stairs, you know about art, Ken?'

He was impressed, I could tell. It did look a bit like writing, but I can't read too well, nor can Brian, so he was convinced I was really clever, but promised not to tell 'Sarge' in case I got chucked off the force.

So, really, I would just like to point out that the Anarchist News Art Critic is quite wrong to think the mural is 'Feb 6 Blockade, Molesworth', that is, in fact, one of Muro's much earlier works.

Yours sincerely
(Dictated by) P.C. Mensa.



4/1986



4/1986

A short reply to Meg's letter on S/M. It seems that her reaction to S/M is very typical of many people's reactions to ---- a first glance superficial reaction to the 'horror' of violence. For a start I think it's bad of her to lump all S/M together, since basically there are 3 categories; heterosexual, gay, and lesbian S/M. Secondly, S/M is political for many people. It is a way to act out and openly come to terms with the shitty role playing of dominance and submission that we are all a part of in our everyday lives. We all hurt each other mentally and emotionally and use techniques to put each other down in far more insidious ways than the open acting out of S/M.

I am not involved in S/M, but basically I wanted to say think and read before you act. I do not agree with heterosexual S/M however, because it seems that there is no basis here for the power imbalances to be resolved. I know for a fact that many lesbians into S/M have thought about why they're into it, and are against rape, mutilation and heterosexist acts of pornography.

Surely anarchism is about opening up and acting out, and not becoming one of the bigotted majority.

Yours in

Pondering By.

SMASH VIDEO

LA CECILIA

Jean-Louis Comolli/France-Italy/1976/colour/eng.subtitles/113 mins cert 15/with Massimo Foschi, Maria Carta, Vittorio Mezzogiorno.

The story of an Anarchist commune established in Brazil in 1887 by an Italian anarchist group. "It is not often that one sees a film as intelligent, stimulating and in particular as politically applicable as *La Cecilia*." *TIME OUT* "One of the key films of the contemporary cinema..." Colin McArthur, *TRIBUNE*

COMMUNITY ARTS CENTRE
GREGORY BLVD.

7:30 THURSDAY MAY 1ST
WE PASS THE HAT TO COVER COSTS.

ALL WELCOME

FOLLOWED BY A PARTY IN FOREST FIELDS

RECLAIM MAYDAY

JUMBLE 'RUMBLE'

IS TUMBLED!

SOCIETY FOR MUTUAL AID AND SELF HELP

JUMBLE SALE

SAT MARCH 1ST
2PM

Mapperley Community Centre

WOODBOROUGH ROAD 50/51 BUS

WE ARE AN OPEN SELF HELP GROUP WHO ARE HAVING A JUMBLE SALE TO RAISE MONEY TO CONTINUE OUR ACTIVITIES AND HOPEFULLY TO PROGRESS TO NEW IDEAS AND NEW PROJECTS. AS THE HONOURARY WE'VE RUNNING AN EDUCATIONAL COURSE AT THE W.E.A. WE ALSO ORGANISE TRIPS TO THE COUNTRY. VIDEO, COMRADE, HEALTH, JOBS, FOOD, MUSIC, AND BAST. LISTING, WE PRODUCE A BI-MONTHLY PAPER ABOUT WHAT WE'RE DOING AND WHAT'S HAPPENING IN NOTTINGHAM. SOME OF THE SKILLS WE SHARE ARE PHOTOGRAPHY, SILK SCREEN PRINTING, OFFICE TYPING, PRINTING, BANG, MAKING, STITCHING, BUNNEN, HANDCRAFT, FELTWORK, PAPERWORK, MUSIC, PLUMBING AND ELECTRICS. WE ALSO DO WE'VE RIGHTS. WE ARE AN APOLITICAL ORGANISATION. WHILE YOU'RE HAVING YOUR SPIN, CLEARING WHY NOT CLEAR UP YOUR FLEABAGS AND GIVE US THE JUNK YOU'VE WANTED TO THROW OUT FOR YEARS?

RIP OFF? ... The SMASH Jumble Sale.

EXCLUSIVE BY
JON BRAIN

THIS innocent looking jumble sale leaflet is the front for a fund-raising drive by a Nottingham group with anarchist links.

Dozens of the leaflets have been distributed through the city appealing for goods for the Society of Mutual Aid and Self Help.

The group describe themselves as unemployed people with common interests such as sewing and



country walks and refer to a bi-monthly paper they produce about what's happening in Nottingham.

They also profess to being non-political.

But investigations by the Trader have revealed that the society is in fact the local anti-state group SMASH and the paper they refer to is the vitriolic Nottingham Anarchist News.

Now, the warden at Mapperley Community Centre where the jumble sale was to have been held this Saturday has slapped a ban on them.

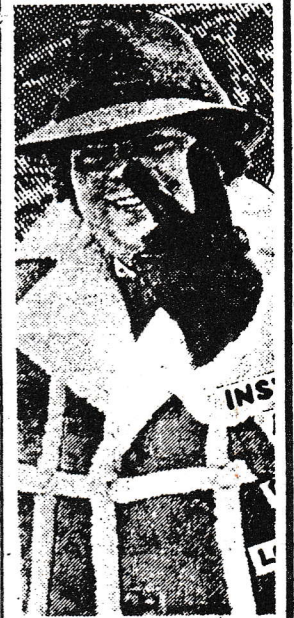
"I had no idea who these people really were," said the warden Geoff Merry. "It is our policy never to allow any political groups to have open meetings here and I have now told this group they cannot come on Saturday."

A spokesperson for SMASH however, denied they were deceiving the public into giving donations for the anarchist cause.

"We are a group of people without very much money who do things together," she said.

"Some of us are also anarchists but not everyone. It is really a friendship group," she added.

The spokesperson said that references to the "bi-monthly" paper referred to in the leaflet had been "mistaken."



FRONT PAGE... Anarchist News.

EXCLUSIVE!

NOTTINGHAM TRADER'S JON BRAIN REALLY LIVED UP TO HIS NAME RECENTLY. HE PRODUCED THE JOURNALISTIC SCOOP OF THE YEAR WHEN HE UNEARTHED A DASTARDLY PLOT TO OVERTHROW SOCIETY BY MEANS OF JUMBLE SALES. "JUMBLE RUMBLE IS TUMBLED" SCREAMED THE WITTY HEADLINE ON PAGE TWO, BEFORE JON BRAIN LAUNCHED INTO AN IN-DEPTH EXPOSE OF HOW A GROUP TRYING TO ORGANISE A JUMBLE SALE HAD "ANARCHIST LINKS". FINE - AND LOTS OF ANARCHISTS BANK AT THE CO-OP, SO MAYBE MR. PEABRAIN SHOULD NEXT EXPOSE THE CO-OP'S ANARCHIST LINKS? AND WHAT ABOUT CND'S ANARCHIST CONNECTION? DO ANARCHISTS REALLY CONTAMINATE EVERY ORGANISATION THEY'RE INVOLVED WITH?

THE HEIGHTS OF MR. PEABRAIN'S JOURNALISTIC ABILITY WERE DISPLAYED WHEN HE DISCOVERED THAT "SOCIETY FOR MUTUAL AID AND SELF HELP", SPELT "SMASH", THIS MAN HAS BEEN TO SCHOOL.

THANKS TO THE EXPOSE, LOTS MORE PEOPLE NOW KNOW THAT THERE ARE ANARCHISTS IN NOTTINGHAM, AND THEY'VE ALSO HEARD ABOUT THE "VITRIOLIC" RAG YOU'RE READING NOW. BUT WE MUST APOLOGISE TO ANYONE WHO MIGHT HAVE TURNED UP TO THE JUMBLE SALE - THE VENUE WAS CANCELLED AT THE LAST MINUTE. WE'RE NOT QUITE SURE WHY; MAPPERLEY COMMUNITY CENTRE WARDEN GEOFF MERRY TOLD SMASH THAT THEY WERE DOUBLE-BOOKED (AND NO, IT WAS IMPOSSIBLE TO HAVE A DIFFERENT DATE) BUT HE TOLD THE TRADER "I HAD NO IDEA WHO THESE PEOPLE REALLY WERE... I HAVE NOW TOLD THIS GROUP THEY CANNOT COME." POOR MR. MERRY MUST BE VERY CONFUSED - MAYBE IT'S AGGRAVATED BY HIS HAVING TO DRIVE ALL THE WAY FROM MANSFIELD TO MAPPERLEY EVERY TIME HE WANTS TO ADMINSTRATE HIS COMMUNITY CENTRE.

THE REALLY PUZZLING THING IS WHY A CENTRE WITH A "POLICY NEVER TO ALLOW ANY POLITICAL GROUPS TO HAVE OPEN MEETINGS" A WEEK LATER LET ROOMS TO AN ORGANISATION WITH KNOWN RIGHT-WING CONNECTIONS AND A VITRIOLIC PAPER - THE EVENING, POST ROADSHOW. PERHAPS IT'S BECAUSE THEY WEREN'T ATTEMPTING ANYTHING AS OPENLY SUBVERSIVE AS A JUMBLE SALE.

Test of faith

SIX YOUNG people yesterday began a hike across the most arid part of Australia without food or water in what one called a test to see if God exists. The group, ranging in age from six to 22, are carrying bibles, bandages, and a Swiss army knife, but no provisions, across the Nullarbor plain, relying on the hospitality of the people they meet. — AP.

