

41. Finally, I had actually *no* money left and I had to get to London in, like two days because of my return ticket to the States. As I had no money to get back across the Channel, I decided to hitchhike and made up a sign - I think I told you this before - that said, "Berlin-Amsterdam-London-Chicago." It was July 4th and I was hoping some American would drive by and take pity on me or something. I went and stood at the edge of town and there were like 50 other people hitchhiking from there, it was the spot for that. This woman walks by and she looks at my sign, gives me a big smile, and walks by. Then these people walk up and say, "Hey, we'll hold your sign for you." They were very nice and didn't like seeing me standing there, holding my sign with a backpack and on crutches. They were a Scottish couple, a black guy and a white guy, and I'd met a black Englishman before but never a black Scotchman. I talked to them a bit and whenever I saw an American car go by, I waved at them but didn't get any response. I was also hoping to get a ride with a truck to avoid paying a passenger fee and when a truck, a lorry, with a right hand drive stopped, I tried to imitate a British accent, "*Oh, are you going to England, Sir?*" Still no luck. After about an hour, a car pulls up and the Scottish guys run up to the driver and then yell back at me, "This car is going to Amsterdam." I go over and ask him in English, "So you are going to Amsterdam?" He says, "Yes, but I want to speak Dutch, I've been speaking German for days," and I told him, "No problem, I don't speak German. We'll speak English." "But I want to speak *Dutch*." "Come on, you will be there in a couple of hours. I'm on crutches for Christ sakes!" "All right then." As soon as he said that, the woman who had smiled at my sign earlier on, runs up and jumps in the car too. She was going to Osnabrück. She spoke some English and turned out to be my new friend, Geshka, and this is when I just really fell in love with the place and some of the people I met there. She was German so the driver ended up speaking German anyway, to her, but we tried to speak in English so he *wouldn't have to speak German*. He got nicer and nicer on the way, actually offered that I could sleep on the floor in his house in Amsterdam but he still had some weird quirks. He was a *Fresian*, from the *Fresian* part of the Netherlands and he was so proud of being a *Fresian*. He was like a *Fresian* nationalist or something. I was like, "Good Lord, every time I turn around, there's more fucking nationalists in Europe!" *Fresia*, who the fuck ever even heard of *Fresia*? It's probably, like the size of Wicker Park or something like that. He was going on and on, and early in the morning we stopped at some rest stop on the autobahn. There was a cafeteria and we had a beer and a cigarette - I didn't have any cigarettes but Geshka gave me some. The *Fresian* went to the bathroom and Geshka goes, "Isn't he a bit of an asshole?" I said, "Yes." Then we talked about nationalism and I said my world doesn't have room for it 'cause in my world there's room for everybody. Our differences are obvious, why not emphasize commonalities and begin to talk and listen to one another? I told her, I was a socialist

42. and she said, "I no longer believe in any Ism's." I understood that point of view but I also saw it as pointless because it's almost like artificial anarchism. It sounds great but people of all classes, black and white, rich and poor, are not just automatically going to get together, at least not at this point in history. I think you still need some Ism's even though they might have to be modified or rethought. It's not like I have expectations of some workers' revolution in the near future but this whole thing with the collapse of the Soviet Union is not the end of everything. Marxism and socialist ideology existed before the Bolshevik Soviet revolution and it exists now. We were discussing this and then Geshka asked, "Do you wanna stop with me in Osnabrück and meet my friends? I'm going to visit them and you are more than welcome to come along." I said, "Well, sure!"