

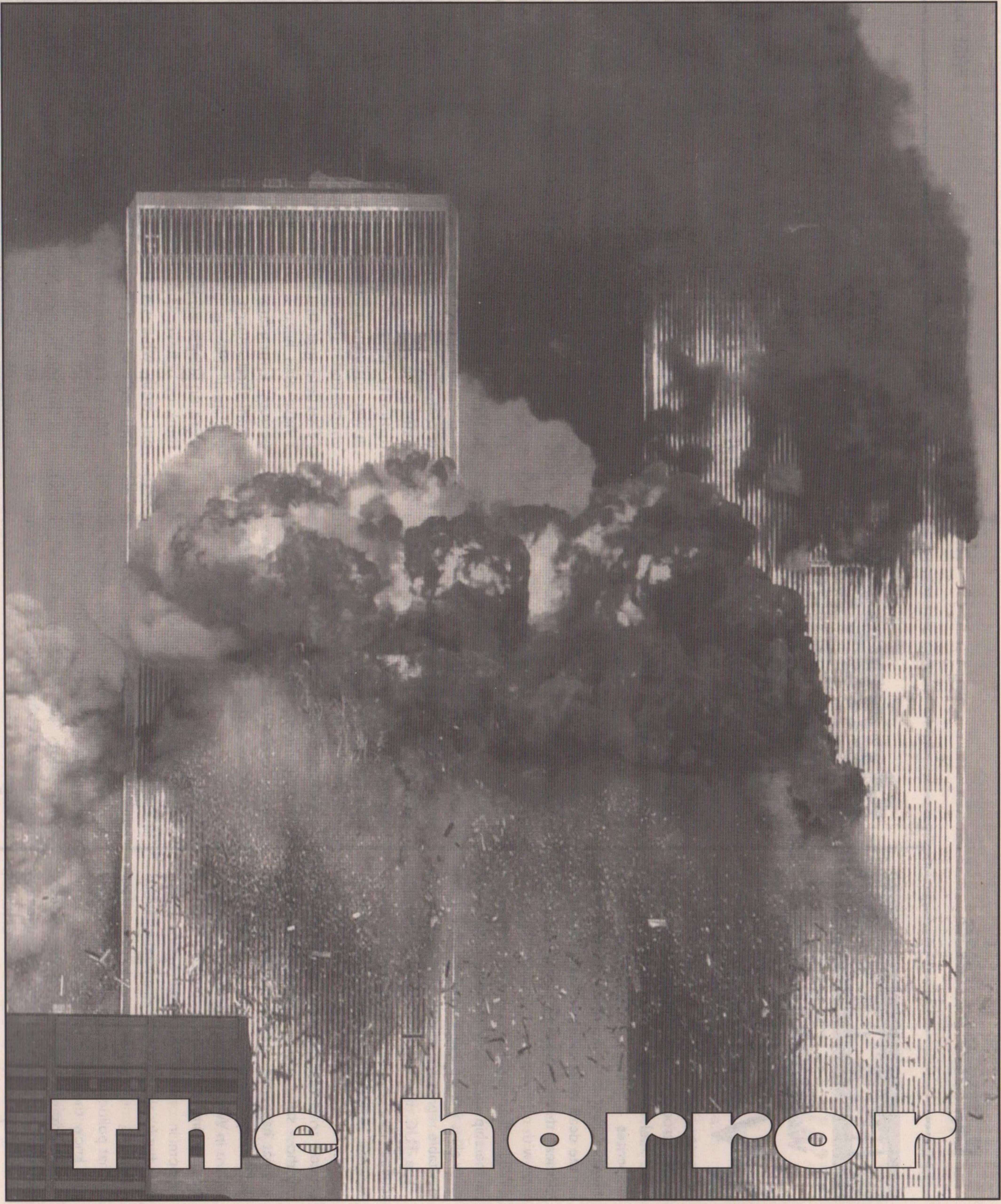
anarchist fortnightly

# Freedom

Vol. 62 No. 18

22nd September 2001

50p



# The horror

# anarchist fortnightly

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Civil liberties threatened • US policies slammed • Muslims fear reprisals

## Facing the abyss

President George Bush ordered America to war at the start of this week, with a pledge to smash “those who have chosen their own destruction”.

This followed the suicide strikes on the World Trade Centre in New York and the Pentagon in Washington, thought to have been carried out by supporters of Osama bin Laden, a religious leader once armed and trained by American special forces.

Bin Laden, the son of a Saudi millionaire, is based in Afghanistan under the protection

of that country’s Taliban government. Thousands of Afghan civilians have now fled their homes in fear of US retaliatory raids.

Anarchists around the world have expressed fear, not just at the threat of imminent and protracted war, but also at the way international outrage is allowing western governments to introduce savage restrictions on personal freedoms.

“Freedom in the west has been slowly eroded for the past few decades”, said Kristen, an American activist. “But these

attacks will mean a redoubled effort by governments to infringe on civil freedoms, and now people won’t resist”. Alarmingly, several senior politicians have already begun to try and associate anarchists with the perpetrators of the attacks.

In another worry for many activists, Muslims in America and Europe have begun to suffer a new wave of intimidation. Britain’s only Islamic state schools, the three Islamia Schools in north London, remained closed at the end of last week after staff and

pupils received threats. The schools were expected to reopen on Monday, with security guards on the gates.

The reaction of the mainstream media has come in for sustained criticism. In particular, many anarchists have blamed highly-paid pundits for not exploring the role played by American foreign policy in stoking resentment and hatred towards the west, and for refusing to acknowledge the manner in which bin Laden was once courted as a close ally in the fight against the Soviet Union.



## “Things are going to get a whole lot more difficult”

• I just saw Ralph Klein, premier of Alberta in Canada, giving a press conference on the TV. He was talking about ‘terrorism’, and the threat posed by “international terrorists or national terrorists”. He was obviously referring to anti-globalisation protesters. **Ian**

• US congressman Don Young told the *Alaska Daily News* on 12th September that it was too soon to conclude that Middle Eastern ‘terrorists’ were responsible for the attacks. “There’s some possibility”, he said, “that the attacks are linked to protests against the WTO. Ecoterrorists could be one of the groups involved”.

• Muslims in a number of countries have become victims of vengeance attacks. There have been reports of assaults and abuse throughout the US, Australia and the UK.

“I work in a job centre”, said one Scottish anarchist last week. “Already we’ve had cases of refugees’ claims for benefits being held up and ‘investigated’”.

• The military necessity for the US to keep Pakistan sweet has effectively sealed the fate of Dr Younis Shaikh, sentenced to death for blasphemy by a Pakistani religious court last month after he said that Mohammed’s parents must have been infidels because they died before Islam was created. His only hope had been the power of international opinion, and that will now effectively be silenced. **Toby Crowe**

• British and American warplanes bombed targets in Iraq again on 10th September, the day before the attacks on American cities. The bombing, which received no coverage in the mainstream media, resulted in the deaths of at least three Iraqi civilians.

• US forces launched airstrikes against Osama bin Laden in 1998, after the bombings of American embassies in Africa. The target was an alleged ‘chemical weapons factory’ in Sudan. This later turned out to be a pharmaceutical factory, with no links to bin Laden at all. It has been estimated that tens of thousands of Sudan’s poor died as a result of the strikes, because they could no longer get the medicines they needed. A UN enquiry into the bombing of the plant was blocked by the US government.

• New York mayor Rudolph Giuliani is being portrayed as the saviour of the city. But he’s completely changing his image for political purposes of his own. He might like to portray himself as saintly and caring now, but this was the man behind so-called ‘zero tolerance’. When did he ever show any compassion for New York’s beggars, homeless and other victims of capitalism, the American nightmare? **Ed**

• We call on anarchists to use this opportunity to step up their opposition to the state, the institution of representative power, and on all military aggression carried out in state or religious interests. People must be made aware that, in choosing a life of civic passivity instead of self-government, they are letting their lives be run by unaccountable murderers who bring all sorts of disaster upon ordinary people. We must also fight against the reactionary jihad and all forms of resistance which threaten to deliver equally murderous fates to their opponents. **Polish anarchists**

• In 1996, I visited the World Trade Centre. It was a beautiful, fresh spring day and I sat on a bench in the plaza between the towers, thinking about the power contained within the massive

monoliths towering above my head. There was undeniably something beautiful about them, but I was overcome by a sense of helplessness and insignificance. It was impossible to conceive of these twin symbols of American capitalist tyranny ever being destroyed. **Armadillo**

• The next anti-capitalist protest should be called off. Otherwise, people will associate the anti-globalisation movement with these attacks. If they do go ahead, anarchists should act as peacefully as possible – nothing confrontational, no masks, just things people wouldn’t be upset about. Probably not even non-violent direct action. Now would be a good time to focus on more ‘constructive’, perhaps local, efforts. **Sabbath**

• I don’t think the movement should cease any of its planned protests, as this just leaves space for the state to try and ‘unite’ us all behind what will be – and I use these words carefully – a militarist and fascist response to the attacks. Alternative voices must be heard, even though it’s going to be difficult to counter the racist hysteria and revenge mentality that will pervade life for months to come, even though we risk being called ‘traitors’. **GG**

• We should omit black bloc tactics for a while, but doing away with direct action is out of the question. If we give in to this repressive atmosphere, we’ll lose all the ground we’ve gained so far. **Ryan**

• We should be very prepared for governments to try to lump all dissidents in with these attackers. Everyone is very emotional and scared, and it’s easy for governments to play on these emotions. **Greg**

• The most interesting thing has been the reaction of our ‘leaders’ to what has happened. The ruling class is trying, it appears, to reassert democratic values and all the bourgeois crap that goes with them – they have carefully and quickly painted this as an attack not just on America, but on the ‘free’ and ‘civilised’ world as a whole. I reckon there’s a real danger that the ruling class are redrawing the line when it comes to deciding which side you are on: all those seemingly opposed to the values of the democratic world will be labelled as its enemies. They’re obviously going to say that the anti-capitalist ‘movement’ is anti-democratic, because we don’t sit down and discuss things with them like all good reformists should. They’re using this terrible moment to make a lot of political capital, with the added benefit that they can play the good ol’ patriot card too. I think things are going to get a whole lot more difficult. **EM**

• The attacks have closed down the space in which radical discourse can be sustained, for the time being any way. It is going to make any sort of anti-capitalist and anti-militarist, let alone any anti-state, activity much more difficult. It will be all too easy for any protests to be tarred with the terrorist brush, no matter how far people try to distance themselves from what happened in the United States. **Richard**

• The general manipulation of public emotion through language and symbolism. And the closing down of possibilities into a simplistic us and them, according to Tony Blair – if you don’t support revenge on ‘our’ enemies, then that makes you an enemy as well. A sobering thought. **RA**



# Guilt and responsibility

At first it makes no sense at all. A team of hijackers kill themselves and 266 passengers on four airliners by crashing them into the World Trade Centre and the Pentagon (with another one crashing outside Pittsburgh). By the end of last week, estimates of the death toll were running between 10,000 and 20,000. An atrocity, pure and simple. No need for qualification and no possibility of comprehension. It takes a particular kind of madness and a particular kind of contempt for life to commit such an act.

The ethical high ground rests with the 'free world'. Tony Blair tells us that "the terrible events should not be seen as a battle between the US and terrorism, but between the free and democratic world and terrorism". According to George Bush, the attacks are designed to undermine 'the civilised world'. And the question of 'ethics' is left begging.

Ethics and morals are just stories we tell to convince ourselves that there is transcendental cause and judgement to the acts we carry out. 'Ethics' is the word we use to cover over the fact that "all our acts find the effective condition of their possibility, as concerns both their material conditions and their signification, in the fact that we are social beings who live in a social world that is what it is because it is instituted thus and not otherwise" (in the words of Cornelius Castoriadis). The 'ethical' allows us to ignore the 'political' – the grounds, context and purpose of our acts.

Immanuel Kant's ethical system can be reduced to the principle, "act in such a way that the maxim of your act might become universal law". Kant meant that the positive effects of an action, its 'moral' strength, would be universalised because embodying a

'common good'; but the 'apocalypse' (to quote one observer) delivered up in Washington and New York goes to prove that it is not only the common good that is capable of universalisation, as the USA has demonstrated. To quote Robert Fisk (one of the few sane voices on Middle Eastern affairs today, writing in the *Independent*), "ask an Arab how he responds to 20,000 or 30,000 innocent deaths and he or she will respond as decent people should, that it is an unspeakable crime. But they will ask why we did not use such words about the sanctions that have destroyed the lives of perhaps half a million children in Iraq, why we did not rage about the 17,500 civilians killed in Israel's 1982 invasion of Lebanon".

The atrocities committed in Washington and New York are not declarations of war, they are revenge attacks for a war the 'civilised world' declared on the ordinary people of the Middle East through military and financial support for despots in Egypt, Jordan, Saudi Arabia; through the sanctions and daily bombing raids that have killed millions in Iraq; the US Apache helicopters, F16s and M16 rifles used to suppress the Palestinian intifadas.

When the Palestinians signed up to the US-backed Oslo peace process, they committed themselves to an accord which has led to a 52% increase in Israeli settlement construction since 1993, and a 72% expansion of the settler population. But ethnic cleansing is, it appears, a 'moral' issue everywhere but the West Bank and Gaza. To quote Robert Fisk again, "this is not the war of democracy versus terror that the world will be asked to believe in the coming days. It is also about American missiles smashing into Palestinian homes and US helicopters firing missiles

into a Lebanese ambulance in 1996 and American shells crashing into a village called Qana and about a Lebanese militia – paid and uniformed by America's Israeli ally – hacking and raping and murdering their way through the refugee camps". If Palestinian celebrations of the attacks show, as one commentator has it, that Palestinians have 'hard hearts', perhaps we should ask what such hearts have already endured to become so hard.

The final irony is that if Osama bin Laden is 'responsible' for the attacks on the United States, the US has in effect let loose a weapon of its own making upon itself. Saudi-born bin Laden went to Afghanistan as one of hundreds of radical Muslims who joined the Afghan mujaheddin in its CIA-trained and financed war against the Soviet invasion of the country. Bin Laden, the son of a Saudi construction magnate, is a ghost of the Cold War, come back to terrorise his former paymasters.

We should not forget either that the growth of radical Islam across the Middle East is in part the result of the bankruptcy of the secular socialist and nationalist oppositions. Arafat's courting of the Middle East bourgeoisie left the poor and oppressed to look to the only other game in town. His capitulation to Israel, and the inability of the left currents in the PLO to oppose him, gave the likes of Hamas a clear run. It is equally true that the failure of all of us in the west – secular leftists, anarchists, anti-imperialists, to maintain a credible anti-imperialist opposition gives credence to the Islamic myth of western infidels. Since the start of Palestine's second intifada a year ago, the UK and US have not mounted a single credible solidarity initiative. The chances of winning this

generation of Islamic militants – here and in the Middle East – away from the dead end of jihad depends on us proving ourselves more effective anti-imperialists than the Islamists. Opposing the threatened invasion of Afghanistan might be a good place to start. The Taliban are a deranged misogynist sect, but it is for the Afghan people to depose them, not George Bush (whose father courted them in order to secure the interests of US oil companies in the region).

In recognising that the attacks on Washington and New York were atrocities which claimed the lives of thousands of ordinary Americans, we have still to place the events in context. We have still to place the ultimate blame on those whose sanctimony about 'the civilised world' belies the fact that they are up to their necks in the blood of thousands of ordinary Iraqis, Palestinians and Afghans. As Edward Said has observed, the 'main thrust' of the west's battle against 'terrorism' has always been its selectivity. "We are never terrorists, no matter what we may have done; they always will be ... the main thing is to isolate your enemy from time to time, from causality, from prior action, and thereby portray him or her as ontologically and gratuitously interested in wreaking havoc for its own sake. Thus, if you can show that Libyans, Muslims, Palestinians and Arabs have no reality except that which tautologically confirms their terrorist essence ... you can go on to attack them and their 'terrorist' states generally, and avoid all questions about your own behaviour or about your share in their present fate".

Nick S.

*Blaming the Victims*, Edward Said and Christopher Hitchens, Verso 2001

# Protesters challenge DSEi killers

## London Docklands

Up to a thousand anti-militarists gathered in east London last week, to protest against the opening of the Defence Systems and Equipment International arms fair (DSEi).

The fair, hosted by the UK in alternate years, is designed to allow weapons manufacturers from around the world to sell their products. It has been reported that almost 900 firms booked stalls at this year's event. British officials said beforehand that they were expecting items as large as warships to be ordered during the four days it lasted.

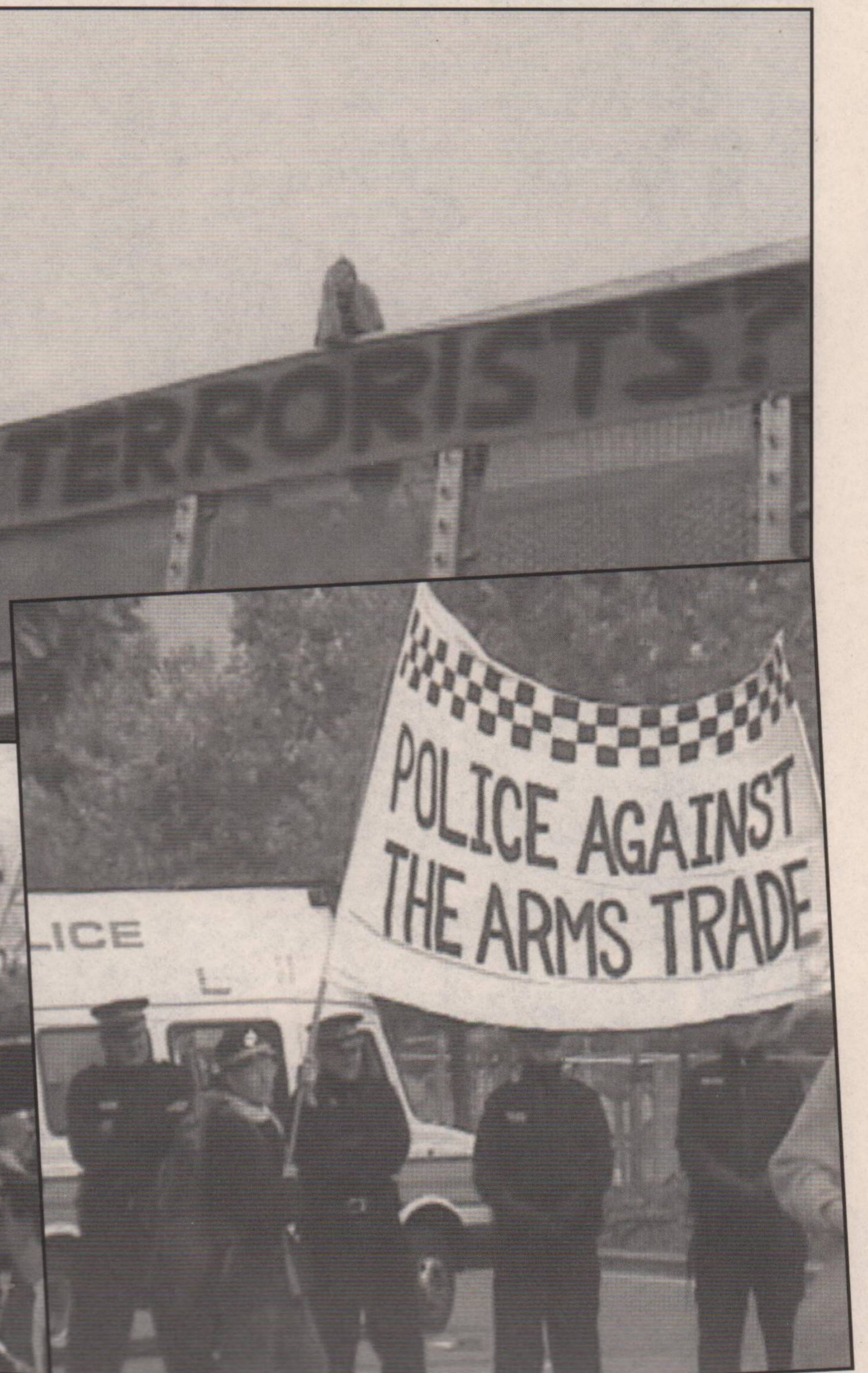
The opening of the fair, on 11th September, coincided with the air attacks on American cities. But officials decided not to follow the example of the Trade Union Congress, which called off its annual conference as a mark of respect. The DSEi continued until last Friday as planned.

Top military officials from states such as Nigeria, Pakistan and China are known to have attended. They were protected by a two-metre high security fence, put up around the venue on Victoria Dock, and a substantial security operation. This involved members of the army, Metropolitan police, MoD police, Special Branch and MI5.

The state began its preparations early. On the morning of 7th September, two London squats were raided. Both of them had been used as accommodation for activists preparing for the protest. One, in Borough, was being used to make puppets, props and banners. Most of these were destroyed by cops, and the rest confiscated.

On 9th September, three people were arrested on suspicion of daubing anti-arms graffiti near the Excel Centre, where the DSEi event took place days later.

Explaining the decision to protest against the fair, Jo Bookchin of the campaign group



Disarm DSEi said, "it is the trade in weapons that allows exploitation and murder to continue around the world". Labelling the DSEi "a serious breach of the peace", she said that weaponry formed "the commodity that enforces all other commodities".

A representative of human rights lobby group Amnesty International said, "we have grave concerns that equipment from DSEi will end up in the hands of torturers and be

used for internal repression".

An official at the Ministry of Defence defended the fair, however, saying that British arms exports underpin 100,000 jobs. "They help to sustain a strong defence industrial base, which is an important part of our own defence effort".

• **Brighton** Local anti-militarist group SPOR marked the DSEi with a squat in the

town's shopping centre over the weekend of 8th-9th September.

Rick Gill, a member of the group, said, "we are occupying this building to draw the public's attention to Britain's continued role in the arms industry."

The squat, named SPORS NOT WARS, was used as an information point, free café and kids' space.

## News in Brief

• **Liverpool** Members of Merseyside Against Detention are marching on Walton Prison today (22nd September), in protest at the increasing use of the jail to detain asylum-seekers.

The march, which leaves Bootle Town Hall at 11.30am, is supported by many organisations, including Liverpool Trades Council and the Fire Brigades Union.

In a statement released recently, organisers from the group said, "in Walton, asylum-seekers are locked up 23 hours a day, denied education and allowed one shower per week. They have fled persecution from repressive

regimes, now they are deprived of basic human rights".

• **London** A march against cannabis prohibition will take place next Saturday (29th September). Several thousand activists are expected to meet at Hyde Park's Speakers' Corner, before moving down Piccadilly to a rally in Trafalgar Square.

Organisers of the event said last week, "the recent progress towards decriminalisation in parts of Britain is to be welcomed, but is clearly not the full solution. Only a complete lifting of prohibition to allow the growing,

selling and consumption of cannabis will do. Anything less is simply a half-way house which fails to protect the public".

"We want to unite and thus strengthen the voice of all those who advocate an end to the prohibition of cannabis, by organising a peaceful event that reflects the wide support for a change in the law".

Meet at Speakers' Corner from midday, march from 2pm.

• **Brighton** Activists preparing to protest at this year's Labour Party conference, due to be held in Brighton at the end of the month, were last week waiting for an official response to the air attacks on Washington and New York.

Until the events of last week, a demo had been planned for Sunday 30th September. But it remained unclear last week whether the conference would go ahead, and what the implications are for protesters against it.

• **Bookfair** The Anarchist Bookfair will be held next month at the Camden Centre, on Euston Road. This is a new venue for the bookfair, which has been forced to move out of Conway Hall because of space restrictions. As well as stalls in the centre itself, many meetings will be held at the Friends' Meeting House, a few minutes walk down the road. These will include the *Freedom* meeting, which will be held from 11.00am in Room 3. More details in our next issue.

## Nasty Nestlé

Report from  
Bristol Nestlé Resistance

On 8th September, a group of activists descended on the city's Nestlé Café and proceeded to set up their own fair-trade alternative. A few minutes later, free coffee, tea and flyers were being handed out to interested passers-by. Police and officials soon showed up to see what was going on, but took no action. A troupe of jazz musicians mixed some excellent sounds to entertain everyone.

This action was part of a group of actions that occurred on the same day, as activists from various groups highlighted the global coffee trade. Throughout the day, activists were heartened by the constant support of the public, many of whom were strongly anti-Nestlé. Comments such as, 'about time someone took on Nestlé' and 'keep up the good work' were commonplace.

Bristol Nestlé Resistance is a non-hierarchically organised group, composed of local activists, anarchists, musicians and environmentalists who act against Nestlé. We see the company as a complete example of a multinational corporation, which encompasses all the areas that many anti-capitalist protesters are concerned with.

• [www.geocities.com/bristolresist/nestleoverview.html](http://www.geocities.com/bristolresist/nestleoverview.html) or subscribe to the newsletter at [bristolresist-subscribe@yahoo.com](mailto:bristolresist-subscribe@yahoo.com)

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# Iron test for US courts

**United States**

The air attacks on New York and Washington last week have prompted talk of a war between 'Islamic fundamentalism' and 'American liberty'. Now, in one of the first tests of the aggressive official rhetoric, fifteen Greenpeace activists go on trial in Los Angeles on Tuesday charged with disrupting military tests.

This follows a demonstration against George Bush's 'Star Wars' missile defence system, which was held at Vandenberg airforce base in California on 14th July. This resulted in a delay of several minutes to a test missile-firing.

If convicted, the fifteen (along with two journalists charged with them) could be sentenced to long jail terms for 'violating a safety zone' and 'disobeying official orders'.

Even before the events of last week, activists were alarmed by the decision of US prosecutors to press felony charges. Concern was also expressed about the charging of the two journalists, who were present to report on the protest rather than to participate.

"The charging of the journalists reflects a worrying trend both in the US and Europe",



says one British alternative journalist. "Police in Genoa targeted journalists who weren't working for the mainstream media, and British police have been beating up independent journalists on demos for some time. It's a very worrying development".

The concerns of the global activist community about the trial have only been

heightened in the wake of the attacks on the World Trade Centre and Pentagon.

"The state was out to get them any way", says John, a US anarchist with an interest in arms issues. "But what chance have they got of a fair trial now? I'm very concerned for anyone who seems to be acting against 'the national interest' at a time like this".

# Web freedom under threat

**Spain**

Freedom of expression is under threat, Spanish anarchists claim. They say that, under plans put forward by the right-wing government of prime minister Aznar, the internet will be highly controlled by the state. The proposed Electronic Commerce (Society of Information Services) Directive makes it a legal requirement for website owners to register their sites.

If the directive is approved by the country's parliament, any sites not officially registered will be considered illegal and their owners subject to heavy penalty fees.

Opponents of the government's plans point out that news digests in web format, academic papers, e-libraries and political discussion sites would in future have to register their activities as forms of e-commerce, if the directive becomes law.

Although email is not explicitly covered by the proposals, many anarchists argue that discussion lists which can be read in web format will also be affected.

The directive also makes it illegal to maintain anonymous websites. David, an activist against the proposed law, says, "imagine you wanted to set up a website denouncing human rights violations in Spain. It would be understandable if you wanted to stay anonymous. But this could lead to penalty fees of 175,000 euros (£108,000). The message for corrupt politicians and judges is clear. If there is some group which keeps an annoying website, just use the directive and fry them with enormous fees".

The Spanish moves mirror those by other states around the world. Last year, the British government passed its Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act, which allows the state to monitor e-activity surreptitiously. American officials were last week said to be hurriedly examining the possibility of introducing similar legislation, in the wake of the attacks on Washington and New York. Just hours after three aeroplanes smashed into key buildings in the two cities, FBI agents were reported to have visited service providers to fit monitoring equipment.

# Other international news

**Greece** As many as 4,500 cops were on hand to guard the opening of an international exhibition in Thessaloniki on 8th September. Despite the heavy police presence, a planned protest went ahead, with up to four thousand demonstrators marching on the venue.

They carried banners, including one which said 'cops, judges, politicians, politicians, pimps - you'll pay for Giuliani's blood', a reference to the death of Carlo Giuliani, the demonstrator shot dead in Genoa in July.

Clashes took place between protesters and police, and seven cops were injured. Many activists claimed that police were assisted by fascist gangs.

**Italy** A demonstration took place outside Genoa's Marassi prison last week, in a show of solidarity with those still being held after the July G8 summit.

The demo was called by the Anarchist Committee for Defence and Solidarity for the evening of 11th September. Activists danced and performed street theatre.

A member of the Committee explained the action: "To preserve their power, the states of the world repeatedly use torture, intimidation and imprisonment of those who don't submit to their rules, or refuse pre-established roles. Rebellion against prisons is necessary, just as it is necessary to rebel against the conditions of existence resulting from wage and salary work".

The Marassi demo came just weeks after it emerged that liberal protest groups had been infiltrated by fascists during the Genoa summit. The city's former police chief, who was sacked after the shooting of Carlo Giuliani, admitted at the end of August that up to 600 neo-nasties had joined the Genoa Social Forum (GSF).

Speaking to a parliamentary committee of enquiry into the circumstances surrounding the G8 summit, ex-chief Colucci admitted that he had known two weeks in advance that the GSF had been infiltrated. Asked why he had not warned GSF organisers, he replied that it was not his job to do so. "Nobody was interested in protecting citizens who were going to demonstrate", he said.

**Canada** At least three members of the Edmonton Edible Ballot Society are due in court next week, after being charged with eating their ballot papers in federal government elections last year.

Around a hundred members of the group ate the papers at polling stations across Canada last September, and charges against more of them are expected soon.

The three activists have been charged under the Canada Elections Act, which was designed to prevent ballot-rigging. But special investigators from Elections Canada, the electoral commission, have decided to stretch the law in this case.

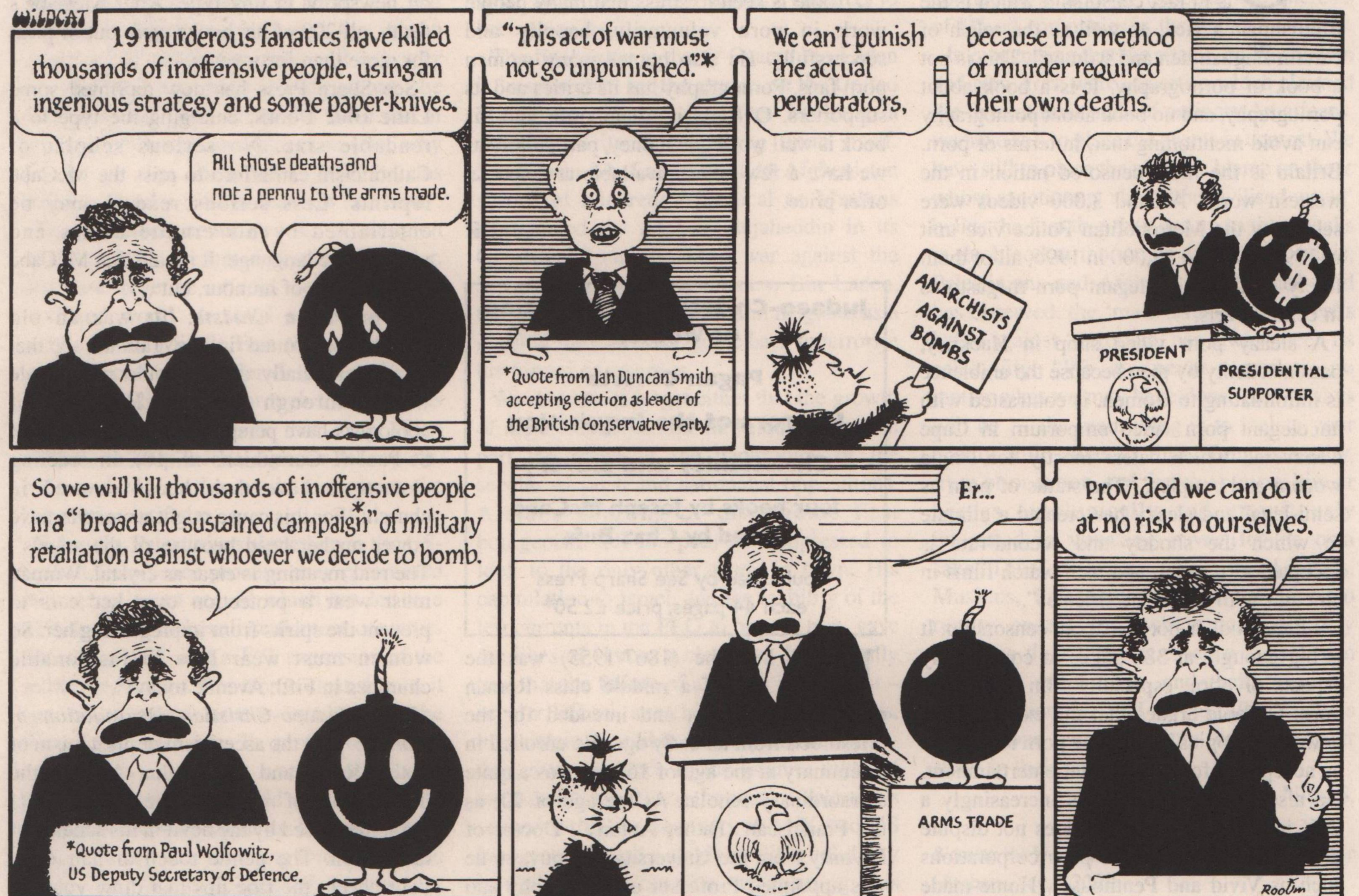
One of the three, Maria Schwandt, is alleged to have liquefied her paper with soya milk and fruit before drinking it. Mike Hudema

allegedly ate his in a stir-fry. It is alleged that Chad Blackburn ate his raw ("clearly Chad is a masochist with an iron stomach" said one eye-witness).

If convicted, the three face up to five years in jail or a C\$5000 fine. "I guess there really is no such thing as a free lunch", said one of them on receiving the summons.

Members of the Edible Ballot Society say they refuse to participate in a system where casting a vote once every four years passes for democracy. "We want to draw attention to the shallow nature of our procedural electoral process, and spark dialogue on participatory alternatives".

Maria, Mike and Chad have their first appearance in court on the morning of 26th September.



# Of priests and pornography



## Pornucopia: porn, sex, technology and desire

by Laurence O'Toole

published by Serpent's Tail, 386 pages  
(publisher's price £13.99)  
special Freedom Bookshop price £2.99\*

“Spanking has become known as the English vice. However ... it is in fact censorship which is the Englishman's vice, as well as the relish of certain Englishmen and women”. This is not a book of pornography. It is a book about pornography, and no book about pornography can avoid mentioning that, in terms of porn, Britain is the most censored nation in the western world. Around 3,000 videos were seized by the Metropolitan Police vice unit in 1990, rising to 52,000 in 1996, all of them freely available in elegant porn megastores in central Paris.

A sleazy porn video shop in Hackney, patronised only by men because the ambience is intimidating to women, is contrasted with an elegant porn video emporium in Cape Canaveral, which caters mostly for single women and couples. “The status of porn as semi-legal and sleazy has created a climate in which the shoddy and second-rate is accepted as normal, and men watch films in cinemas with no fire certificates”.

But the book is not just about censorship. It is big enough, at 386 pages to cover many aspects of porn, especially film and video porn. O'Toole argues that the expansion of new technologies is allowing porn to become an acceptable form of popular entertainment. He also argues that porn is increasingly a DIY industry (although he does not dispute the power and wealth of porn corporations such as Vivid and Penthouse). Home-made

porn on the internet, he says, is one response to porn users' desire for new kinds of material, different to what the corporate giants have to offer. “I think the move towards amateur stuff has made porn much more interesting” he quotes a woman porn fan as saying. “It takes a long time for the porn industry to respond to people's needs. In fact it could be argued that the entire internet growth was a result of people's needs to view pornography not being met by providers”.

O'Toole is keen to stress that many people work in porn voluntarily, happily and successfully. He also quotes many women porn fans. Pornography has its critics and its supporters. O'Toole is a supporter and his book is well worth the money, particularly as we have a few copies available at a special offer price.

DR

## Judaeo-Christian Degradation of Women

Pagan Christs

Horrors of the Inquisition  
Christianity and Slavery

four books by Joseph McCabe  
edited by Chaz Bufe

published by See Sharp Press  
each 44 pages, price £2.50\*

Joseph McCabe (1867-1955) was the second son of a middle class Roman Catholic family, and intended for the priesthood from an early age. He enrolled in a seminary at the age of 16, and was a quite extraordinary scholar. At the age of 23, as the Franciscan 'Father Antony', Doctor of Divinity from the University of Louvain, he was appointed Professor of Philosophy and

Ecclesiastical History at a seminary in London.

At the age of 28, he bought a book on etiquette to find out how people lived outside the monasteries, and left the church. He continued his career as a scholar, but now in the atheist, materialist and feminist movements, earning his living as a writer and lecturer. But he fell out with people, and by the 1930s his only remaining publisher was Emmanuel Haldemann-Julius of Kansas, publisher of the Little Blue Books, printed on newsprint in tiny type. After McCabe's death, all 200 of his books were out of print for more than forty years.

See Sharp Press has now reprinted some Little Blue Books, enlarging the type to a readable size. No serious scholar of Catholicism can afford to miss the McCabe reprints. Less serious readers may be entertained by his erudite asides and vituperative language. It is said that McCabe had no sense of humour, but ...

From *Pagan Christs*: “It was an old superstition, found in the Talmud ... that spirits (especially devils) could impregnate women through the ears. Hundreds of apologists have perspired over the saying of St Paul (I Corinthians xi, 10), in ordering women to have their heads covered in church: ‘For this cause ought woman to have power on her head because of the angels’. The real meaning is clear as crystal. Woman must wear a protection over her ears to prevent the spirits from impregnating her. So women must wear hats in fashionable churches in Fifth Avenue today!”.

From *Judaeo-Christian Degradation of Women*: “It is the asceticism or puritanism of both [Jesus and Paul] that led to the degradation of women. She is the chief implement used by the devil in his scheme of temptation. The gentle touch of hair upon your cheek, the ripe lips that draw you, the

tender pressure of her breasts, the white rounded limbs and finely moulded neck – the devil smiles cynically at every one of her allurements, and the ascetic sees only that imaginary smile”.

From *Christianity and Slavery*: “And the historical facts show that of those social idealists ... the overwhelming majority were Rationalists at a time when Rationalists were only five or ten percent of the whole community ... It is only in recent times, when reform movements were successful and the Churches were losing members very heavily, that we have discovered such a thing as social idealism ... in the Christian bodies”.

From *Horrors of the Inquisition*: “The learned *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics* ... is, in fact, one of the most scholarly of all recent encyclopaedias. But ... its article on the Inquisition is actually written by a well-known Roman Catholic apologist, Canon Vacandard! But he is quite a scholar, you may say. And I reply that there is not a wholly truthful Catholic scholar in the world, and that Vacandard's article is a disgrace to the *Encyclopaedia* ... The canon begins by placidly announcing that the Spanish Inquisition is outside his scope, which is like writing *Hamlet* without the ghost, *Hamlet*, the King and Ophelia”.

The institutions of the Roman Catholic church have always had plenty of critics. Despite the efforts of some of the more far-sighted theologians to extend the church's appeal, it still suffers from a reputation built up over centuries for greed, cynicism and exploitation. In recent times, this reputation has sunk further as the church's role in supporting dictatorships and genocide have become more widely known. McCabe's work is a erudite tool in the hands of its opponents.

DR

For more about Joseph McCabe see the lecture by Bill Cooke, reprinted in *Ethical Record* 105/3, March 2000. Obtainable from SPES, Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London WC1R 4RL. £1.50, post free

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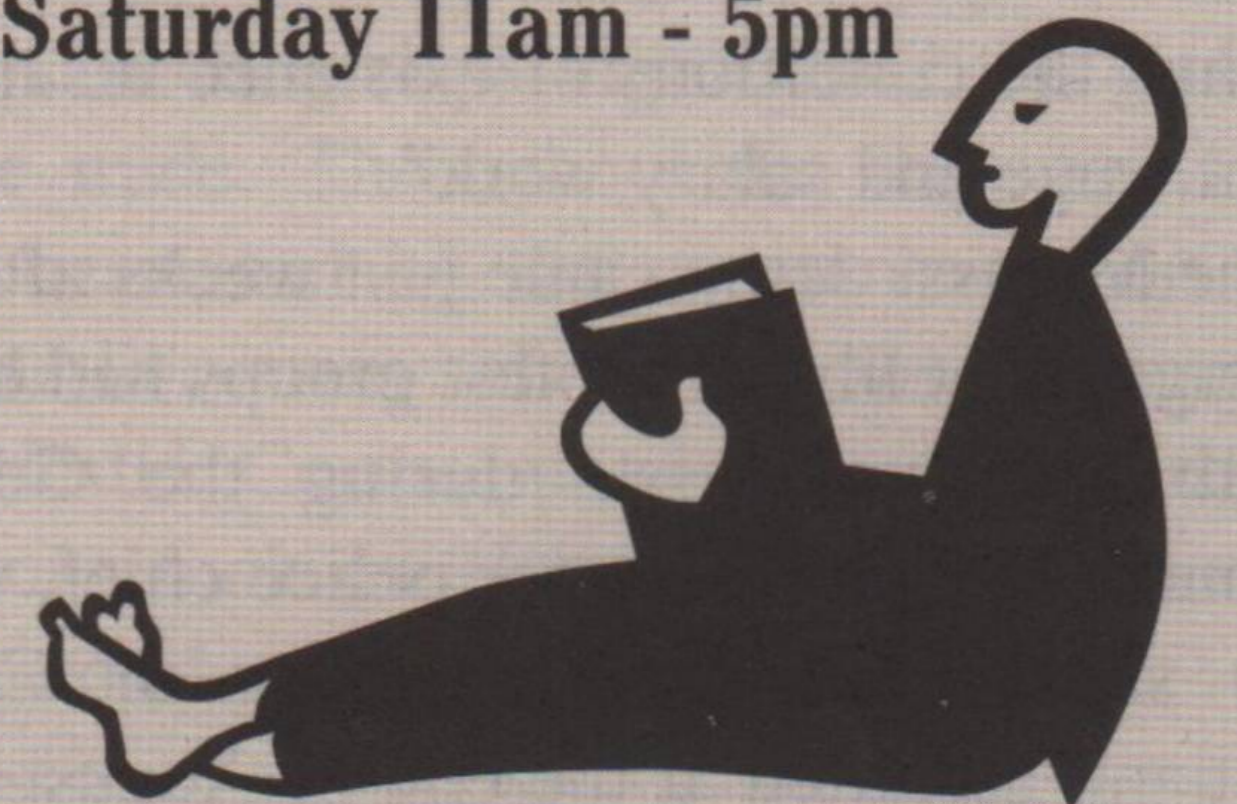
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## What we say ...

### Welcome to hell

**W**esterners are more important than other people. This is the only explanation we can see for the response of media and politicians to last week's atrocities in the United States.

We feel nothing but contempt for the hypocrites – pundits, bosses, 'experts', the 'humane' liberals – who shed crocodile tears for the dead while exploiting an opportunity to sneak through measures they'd never get away with otherwise.

What chance of Blair's public-private partnership idea being stopped now? How many allies will we find in the fight against the inevitable repression of our liberties?

The TUC, the organisation most likely to scupper the government's plans for public services, called off congress as a mark of respect for those who died. The killers at the London arms fair, protected by British cops and those same politicians who affect horror at what happened in New York, Washington and Pennsylvania observed no such decency.

Here in Whitechapel, we could almost hear the smacking of their lips as they contemplated a boom in orders. War is the health of the state, but it's also a tonic for many industrialists' wallets.

What politician (except a couple of old dogs who know their hour has passed) will admit that American foreign policy is the cause of the resentments of the Middle East? None – instead they have to fall back on racist stereotypes of 'different' Arabs or offensive platitudes about the psychosis of 'fundamentalism'.

The biggest and most ruthless killers since 1945 have always been – beyond compare – the paid killers of the developed world and their 'principled' bosses. Dresden, Hiroshima, Nagasaki, Vietnam, Iraq: these were not the actions of religious fundamentalists (though America has such people in abundance – they could be heard last week, howling for revenge).

Of course we're scared of the next escalation in this new war. But much more terrifying than any holy lunatic is the power of our own governments and their friends.

The big wars of the last century saw huge infringements of civil liberties. But there was a limit to what the state could do: the time came when 'the enemy' was finally defeated, and governments had no choice but to relax their hard grip.

This time there's no land to conquer, no cities to seize. In other words, this is a war that will have no end. Every victorious battle for 'our' side will spawn new hatreds and fresh enemies.

The freedoms we lose now will never be replaced, until we forcibly take them back.

We are sickened by the hypocrisy, we are scared for the future. But most of all, we are angry. Angry with the governments, angry with the bosses, and – particularly – angry with all those people who can't see beyond the atrocities of last week to the cesspool of betrayal, greed and opportunism behind them.

This was no 'human tragedy'. To call it that is to deny its political nature. The authors of last week's atrocity, like those of the bigger atrocities to come, have names, and the names aren't just those of the people who hijacked the planes. The names of the guilty are the names of everyone who's being swept along in this sewer of nationalism. There are a lot of decent people, who can't see that they've already started to take sides for the war to come. There was a three-minute silence last week for the victims of the attacks. Will there be another one for the victims of America's revenge?

## Readers' letters

### On religion

Dear *Freedom*,

With great regret I ask you to cancel my subscription to *Freedom*. For a long time, I have been dismayed by the persistent atheist line plugged in your paper. You never even seem to imagine that there is much good evidence for religious faith, knowledge and morality. There is not the time or space for a great argument. I state this as a fact.

What it virtually amounts to is supporting an atheist group amongst other things, and I want to clearly state that I am not an atheist and do not want to support or encourage atheism. Every plug for science, a grand menace to mankind if ever there was one, you certainly give if at all possible.

I have found much social and political wisdom, compassion, concern and courage in anarchism, and as for the anarchists themselves – I shall always love you.

Mary Quintana

Dear *Freedom*,

In regard to Ewton's response to Simon O'Meara's position on abortion (letters, 28th July), and Simon's termination of his subscription because (in his own words), "I can not in all conscience subscribe to a paper that prints pro-abortion articles", I feel compelled to throw into the ring a couple of things.

I am a member of the Christian Anarchist community in London, the Catholic Worker. It needs to be pointed out that as individuals we have the power to make up our own minds and thus see God in our very own and unique way. Not as we have perhaps been taught – through force, manipulation and fear that inevitably sticks like tar in the mind for generations to come.

To liberate Christ from Christianity is (for me) to move beyond reacting to what was taught me and think for myself.

The most famous of Christian anarchists, Ammon Hennacy, said, "the early Christians would be thrown to the lions rather than put an inch of incense on the altar of Caesar, while the modern ones seem to delight in joining the lions' club".

Chris Goodchild

Dear *Freedom*,

Judging by the letter from Ewton together with other correspondence in a similar vein, it seems that anarchists – who appear in the main to be either atheists or agnostics – have difficulty in distinguishing the pyramidal power structure of the established Christian church and religious belief per se.

I've held anarchist beliefs for over 40 years; I have also been a Unitarian for the same period. Unitarians broke away from the established church centuries ago, partly for doctrinal reasons but mainly because they were no longer prepared to be told what to think or believe. Unitarians are free to seek out truth wherever they can find it, and ultimately to form their own theology.

Most of us believe in and revere a supreme intelligence behind the universe. Some of us call this intelligence 'God', though the word itself is unhelpful as it comes with a lot of unwanted baggage.

Anarchists say 'no man has the right to govern me'. And anarchism concerns itself with how we conduct our human affairs, how we organise society in a caring, humane and non-exploitative way. And whilst we rightly deny the right of politicians (or anyone else) to make our decisions for us, this has nothing to do with belief in a creator who is concerned with our spiritual welfare.

I challenge any anarchist to explain to me the contradiction between anarchism and a free religious faith.

Peter Dodson

Dear *Freedom*,

Most anarchists are against religion. As Bakunin famously put it, "a tyrant in Heaven is the best justification for a tyrant on earth". Mediaeval forerunners of anarchism, on the other hand, took the view that earthly rulers were usurping God's authority: "when Adam delved and Eve span, who was then the gentleman?". And religious anarchists exist today.

'Roman Catholic anarchism' strikes me as a self-contradiction, since Romanists accept the authority of the hierarchy, with the threat of divine penalties. But 'rational' religionists, like Quakers, who think of God as within themselves and 'do it yourself' religionists, like Neopagans and Unitarians, may surely be as anti-authoritarian as atheists.

Donald Room

Dear *Freedom*,

Whether 'god' exists, I think, is irrelevant to anarchism. In other words, being an anarchist doesn't entail a view one way or the other. But if people believe they're obliged to follow god's will while at the same time calling themselves anarchist – that I'd find hard to understand. A boss is a boss is a boss, and god must be the biggest boss of the lot. In other words, if god existed I'd oppose it and defy its domination over me.

Johnny M.

Correspondents are asked to keep their letters short. Letters may have to be cut for reasons of space.

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## FREEDOM & THE RAVEN

In the last *Freedom*, we reported that our 11th August issue had been lost by the Post Office. After we'd gone to press, subscribers round the UK told us that the missing copies had started to arrive, almost a month late. Although this means we don't have to reprint the issue, which is a good thing, it still means the paper's contents were several weeks out of date before British readers got to see them. We value your subscriptions, and we're not at all happy that – on this occasion – you didn't get the up-to-date information you paid for. Representatives of Freedom Press are actively pursuing a compensation claim with the Post Office, and we'll let you know in the next issue how this turns out.

Other news: *The Raven* (no. 42) on Marxism is just out, and it will be reviewed in a forthcoming issue of *Freedom*.

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[www.anarchistbookfair.org](http://www.anarchistbookfair.org) • Anarchist Bookfair, 84b Whitechapel High Street, London E1

## London Anarchist Forum

**4th October** Women and Anarchy (a women-led discussion on a mixed sex symposium)

**18th October** Debate on Anarchist Internationalism

This fortnightly discussion forum is held on Thursdays from 8pm at the Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, Holborn. Following the above dates the LAF will return to Fridays for the rest of the winter.

For more info see: [www.trak.to/LAF](http://www.trak.to/LAF) or contact [LAF@anarchic.co.uk](mailto:LAF@anarchic.co.uk)

## Release the Refugees march Saturday 22nd September

March from Bootle Town Hall to Walton Prison  
assemble 11.30am

Merseyside Against Detention, c/o News from Nowhere,  
96 Bold Street, Liverpool L1 4HY  
[freethedetainees@merseymail.com](mailto:freethedetainees@merseymail.com)

## Chester Gap protest

on Saturday 22nd September at 12 noon

FLAN (Flintshire Action Network) will be holding a nonviolent protest outside the Gap store in Chester  
Download leaflets from [www.globalexchange.org](http://www.globalexchange.org) or [gapsucks.org](http://gapsucks.org)

## National Cannabis March Saturday 29th September

meet at 12 noon, Speakers Corner, Hyde Park, London  
to depart at 2pm via Park Lane and Piccadilly for  
cannabis rally at Trafalgar Square

recorded info: 020 7637 7467 • direct line: 020 7837 2720

email: [sep29@schmoo.co.uk](mailto:sep29@schmoo.co.uk)

<http://www.cannabiscoalition.org>

## Bristol video screening of 'Injustice'

Saturday 29th September at 9pm

at Easton Community Centre, Kilburn Road, Bristol

The long awaited film that the police have been trying to ban

[www.injusticefilm.co.uk](http://www.injusticefilm.co.uk)

## Worldwide Anti-McDonald's Day

A carnival against McWorld  
on Tuesday 16th October

meet at 3pm at McDonalds on The Strand, London,  
and then ...

more details to follow, so watch this space or visit

<http://www.mcspotlight.org>

## Dutch Anarchist Bookfair

on Saturday 10th November

the third Anarchistische Boekenmarkt will take place in  
Utrecht from 11am until 6pm

The event will be held at two locations: the bookfair at the Moira,  
and the cultural programme at the ACU. Cheap accommodation  
available at the nearby Strowis hostel ([strowis@xs4all.nl](mailto:strowis@xs4all.nl))

Anarchistische Boekenmarkt, p/o Simon Bolivarstraat 91,

35 73 ZK Utrecht, The Netherlands

[peetje@antenna.nl](mailto:peetje@antenna.nl)

## Red Rambles 2001

Red Rambles walks and rambles for Radicals, Libertarians, Anarchists,  
Greens, Socialists, Syndicalists, et al. Walkers are reminded to wear  
walking boots, appropriate clothing and to bring waterproofs, food  
and drink. See <http://members.tripod.co.uk/ainema/index-2.html>

**Sunday 18th November 2001**

Lathkill Dale in autumn, 6 miles. Meet at 11am at Monyash Village Green by  
the War Memorial. Walk leaders Malcolm & Marion.

Telephone 07939 440548 / 01773 827513 or e-mail [ain@ziplip.com](mailto:ain@ziplip.com)

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