

anarchist fortnightly **Freedom**

Vol. 62 No. 19

6th October 2001

50p



Suits you, Sir!

Suppliers of gas masks are out of stock. Panic-buying was boosted last week by a warning from the World Health Organisation, which said that governments must be alert to the risk of chemical and biological attack by 'international terrorists'.

But the masks won't work. Worse still, several of the world's biggest and baddest rogue states are known to have stock-

piled 'weapons of mass destruction' over several decades, and are thought to be increasingly willing to use them.

George W. Bush, figurehead for the world's largest organised terror network, has ordered his lieutenants to deploy tactical nuclear weapons in the Gulf and Indian Ocean. He had already, a few weeks before, sabotaged an international bioweapons ban. It would, he insisted,

hinder America's 'defensive' capability.

Bush and his henchmen have shown repeatedly that they have no respect for human life. Nor are they afraid of death (albeit other people's) in furthering their cause. These maniacs have to be stopped. It won't be easy, but we can't rest until we've done it. Politician: a primitive yet dangerous and unstable life-form, frequently fatal.

anarchist fortnightly

Freedom

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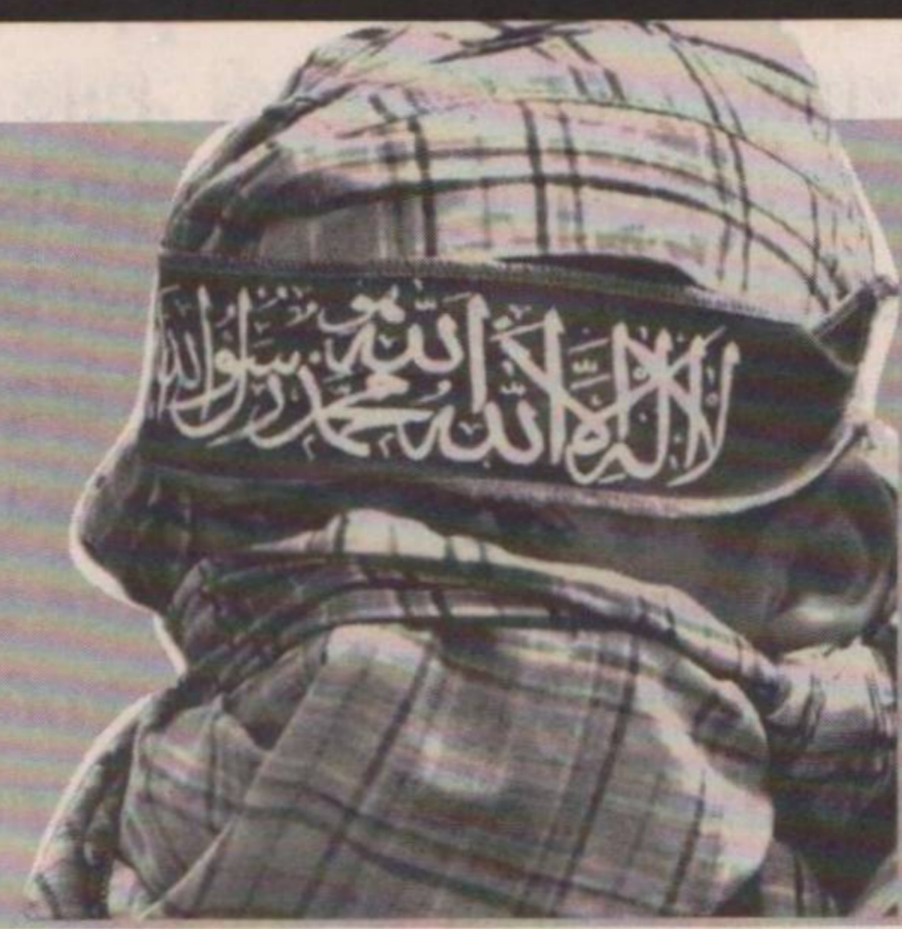
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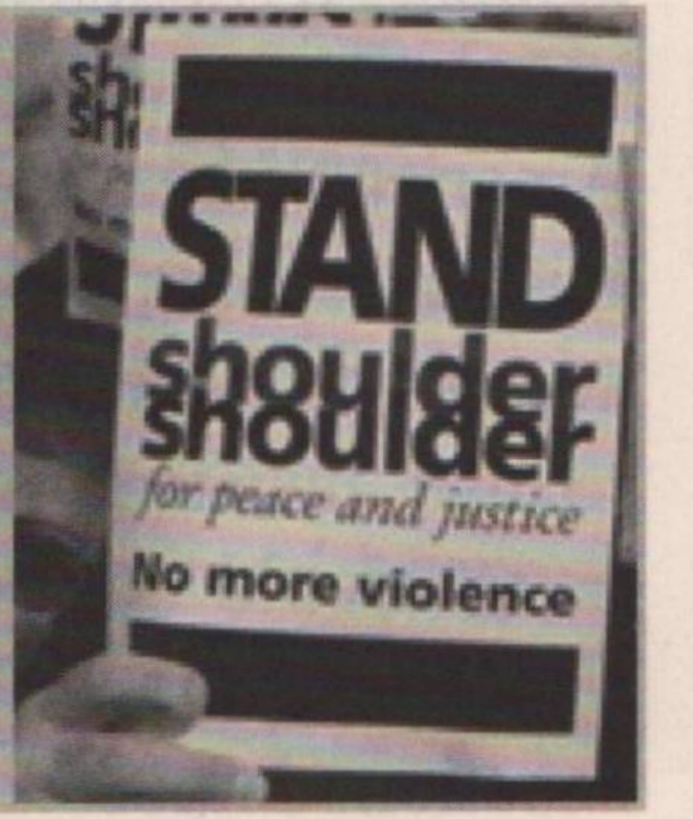


**LIFE UNDER
THE TALIBAN**
page 2

**AN INFINITE
INJUSTICE**
page 3



**ANTI-WAR
DEMOS**
page 4



Civil liberties: threat of new restrictions

Human rights groups last week expressed alarm at a raft of new laws proposed by the British government in the wake of attacks on American cities last month. In a move labelled 'draconian' by anarchists and other activists, home secretary David Blunkett has announced that he will introduce new 'anti-terrorism' laws.

He said he wanted to introduce three new bills, but that they would be so controversial he would not proceed without gaining prior approval from bosses of other political parties. The Conservative Party has already pledged to support any measures proposed, no matter how repressive they are.

Among measures under consideration are the granting of police powers to arrest people suspected of having knowledge of 'terrorist' activities, solely for the purpose of interrogation. This was considered in 1999 after the Omagh bombing, but ruled out because it would conflict with the European Convention on Human Rights, which has now been incorporated into British law. Civil servants are also known to be pushing for transcripts of telephone-taps to be admitted as evidence in court.

Activists were last week paying particular attention to Blunkett's proposals to introduce identity cards. These have previously been issued in Britain just once, during the second world war.

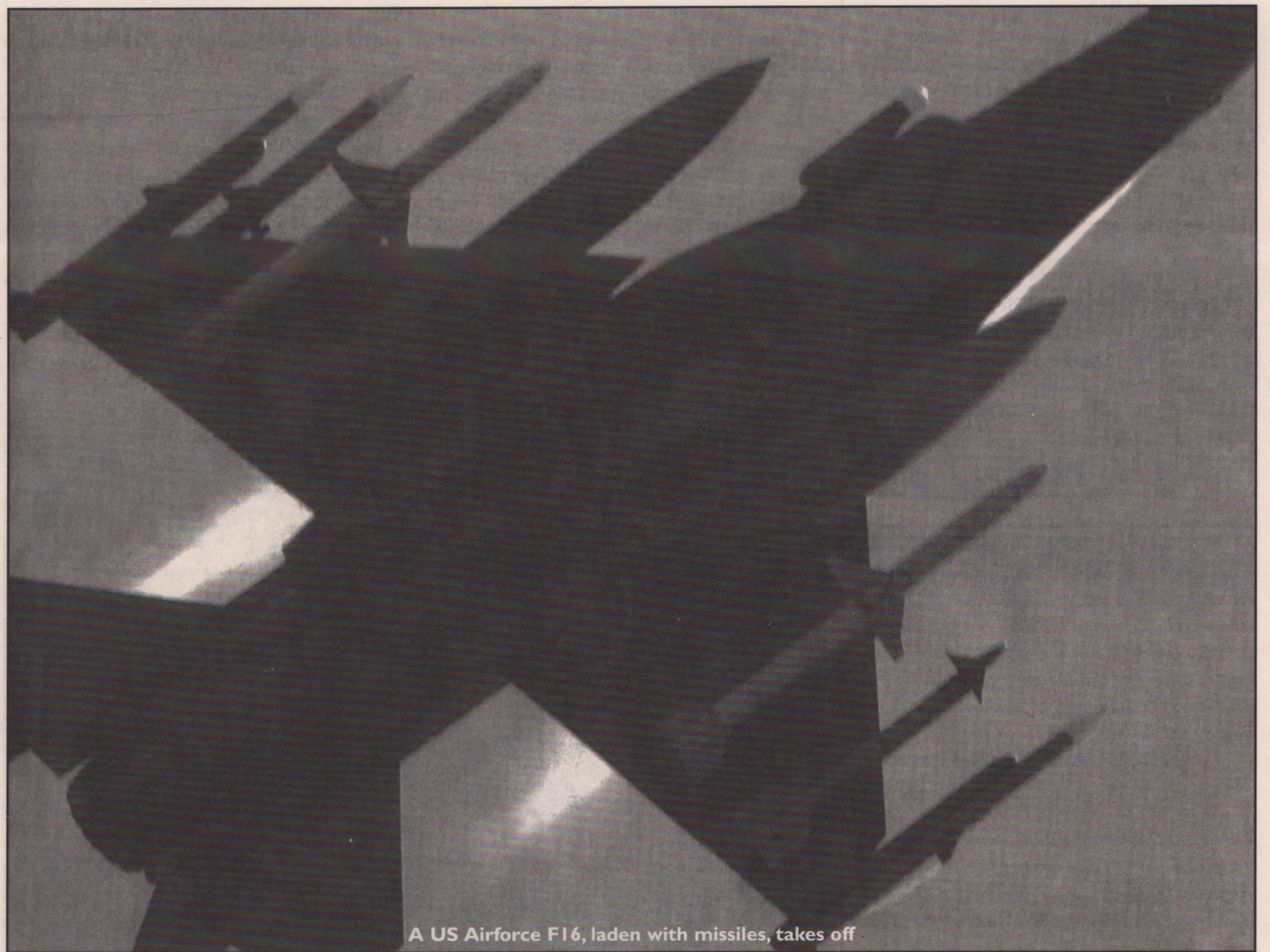
By the end of last week, Blunkett had been forced to back down. He insisted that police would not be given the power to stop people in the street and demand their papers, as had initially been suggested. Instead, he said, they would act as "citizens' entitlement cards". They would remain compulsory, however, and would have to be presented in order to access state services such as healthcare or education.

Many human rights activists said that the government's climbdown was insignificant. They pointed out that, in the wake of last month's attacks, officials had asked internet service providers to log all emails sent and received in Britain and to log all websites visited. Telephone networks have also been asked to keep logs of all calls made in or routed through the UK. Some suggested that the row over identity cards had been manufactured as a smokescreen to cover up these other measures. "Blunkett and Blair are clever politicians", said one. "You've got to admire their tactics, even though the opportunism stinks".

Editorial on page 7

"We're at war – there's been a war declared"

Rogue states prepare new terrorist attacks



A US Airforce F16, laden with missiles, takes off

A devastating military strike against targets in Afghanistan was reported to be imminent as *Freedom* went to press at the start of the week. The operation was expected to begin with manned and remote air attacks, aimed at destroying the small Afghan airforce and missile defence systems.

In a clear signal that an attack was imminent, US president George Bush said last weekend that the offensive would be pursued energetically. "America will act deliberately and decisively, and the cause of freedom will prevail", he said.

"We did not seek this conflict", he went on, "but we will end it. This war will be fought wherever terrorists hide, or run, or plan".

It is expected that, once Afghan defensive capabilities have been destroyed, a substantial

military operation will follow on the ground. At least one US paratroop division is known to have been put on battle readiness. British troops are thought to be preparing for deployment in support roles.

But critics of the military preparations have pointed out that no evidence has yet been presented to show that Osama bin Laden was responsible for attacks on New York and Washington almost a month ago. Some representatives of the mainstream media claim to have seen documentary evidence proving his involvement, but they say it must remain unpublished to protect the working methods of western 'intelligence agencies'.

Even before military strikes had been launched, cracks had started to appear in the coalition of states which Bush and Blair had worked so hard to put together. It is known

that British officials, generally considered the most loyal backers of American military strategy, had been urging Pentagon planners to target bin Laden's al-Qaeda network and the Taliban itself, rather than Afghanistan or its people. Other European states have been even more wary of giving American bosses an open-ended commitment of their support.

But so-called 'hawks' within the US government are known to want to widen the conflict. It has been suggested that, once the immediate target of Afghanistan has been neutralised, further attacks might follow on Iraq, Syria and Lebanon. Many senior US military personnel were last week insisting that the elimination of Saddam Hussein, the Iraqi dictator once armed and supported by the CIA, was 'a precondition' for the destruction of 'international terrorism'.

In Brief

• **Pakistan** Bosses in Pakistan last week welcomed a decision by the US government to lift economic sanctions, which had been imposed in 1998 after the country carried out nuclear weapons tests.

US president George Bush lifted the sanctions on 23rd September, after Pakistan's military ruler agreed to support US actions against Afghanistan.

General Pervez Musharraf agreed to allow American forces to use Pakistani airbases and military camps soon after the 11th September attacks on American cities.

Bush insisted that maintaining sanctions now "would not be in the national security interests of the United States". He also lifted sanctions imposed on India at the same time.

• **Nuclear fears** It has been revealed that US forces massing around Afghanistan will be equipped with tactical nuclear weapons. American military strategists are reported to have said that these weapons will only be used as a 'last resort'.

But this has not assuaged the fears of anti-militarist activists. "What exactly is a 'last resort'?", asked one last week. "Is that when Bush and his hawks get too tired or frustrated to continue pursuing a goal that was always totally unrealistic and unattainable to begin with?"

"The US has already refused to curtail its biological weapons development. It will now be impossible for the United States government to preach restraint to anyone about nuclear warfare. Deploying these missiles to the theatre of operations has to be one of the most reckless acts since the Cuban missile crisis".

• **Opium fields** British and American officials are warning that a £20 billion stockpile of raw opium is about to be released onto the world market by the Taliban. They say that 3,000 tonnes of the drug have been stored in secret bunkers across Afghanistan. The proceeds will finance the regime's defence against the current threatened war.

Quotations corner

America has created the evil that is attacking it. This evil will not disappear even if I die and Osama bin Laden dies and others die. The US should stop trying to impose its empire on the rest of the world.

Mullah Omar, 'spiritual leader' of the Taliban

Oh, I thought you meant some band. The Taliban in Afghanistan! Absolutely. Repressive.

George W. Bush, June 2000

We can not let terrorists and rogue nations hold this nation hostile.

George W. Bush, August 2000

Today I have been listening to a cassette of Ahmed Iqbal's programme on Alternative Radio, in which he quotes Ronald Reagan saying that Osama bin Laden is "the moral equivalent of America's founding fathers".

G.B.

While we are on the subject of quotes from scumbags, I found a book in my local library written about the war in Afghanistan in the 1980s against the USSR. In it was a foreword by Margaret Thatcher, in which she describes the mujahedin as fighters in the noble struggle for freedom ...

M.E.

'Talk to outside world and we'll kill you' vow Afghan bosses

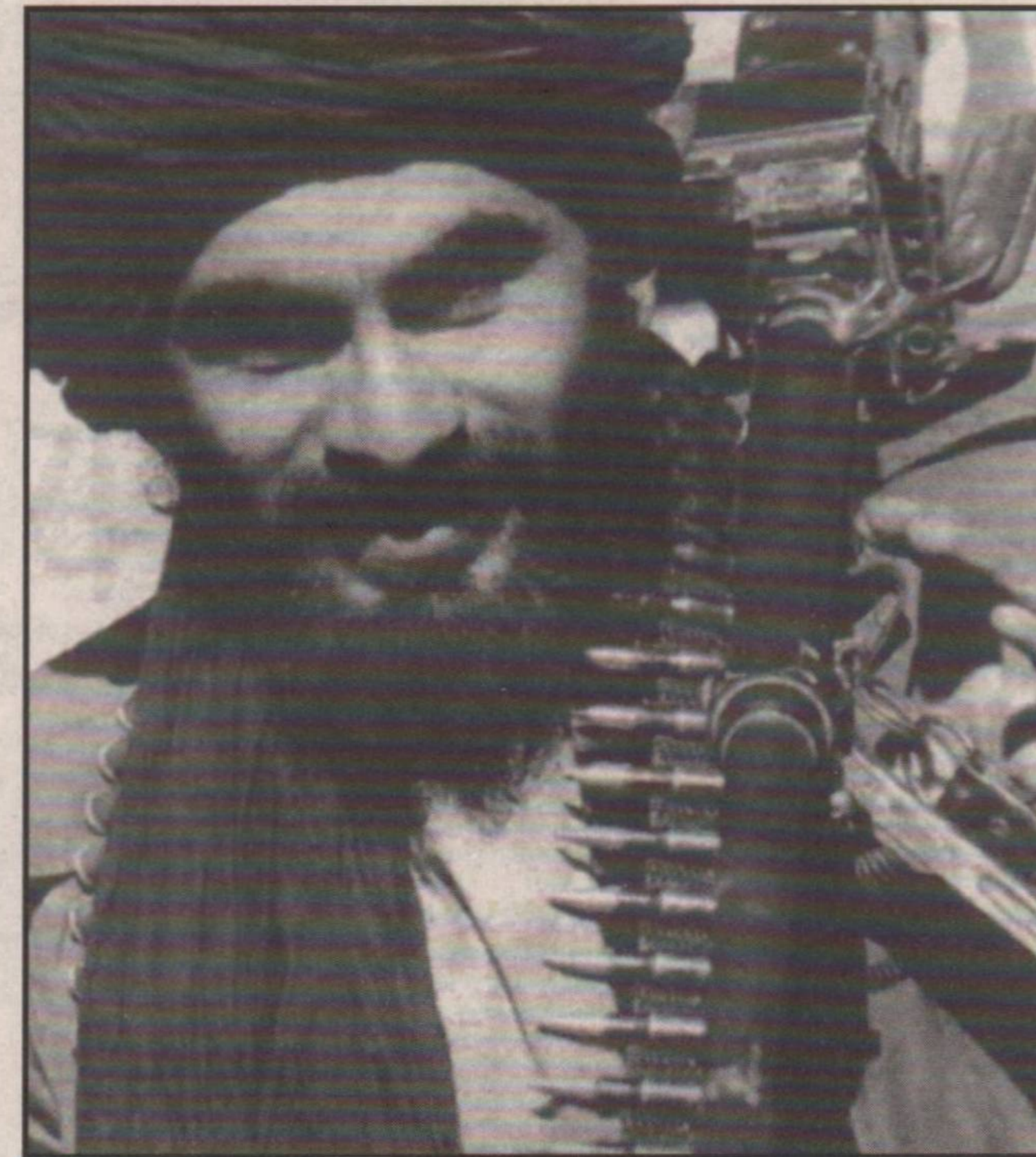
Bosses from the ruling Taliban dictatorship last week warned that Afghans found communicating with the outside world would be executed. Opposition activists said the move was an attempt to halt growing resistance to Taliban rule in Afghanistan. The internet, radio, television and mobile telephones have already been banned.

The announcement came as up to a quarter of the country's 26 million people were said to be facing starvation before the end of the year. The ban would have effectively ended western relief programmes, if aid organisations had not already been ordered out of the country by the government.

Other reports from inside the country suggest that state repression is tightening, in advance of conflict with a coalition of forces led by the United States. The defence minister claimed last week to have mobilised an extra 300,000 troops in readiness for attacks, but his claims have been widely disputed. Thousands of men from the country's ethnic minorities – Tajiks, Hazaras and Uzbeks – have fled their homes in order to avoid conscription.

"Every family is being asked to hand over one young man", said a refugee who had fled Taliban press gangs for Pakistan. "I left before they could come for me".

In at least one province, civilians and troops have started to rebel openly. The governor of Khost, a strategically important city in the east, was forced to withdraw temporarily after local militias mutinied. When local clans did finally obey the call to military service, governor Maulana Abdul Rauf Arif reportedly refused to arm them because of doubts over their loyalty to the regime. Forces along the Pakistani frontier have also threatened to disobey orders, unless forces



loyal to Osama bin Laden are withdrawn from their villages.

Taliban forces have set up road blocks on major routes, to prevent people fleeing the cities in direct contravention of orders from Mullah Omar, Afghanistan's religious boss.

Ironically, informed observers of the region argue that an attack by a US-led coalition is now the Taliban's best hope of survival. Even Afghan refugees who have fled the country unite in saying they do not want to see it attacked.

"If the Americans start bombing the Taliban areas, every Afghan will resist", Mohamed Nahim, the commander of a small opposition unit in the province of Nimruz, was reported as saying in *The Observer* newspaper (30th September). Abdul Rahman Gorgej, agreed. "We don't want American help", he said. "The US may manage to defeat the Taliban, but it will take a long time and many women and children will be killed".

In a sign of desperation, US officials have floated the idea of a return to a monarchy.



Amid the ruins of Kabul, what is there left to bomb?

• The following is a statement by resistance group the Revolutionary Association of Women of Afghanistan.

The people of Afghanistan have nothing to do with bin Laden and his accomplices

On 11th September, the world was stunned by the horrific terrorist attacks on the United States. Members of the Revolutionary Association of Women of Afghanistan stand with the rest of the world in expressing our condemnation for this barbaric act of violence and terror.

We had long been warning that the US should not support the most treacherous, criminal, anti-democratic and anti-women Islamic fundamentalist parties – if the Taliban could commit every possible type of crime against other Afghans, we argued, they would feel no shame in committing crimes against Americans too, if it helped them gain and maintain their power. To do this these barbaric criminals will readily turn to any means necessary.

But it was the US government who supported Pakistani dictator General Zia-ul-Haq in the 1980s, when he created thousands of religious schools from which the germs of the Taliban emerged. Similarly, it is well-known that Osama bin Laden was once the blue-eyed boy of the CIA.

What is more painful still is the realisation that American politicians have not learned a lesson from their pro-fundamentalist policies in Afghanistan, and are still supporting other fundamentalist groups and their leaders. In our opinion, any kind of support for the fundamentalist Taliban and groups like them is to trample on human rights generally and women's rights in particular.

If it is eventually established that the perpetrators of the terrorist attacks came from outside the United States, our claim that fundamentalist terrorists would eventually devour their creators will be proved once again.

The 11th September attacks were not the first such terrible event, nor will they be the last. The US government should consider the root causes of what happened and stop supporting the Afghan terrorists once and for all.

Now that the Taliban and bin Laden are the prime suspects in the eyes of US officials, how many thousands of innocent Afghans will end up being killed for the crimes of the government? Does the American state think that through such attacks it will wipe out the causes of terrorism? Or will it result in terrorism spreading on an even larger scale?

From our point of view, vast and indiscriminate military attacks on a country that has been facing permanent disaster for over twenty years will not be a matter of pride. People have to realise that there is a vast difference between the poor and devastated people of Afghanistan, and the terrorist Taliban who govern there.

While we once again announce our solidarity with the people of the United States, we also believe that attacking Afghanistan and killing its ruined and destitute civilians will not in any way decrease America's grief. We sincerely hope that Americans can differentiate between the country's people and a handful of fundamentalist terrorists that rule over them. Our hearts go out to the people of Washington and New York. Down with terrorism!

Editorial on page 7

An infinite injustice



Mourning a victim of the Taliban in Afghanistan

One of the saddest lessons of the militarised hysteria following the attacks on the World Trade Centre and Pentagon is also one of the simplest – that every liberal eventually finds an imperialist campaign he can support. It is particularly sad when the liberal in question is Christopher Hitchens, scourge of Henry Kissinger, Bill Clinton, Mother Theresa and many other rightwing moralists and mass murderers. Having swallowed the ‘new military humanism’ which bombed Serbia in 1999, Hitchens has now found a taste for it. He’s been urging us to recognise that “Islamic fascism is an enemy for life, as well as an enemy of life”.

So there you have it. From the rantings of Italy’s extremely rightwing prime minister Silvio Berlusconi about “the superiority of our civilisation” to Hitchens on the left, there seems to be a consensus that the ‘war on terrorism’ is really a ‘clash of civilisations’.

The phoney war which has followed the attacks on the US has seen a particular debasement of language as one of its spin-offs. Home Secretary David Blunkett, for example, talks of the need to revise anti-terrorist legislation, speed up extradition procedures and introduce ID cards as moves to “avert the creation of a police state”. George Bush can refer to the institution of indefinite internment of ‘suspect’ foreign nationals (a proposal currently under discussion in Washington) as necessary to ‘protect freedom’. A campaign which might end in the restoration of the Afghan monarchy is described as a ‘revolution’.

“As a bare minimum, tactical nuclear capabilities should be used against the bin Laden camps in the desert of Afghanistan”, suggests Defence Intelligence Agency analyst Thomas Woodrow, writing in the *Washington Times*. There is certainly a consensus forming around the position advocated by US deputy defence secretary Paul Wolfowitz, that the war ‘against terror’ will be a war without end, a war that ‘knows no borders’.

This suggests that after the destruction of Afghanistan comes Iraq, and maybe Syria (and then where? Colombia?). It also suggests that, far from being obsessed with revenge, the US and its NATO allies – together with the bruised and battered warriors of Wall Street – have a keen eye on the oil reserves of the Middle East.

Novelist Ian McEwan used the 11th September attacks as an excuse to wallow in sanctimony. Writing in the *Guardian*, he gave us a lesson in the nature of empathy. “If the hijackers had been able to imagine themselves into the thoughts and feelings of the passengers”, he opined, “they would have been unable to proceed. It is hard to be cruel once you permit yourself to enter the mind of your victim. Imagining what it is like to be someone other than yourself is at the core of our humanity. It is the essence of compassion, and it is the beginning of morality”.

There is no recognition that it’s the inability of public liberal intellectuals like McEwan himself to “imagine what it is like” which has led young men like those who hijacked the aeroplanes to think that all of us are the enemy. What is it like to be the father or mother of a dying Iraqi baby? How to ‘imagine’ the last desperate heartbeats, the inescapable terror encompassed in the murder on primetime of 12 year old Mohammed al-

Durrah, killed by Israeli troops at the start of the second intifada? McEwan doesn’t say.

What made 11th September distinct was not, as Noam Chomsky has already pointed out, the massive loss of life. The killing of 5,000 people is terrible, but the US has been directly responsible for the deaths of millions in the last half-century alone. What made the last month’s attacks distinct was the fact that this was the first time ‘victims outside’ had launched an attack on US soil.

The US did not engineer it. But in propping up dictatorships across the Middle East, bank-rolling Israeli oppression of the Palestinian people and decimating Iraq, America has lost all claim to the moral high ground over what ensues from their actions. In a sense, for some elements of US capital, it couldn’t have come at a better time. Wars are always useful for escaping a recession. Moreover, the US has been searching for a new Cold War for a decade now, in a bid to maintain its European hegemony. It has come up against

the Euro’s challenge to the dollar and the development of the European Union in the process. If, as Henry Kissinger once observed, NATO is the “principal institutional link between America and Europe”, then the prospect of a new “clash of civilisations” can only help keep the leash tight.

Those of us who want to oppose the ‘infinite justice’ which the US-led coalition will try to impose on the people of Afghanistan have to transform the anger of the anti-capitalist movement into a genuine anti-imperialist force. We’re not off to a good start. The Movement for Global Justice recently postponed its anti-IMF demo in Washington because of the attacks. American activist Lorenzo Kombo Ervin has said that “the task of anarchists, especially in the anti-globalisation movement, has to be to build an anti-war movement in opposition of any further military engagement”. He contends that “we need to put ourselves in harm’s way to stop this military build-up”, and to use our “force of numbers and ability” to gum up the war machine.

In Britain, that must mean making next week’s CND demo in London as large and as militant a refusal of the ‘war against terrorism’ as possible. It has, though, to mean much more than that too. We have to oppose this war by all means necessary. If we have begun now to fear the violence of the oppressed, it is because the oppressed have decided that our solidarity isn’t worth waiting for. If we want to avert more attacks on western cities, we have to demonstrate our capacity to oppose our own governments as they move to shed more blood in the name of peace.

During the war for Algerian independence, a leaflet produced by the rebel FLN famously said that “colonialism only loosens its hold when the knife is at its throat”. As Franz Fanon noted, “no Algerian really found these terms too violent. The leaflet only expressed what every Algerian felt at heart – colonialism is not a thinking machine, nor a body endowed with reasoning faculties. It is violence in its natural state, and it will only yield when confronted by greater violence”. Military attacks on Afghanistan won’t address the problem. **Nick S.**



Protests against terror



photo © Ludovic Turman

Anti-militarist actions and protests have been taking place around the world, on a scale not seen since the second Gulf War a decade ago.

A demonstration in Barcelona on Saturday 29th September saw five thousand protesters on the march. Around a thousand people came on to the streets of Sydney the same day, to protest against the Australian government's plans for backing the US-led coalition.

In Washington, demonstrations which had been planned against the annual meeting of the International Monetary Fund and World Bank went ahead, despite the meeting's cancellation. They became anti-war demos instead.

Another protest which had been organised months in advance also went ahead. A key NATO meeting which was to have been held in Naples on 27th September was cancelled in the aftermath of the attacks on New York and Washington, but the planned protests continued in the form of an anti-militarist rally.

The largest demonstration seen so far took place in Athens on 27th September. Around ten thousand people met in the Greek capital's Propylea Square, before marching on the parliament building. This followed opinion polls which showed that 90% of people in Greece oppose military action.

There have been several demonstrations in London, and in other towns and cities throughout the UK.

The first London demo was on 18th September, when more than three hundred people gathered on the pavement outside Downing Street. A larger protest in Whitehall followed on 22nd September.

One activist said, "we want to show our solidarity with those who, like us, live in fear

of nutters like Blair and Bush. We fully oppose any further acts of violence. The deaths in the 11th September attacks were disgusting and pointless, but we should resist any acts of retaliation that can only result in more bloodshed and suffering."

London: 22nd September

A crowd of more than 4,000 gathered outside Downing Street, many of them holding CND posters which said, 'stand shoulder to shoulder for peace and justice' (see picture, above). Many of them were wearing black.

A CND representative said that Blair and Bush risked being seen as terrorists themselves if they launched an attack on Afghanistan. "Any military strike is going to kill yet more civilians who don't deserve to die", she said. "It will only create a spiral of violence, and it will create huge resentment against the US and Britain.

London: 25th September

Anarchists joined around seven hundred other protesters outside Downing Street in what has become a weekly vigil against the gathering war. The demo, which had been organised by ARROW and CND, called for justice in the place of vengeance. One anarchist banner said, 'we are for love and peace ... oh yes, and class war!'. Other banners repeated Ghandi's famous phrase, that 'an eye for an eye makes the whole world blind'.

Speakers included *Freedom* contributor Milan Rai, who pointed out the hypocrisy of the West. Not only did western governments fund and train Osama bin Laden, but their sanctions against Iraq have (according to the United Nations) killed 220,000 Iraqi civilians.

Various speakers also highlighted the humanitarian disaster that was unfolding in Afghanistan even before the first bomb dropped. Some 1.5 million people were known, at the time of the demo, to be fleeing their homes in search of food. **RG**

London: 7th October

A public meeting is being organised by the No War but the Class War collective. This will be held at 5pm at the Exchange, Sebbon Street, Islington (nearest tube: Highbury). Email nowarbuttheclasswar@hotmail.com

London: 13th October

A major demo is planned next Saturday, starting at 12pm in Hyde Park. This will be followed by a march to Trafalgar Square for a rally. The protest coincides with a demo against 'Star Wars' at the Menwith Hill spy base in Yorkshire (see page 6).

Elsewhere in the UK: 22nd September

• **Cambridge** Over fifty activists held a four-hour vigil in the city's market square, to show their solidarity with all victims of terrorism.

• **Glasgow** Around a thousand people attended a 'stop the war' rally in George Square, organised by Scottish CND. Afghan asylum-seeker Mohammed Asif told the crowd, "there is nothing left in Afghanistan to be bombed and destroyed. People are tired of the Taliban, and they don't want Osama bin Laden in the country". Human rights lawyer Aamer Anwar said, "we understand the pain that the Americans are going through, because for years Muslims have seen their people humiliated and bombed from Palestine to Iraq, Kashmir to Kurdistan. No tears have been shed for their families. Is the life of a Palestinian child not equal to that of an American child?"

• **Newcastle** A vigil was held in Haymarket, next to the War Memorial. Activists warned that any military intervention in Afghanistan would be counter-productive from the point of view of western states, and would lead to many civilian deaths.

• **Nottingham** As many as 300 people assembled in the city's market square to protest against the build-up of US forces in the Indian Ocean and republics of the former USSR. Many of the protesters lit candles.

• **Oxford** Over 700 campaigners marched on religious venues in the city. Many carried

candles. Several hundred went to the Bath Street mosque, while others headed for the cathedral and a synagogue. The actions were organised by the Oxford Stop the War Coalition, founded to oppose the Kosovo intervention in 1999 and now relaunched. Several of the organisers complained about disruptive tactics by local cops.

• **Portsmouth** Up to 200 people met in Guildhall Square, the largest demonstration in the city since an anti-militarist rally during the Kosovo bombing campaign. Participants said they were pleased with the turnout. "The attendance was good, and the mood among passersby very supportive", said one.

• **Reading** A stall was set up in Town Hall Square by members of the Reading Peace Group and the International Solidarity Centre. Organisers said that several hundred people had signed a petition.

• **Yorkshire** A rally in Leeds was attended by around 150 people, while fifty campaigners staged a protest in Bradford. Several dozen demonstrators gathered in Todmorden's Peace Gardens, and a peace vigil was held in Hebden Bridge.

Elsewhere in the UK: 29th September

• **Bristol** Around four hundred people marched through the city centre, calling for an end to military preparations for an attack on Afghanistan.

• **Cardiff** Two local women, Celia Webb and Rabab Ghazoul, organised 'a walk to end the violence against all peoples of the world'. During the afternoon, a small group of anti-militarists walked a loop round Cardiff's central shopping area, carrying placards. "The slogan was deliberately not Saatchi & Saatchi", said one participant. "The action came across very clearly for what it was - something created by ordinary people, rather than by spin-doctors and their pet politicians. You had to spend a little time to read it, a little time for thought".

• **Manchester** Several hundred people staged a peace rally in St Peter's Square. This followed an earlier vigil on 20th September, when fifty people staged a silent protest outside the Friends' Meeting House.

Initial military strikes were widely expected to start at the beginning of this week. If they don't happen before *Freedom* is published, however, CND are calling for a peace vigil on the day action begins in every town centre, 6pm.

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'We don't want your wars'

anarchists tell the state

Below we publish part of a statement from *Resistance*, the monthly bulletin of the Anarchist Federation. This is followed by two short comment pieces.

No War or just Jaw Jaw?

Following the recent terrorist attacks in the USA, President George Bush and Prime Minister Tony Blair have declared that the guilty parties must be held responsible. We couldn't agree more. The problem we have is over who the guilty parties are. Osama bin Laden? The Taliban? Or the British and American states who funded them?

The current outbreak of hostilities between two different ruling elites (western and Taliban) is yet another manifestation of the greed and power-lust of the enemies of humanity. How will those apparently on the side of humanity respond?

Past experience leaves little room for optimism. The left, as ever, will attempt to muddy the waters (anti-imperialism, national liberation, support of this or that faction). Part of the politics of authoritarian groups is making situations that are easily comprehensible infinitely complicated, so leaving the political strategy to those clued up enough on the correct ideology (Marxism, Leninism, etc.). The job of party-members is not to understand, but to learn a few slogans and follow the orders of their wise leaders. During the bombing of Yugoslavia, the various left groups all chose their favourite army to back, though some even managed to switch allegiance in the middle of the conflict.

Pacifists will be calling for a non-violent response, but within the framework of the capitalist state. Asking states to be non-violent is like telling the tide to stop coming in. It's not enough to ask the state to be nicer – the state must be destroyed. During the Gulf War, pacifists called for sanctions instead of bombs against Iraq. These sanctions have now killed hundreds of thousands more than the bombs ever did.

Anarchists claim to be different. We realise that the biggest weapon the ruling class have got is not this or that gun, tank or missile, but the power over our minds, over what we think. Disinformation amplified by the media, and mystification through religion or patriotism, add up to formidable tools. These aim to prevent us from understanding what's really going on in our lives and the world, and how we should respond to it. So, as anarchists, we aim to raise our level of understanding and encourage others to do likewise.

Will Britain's anarchists rise to the challenge of this war, in words and deeds, by putting across a clear revolutionary analysis of the situation? Will there be attempts to get a strong, aggressive, class-based message across to working class people? Will we make people think? The response from many anarchists to previous wars has been (at best) confused, and many just retreated into the anarchist/anti-capitalist social scene and spent endless hours hand-wringing and arguing among themselves in irrelevant meetings that no sane person would go within a mile of.

How ridiculous, that every time a war starts the same twenty to thirty or so people get



together in London to hold 'No War But The Class War' meetings. A fine slogan for sure, but who else hears it beyond the walls in which they meet? Are we brave enough to decide a clear message and take it out on to the streets? During the Gulf War, one meeting spent ages deciding whether to even go on an anti-war march. It's difficult to think of a more pointless way to spend time. And what of the so-called 'anti-capitalist' scene? Will it develop into an anti-war movement? When bombs were falling on Yugoslavia, the political weakness of this scene was clearly exposed. First there was hopeless confusion, as there was no simple 'good guys versus bad guys' to support. Soon after, attempts at analysis were abandoned and the war was to a large extent ignored.

'Anti-capitalism' is a strange blend of Christians, liberals, leftwing parties, environmentalists, pacifists, do-gooders and occasional anarchists. It never has had, and never will have, any relevance to the majority of people. It has no foundation in workplaces, no roots in communities, and the times it has looked most interesting are when already existing social movements have temporarily got involved.

The people involved in 'anti-capitalism' have got to decide. More 'celebrations of the diversity of our struggles'? Or the realisation that this is a directionless and politically inept movement with no hope of contributing to the creation of a free and equal society? There can only be one response to capitalist war – a clear call for a war against the rulers and would-be rulers of all states. To end war, we must end capitalism.

• *Resistance* costs £4 for 12 issues (£6 EU, £12 elsewhere), from AF, PO Box 375, Knaphill, Woking GU21 2XL. Visit www.afed.org.uk

The article by Nick S. in the last issue of *Freedom* raised questions rather than giving answers. Is it true, for example, that ethics and morals are really just stories we tell to justify ourselves? Let's junk morals, they are rules provided by an authority and as such anarchists should have nothing to do with them. Ethics, by contrast, is about making rational assertions based on reason and logic. They form the principles by which we try to live.

Nick rattles round Kant's attempt to develop ethics based on pure reason, which requires us to act as if the maxim of our acts were to become a universal law. Okay, it's clearly untenable for crashing planes into buildings to become a universal law. But isn't it equally untenable for everyone in the world to live and consume as Americans do?

The fictional cliché of 'the innocent bystander', in the shape of 'ordinary Americans' crops up. In nations where there is access to education and information, can there really be innocent bystanders? We seem to have lost our grip on anarchist truths. War is the health of the state, is it not? And terrorism is war in pursuit of a state.

Bush is now positioning America for a future where oil and water will be resources to fight over. When he and poodle Blair claim to be 'defending freedom', they mean freedom for ordinary Americans to continue consuming and polluting as they are now (the poodle will eventually get the boot).

And why do we have to place the blame, as Nick seems to want to do? What are we, anarchist judges? Back to basics once more. 'All power tends to corrupt, and absolute power tends to corrupt absolutely'. Do we need go any further than that? They all commit atrocities, that's the nature of power.

Colin Johnson

With the harsh Afghan winter fast approaching and with a massive humanitarian disaster looming, even Bush has realised that it wouldn't be a good move to send huge numbers of ground troops into Afghanistan at this time of year.

I suspect that for now, apart from bombing, it'll be special forces trying to work at night to catch isolated groups of bin Laden supporters to take out. This is one war that won't be televised – far too messy. The much televised Northern Alliance push will also peter out very quickly when the snows starts.

Russia will still send the Northern Alliance arms and equipment. They don't want a substantial American presence in that part of the world, but would welcome cutting off bin Laden's support for the Chechen rebels.

Richard A.

Algerian pilot Lotfi Raissi was in a London court last week, fighting extradition to the United States on a charge of falsifying information in his application for a US commercial pilot's licence. Forgetting their usual guff about the presumption of innocence, the media had reported his arrest as the smashing of a bin Laden terrorist cell. It's well known that the FBI want him tried as an accomplice to the 11th September plot.

There could be difficulties for the British government ahead. UK policy is to refuse extradition on capital charges to a state which inflicts execution on its victims.

If US prosecutors have any sense, they'll get Lotfi extradited to face the falsification charges and slap on the serious charges once he's at their mercy. If they seek his extradition on murder charges instead, it could all get very embarrassing indeed. The UK government would be exposed as hypocritical if they extradited him. But it would be accused of harbouring terrorists if it didn't. Such are the burdens of a war on terrorism.

TC

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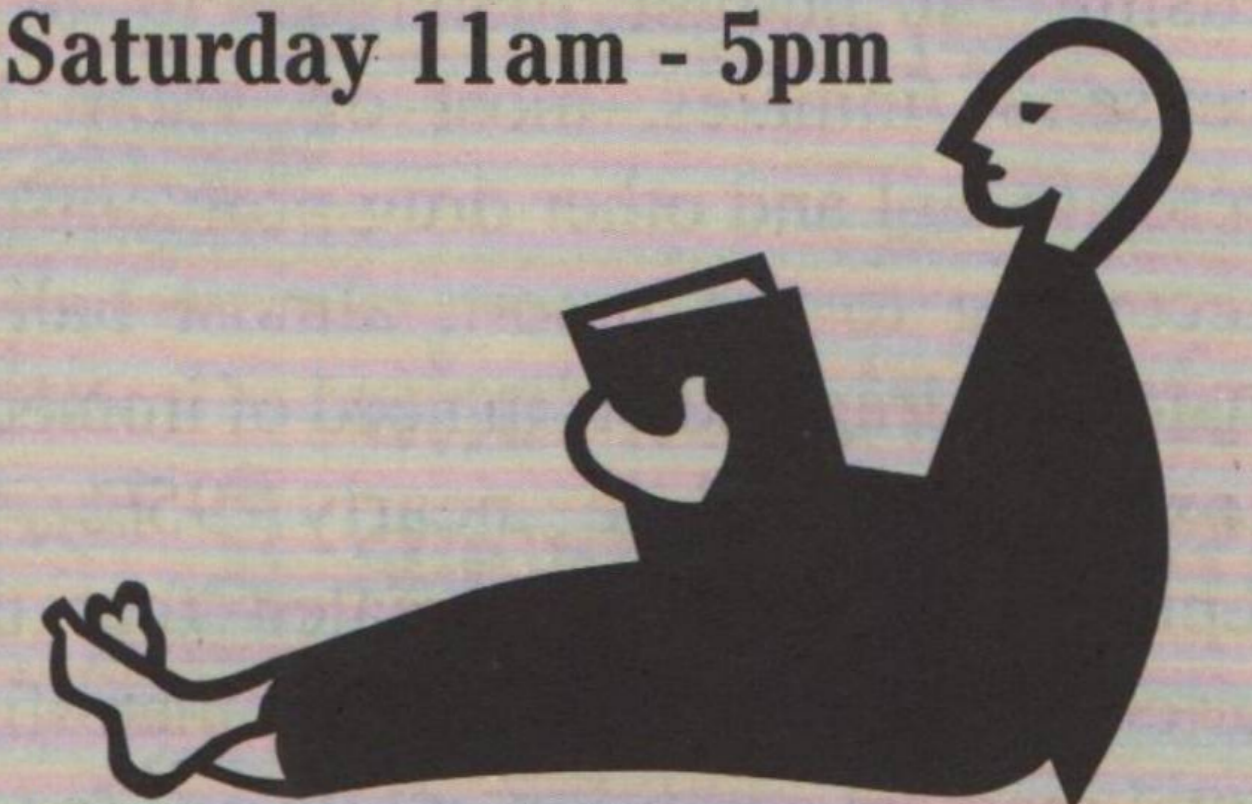
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Freedom man convicted

Oldham

Regular *Freedom* contributor Brian Bamford has been convicted of a breach of the peace by Oldham magistrates. This followed an episode on 4th June when protesters occupied the offices of Oldham East MP Phil Woolas. An additional charge of assault was dismissed.

Four Labour Party workers appeared as witnesses for the prosecution during the two day trial. One of them, Jean Lord, told the court, "these men came into the office shouting 'get Woolas down here'. They were anarchists, anarchists are against everyone, they don't believe in anything".

Steven Morgan, the managing director of a political consultancy who also appeared for the prosecution, said, "this was four days before the general election and we didn't want disruption".

Woolas had been targeted after proposing a Private Members' Bill in Parliament aimed at stopping people from receiving benefits unless they were on the electoral register. The protesters also objected to his plan for creating a DNA register.

They had been distributing leaflets outside the constituency Labour Party office calling for Woolas himself to be put on the dole. But when they went inside, a row broke out with party officials and police were called.

Brian was taking photographs for *Freedom* when he was accosted by Steven Morgan. Morgan carried out what he himself described in court as a 'smother tackle'. He later claimed that Brian had elbowed him, but the resulting charge of assault against Brian was not accepted by the bench.

Brian was bound over for two years and is now considering an appeal. Defending his actions, he said that the case was an important one. "This represents an attack by the Labour Party on peaceful protest and investigative journalism", he said. "They want a world where everything is scripted, where everything is spun and where critics of the party are silenced".

Eight other people were arrested at the protest. They were held for eight hours before being released without charge.

Women's jail condemned

London

Holloway prison is "failing its inmates", according to a report by the Chief Inspector of Prisons released last week. Bosses at the North London nick, which has 500 prisoners, were criticised for focusing on budget management at the expense of inmates, most of whom have severe alcohol and other drug problems.

According to the report, almost half the inmates are drug addicts in need of immediate detoxification, while nearly 95% take sleeping pills. It also revealed that three quarters of the prisoners have an identifiable mental medical condition, while one in ten is suicidal. Lack of funding means that the necessary support programmes do not exist.

The report of Sir David Ramsbotham also condemned holding teenagers on remand in the same cells as convicted prisoners, saying "common sense, never mind the law, should dictate that this is wholly inappropriate".

Martin Narey, director general of Britain's prison regime, said that changes were currently being made.

Did anyone see DSEi cop attack?

Appeal from the Legal Defence and Monitoring Group

We are looking for witnesses to the arrest of a medic outside the DSEi arms fair in London last month. The arms fair took place in Docklands on 11th September. The man, who was acting as a medic for the Wombles direct action group, was arrested as he went to help a woman injured by police.

The arrest happened at 2.10pm at the roundabout opposite the Royal Victoria DLR station, near Tidal Basin Road. It came just as police began forcing demonstrators down the south side of the roundabout.

The medic is 5ft 7ins tall, and he was wearing white overalls and a white bicycle helmet with red cross symbols on it.

He has been charged under section 4 of the 1986 Public Order Act. A trial date has been set for 3rd December, and we urgently need to find anyone who saw his arrest and who could help with preparations for his defence. In particular, the arrest took place while the

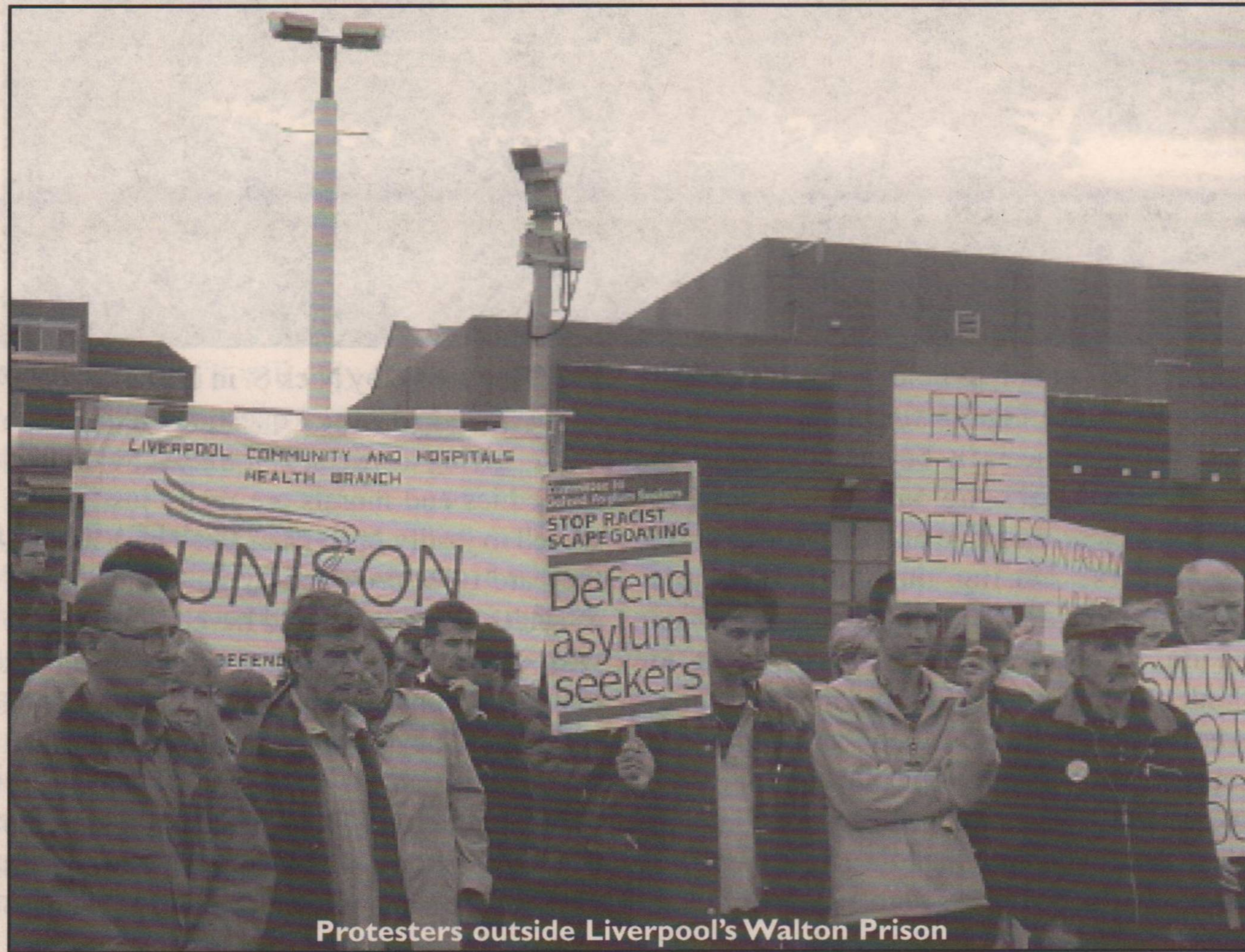


Police making another DSEi arrest on 11th September

medic was helping a woman who had collapsed after being kicked by a policeman. If you are or know this woman, or if you saw the medic's arrest, please get in touch with

the Legal Defence and Monitoring Group at BM Haven, London WC1N 3XX, or you can telephone 020 8245 2930 or email them at LDMG@altavista.com

'Free the detainees' demand activists



Protesters outside Liverpool's Walton Prison

A coordinated series of protests took place across Britain on Saturday 22nd September, to demand an end to the detention of asylum-seekers. These were planned to coincide with a similar series of events which took place in Australia.

In Scotland, activists travelled to Dungavel Detention Centre from nearby Glasgow for a rally outside.

In England, protesters gathered outside detention centres at Harmondsworth and Campsfield, and outside Liverpool's Walton Prison. Activists opposing the jailing of refugees in Lewes Prison leafleted the town centre to raise awareness of British state policies.

• **Liverpool** "I have never committed a crime in my life, but I have paid the price of a murderer – just for fleeing from persecution in my homeland". These words, which were read to a protest outside Walton Prison on 22nd September, tell of the plight of more than a hundred asylum-seekers currently detained there. Around 100 people came to demonstrate against official policies, which result in refugees being locked in their cells

for 23 hours a day, subject to racist abuse and given adulterated food. They are denied English lessons.

The Liverpool campaign to free the detainees has received strong support, much of it from trades unions. Speakers at the demo from the North West Region of UNISON demanded "justice for the illegally detained refugees" and pledged their continuing support for the campaign.

Merseyside firefighter and FBU chair Ian Foulkes received much applause when he told protesters, "three hundred firefighters lost their lives last week, but that tragedy should not be used as an excuse to murder more people".

UNISON is asking the local council to open up recently closed children's homes and centres for the elderly to house asylum-seekers, instead of having them put in prison illegally.

Tony Openshaw

National Coalition of Anti-Deportation Campaigns (NCADC), 400 Cheetham Hill Road, Manchester M8 9LE

0161-740 8206

www.ncadc.org.uk

News in Brief

• **North East** Local government workers went on strike in Newcastle last week, in protest at privatisation measures. Nearly 600 members of UNISON voted overwhelmingly for the 24-hour walkout on Friday 28th September. The strikers work for the Street Lighting and IT departments, which Newcastle City Council is planning to sell off. Activists said that they had received massive support from people in the city.

• **West Sussex** The annual conference of the Labour Party took place this week in Brighton. It was a day shorter than originally planned, allegedly because of security fears. The opening of the conference last Sunday was greeted by anarchists and other activists, who protested under a banner of 'no war but the class war'. They were joined by hundreds more anti-militarists and peace campaigners.

• **North Yorkshire** Campaigners against American 'Star Wars' proposals will be demonstrating outside the Menwith Hill US base near Harrogate on Saturday 13th October. The action is part of an international day of protest, called by the Global Network Against Nuclear Weapons and Power in Space.

• **Newham** An employment tribunal in London's East End will start hearing the case of three sacked CSL workers on Monday. The three, who were shop stewards in the borough's privatised Housing Benefits section, were fired after (it was alleged) they leaked details of disastrous mismanagement to a trade newspaper. Their supporters claim they were victimised for being effective shop stewards. Lobby the hearing at Stratford Employment Tribunal, Stratford Broadway, E15, 8.30 to 9am, Monday 15th October. For info email housingbenefit@hotmail.com

Correction: On the books page in our last issue, we gave the Freedom Press Bookshop price of *Pornucopia* as £2.99*. The asterisk (*) is our code for 'post free in UK', and it was inserted in error. Postage and packing on reduced price books is calculated on the original price, which for *Pornucopia* is £13.99. If you buy it from us in person you pay £2.99, but the mail order price is £4.39 in the UK, £5.79 elsewhere (including p&p). Our apologies for the error.

What we say ...

Victory of sorts

The idea of people in Britain being forced to carry compulsory identification documents has always stirred civil rights activists to anger, in ways which the (albeit serious) threat to freedom can't fully explain. Other government proposals, with implications at least as sinister, have rarely received such a hostile reception.

Obviously we don't support the introduction of identity cards. As anarchists we can only resist them. But there are other things, which concern us just as much, and to which the opposition has always been much less pronounced.

This time round, in fact, the anger of activists may have been stoked up by the politicians themselves as a ruse: they certainly managed to slip a few things through while we were congratulating ourselves over our defeat of Blunkett's ID card plan.

Everyone got themselves in a terrible lather, but only a few looked sideways to see what other measures were being snuck by.

The state now keeps logs of all emails sent, websites visited and telephone calls made. Who even realises this is being done? We're hardly in a position to start building an effective movement against it.

A slight defeat for the government over identity cards is a victory of sorts. But the cards will still be issued, and they will (in effect) still be compulsory. We've won the right to call them by a different name ('entitlement cards'), and the – not inconsiderable – right not to be stopped in the street by cops asking to see them. But while we've been winning these rights, we've lost a few more.

Fundamental lesson

The people of Afghanistan are the biggest victims of the Taliban regime. But this won't stop the British and American governments from bombing them, if and when it suits their interests to do so.

Nor did it stop these terrorist organisations from supporting the Taliban for years, in the full knowledge of their horrifying policies.

Who armed and trained bin Laden and his cronies? Who supported the mujahedin as they fought their way to power? Step forward the USA.

The reason is the same one that's now being put forward to explain why countries like Iran and Syria are suddenly members of an international coalition for freedom – the enemy of the enemy of the USA is America's friend.

Except that things have been reversed. The Taliban were opposed to Iran, which made them friends of the United States. They had to be supported at all costs. But bin Laden, clever politician that he is, set out to prize them from their dependence on American support, and he's achieved his goal beyond hope of recovery.

What goes around comes around. As usual the US has come unstuck, and its unsticking will have an effect on all of us. But has America learned its lesson? We reckon not.

Now that Afghanistan is the enemy, fresh alliances are being forged. But Bush's new buddies in Tehran and Damascus are just as likely to turn nasty. There'll be no peace until the factors that cause America to be loathed have been removed. But this would require American politicians to ask fundamental questions about themselves and their policies. We don't think this is going to happen.

Why must the American state poke its nose into the affairs of people in and near the Middle East? It's the oil, as everybody knows. To challenge that shibboleth, capitalism itself will have to be challenged.

Readers' letters

Vindictive editorial Violent reality

Dear *Freedom*,

Your editorial, 'Governments Shamed' (8th September), was of poor calibre and unnecessarily vindictive. From a newspaper like *Freedom*, we deserve better.

Of course Australia is a large place, much of it inhospitable for human existence, but it ill becomes us to criticise our Australian friends until the full facts on the illegal immigrants are known.

Brothers Howard and Blair are a reflection of the society we live in, and as such are expected to put their best face forwards to the world. I know nothing about Howard; but of Blair, he does it quite well and I would be the last to accuse him of racism, publicly or privately.

Where I live is a 'new town' with a lot going for it, and it has a substantial number of ethnic minorities who do their bit towards creating a harmonious whole. But beneath that there is a substratum of ill-informed people, constantly niggling away with the jingles put about by Enoch Powell and his modern acolytes. Fortunately local people have shown good sense, and this town has not fallen into the trap of Oldham, Leeds, Glasgow and Bradford.

Keeping this social balance is a work of love for us all, including Blair, and we have to trust that he does know what he is doing, just as he trusts us to be equally active in pursuit of the same cause.

If you are interested, I did (as an anarchist) vote for Blair. It is an age-old dilemma for us, the choice of the lesser of two evils. That does not take away my right to fight for freedom for all of us, not just myself; or to be vilified for so doing.

Garry Bradford

Dear *Freedom*,

A few comments on Gerald Hatton's contribution on violence ('Brief and joyless', 8th September). By quoting Kropotkin (in context), the point I was hoping to make in my original article, which Gerald criticises, was that throughout history – for a mass of people worldwide – violence has been and is a daily reality.

To ignore people's reality is to act either naively or as a censor. Either way it's a dangerous path to tread. Equally, to label somebody 'violentist' for pointing out methods of resistance that working class people have found for themselves seems a little odd.

Like Kropotkin, I don't believe that those in control will allow their power structures to be dismantled without using everything at their disposal to stop it. After all, they know they're involved in a class war.

Paul

More religion

Dear *Freedom*,

As a Friend (a Quaker), I was tempted to write about religion before but found that most of the ground was covered by Peter Dodson, Donald Room and (to an extent) Chris Goodchild (letters, 22nd September).

This point is not belief so much as adherence to a hierarchical church: the latter is inimicable to anarchism, as is a hierarchical view of 'creation', with God at the top. No 'He who must be obeyed'!

Since we do not have a creed, I cannot speak for all Quakers. For me, 'that of God within me' (to which Donald Room refers) means that I am part of a greater whole. As the

(Hindu) *Upanishads* would have it, my self is ultimately identified with the greater Self.

Like non-violence, anarchism – as being the only system of political thought which genuinely regards all individuals as equally human and of equal worth – naturally follows from this mystical position, representatives of which are to be found in all faiths (including Islam, in the Sufi tradition).

The Religious Society of Friends (the Quakers) is organised non-hierarchically, by the way, without any voting.

Richard Morgan

Dear *Freedom*,

Our views on what constitutes anarchism are many and various, but freedom from murderous oppressors is something that most of us can aspire to.

The Bible describes (Genesis, chapter 19) how the Christian God arranged for two young women to be offered to a mob for a jolly gang-rape. Later it describes how He sends 42 children to their deaths for the awful crime of laughing at a bald priest (II Kings, chapter 2).

In fact, actually read the Bible and you find dozens of such examples of His 'compassion'. And to think that the likes of Mary Quintana (letters, 22nd September) would have us trust our immortal souls to this despotic deity!

Perhaps Mary, Chris Goodchild and others ought to go back and read their sacred texts. Then try to convince us that Christianity is compatible with anarchism.

Aaron L.

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

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15th to 30th September

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Newport, NF, £12; Weston-super-Mare, DT, £7; London E1, DK, £20.

Total to 30th September = £39.00

Total for 2001 = £895.00

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Total for 2001 = £596.00

FREEDOM: SCOOP OR POOP?

Tell us at the Anarchist Bookfair on Saturday 20th October

There's been some changes this year to *Freedom*, your favourite anarchist newspaper. Come along and tell us what you think and tell us your ideas for the future.

The 20th Anarchist Bookfair is being held in Central London in a fortnight's time. There are meetings at two venues: the Camden Centre and also at Friends' Meeting House (opposite Euston Station).

The *Freedom* meeting is for our readers, contributors, editors and anyone else who's interested. **Join us at 11am in Room 3 at Friends' Meeting House, or visit our stall.**

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London Anarchist Forum

18th October Debate on Anarchist Internationalism

1st November Situationism, Anarchy and Crypto-Fascism (talk and discussion led by Steve Ash)

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 or contact LAF@anarchic.co.uk

'No war but the class war'

Sunday 7th October at 5pm

Open meeting to focus on opposition to the impending terror strikes on Afghanistan at

The Exchange, Sebbon Street, Islington, London N1

nowarbuttheclasswar@hotmail.com

Brighton peace vigil

every Tuesday from 12 noon until 2pm outside the MoD Recruitment Centre, Queens Road, Brighton
contact Brighton Peace and Environment Centre: 01273 620215

International Day of Protest

Saturday 13th October from 10am to 4pm

Say no to Star Wars at the American base at Menwith Hill near Harrogate, North Yorkshire

www.caab.org.uk

PEACE AND JUSTICE FOR ALL

Rally and March on Saturday 13th October

meet Hyde Park (Marble Arch end) at 12 noon and march to Trafalgar Square at 1pm for rally

organised by CND

Worldwide Anti-McDonald's Day

A carnival against McWorld

on Tuesday 16th October

meet at 3pm at McDonalds on The Strand, London

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

Faslane October Blockade

Monday 22nd October from 7am

at Faslane Trident base on the Clyde near Glasgow

For a briefing and further info contact The October Blockade

Action Line on 0141 423 1222

see also Scottish CND at www.cnsscot.dial.pipex.com

British CND at www.cnduk.org

Trident Ploughshares at www.gn.apc.org/tp2000

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)

Anarchistische Boekenmarkt, p/o Simon Bolivarstraat 91,

35 73 ZK Utrecht, The Netherlands

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

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