

anarchist fortnightly Freedom

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**FASLANE
BLOCKADE**

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**ANARCHIST
PHILOSOPHER?**

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**JUST ANOTHER
COMMODITY**

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Confusion after asylum inferno

It remained unclear at the start of this week whether anybody was killed in the massive blaze which destroyed a large part of Yarl's Wood Detention Centre in the early hours of 15th February. Police and officials insisted on Sunday that there was no evidence to suggest bodies were still inside the shell of the Bedford complex. But cops admitted that the high temperatures generated by the fire meant it was impossible to be sure. "There is a possibility they may not have escaped, and obviously we cannot rule out that they could have died" a police representative told the *Observer*.

Anti-detention activists said they were very concerned. "The latest statements from Bedfordshire Police indicate that our worst fears may yet be realised and that detainees could have died in the blaze", said Emma Ginn, a member of local group the Campaign against Arbitrary Detention. "Quite literally, it looks like the policy of arbitrary detention can kill". She challenged the Home Office to explain why it had decided not to install sprinklers in the £100m centre, Europe's largest, which only opened three months ago.

In the days after the blaze, activists quickly established that detainees, including mothers with babies, had been left partially clothed in sub-zero temperatures for several hours following their evacuation. Detainees who were taken by bus to other detention centres were kept in handcuffs, and cops have refused to say where many of them have gone. "We have been receiving calls from people's wives demanding to know where their husbands are and they are not being told anything", Emma said. "We do not know if they are safe, if they are dead or if they escaped. It's a disgrace".

There have been persistent rumours that firefighters were denied access to one of the buildings, despite the possibility that people could be trapped inside. It has also been reported that detainees were kept locked in their rooms, even as the fire raged.

Initial claims by cops and mainstream journalists that the blaze was planned as cover for a breakout were played down this week by representatives of Group 4. The company runs Yarl's Wood under contract to the Home Office. It has admitted that its records on Yarl's Wood detainees were kept in the centre and have probably been destroyed.

Civil servants are now thought to be drawing up plans for housing refugees in regular prisons. Campaigners say this will add to the pressure of prison numbers.

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Fighting the inferno at Yarl's Wood, 15th February

Another avoidable death

Martin Ward, an Irish remand prisoner, was found dead in his cell at Buckinghamshire's HMP Woodhill on the morning of 19th February 2001. Just under a year later, on 15th February, an inquest found that a simple course of penicillin would have saved his life. The inquest in Milton Keynes concluded that he died of natural causes, aggravated by neglect.

During the week preceding his death, Martin had complained of chest pains. He began to hyperventilate and vomit blood. Fellow inmates told prison staff they were concerned about his condition. Several times he asked to see a doctor. But an agency nurse from the jail's Health Centre didn't refer him to a medic, even though one was available. Two days later, he died from pneumonia, alone in his cell. He hadn't eaten for several days.

When the inquest began on 12th February, Jocelyn Cockburn, solicitor for the Ward family, said "this was an entirely avoidable

death. Martin Ward did everything in his power to get treatment, but as a prisoner he was entirely dependent on others. Due to apparent individual and systemic failures in the prison, he suffered a slow and painful death".

After the coroner had delivered his findings, Terry Stewart of the Irish Deaths in Custody Campaign said, "when a police dog handler was responsible for the death of his police dog, there was a court case and he was convicted. Clearly the life of a young Irish man is worth less than that of a dog. The nurse should carry some of the blame, but it's really the Prison Service which is responsible for Martin's death".

A 1998 enquiry into conditions at HMP Woodhill found evidence of inmates being kept in horrendous conditions.

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• A picket of the High Court was due to be held at the start of this week (18th February), to protest an appeal by Home Secretary David Blunkett against the findings of an earlier judicial review. This resulted from his refusal to grant a public enquiry into the death of Zahid Mubarek, murdered by a racist cellmate at Feltham Young Offenders' Institution in March 2000. In October 2001, a High Court judge ordered Blunkett to reconsider his decision.

Zahid's uncle, Imtiaz Amin, said "our grief is being prolonged by the Home Secretary's attitude. Our question is very simple. Why was a racist psychopath put in the same cell as my nephew? This was a murder waiting to happen, because the prison establishment couldn't be bothered, or because it wanted this tragedy to take place".

Blunkett's appeal hearing was expected to last three days.

Editorial on page 7

Freedom

anarchist fortnightly

"Industry is not dominated by technical expertise, but by the sales-manager, the accountant and the financial tycoon who never made anything in their lives except money."

Colin Ward in *Anarchy in Action*

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The first of two reports on popular resistance to a new airport 'Our land is not for sale'

Mexico State

There are few tourists in Texcoco. The town lies about 20km due east of Mexico City, across a large plain. This contains one of the few bits of open water to remain in the area, the lake of Texcoco itself. Although it's drying up, the lake attracts migratory ducks from Canada and the USA. Taking the bus there on a clear day, you have little time to take in the view of the two snow-capped volcanoes before you arrive in the bustling little town.

To the north and slightly west of Texcoco lies the municipality of Atenco and its numerous villages. I've made several trips to the village of San Salvador Atenco, a charming little place in the rugged and ramshackle Mexican way, with winding streets and speed bumps for the cars (which are outnumbered here by bicycles anyway). You can see *campesinos* (peasant farmers) on horseback or leading a donkey and cart and, apart from the people who work full-time on the land, there are many shops and small concerns in the winding streets. The air is clean and the sky clear.

The 30,000 people of the municipality of Atenco are spread among its several villages, and occupy a largely rural scene. Although many people work in offices and businesses, according to residents about 95% of working people have some occupation on the land. They grow maize, wheat, barley, alfalfa and vegetables amongst other things, and graze cows for milk and cheese. Sheep and chickens are raised for eggs and meat. While produce is used by the landholders, most of it makes its way on to the local market, taking in Texcoco. Some of the maize is ground into flour for tortillas in the large mill in the town.

The land allocated to Atenco is divided into thirteen administrative divisions, known as *ejidos*, while plots are in the name of a family and are passed down from generation to generation. There is no right of selling the land, so naturally strong traditions of community have developed. A communal system of agriculture in the area can be traced back to pre-conquest times, though the system was only written into law in the 1930s, when President Cardenas began to fulfil some of the demands of Zapata's Plan de Ayala. This had called for the land to be held by the peasantry.

Some *campesinos* I spoke to agreed that the land could be more productive with the right kind of development and machinery. But that's impossible without aid of some sort, and this won't come from private capital because the returns aren't high enough.

The last thing the people of Atenco want as a means of developing their economy, though, is a new international airport. But that's what



the federal and state governments have decided to put on the *ejido* lands owned and worked by the people on the western edge of the municipality.

The usual arguments against the airport apply. The eco-system of Lake Texcoco will be destroyed. Commercial and industrial development will lead to Texcoco and its surroundings being swallowed up by Mexico City. Wildlife and its natural habitat will be destroyed, and pollution will increase. The water table will erode further. Life will change irrevocably for all the inhabitants of the surrounding area and those most affected, in Atenco and neighbouring villages and *ejidos*, will find their livelihoods demolished along with their traditional way of life.

But these aren't the prime considerations for the *campesinos* and citizens of the municipality. For them, there's only one argument – that the land is not for sale, at any price. But state bosses have decreed that the airport will be built and the land appropriated, and they've offered compensation of seven pesos per square metre (about 4 pence). The people of Atenco haven't been consulted and they consider the government's position one of intent to rob, tantamount to a declaration of war. The land isn't for sale, and there isn't a price to negotiate.

This position was explained to me by Philippe, one of the *campesinos*, and reiterated by several of his *compañeros*. One of them, Juan, took me for a tour of the *ejidos* in his Honda 125. The state government is planning to expropriate 15,000 hectares of land in the municipality of Atenco and more in the municipality of Texcoco, but we were looking at a lot more land than that – enough to build six airports, as Juan put it (rather ominously I thought). It's obvious that when construction starts, previously protected land will be fair game for squatters, desperate for a plot to build their houses on, and the already unfeasibly large Mexico City will quickly grow under this dynamic. All the land, as far as the eye can see, will be swallowed up in urban sprawl.

We made a comprehensive tour of an *ejido*, and apart from the livestock there seemed to be very little land that wasn't put to good use. I can't comment on the level of productivity, but I could see that there was no wasted land.

Juan showed me his home, built on his *ejido* plot, a bungalow that he's been working on for ten years. Incongruously, he has a well-kept little lawn and a quaint little red-brick well in the middle of it, straight from the pages of a picture book. The water in it, at three metres deep, is higher than the surrounding ground water because it's pushed up by natural pressure from below. Juan says construction will require millions of tons of concrete to take care of this. I asked him what

price the state government was offering for his house. Seven pesos per square metre, he said. I asked him how it would be possible to defend the land. He shrugged. "Pistol", he replied.

In San Salvador Atenco, the village square is bedecked with banners. The village hall is the command centre. There's a captured drilling vehicle, disabled and parked to one side. A few cafés remain open, but there's nothing for sale – their function is to provision the villagers organising to resist the occupation of their land. A stage has been erected at the side of the hall, roofed over with tarpaulins. A large blackboard details the shifts and duties of those who patrol the *ejidos*. A loudspeaker plays songs and recorded speeches.

The walls of the hall, with their large mural of Emiliano Zapata, are daubed with slogans. 'Mexicanos al grito de guerra, el gobierno roba nuestra tierra' ('Mexicans, a call to arms, the government is stealing our land'), says one. 'Se levanta en armas San Salvador Atenco' ('San Salvador Atenco rises up in arms'), says another.

There are barricades of sandbags at the entrances to the village, aimed at discouraging police harassment (several villagers are wanted for protest-related actions), and the *campesinos* walk around carrying machetes. But really these are (so I was told by some of the women) purely symbolic, signs of a state of siege and resistance to it.

I was shown around by Philippe, who told me about life in the village and what he thought of the situation. "It's a very happy village, and there's no crime or drugs trafficking", he said. "If the airport is built, all of these will appear. We're not going to sell, because our children need an example for their future. We'll die if we have to leave the land. We're going to fight because we know the army will come".

The people of Atenco are pursuing a rigorous defence of their land. There is presently a group action tied up in the courts. Villagers have petitioned the President of the Republic for an audience. A public debate has been organised in Mexico City. The San Salvador football team were beaten by the combined press team. There have been lots of demonstrations, and a delegation was sent to Arturo Montiel Rojas, the state governor – it came back empty-handed.

At a rally I attended last month in Toluca, seat of state government, news of Montiel's inflexibility was received with little surprise. It's generally believed here that the decision to go ahead with the airport project doesn't lie in the hands of politicians.

Jo L.

In our next issue, we go on to examine the political and economic impetus behind the plans for a new Mexico City airport.



Two *campesino* *compañeros* in Toluca – Philippe is on the right with a machete

'Spirit of Seattle lives'

Clydeside

Defiant anti-militarists vowed to continue their campaign against Britain's nuclear death system last week, as the annual blockade of Faslane naval base drew to a close. The 'Big Blockade' of the base, 30 miles from Glasgow, ended on 13th February. Activists had successfully brought work there to a standstill on each of the action's three days. Up to 200 demonstrators were arrested. Most of those charged were accused of 'breaches of the peace'.

This year's event began on Monday 11th February. Hundreds of people gathered outside the base to stop traffic entering and leaving. Activists came from as far away as Japan, India and Australia. Several people chained themselves to the gates. Protesters banged drums, blew whistles and cheered as cops worked with hammers and chisels to remove them.

On the second day, protesters appeared dressed as characters from the Mad Hatter's Tea Party. Others marked the Chinese New Year by sealing themselves inside a giant oriental dragon. Participants said the atmosphere of the blockade was excellent. One of them, Marcus Armstrong, said "while we achieved a lot of what we set out to do by disrupting the operation of the base on every



photograph by Mick Cropper

Monday 11th February at the North Gate, Faslane naval base

one of the three days, the most thrilling outcome has been the tremendous spirit that has been in evidence". Comparing the massive American anti-capitalist actions in 1999, another demonstrator said "the spirit of Seattle is well and truly alive on Clydeside".

Faslane is home to the British state's four Trident nuclear submarines. Each carries an arsenal over a thousand times more powerful than the atomic bomb which was dropped on Hiroshima in 1945, killing over 140,000 people.

The Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament last week condemned government plans to participate in a nuclear experiment in the Nevada desert. Officials insisted that no plutonium hydrodynamic experiment, to be carried out in collaboration with American scientists. But CND said the experiment, designed to test a new supercomputer at the Aldermaston's Atomic Weapons Establishment, would contravene the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty.

Successful beginning

Report from the Bristol Prisoner Support Group / Anarchist Black Cross

We hope to concentrate on local issues while at the same time recognising the role of international prisoner support (including support for earth liberation prisoners). We hope to get involved with local campaigns that are already established. Other areas of concern are the holding of asylum-seekers in local prisons and the fact that any woman jailed in the south west is automatically placed in HMP East Wood Park. Because this prison is in south Gloucestershire, on the very edge of the region, many of its inmates are miles away from their families.

Initially we will write letters and raise funds. We may also hold a national prisoner support meeting in Bristol, bringing different anarchist and autonomous prisoner support groups and campaigns together. All ideas are welcome. To find out more you should contact us.

Noel M.

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Editorial on page 7

News in Brief

East Sussex The Chief Constable of Sussex Police has offered an apology to the family of a man killed during an armed raid, it was revealed on 11th February. Ken Jones's offer was described in a report on the death of Jimmy Ashley, compiled by the area's Police Authority.

Jimmy was shot dead in January 1998, when a group of armed cops burst into the bedroom of his flat in St Leonards. He was naked and unarmed at the time. The cop who killed him, PC Chris Sherwood, was cleared of murder and manslaughter in February last year, on the directions of an Old Bailey judge.

Jimmy Ashley's sister Pauline remained unimpressed by Jones's offer. "My brother Tony and I aren't interested in an apology after four years", she told *Freedom*. "It won't change the way we've been treated by Sussex Police, which we can't forgive them for. Too little, too late".

London A day after spotting a disused corner house in north London last month, the Building Liberation Action Group (BLAG) had shown what a little commitment, intelligence and fortitude can achieve. The empty premises in Stoke Newington were renovated and opened as an autonomous social centre within 36 hours, under the name The Radical Dairy.

At its core is a café, with a radical library upstairs. The basement is a chill-out zone. There are classes in yoga, English and singing. There are also cafés each week with vegetarian, women's and queer emphases, and some benefits are being held there. All payments are by donation.

The laid-back atmosphere and committed volunteers ensure that the building is regularly packed. More events are being organised for the future, such as the forthcoming women's weekend (8th to 10th March). Anyone with ideas and enthusiasm is welcome to open-house meetings every Thursday at 8pm.

M.K.

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Liverpool The spring gathering of the Northern Anarchist Network will be held in Liverpool on 9th March.

Items to be discussed include the state of the anti-capitalist movement, how prisoners can best be supported, the prospects for war in the Indian subcontinent and the situation in Argentina. There will also be a discussion of anarchist propaganda and how it can be improved. This will focus on the work of Freedom Press (publishers of this newspaper), whose representatives will be attending.

The conference will be held on Saturday 9th March from 10.30 to 5pm at the News from Nowhere Bookshop, 96 Bold Street, Liverpool (near Central Station).

Stop the war on dissent

Westminster

Over 100 people attended a meeting at the House of Commons last week. The meeting, on 12th February, was organised by the CACC (Campaign Against Criminalising Communities) in opposition to the new Anti-Terrorism, Crime and Security Act. The title of the meeting, 'Stop the war on dissent', reflected the feeling that the 'anti-terrorism' laws are no such thing.

The state is using the events of 11th September in the same way it used previous acts of terrorism - to increase its powers. The new law is being used to target various ethnic communities, often on behalf of repressive governments from which they

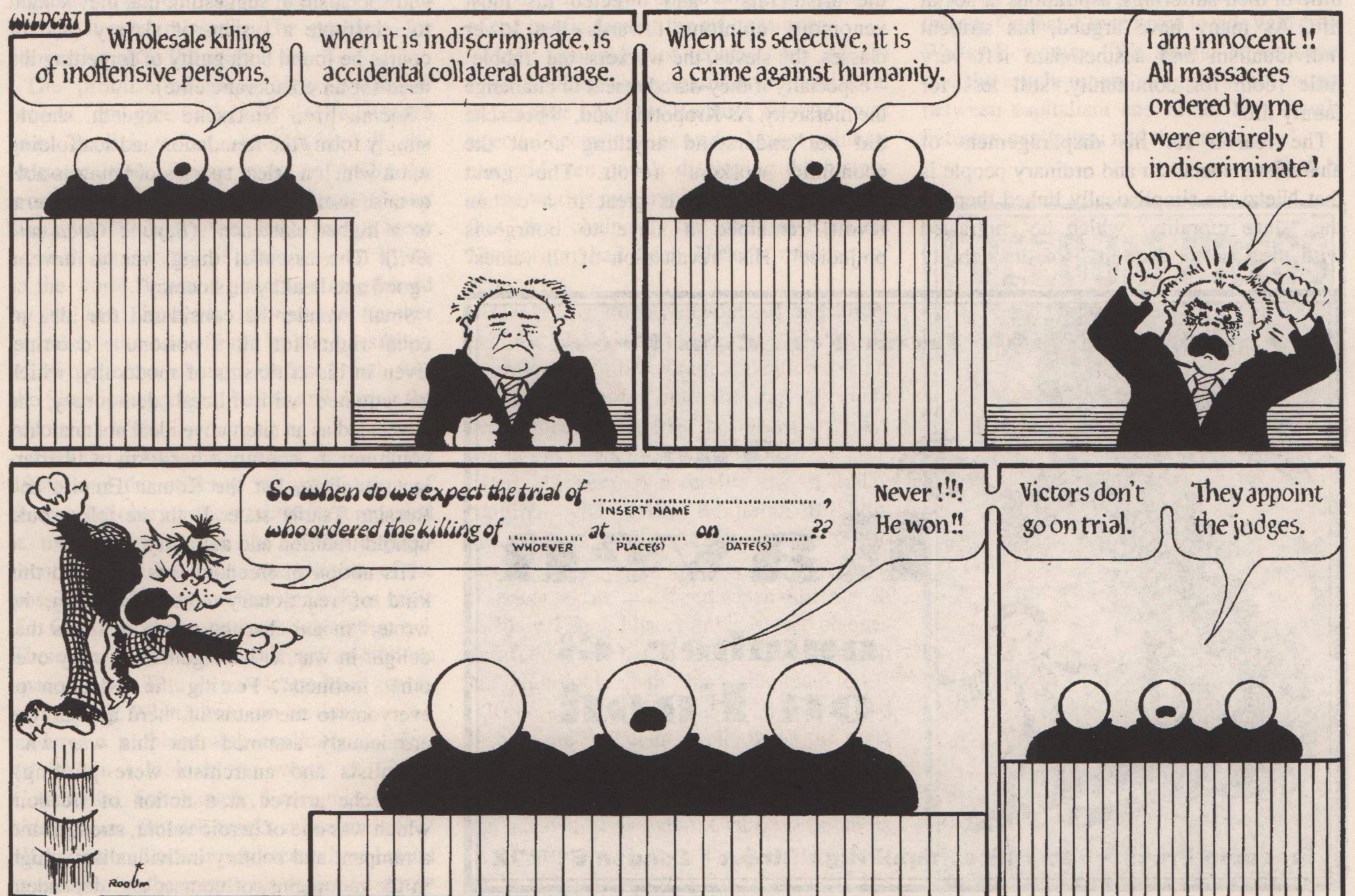
fled in the first place. It allows detention without trial (so far only of non-British nationals) and outlaws any association with groups banned under its provisions (21 so far, some of which don't even operate in Britain).

The Act, along with its predecessor, the 2000 Terrorism Act, makes the UK, on paper, a police state. Because its definition of 'terrorism' is so broad, anti-capitalist demonstrators, and even workers on strike, could be targeted under it.

Ed

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Was Nietzsche an anarchist?

While the German philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900) has always been hated by liberals, there have been attempts to claim him by anarchists as well as by nazis. Hitler was certainly wrong to see in him a kindred spirit. But here Brian Morris argues that the anarchists are wrong to do so too.

Nietzsche is now all the rage in academia. The man who spent much of his solitary life wandering southern Europe as an "eternal fugitive" (his own words), looking for some place or climate that might ease or stay his deteriorating health, has now become the academic icon of those apocalyptic thinkers, the post-modernists. As Bakunin, Kropotkin and Malatesta have been declared obsolete, Nietzsche has replaced them as an icon for certain anarchists. Indeed the question has often been asked, was he an anarchist himself?

The simple answer is no, and Nietzsche himself explicitly repudiated everything anarchism stands for. In *Twilight of the Idols*, he wrote that the Christian and the anarchist were "both decadents; both incapable of producing anything but dissolution, poisoning, degeneration, both blood-suckers, both with the instinct of deadly hatred towards everything that stands erect, that towers grandly up, that possesses duration, that promises life a future".

He was equally critical and disparaging of socialists, who he called 'dolts', 'blockheads', 'decadents' and 'buffoons'. He insisted that they advocated "the collective degeneration" of humanity into the "perfect herd animal" (*Beyond Good and Evil*). Ordinary working people were tarred with the same brush, and he spoke of them with disdain - 'crowd', 'herd', 'rabble'.

Like his early mentor Schopenhauer, Nietzsche had a very low regard for ordinary people, though this "hermit of Sils-Maria" (where he spent his summers) knew precious little of their sufferings, aspirations or social life. As many have argued, his strident individualism and aestheticism left very little room for community, still less for family life.

The reason for his disparagement of anarchism, socialism and ordinary people is that Nietzsche simplistically linked them to the "slave morality" which he contrasted with the "master morality" of the nobility



The nazis tried to claim Nietzsche as their own - but many anarchists beg to differ

and ruling elite. This "slave morality" (which he associated with Buddhism and Christianity as well as socialism, democracy and anarchism) he linked to humility, servility, pity, envy, secrecy, reaction and compassion, all motivated by "ressentiment" - what Tory Prime Minister John Major called "the politics of envy", attributed to anyone who complained about the rampant inequalities of global capitalism.

In contrast, the "master morality" of the rulers and aristocratic elite was characterised by courage, openness, strength, power, nobility, sensitivity, pride and self-control. The slaves and ordinary people were 'rabble', the rulers 'good men' (though Nietzsche never condoned the elite's cruelty). Although he presented, in *Thus Spake Zarathustra*, a strident critique of the state, and is alleged by his disciples to have been 'anti-political' and concerned only with the Dionysian aesthetics of 'self-making', in fact throughout his writings he supported and expressed allegiance to those in power.

He sided with the 'strong', the 'rulers' and the aristocrats - and directed his most venomous opinions towards the lower classes, the slaves, the workers, the 'rabble' - especially if they dared resent or challenge the hierarchy. As Kropotkin said, "Nietzsche did not understand anything about the economic workers' revolt. The great Nietzsche, for he was great in a certain revolt, remained a slave to bourgeois prejudice". His "revaluation of all values"

did not extend to challenging aristocratic values of hierarchy, class structure and economic forms of exploitation.

He was akin to Aristotle in his defence of slavery and, almost devoid of sociological perspective, seems to have assumed that there would always be 'slaves' to provide the daily bread for the aristocratic elite or 'overmen' in their solitary wanderings, and in their Dionysian affirmation of the "will to power".

So it's no surprise to find that Nietzsche heaped praise on the Indian caste system and its ranked hierarchy, or that he did little but insult and disparage the lower castes - the Chandalas, who he thought had a "feeling of contentment" in their servitude! The "laws of Manu" upholding this system of social inequality certainly met with his approval.

The whole idea of a free society or of equal rights was anathema to him. He simply equated them with the diminution of humanity, and saw them as conducive to the development of the "perfect herd animal". He wilfully misinterpreted both anarchism and socialism in suggesting that they sought to reinstitute a system of slavery (and of course he found both guilty of forgetting the need for an aristocratic elite).

Social life, Nietzsche argued, should simply form "the foundation and scaffolding upon which a select species of being is able to raise itself to its higher task and in general to a higher existence" (*Beyond Good and Evil*). The essential thing was to have a "good and healthy aristocracy".

Small wonder he considered the idea of equal rights for all a poisonous doctrine. Even in his criticisms of modernity, which he equated with liberal democracy, he advocated as an alternative ideal not anarchist communism, nor any other form of libertarian socialism, but the Roman Empire and Russian Tsarist state. Both, he felt, would uphold tradition and authority.

His notion of freedom was linked to this kind of reactionary ethos. Freedom, he wrote, "means that the manly instincts that delight in war ... have gained mastery over other instincts". Fearing the reduction of everyone to the status of 'herd animal' (he erroneously assumed that this was what socialists and anarchists were plotting), Nietzsche arrived at a notion of freedom which was one of heroic valour, strength and a rampant and solitary individualism - high in the mountains, of course, and dependent

on the people of the valley, the 'rabble' who produced his subsistence.

The thinkers of the Enlightenment had had faith in empirical knowledge and a belief in progress. They may have been a little naïve in their enthusiasm for the betterment of humankind, but to blame them for the atrocities of the twentieth century would be as simplistic as blaming Jesus for the Inquisition.

Nietzsche was thoroughly reactionary in counterposing the Enlightenment belief in progress with that of the aristocratic belief in authority and tradition. As he cogently put it (again in *Beyond Good and Evil*), "deep reverence for age and the traditional ... prejudice in favour of the ancestors ... is typical of the morality of the powerful: and when, conversely, men of 'modern ideas' believe almost instinctively in 'progress' and 'the future' ... this reveals clearly enough the ignoble origin of these ideas".

Nietzsche was not a postmodernist but a thoroughly reactionary, 'pre-modern' thinker. He has long been renowned as a thoroughly misogynist thinker too, though some postmodernists (Derrida, for example) seem to portray him as an out-and-out feminist. One day some postmodernist will 'deconstruct' Hitler's *Mein Kampf* as well, to show that its author was really a pacifist!

As we are told that all language is metaphorical, that there are no stable meanings, that Nietzsche's writing style is consistently ironic, perhaps there is no way of knowing whether or not he was anti-feminist. But if we take him at his word, he hated feminism and considered it (like socialism) thoroughly decadent. Read the following and see if he was a feminist or not (as for the racist stereotype - don't even go there). "A man who has depth, in his spirit as well as in his desires ... can think of woman only in an oriental way - he must conceive of woman as a possession, as property with lock and key, as something predestined for service".

In suggesting that marriage as an institution shouldn't be based on love, he also wrote (in *Twilight of the Idols*) that "one establishes it on the basis of the sexual drive, the drive to own property (wife and child conceived of as property), the drive to dominate which continually organises the smallest type of domain, the family". Some feminist!

In *Nationalism and Culture*, Rudolf Rocker said Nietzsche's life showed a "constant oscillation between outlived authoritarian concepts and truly libertarian ideas". There was undoubtedly a libertarian aspect to his philosophy - his solitary form of individualism with its aesthetic appeal to self-making, the radical critique implied in his "revaluation of all values", his strident attack on the state in *Thus Spake Zarathustra* and his impassioned celebration of personal freedom and power.

But this was more than offset by his thoroughly reactionary mindset - his elitist politics, his celebration of authority and tradition, his complete lack of any progressive vision apart from the notion of an isolated, asocial nomad, the 'overman'. Perhaps a later philosopher, Bertrand Russell, described him best when he called him an "aristocratic anarchist".

Brian Morris

• On Sunday 24th February at 11am there will be a talk by David Murray entitled *Philosophising with a stammer - why liberals lie about Nietzsche*, at the South Place Ethical Society, Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London WC1 (nearest tube Holborn).

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The promise of another world

Paul Klee:

The Nature of Creation

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One of the more bizarre aspects of the Paul Klee exhibition at the Hayward Gallery is that it's forced to share space with a film about workers and clients in the east European sex industry. This displays all the current sicknesses of 'art' – a mock realism which makes no attempt at analysis, and which becomes no more than a salacious voyeurism that treats every aspect of the world as if it's the backdrop to a Gap commercial.

Klee himself wasn't in any sense a realist. His refusal to see the world as its owners tell us it should be seen is what makes his art so engaging. It is art based on the claim that another world is possible.

During his life (1879-1940), he made almost 10,000 paintings, drawings and works on paper, which ranged from the abstract to the figurative. The exhibition is arranged in sections. The first section contains his square paintings, which come from his time in Tunisia. These were his response to the colour and light of north Africa, to being possessed by colour. They are squares of colour, sometimes simply abstract, sometimes with patterns – such as the domes on the skyline of a north African town – mapped on them. They are, all of them, quite beautiful.

A further section displays his experiments with 'narrative line', where (as Klee himself put it) "a line comes into being. It goes out for a walk so to speak, aimlessly, for the sake of a walk". The drawings are experiments in capturing an essence in a simple line.

In the late 1920s, Klee began to be concerned with the basic elements of picture-making, with "reducing the whole to a few steps". His watercolours from this period, such as *Fig Tree*, contain simple shapes and experiments with contrasts of colour and tone. They capture that essence of things he sought in all his art.

These in turn triggered experiments with linear repetition, in which images are 'cast' from the interpenetration of parallel lines like shadows cast on an architect's drawing board. Other works, drawing on Klee's love of music and rhythm, seek to use paint and line as music, as rhythm, most obviously in his *Family Walk*. By 1933, he was paralysed by scleroderma, and his last paintings are more sparse and fragmented, reflecting his loss of movement.

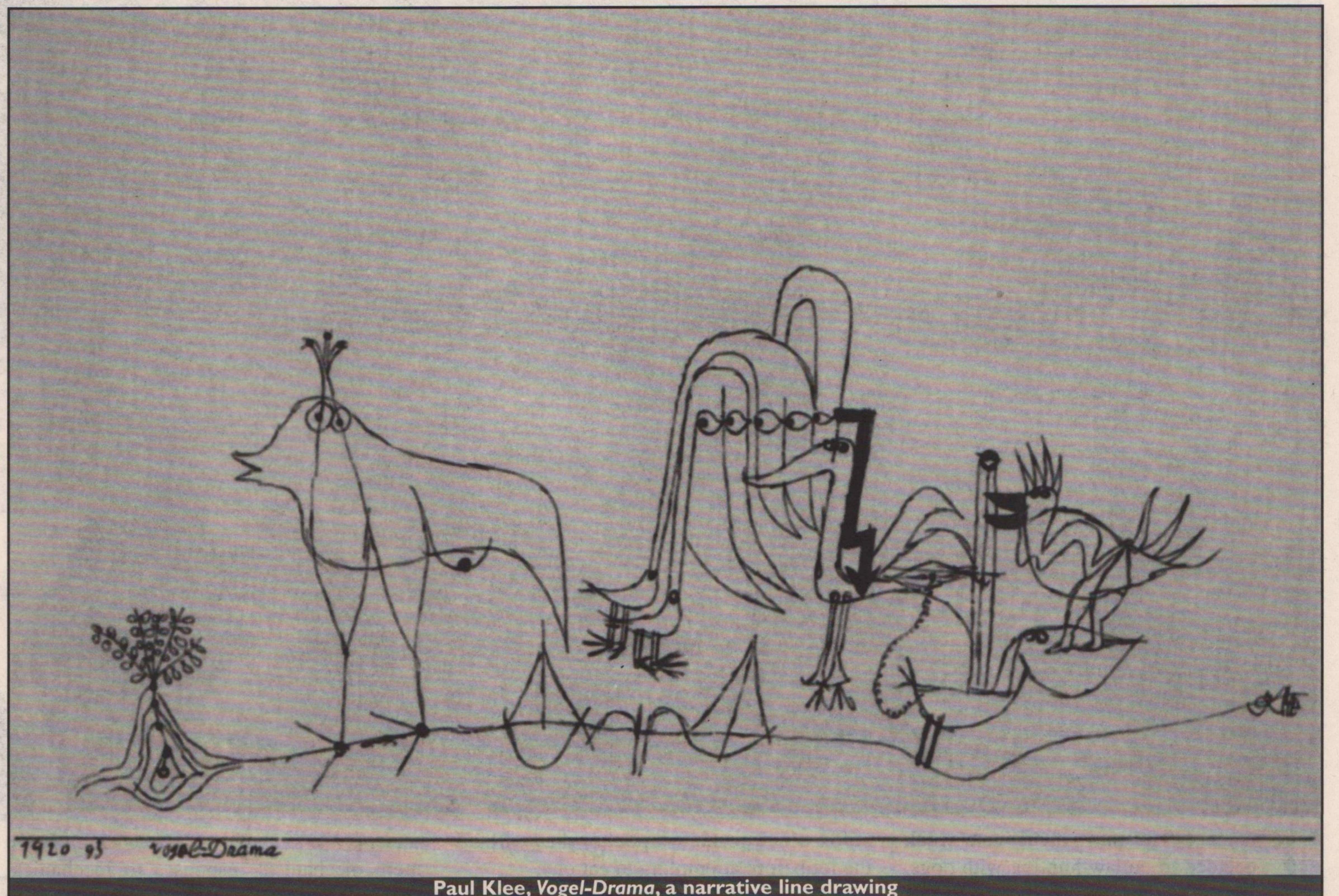
Klee's work exists as a celebration of the joy of the everyday, the magic of simple things. But it is also, more importantly, a refusal to deny the possibilities of the world, to accept 'this' as all there is.

His art is rarely politically engaged, though the mocking sketch of *The Great Emperor Rides to War* – a sketch of a buffoon, lurching on a lunatic steed – should be borne in mind every time George Bush appears on our television screens.

What Klee represents, though, is the utopian in art, the refusal to paint only what is. As he once explained, "this world has looked different and in time to come it will look different again".

Nick S.

This historical perspective of the Swiss artist Paul Klee is on until 1st April. The gallery's opening hours are Monday 10am to 6pm, Tuesday and Wednesday 10am to 8pm, Thursday to Sunday 10am to 6pm.



Paul Klee, *Vogel-Drama*, a narrative line drawing

In the last issue we published a review of 'Merz Nite', the Dadaist event held last month at London's Victoria and Albert Museum. The reviewer, Nicky Ludd, invited opinions on the role of art in capitalist society. Nick S. takes up the challenge.

Nicky asks if any subversive art practice is still possible. I'm not sure it is. Karl Marx wrote that philosophers were content to interpret the world, but that the point was really to change it. Faced with the broken promises of the Russian Revolution and the inescapable barbarism of the Holocaust, Theodor Adorno said, "philosophy, which once seemed obsolete, lives on because the moment to realise it was missed". The problem for subversive art is the same.

The promise of the critical modernist project, embodied in Dada and surrealism most explicitly (but also implicit in the demonstration of other ways of seeing the world by Cézanne, Picasso, Pollock and Klee, for example – see left), gained force from the possibility of other ways of living in the world. It was a promise strengthened by its link, however indirect, to another promise – the one offered by the possibility of revolutionary change. Its last breath was the Situationist project before and during the revolts of 1968.

After the defeat of organised labour in the 1980s and the effective marginalisation of the revolutionary project which accompanied it, modernism (that is, the critical engagement of art with the pain and promise of the possibility of living another way) is, as critic T.J. Clarke recently observed, "our antiquity". There's no longer any outside, any subversive space for art. There's no escape from art-as-commodity. What, then, can be done?

I have a problem with explicitly political art. When I look at the works of Flavio Constantini, for example, I recognise which side I'm on. But the works move me not at all, and (were I not already clear where I stand in relation to the events he depicts) I doubt

they'd provoke me to question the received history they aim to challenge.

I do think, though, that art can be 'political' in other ways. If, as I suggest, there's no longer a space 'beyond' for art, then mightn't a properly subversive project involve making a critique of the space, the relations of art itself? The works of Hans Haacke are a case in point, being based on a presupposition that building a critique within the institutions of art is possible.

His early work *Museum of Modern Art Poll*, for example, consisted of two boxes in which visitors to New York's MoMA cast their votes in answer to the question, "would the fact that Governor Rockefeller has not denounced President Nixon's Indochina policy be a reason for you to vote for him in November?" The large number of votes cast served as a critique of the liberal pretensions of the public face of the art consumer.

Most famously, of course, his *Manet Project*, which he'd planned as an installation in Cologne's Wellraf-Richartz museum, was rejected because it showed a Manet painting alongside ten panels displaying the history of the work's ownership. The ninth revealed that the chair of the Wellraf-Richartz Kuratorium had been Hitler's minister of economics.

Haacke is routinely denounced and rarely exhibited, but his best work opens the way to a critique of the commodification of art which doesn't fall into the trap of ironic acceptance that marks the efforts of (say) Warhol to target the most obvious.

Perhaps being subversive in art today requires what critic Benjamin Buchloh describes as "the strict elimination of all aesthetic illusion". This is something which Haacke makes explicit and which others, such as Marcel Broodthaers in his *Musee plaques* and *Industrial Poems* and Dan Graham with his 'photojournalism', have attempted too.

To be subversive in an age when art and fashion are interchangeable, when the most striking feature of London's Tate Modern is its shopping mall, and when what matters in the art world is what Charlie Saatchi is buying this week, must involve a challenge to the structure and function of art itself. It's

not as if attempts to make this challenge haven't been made before either – Dada was one such instance. The problem with any challenge to the logic of capital is that it will invariably be recuperated (though sometimes the barbs are too sharp for the collectors to bite – John Heartfield's photomontage in the 1930s being a case in point).

As Nicky points out, any art which doesn't consider and critique the conditions which facilitate the event of 'art' itself won't transcend its primary role as commodity in any way. At a time when the promise of a world beyond capital and the presence of a social movement able to deliver on the promise seems so distant, the notion of art as a site of resistance is dangerous, problematic ground.

Whether it's ground we should much concern ourselves with is another matter though. On that, I'm tempted to side with critic Walter Benjamin. "We should never forget that the revolutionary struggle is not fought between capitalism and mind. It is fought between capitalism and the proletariat".

Nick S.

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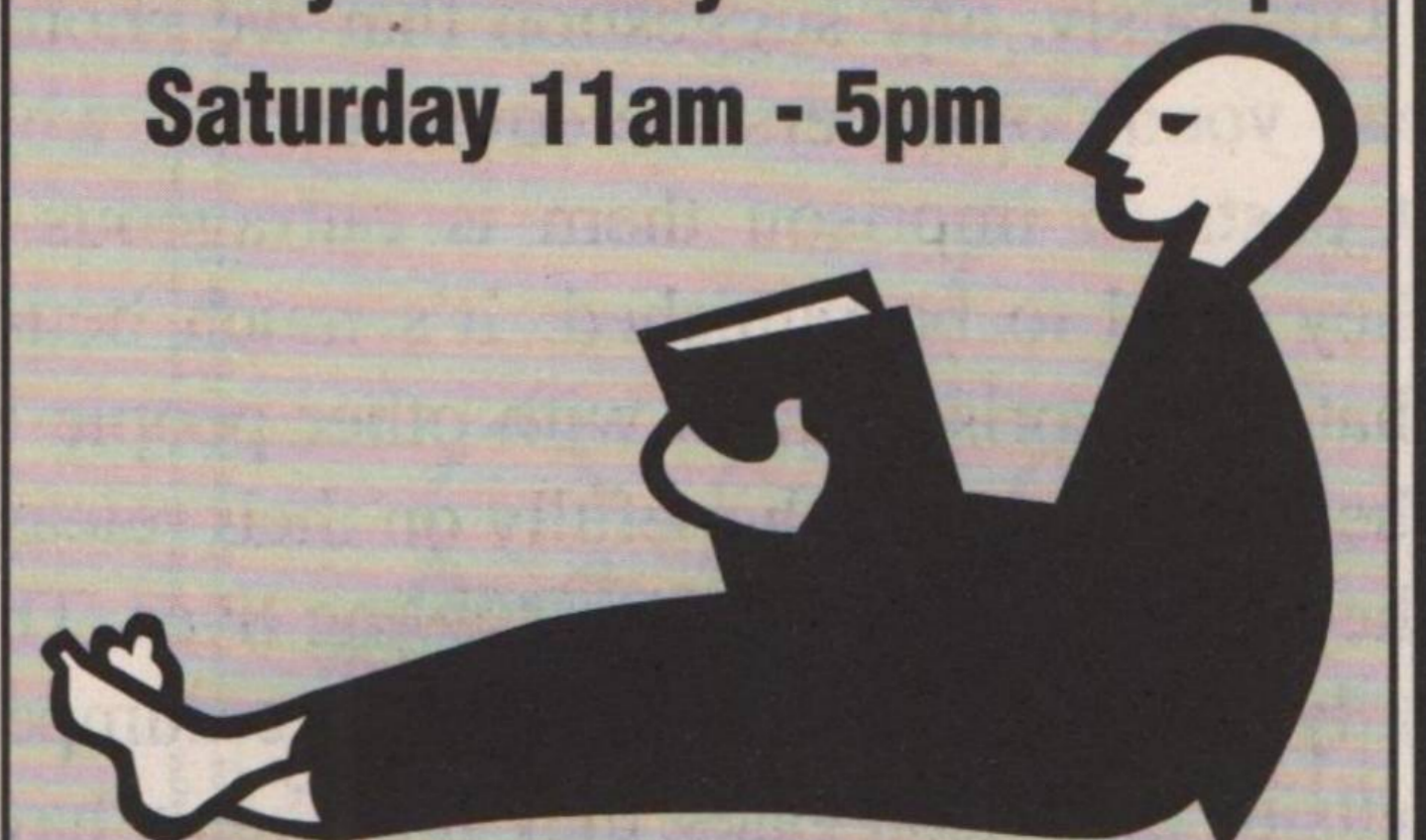
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Scottish foxes breathe more easily



The Scottish parliament last week decided to outlaw hunting with dogs. It can only be a matter of time before the English parliament agrees. It has been suggested in the past that *Freedom* should include discussions of conflicting freedoms. This is a case in point. The freedom of people to hunt is clearly in opposition to the freedom of foxes to stay alive.

It's true that foxes are a formidable agricultural pest. By nature they are predators on small animals. If a fox comes across a group of prey, it's genetically programmed to kill all it can catch, providing itself with a larder.

A fox which gets into a poultry shed will kill the lot before attempting to eat one.

Red deer, which are also hunted with dogs, have no predators other than humans. If left to multiply, they'd destroy their food plants, so causing an ecological disaster before dying of starvation. If we accept that foxes and deer have to be killed, the next question is whether they should be killed with minimal distress or chased until they can run no longer and die by having their guts ripped out.

Seventeenth century French philosopher René Descartes held that, since animals don't have minds (as, in his view, they didn't), the

screams and struggles of tortured animals are mere mechanical responses to mechanical stimuli. The nineteenth century English philosopher Jeremy Bentham held that the relevant question isn't whether animals can reason, but whether they can suffer. In this country today, the general consensus is that animals shouldn't be made to suffer more than is necessary for their control and exploitation.

Food animals, pest animals, experimental animals and domestic animals which are sick or surplus, are killed with as little fear and pain as possible. Fishing is enjoyed as a sport,

in the belief that fishes do not feel distress when they are caught. Badger baiting and cockfighting, the blood sports or 'countryside pursuits' of the peasantry, have been made illegal.

Those which remain legal, apart from fishing, are the ones that require land, horses, dog packs, gamekeepers, hunt servants and other expensive accoutrements – in other words, the 'countryside pursuits' of the wealthy. Given this, it is not difficult to understand why some people become hunt saboteurs.

Donald Room

Prison works?

I was surprised to hear last week that Home Secretary David Blunkett intends to break away from the fallacy (propagated by his predecessors) that prison somehow 'works'. But his intention to introduce 'part-time' prisons will fall far short of reducing Europe's second highest prison population. While Blunkett says he wants to reduce the daily prison population by five hundred inmates, he's unwittingly going to increase it with new measures dreamed up in response to the latest moral panics, mobile phone theft and 'car-jacking'. These will only result in longer sentences for more young people.

It costs on average £910 per week to imprison a young offender. This probably works out at £10 for their food and the other £900 for their containment. Assuming that young people are nicking mobiles for economic reasons, mightn't it be better to give thousands of young offenders this money instead of imprisoning them, and seeing if this helps them out of the poverty trap?

Obviously, any suggestion that we should pay young offenders the equivalent of what it costs to imprison them is outrageous – they need to be punished. It's much better that we imprison them with other people in the same boat, and hopefully on their release they'll be able to lead law-abiding lives. The only drawback is that when they're dumped outside the prison gates, they'll probably have nowhere to live, no job or likelihood of getting one, plus the additional stigma of being a 'criminal'. So it's back to square one.

From Blunkett's proposals, I ask myself how on earth it is possible for New Labour (or any future government) to be 'tough on the causes of crime' when we live in an unequal society. And even more importantly, when will they realise that imprisoning tens of thousands of people does nothing to reduce crime? Not only is it useless in achieving what it's designed to do, it actually adds more fuel to the fire.

Lee H.

The answer's local

Because the alternative to global capitalism is localised self-governed communities (i.e. communes), we offer the following as a road map to get us from here to there (with much respect to Colin Hines, author of *Globalise the Local*). We take it to be a self-evident truth that "social, economic and environmental problems are best solved as close to their origins as possible". The politicians' commandment, that every nation must contort its economy to

out-compete every other country, is an economic and environmental nonsense. It's an act of beggar-my-neighbour warfare, a form of structural violence that excludes local voices and interests while devaluing their socio-cultural forms.

The alternative is localisation. This insists that everything which can be produced locally or regionally should be. Long-distance trade would be reduced to supplying what can't come from within one country or geographical group of countries. This would increase control of local economies. Information and sustainable technology could be employed to strengthen them. More co-operative ways could be identified to build 'better-your-neighbour' local economies. Local profits would remain in them, so providing opportunities for local development funding and people's banks to help in creating community enterprises and co-operatives.

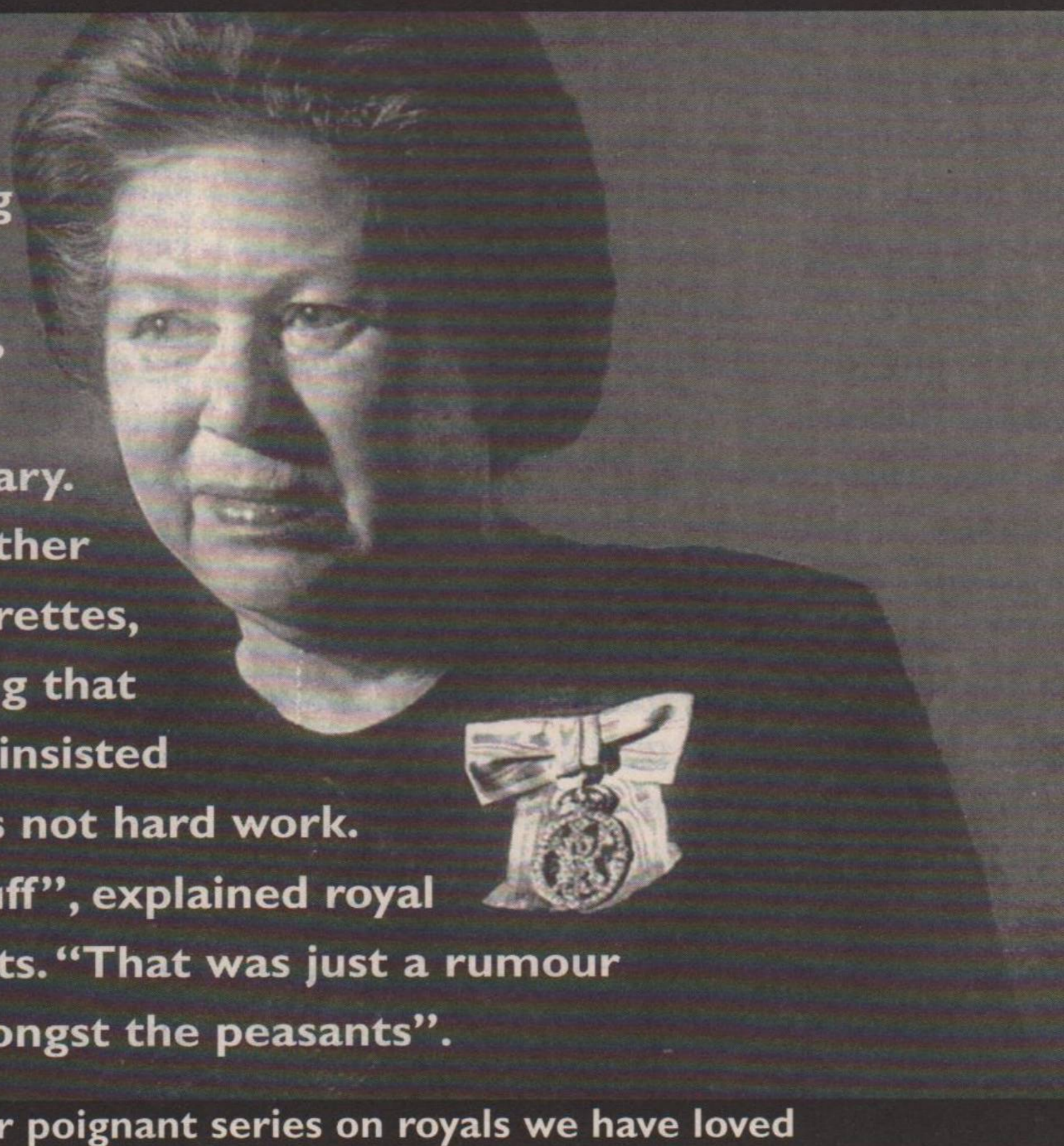
Localisation doesn't require a return to state control, just a state policy and economic framework which would enable people and their communities to re-diversify their own local economies. A diverse local economy requires the active democracy of everyday involvement in producing goods and services, close to the point of consumption. A citizens' income would guarantee everyone's right to participate in re-prioritising the local economy. With these measures in place, power would return to local communities. Act for local solutions at the local level.

East Midlands Anarchist Network

2002: A NATION MOURNS

Literally dozens of people throughout Britain were grieving last week, following the funeral of Margaret Windsor. The former it-girl, still known as 'Princess' to her fans, died on 8th February. Doctors are uncertain whether it was gin, champagne, cigarettes, parties or general wild living that finally did for her. But they insisted that the cause of death was not hard work.

"She never touched the stuff", explained royal physician Dr Alexis Z. Coutts. "That was just a rumour someone tried to start amongst the peasants".



Episode four in our poignant series on royals we have loved

What we say ...

Free the refugees

In the days after a large chunk of Yarl's Wood Detention Centre was destroyed by fire, several lies were being spread by people with a vested interest in spreading them. It was alleged (wrongly) by Bedfordshire Police, and dutifully reported by the mainstream media, that the fire was started deliberately.

Meanwhile, gutter press hacks wrote reports on the life of ease enjoyed by detainees at the centre, all at the expense of a noble tax-paying public. The implication, that refugees are ungrateful leeches, wasn't exactly hard to find.

But the biggest dollop of nonsense was served up, yet again, by the Bedfordshire fuzz. Their warnings to local folk fell only slightly short of telling them to lock up their doors and their daughters. All this about refugees who've committed no offence, even under Britain's draconian laws.

But here's the reason for their demonisation by cops and media alike. Without it, people might begin to ask why refugees are locked up in the first place. And that would never do. There's political reputations involved – not just those of the politicians, but those of the hacks and their bosses as well. The sensible thing for the government to do in the light of the destruction at Yarl's Wood (and who knows, maybe the deaths), would be to reconsider its asylum strategy, and particularly its policy of imprisoning those who ask for it.

Just because that's the sensible thing doesn't mean it'll happen, of course. In fact we'll eat our typewriters if it does. But it's the only right thing to do. If any detainees escaped as a result of the fire, good for them. Now let the others out too.

Another jail death

There was, by common agreement, a bizarre visitor at the prison abolition conference in London last month. A serving prison officer, he hadn't come to listen and learn, as we might've hoped (and as he clearly needed to do). He'd come to tell everyone else that prisons really weren't so bad. They've moved on since the dark days of the 1990s, he seemed to say. Jails these days are caring places, full of love and flowers and light.

Or so he would've had us believe. Every report of brutality inflicted or of rights denied was brushed aside with a declaration that he hadn't seen such things himself. What, we wondered, does he do all day?

Unfortunately for Martin Ward, he found himself at plain old HMP Woodhill. This is a bog-standard jail, with normal conditions and levels of care. In other words, prisoners are humiliated, deprived and – in his case – killed. This is the reality of the prison system, these are its morals. And so long as it lasts, there'll be many more Martin Wards.

No higher calling

There was once an active network of Anarchist Black Cross groups in Britain and elsewhere. The ABC supported prisoners in countless practical ways. For one reason or another, it hasn't functioned for years. Its loss has left a gap in anarchists' work against imprisonment and for the imprisoned.

Any attempt to restart it as an anarchist organisation, as activists in Brighton and now in Bristol are doing, is very welcome. We offer whatever support we can give. Prisoner support groups and prison abolition groups must be at the heart of what we as anarchists do. For an anarchist, there is no more critical task. For a newspaper called *Freedom*, there can be no higher calling.

Readers' letters

Reply to Derek

Dear *Freedom*,

Derek Barrow says that by promoting an anarchism available here and now, I imply the need for a "state-like arrangement" (letters, 9th February). On the contrary I say that his vision of a totally individualistic world, which automatically safeguards all our separate freedoms, could only be brought about by an episode of absolute authority. It would need a dictatorial or oligarchical fiat, requiring force either to convert the world or to protect the converted from the rest during the setting up process.

I admit we're now in sight of a much less violent method than ever before of bringing our brave new world about. Nobody yet knows how much of our acceptance of authority is inbuilt, but even if we assume it's wholly due to upbringing, genetic engineering will obviously soon let us add dog-like characteristics to our genome. I can't see *Freedom* readers accepting this method of bringing the revolution about. Nor would they like its opposite – a system in which we're designed to live alone in a fortified cave with a shotgun under the bed!

I'm certain I know better than anybody else in this town, country, world how they should live for their own good, but I'd never consider imposing this certainty on them any more than I'd let them impose theirs on me if I don't want. I'll continue to encourage people to see that everyone controls their own life to varying extents, and that we could all do so a lot more if we only choose. It's easier right now, when everyone expects the worst of politicians – now we just have to persuade people not to vote for 'em!

In these terms, a difference in size means a difference in kind. Ruled by a state, 30

million of us can be a minority – no way should we do a Socrates and accept it. As part of a community, of whatever size we like, I could yield gracefully to a few thousand I think. And, of course, no rules – as each of us is individual, so must our daily decisions be.

Paul Campbell

Good for them

Dear *Freedom*,

Yes, I'm going to defend Chumbawamba (letters, 9th February). As anarchists, we oppose capitalism and the state. But the society we live in has a stranglehold on most occupations. As for music, gone are the days of minstrels and strolling players, whose only sustenance was to pass the hat round after a performance. If you're going to attack a group because they've got links with EMI, then take it the whole hog and attack teachers, nurses and social workers too – by working in state education, the NHS and social services, they're actually serving arms of the state.

Peter Neville

Dear *Freedom*,

Good for Chumbawamba. They work in an industry where this sort of thing is inevitable. It's good that they're using their influence to fund anti-system projects.

I.M.

Prisoner support

Dear *Freedom*,

I hope comrades will support Comrade Mozhenkov in his efforts to keep *Freedom* accessible in his prison library (letters, 9th

February). Censorship has long been a tool by the state to undermine our liberties. Aren't we appalled any more?

Mike V.

Ashton Peace Group

Stern critic

Dear *Freedom*,

Spiritually and politically, England is a ventilated corpse. Margaret Thatcher may have departed, but her Benthamite-Stirnerism still holds centre-stage. England is now Stirnerite territory, and that is why Stirnerite *Freedom* continues to go round in circles, conscientiously saying nothing, from fortnight to fortnight.

The breakout, if there is to be one, has to turn on a new traumatic discovery, manifest in action, that we are social and inventive animals. Only when we discover the living reality of being and becoming in groups shall we cease to be lost souls, with no purpose, no means, nothing.

Peter C.

Custody deaths

Dear *Freedom*,

I'm looking for details of Irish deaths in youth custody, particularly in Feltham between 1992 and the present. I would also appreciate any details regarding the treatment of young travellers while in custody. Maybe readers witnessed something while they were working or residing there. Every little piece of information is important. Thanks for your help, which is much appreciated.

Terry Stewart

deathsincustody@hotmail.com

07931-844 969

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TO BE CONTINUED...

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Meets at 8pm at the Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London WC1 (nearest tube Holborn). Admission free.
• Friday 22nd February: Do we need more immigration or less? (speaker Peter Neville)
• Thursday 7th March: The War Against Terrorism (symposium)
• Friday 22nd March: Anarchy and the Third World (symposium)

WELSH NATIONAL PEACE FESTIVAL
Saturday 23rd February at 6pm
Great Hall, Aberystwyth Arts Centre
To address issues from the US war on terrorism and prospects for international peace and justice
info: Olwen Davies 01970 611994 • Medi James 01970 832725
Helena Earnshaw 01654 702375 • Aberpeacegroups@hotmail.com

DEMONSTRATION AT CAMPSFIELD
Saturday 23rd February from 12 noon to 2pm
Demonstration to give support to the detainees imprisoned inside Campsfield detention centre at Kidlington, near Oxford.
Bring kites/balloons/music!
contact: 01865 58145 or 01865 557282 or 01865 726804
www.closecampsfield.org.uk

WAR ON TERRORISM STOP SANCTIONS ON IRAQ
Conference from 23rd to 24th February
Kingsley Hall, Bruce Road, London E3
An opportunity for the anti-war and anti-sanctions movements to re-group and be re-inspired
info: voices@viwuk.freeserve.co.uk or 0845 458 2564

MAYDAY MEETING
Sunday 24th February at 2pm
The Calthorpe Arms pub, Grays Inn Road
Nearest tubes Kings Cross / Chancery Lane

CARNIVALISTA CAFE NIGHT
Monday 25th February at 7pm
Bonnington's Café, 11 Vauxhall Grove, SW8
We invite one and all to enjoy some vegan deliciousness. We are in the process of purchasing a space to run a social centre in South London so local community groups and individuals can come together free from all forms of bigotry.
contact: carnivalista@yahoo.co.uk

SINGING WORKSHOP
Tuesday 26th February from 7pm to 9pm
Radical Dairy, 47 Kynaston Road, London N16
Regular weekly singing workshop
contact: Elizabeth on 020 8809 1352

WOMBLES CAMPAIGN MEETING
Wednesday 27th February from 7.30pm
at The Exchange, Sebbon Street, Islington, London
(nearest tube Highbury & Islington)

UFC PICKET
Wednesday 27th February from 3.30pm to 5pm
Attorney General's Chambers
9 Buckingham Gate, London SW1
Called by the United Families and Friends Campaign (UFC). Families and friends of those who have died in custody have been invited to meet the Attorney General as part of a review of the role of the Crown Prosecution Services (CPS) in bringing changes following a custody death. We will call upon the Attorney General to re-open the files on controversial deaths.

LONDON UNDERGROUND
Meeting on Sunday 3rd March at 2pm
at the London Activist Resource Centre (LARC) corner of Fieldgate and Parfett Street, London E1
This is a chance for you to network your groups ideas and find out what's else is happening in the capital.
There will be good food, followed by a video about Argentina

GLOBAL WOMEN'S STRIKE
Friday 8th March (International Women's Day)
Assemble 12 noon at Shell Centre, Waterloo ending at the World Bank
Coordinated by International Wages for Housework Campaign, Crossroads Women's Centre, 230a Kentish Town Road
womenstrike8m@server101.com
http://womenstrike8m.server101.com

NORTHERN ANARCHIST NETWORK: SPRING CONFERENCE
Saturday 9th March from 10.30am to 5.30pm
at the News from Nowhere Bookshop, Bold Street, Liverpool
for details contact Martin on 0161 707 9652

WOMEN SPEAK OUT
A national anarcha-feminist gathering
from 8th to 10th March
at the Radical Dairy Community Centre
47 Kynaston Road, London N16
Workshops, discussion, action, films, food, fun, frolics, music
contact 020 7249 6996 for more info

INTERNATIONAL ALTERNATIVE BOOKFAIR IN BELGIUM
Saturday 9th March • 10am to 8pm
Intercultureel Centrum 'De Centrale'
Kraankinderstraat 2, 9000 Gent, Belgium
Our second International Alternative Bookfair in Belgium
plus a gig from 9pm onwards
contact: aboekenbeurs@yahoo.com
website: http://www.Xs4all.be/~verdan/aboek

IWW LONDON MEETING
Monday 11th March at 7.30pm
Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London WC1
contact: IWW, PO Box 4414, Poole, Dorset BH15 3YL
email info@iww.org.uk • www.iww.org.uk

DEFEND ASYLUM SEEKERS
Conference on Saturday 23rd March, 10am to 6pm
Cross Street Chapel, Cross Street, Manchester M2
Arming activists with the arguments, building greater coordination across campaigns, working with refugees and migrants' organisations. Speakers and workshops.
BCM Box 4289, London WC1X 3XX • tel 07905 566183
email info@defend-asylum.org

RED RAMBLES 2002
Red Rambles is a group who meet in Derbyshire and the Peak District. Anyone from a left libertarian background is welcome.
Sunday 7th April at 11am
Meet outside the Hurt Arms Public House, Ambergate, Derbyshire, for a five mile circular walk through Shining Cliff Woods in springtime. Walk leader Mike.
for more info call 07775 977136 or email ain@ziplip.com

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