



**PRACTICAL ANARCHY**

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**NEWS AND VIEWS ON MAYDAY 2002** page 4 onwards

The men on these stretchers were shot by Israeli soldiers

# Who are the real terrorists?



After September 11th, we were told that a war against terror would be unleashed. No sooner was it declared than Israel announced its own bloody suppression of the Palestinians would constitute a front in it. If we cut through the sanctimony and see this war for what it really is, then the claims of Israeli prime minister Sharon to be part of a 'just cause' are indeed plausible. For the war isn't being fought against 'terror' at all – it's only being fought to decide who has the right to wield it.

September 11th showed the US government that their state doesn't have the monopoly of violence they claimed. The right of capital to assert itself, over and above any claims to self-determination was (for a day at least) shown to be assailable. If people who assert their claims to self-determination against the interests of capital are terrorists, then it's right to call Palestinians by that name.

Their claim to a homeland against the military might of Israel's apartheid state threatens the stability on which capital's exploitation of the Middle East's resources depends. Terrorists, it seems, are anyone who isn't assimilated to the agenda of the World Bank, IMF and western capital.

Jean-Paul Sartre once observed that French attempts to suppress the anti-colonial revolt in Algeria led to a 'striptease' of the humanism to which the state swore formal allegiance.

The war on 'terror' goes the same way. At Camp X-Ray, prisoners are held naked, shackled and blindfolded. They are denied access to lawyers and force-fed when they go on hunger strike to protest.

In the war against the Palestinians' right to a homeland (in fact, any kind of home at all – houses in Palestinian settlements are routinely bulldozed by the Israeli army), the claim of the Israeli state to moral legitimacy has been shown up for the lie it always was. Israel's latest invasion of Palestinian territories has shown that, gorged on blood, the west's monster has slipped the leash.

In the process, it's thrown into jeopardy Bush's desire to murder yet more Iraqi kids, and (with street protests across the Middle East to show solidarity with the Palestinian struggle) put the 'stability' of the region into question.

Over two hundred Palestinians have died in the last fortnight, as Israeli helicopters have fired rockets into refugee camps and Israeli snipers have shot down pregnant women in the streets. Ambulance drivers have been targeted. The International Red Cross has publicly accused Israel of preventing ambulances from reaching the region.

In every camp invaded, Israeli soldiers have rounded up all Palestinian males between the ages of 14 and 50, stripped them naked, blindfolded them and removed them for

interrogation. The camps have been shelled continuously by F-16 planes and Apache helicopters. Water and electricity have been cut off. The Palestinian Red Crescent has warned of the dangers of an epidemic because of the number of corpses decomposing in the streets.

The Israeli invasion is illegal – in breach of international law and in defiance of the UN – but as laws are the legitimations of the powerful, so the slaughter continues. In Ramallah, the army summarily executed Palestinian policemen, delivering headshots while they lay wounded on the ground. Israeli officers have spoken openly of mirroring the tactics the Nazis used in suppressing the rising of the Warsaw ghetto.

There's nothing new in this. In 1948 (when Palestine was under British control), 95% of what is now Israel was owned by Palestinians. Now Israelis own 93% of what were Palestinian lands. There are 25,000 internally displaced Palestinians, and a diaspora of five million are denied a right to a homeland.

Since 1948, Israel has expropriated more than 17 million dunums (17,000 sq km) of land owned by Palestinian refugees, and nearly a million dunums owned by Palestinians inside Israel. In addition, it has expropriated or controls some 4.7 million dunums in the occupied West Bank, East Jerusalem and the Gaza Strip. Each square of

land has been taken through the destruction of villages and the massacre of Palestinian families.

Proportionate to its population, Israel is the recipient of more US foreign aid than any other state in history. Every Israeli citizen is subsidised by the US by approximately \$1,400 a year, while each member of the military is underwritten by about \$9,750. Israel is the US cop in the Middle East. Every dead Palestinian is a message to the region's poor.

Solidarity with the Palestinian struggle is an essential condition for building effective resistance to capital's imperialist agenda. Up to now, this is solidarity that's rarely been delivered. But last month in Rome, up to 100,000 people demonstrated, chanting "the *intifada* continues until the land is free". Protests here have been small by comparison, and more muted. We should work to build them up and make our own solidarity with the *intifada* clear. The Palestinian uprising is effectively now the voice of the 'Arab street' (to quote journalist Amira Howeidy), and its aim should be ours too.

It's essential that we move beyond campaigning for peace and declare our solidarity with the Palestinian struggle. Good as it is to see members of the International Solidarity Movement acting as 'human shields' for Palestinian families (if

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Hungarian activists demonstrate in solidarity with the Palestinian struggle, Budapest, 8th April 2002

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(continued from page 1)

only more members of the anti-capitalist movement had their guts and internationalist perspective), their pacifism has been shown up as a dead end – despite their claim to non-violence, Israeli troops have been happy to fire off live rounds at them.

Liberal journalist George Monbiot was right to applaud them (*Guardian*, 9th April), but their strategy of trying to "place themselves between power and those whom power afflicts" has to be rejected. There's no neutral terrain here, no middle space to

occupy. There are only sides to take between oppressor and oppressed.

We shouldn't campaign for peace, but try to further the chances of victory to the Palestinians. Their self-determination is a legitimate, democratic demand.

The Israeli state is a sectarian imposition propped up by the United States and Europe. Some of us might not like the methods used by some forces of the *intifada* (suicide bombings seem 'irrational' from the comfort of the armchair), but as Sartre wrote of the Algerian resistance, "we find our humanity

on this side of death and despair, they find it beyond torture and death ... Sons of violence, at every instance they draw their humanity from it; we were human beings at their expense, they are making themselves human beings at ours".

The more determined the resistance to the Israeli state on the streets of the west, the less despairing will be the resistance on the West Bank.

Nick S.

For details of the International Solidarity Movement, visit [www.freepalestinecampaign.org](http://www.freepalestinecampaign.org)

Reports from Argentina and Australia on why anarchy is ...

## A practical response to poverty

A new wave of organised looting swept Argentina at the end of last month. The most dramatic incident came on 23rd or 24th March (sources differ on the date), when a truck carrying 22 cattle overturned in the suburbs of Rosario, an industrial city in Santa Fe. This is an area which has suffered especially high unemployment in the recession of the last three years.

Some 400 people from nearby La Granada gathered at the scene and began to divide up the meat, slaughtering the animals that had survived the accident. "Our kids can eat now, thanks to this", said one woman. Local police chose not to intervene.

On 27th March, people in the northern province of Chaco looted a stalled truck carrying milk, and protesters massed in front of a supermarket in Córdoba province to demand food. The same day, there were two attacks on a small supermarket in Ciudadela, Buenos Aires province, in which a security guard was injured. There were five incidents of looting in the western part of the province during the night.

Meanwhile, in Neuquén (the capital of Neuquén province), police agents fought young people trying to loot a supermarket, while in Tucuman province, some 100 residents of a

poor neighbourhood tried to loot a truck that was carrying flour.

On 30th March, around 200 people tried to break into a supermarket in Concepción del Uruguay, Entre Ríos province. They used a tractor in an attempt to tear down the gates. Police responded by attacking them with teargas and rubber bullets. Two protesters were injured and taken to hospital.

The recent incidents were smaller and more isolated than the series of lootings and demonstrations that led to president de la Rúa's resignation in December (*Freedom*, 12th January). The current president, Eduardo Duhalde, has tried to play down their significance, claiming that the looters are recruits of unnamed political forces which are trying to destabilise his government.

KAF

Recently in Campbelltown, a mainly working class suburb south west of Sydney, there was an event which warmed the left ventricle of my badly damaged heart. Word had spread that if you used your payment card at the local Coles supermarket between midnight and one o'clock, when the system was down, the transaction wouldn't be recorded. This meant you could shop for free.

This was an offer too good to refuse for locals, many of whom survive on paltry social insecurity payments or minimum wage McJobs. A collective party mood reigned supreme, as proletarian shopping ensued at full bore in the early hours of the morning.

What was usually a mind-numbingly boring and humiliating experience (imagine trying to feed a growing family on the dole) became a festival of the oppressed, based on a spirit of play and adventure.

For an all too brief moment in time, paupers lived like princes, feasting on smoked salmon and smoking posh imported cigarettes instead of the own-brand fishfingers and lung-buster smokes we can usually afford. Social relations were affected too, as people who were once strangers became friends and acknowledged

that they were all part of the same game.

Shoppers would often drop outrageously overpriced luxurious commodities such as truffles and pigs' ears in aspic into each other's trolleys, as gifts and signs of appreciation. And why not?

After all, everything was free for the taking. We can only imagine the community spirit which ensued in this shopping Olympiad. Relations started, as star-crossed lovers met in aisle five, maybe looking for something more than frozen TV-dinners.

But the most important outcome was the breaking down of the chains of isolation which grind us down, when we anonymously believe we are the only ones disaffected with our lives.

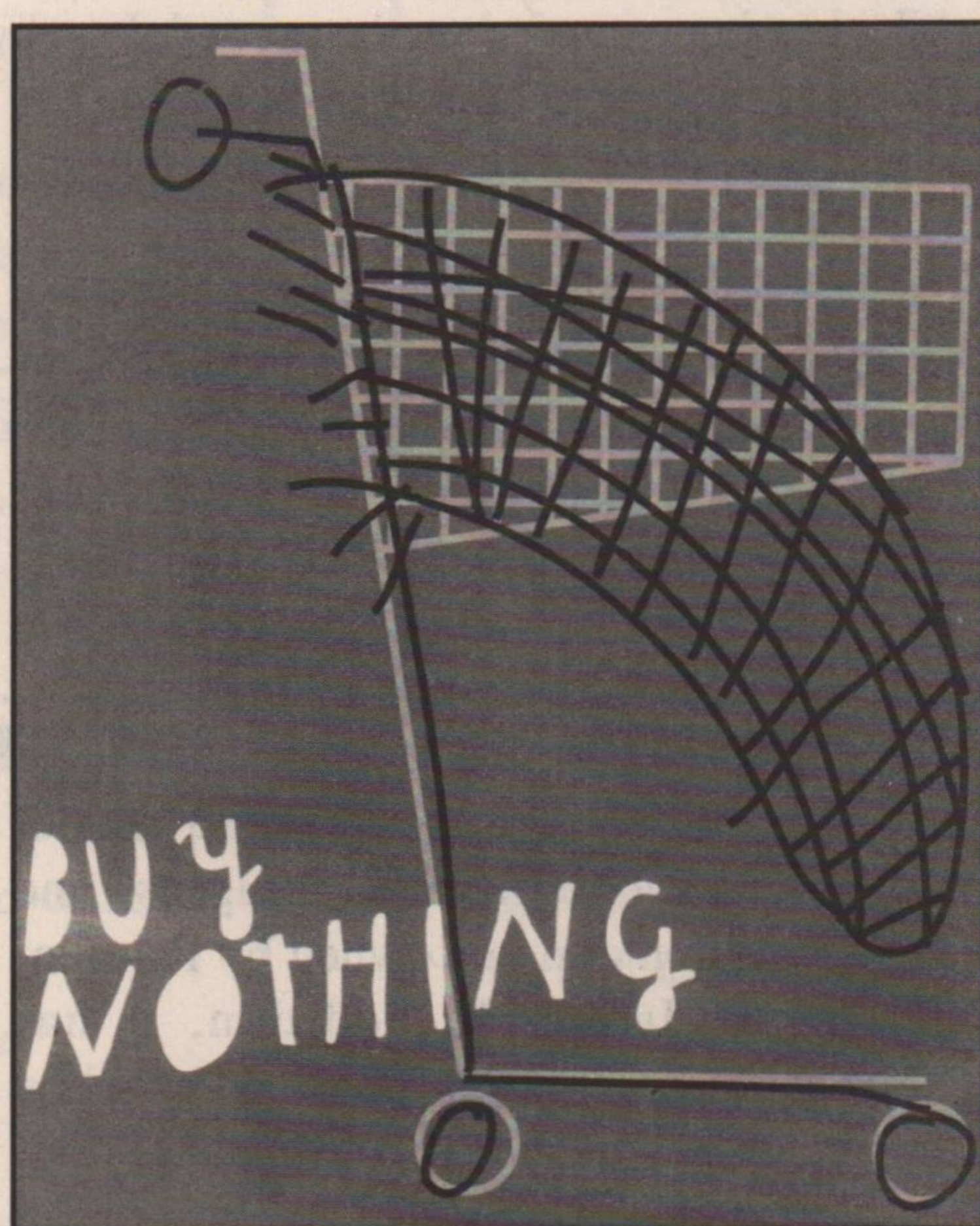
Of course, this great carnival ended far too early, when the gutter journalists got wind of a story to take the heat off their corrupt bosses back at the office and in parliament. These servile imbeciles bayed for proletarian blood, mortified that poor people should have the intelligence and temerity to steal rather than starve.

This momentous fissure of capitalist social relations wasn't reported in the official organs of the left, nor discussed over soya lattes in liberal circles, despite the fact that it posed far more of a threat to the business-as-usual mentality than any spectacular culture jam.

Has the Australian activist scene really got its collective head up its own arse? It wouldn't surprise me if many comrades had been on the European activist merry-go-round as revolutionary tourists more times than they'd been to working class areas of their own cities.

I always see red when I hear activists whine that Australia is a cultural backwater, without any serious potential for revolutionary upheaval. While Australia isn't Greece or Spain, there are 'hidden' acts of refusal and subversion going on every day, which prove that all isn't relaxed and comfortable down under. These acts are perpetrated by working class communities every day.

Tall Paul



# Industrial unrest spreads

Train drivers at First North Western (FNW) have announced a further three days of strikes in solidarity with their fellow workers. This follows the successful actions held at the start of the month (*Freedom*, 6th April). If union bureaucrats don't stitch up the drivers first, then one-day strikes will go ahead on 22nd and 26th April, and 6th May.

The bosses' response to this militancy has been a concerted publicity campaign to demonise the drivers. Press releases and leaflets distributed to customers have said that they don't understand the motives of the strikers. But a Railtrack representative, in a momentary lapse into clarity, recently told journalists that the drivers "seem to be simply striking in solidarity".

In a crude attempt to divide railworkers, a letter has been sent to every FNW employee. It described the drivers as, amongst other things, 'irresponsible'. It said they were deliberately compromising safety. The hypocritical nature of these accusations hasn't been lost on railworkers.

After all, this is in an industry where workers are regularly forced to do overtime just to make ends meet. And the accusations have come from bosses who've tried to impose employment contracts on workers



Commuters inconvenienced by the bosses' greed

which compel them to be on call on what were previously designated 'rest days'.

Meanwhile train conductors from Arriva Northern, another company, are stepping up their series of one day strikes in pursuit of a 7.9% pay claim. The reaction of Arriva bosses to their demands highlights the thinking of the people who now run our railways.

In a bizarre response to the conductors' action, Arriva have announced an overtime

ban. The company says striking workers have been doing overtime to make up the shortfall in their pay caused by going on strike. The result has been that scheduled trains have been severely affected because of 'staff shortages'.

But this has backfired on Arriva Northern, because the Strategic Rail Authority (the state's watchdog) recently levied a huge fine on the company as a punishment for poor train

performance figures. This was rumoured to be in the region of £2 million.

Arriva's response? It was announced on 11th April that chief executive Bob Davies has received a £200,000 bonus to top up his salary of £300,000. Half a million a year, just to run our railways into the ground. An Arriva representative explained that "the objective of Arriva's remuneration policy for its executive directors is to ensure that they are highly motivated". Roll on the day when railworkers sack these fucking clowns and start to run an integrated transport system, based on our needs. That means community needs, not just the greed of a few.

**Jones the Steam**

• Around 40,000 postal workers are being threatened with redundancy in Consignia/Royal Mail's bid for profits. A postal workers' solidarity group has now been set up. The group is non-hierarchical, and aims to show solidarity with postal workers. It will fight alongside them on picket lines and take direct action in support. We will also highlight the links between anti-capitalism in Britain and elsewhere. For more details, email [postie\\_action@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:postie_action@yahoo.co.uk) or call 07751-432 240.

**A.T.**

• **Hackney** Riot police stormed a north London social centre last week, in what activists said was part of a state campaign of repression leading up to Mayday. Over thirty cops forced an entry to Stoke Newington's Radical Dairy on 12th April, allegedly to investigate the theft of electricity and the misuse of drugs. They were accompanied by employees of London Electricity.

No drugs were found, but cops removed the centre's computer as evidence that electricity had been drawn off the grid. The machine had been used to provide a free internet service for local people. Cops also read out a statement saying that, because a Mayday Festival of Alternatives leaflet had been displayed in the window, the building was obviously being used as "part of the infrastructure to Mayday". There were no arrests, but the centre was left without electricity.

This was the third attempt to intimidate users of the building. On 5th April, members of the Forward Intelligence Team 'broke down' outside the building, and spent three hours photographing people going in and out while they waited for a 'repair vehicle' to arrive. On 9th April, more cops came to video the building. On both occasions, they left after local residents complained they were targeting a valuable community resource.

"Speaking as a Hackney resident who's paying for this farcical police behaviour, and at a time when we're fighting to keep our libraries, clubs and other public spaces, it's beyond belief that true community services are coming under attack from the police", said one local man.

• **Sheffield** Home Secretary and local MP David Blunkett was forced to run the gauntlet of over fifty protesters outside his Sheffield surgery last week. Police had to clear a path for him to leave the building on 13th April, after his car was surrounded by protesters angry at Mark Barnsley's continued imprisonment. Eggs were thrown, and Blunkett was described by a passerby as looking "afraid".

The protest was part of a day of action organised by Mark's supporters. Mark was attacked by a group of drunken students outside the city's Pomona pub in 1995, while out with his baby and a friend. Despite clear

## News in Brief

evidence that he was the victim of an attack, the police and Sheffield's political establishment saw a chance to rid themselves of a thorn in their side. Mark was charged with causing Grievous Bodily Harm. He was convicted and sentenced to twelve years. His case is now under review by the Criminal Cases Review Commission.

For more information, call 07944-522 001 or visit [www.freemarkbarnsley.com](http://www.freemarkbarnsley.com)

• **London** The Queen and the Duke of Edinburgh are having a celebration dinner with Tony Blair at Downing Street on 29th April, to celebrate fifty years of lording it over us at our expense. Also invited are the

four living ex-prime ministers – Thatcher, Heath, Callaghan and Major.

This is a disgusting feast of inbred royalty and arrogant politicians, who between them have caused no end of problems for ordinary people. Here's an opportunity to express your disgust. Come to the 'Choke on it' demo organised by the Movement Against the Monarchy (MA'M). From 6.00pm MA'M will be at the gates of Downing Street to give them a right royal send off.

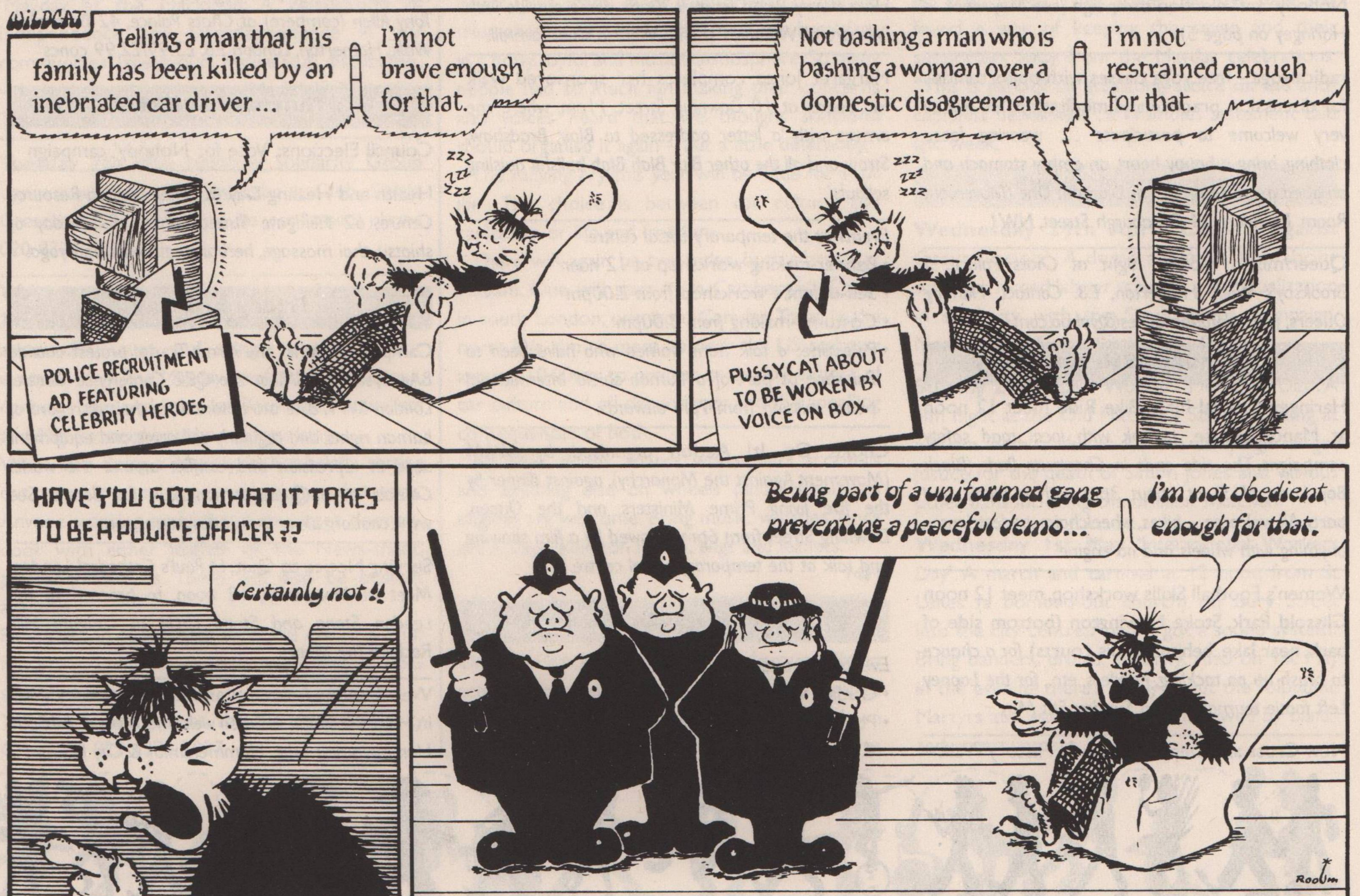
'Choke on it', Downing Street, Monday 29th April, 6pm. Bring whistles, banners, drums and other entertainment to celebrate the end of the monarchy. Call 07931-301 901 or visit [www.fuckthejubilee.com](http://www.fuckthejubilee.com)

• **Angola Three** Robert King Wilkerson, the Black Panther held in solitary confinement in Louisiana's Angola State Penitentiary for 27 years for a crime he didn't commit, will begin his British speaking tour on 29th April.

Since his release in February 2001, following a long campaign, he's spent his time travelling to raise awareness of the brutality, corruption and racism of the state's criminal justice system. He also campaigns for the release of his comrades, Albert Woodfox and Herman Wallace, who are now in their thirtieth year of solitary confinement. Together, King, Albert and Herman came to be known as the 'Angola Three'.

King will be accompanied on his tour by Althea Francois, another ex-Panther, who works as director of the New Orleans Prison Organising Resource Centre.

See back page for details of tour dates.







# A day of unfettered joy

Officially, Mayday is a movable holiday, on the first Monday of the month. This could be any time from 1st to 7th May – this year it's 6th May. This has been so since its reintroduction as a public holiday by the Labour government in 1978. But for centuries in Britain the first day of May was a holiday for all to enjoy.

Spring flowers have been predominant in May celebrations since Roman times, when youths and maidens spent the Calends of May dancing and singing to mark the beginning of summer.

Later, nobles and commoners rose early on Mayday to visit their nearest woodlands to gather flowers and hawthorn branches, arriving home with them about sunrise. Doors and windows were then garlanded with May blossom before the start of the general festivities. Many still use hawthorn blossom as an interior decoration, even today.

Nowadays, places visited on the Mayday bank holiday are usually further afield than the nearest woodlands. Being the first long weekend of the spring-summer holiday season, it's become a time when the volume of traffic to popular areas often causes major delays.

Some excursions are to places where centuries-old customs are still upheld. In localities associated with floral traditions, the organisers of festivals obviously have the holiday in mind when they fix their annual dates.

May garlands were once a feature of village Mayday celebrations. They were made with two hoops, one set at right angles inside the other, and the whole covered with leaves and flowers. There are many variations, including bell-shaped structures about four feet high, often with a doll encased in the middle to represent the goddess of spring.

In the Middle Ages, celebrations of the vernal equinox took place throughout Europe, with the change in seasons marked by various forms of floral custom.

In England, Morris dancing became part of the celebrations, after its introduction in the reign of King Edward III. These dances came from Spain, and were an adaptation of the military dances of the Moriscoes, hence the name. One of the key dancing characters was



a boy wearing a headpiece, called a 'morion'. His antics led to him being labelled 'the Mad Morion'. The corruption of the name, accompanied by a sex change, brought about the legend of Maid Marion, who – with Robin Hood – still features in some of today's Morris dances.

Up to the beginning of this century, chimney sweeps were another feature of London Mayday scenes. Small groups moved around the streets, dressed in decorative clothes. One of the band was Jack-in-the-Green, and he concealed himself within a framework of greenery, herbs and flowers. He was regarded as the representation of spring.

Today, Jack-in-the-Green is still seen on some of the Green Man pub signs. But this is wrong – the correct Green Man sign is one

that displays a bodiless man's head depicted with twigs and leaves growing out of his mouth and ears. The two are not related.

Jack-in-the-Green is merely a human character associated with Mayday celebrations. The true Green Man is a foliate head, most likely of pagan origin. These heads can be seen on wood carvings inside churches or stone carvings on the outside. Their chief function was to scare away evil influences.

The Maypole was another focal point of the Mayday celebrations in most cities, towns and villages. In London, for instance, every parish had its Maypole, and there was competition to produce the most richly adorned. Some were so magnificently devised in natural splendour that they were left up for several weeks, with flowers replaced regularly

as a reminder of the joyous days of spring.

Oliver Cromwell put a stop to most of the old-time merrymaking, by decreeing that "all and singular Maypoles that are or shall be erected shall be taken down". Rather a strange order to enforce, if obeyed to the letter.

At first, Londoners ignored it, but as stricter penalties were introduced, all the Maypoles that had been put up were taken down and no more were put in their place. Cromwell's objective was achieved.

The Mayday jollity of 1661, following the restoration of the monarchy, brought about a proliferation of Maypoles. In London, it was decided that the tallest should be put up in the most conspicuous part of the Strand. It was brought in triumph, with bands playing and flags waving, from Scotland Yard to the opening of Little Drury Lane, opposite Somerset House. The lane was known for long afterwards as Maypole Alley.

The association of Mayday with the international labour movement dates back to the middle of the nineteenth century, but it was not officially adopted until some forty years later. Then it marked the death of the 'Chicago Martyrs', a group of anarchists who publicly campaigned for improved pay and conditions, and who were then sensationally hanged in a historic case of mistaken identity.

At the start of the French Revolution, an angry crowd broke into a notorious Paris jail and set the inmates free. On the centenary of the storming of the Bastille in July 1889, European labour and socialist representatives met in Paris. They decided to join the American Federation of Labour in pressing claims for a statutory eight-hour working day. The Americans planned to stage mass demonstrations in May 1890, and the Europeans pledged to adopt similar tactics.

In Britain, the main demonstration took place in Hyde Park on 4th May 1890. Over 200,000 people were reported to have attended, among them trade unionist John Burns, George Bernard Shaw and Friedrich Engels, the collaborator of Karl Marx. This established a political tradition which has lasted until the present day.

Victorian socialist writer William Morris described Mayday as "above all days of the year, fitting for the protest of the disinherited against the system of robbery that shuts the door between them and a decent life".

As this year's Mayday demonstrations take place, there are as many political issues in need of action as there ever were.

Geoffrey Humphrys

## Who owns Britain?

In a recent written response to Liberal Democrat MP Adrian Saunders, government minister Michael Willis let the cat out of the bag about our over-generous support of the fat cat landowners. The following is a perfect example of those making the rules of the game benefiting the most. This is seriously real monopoly money, with the public as banker. In the words of somebody



'We paid £550 for the privilege'

famous, it's time to take the rich off welfare.

"England and Wales together comprise about 37.3 million acres, which means that about 13 million acres are not registered in the Land Registry. Most of those 13 million acres are agricultural or rural landholdings, and their owners are the recipients of about £2 billion out of a total of £4 billion in subsidies", Willis said.

One estimate – nobody's given access to actual figures – suggests that there are 41,000 millionaires who pay no tax on their assets, but who receive between £1 billion and £2 billion from the public purse each year. That works out between £24,000 and £48,000 per family, free and gratis from the taxpayer.

These 41,000 come to 27% of the 147,000 families who own, as opposed to renting, about 70% of the UK land mass. They have assets in excess of 340 acres each.

The situation of this group, and a significant number of the 147,000 landowning families generally, is doubly anomalous. Most of them receive money from public funds by way of the Common Agricultural Policy and also from subsidies by DEFRA (as the Ministry of Agriculture is now known). These,

together with other sources derived from tax, total around £4 billion a year.

Under the extraordinary arrangements for agricultural subsidies, the existence of this gravy train is kept quiet. Those who receive sums of £1 million and more – and there are significant numbers of them – have their names kept secret by the government. The state also conceals the names of recipients of smaller amounts, on the grounds that the gravy train is 'commercially confidential'.

Those of us who pay tax as we earn (PAYE) have employers who give our details to anyone the state cares to send. Meanwhile, over the last ten years alone, about £40 billion has gone to this group of the rich, in total secret.

Just as a thumb nail sketch about the lives of the peasants who support these people, consider the following broad details. On average, the ownership pattern of most home owners is 0.2 acres, and we pay an average of £550 per year Council Tax for the 'privilege'!

Mike Hamilton

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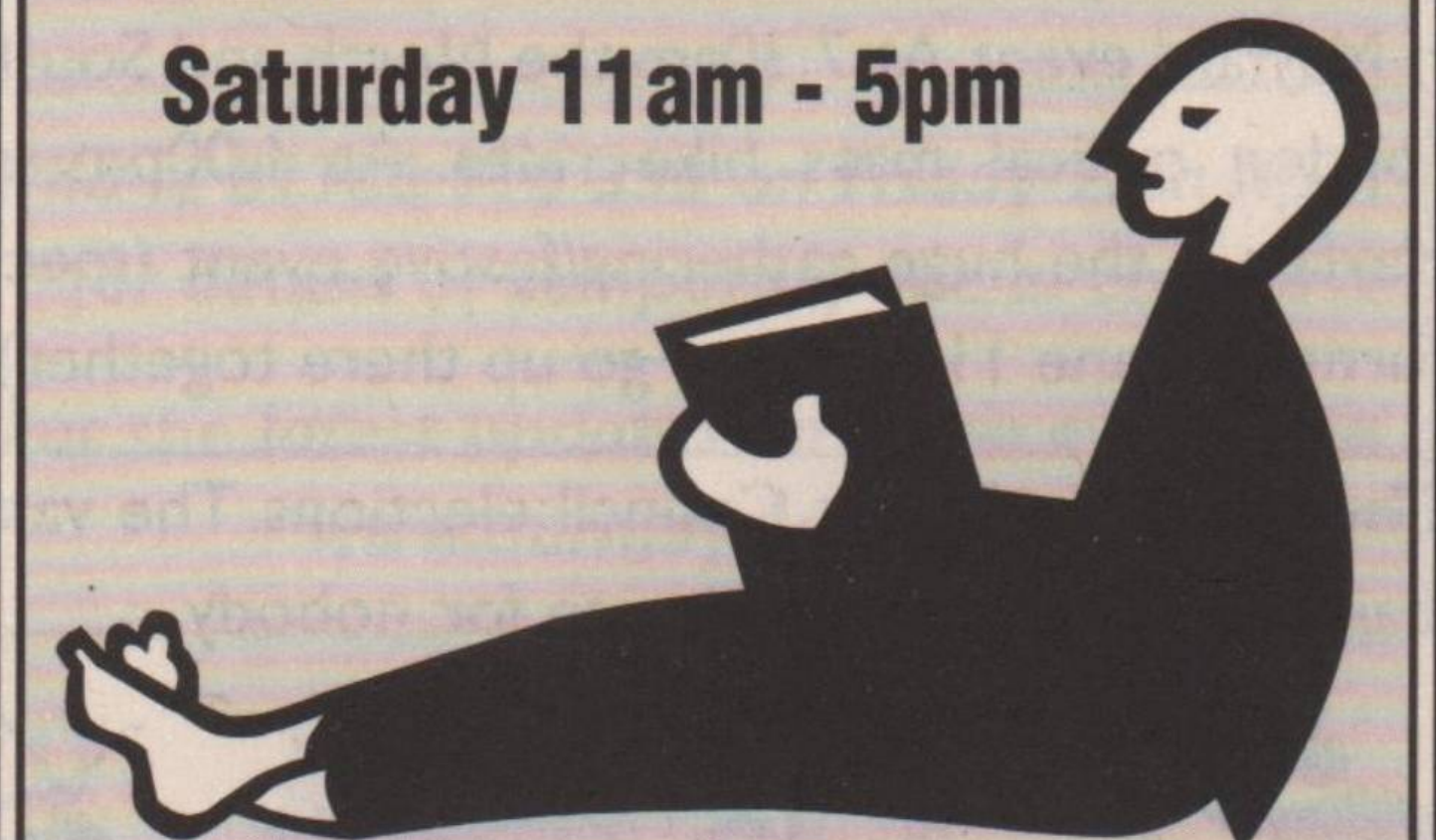
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## What we say ...

### The real enemy

The decision of the British National Party to field eighteen candidates in Burnley and Oldham in next month's local elections had been almost overlooked until a couple of weeks ago.

After last summer's riots in the towns, the left found other causes to launch their band-wagons on the back of. This left the fascists with a free rein to prepare themselves for the polls. Now, all of a sudden, the government's woken up to the fact that the fascists are in with a good chance of winning council seats on 2nd May.

"The far right is the enemy", home secretary David Blunkett declared in a letter to the *Guardian* last week. If so, they've been a very useful enemy for the government, at least until now. Their politics, of pitting poor white people against poor black and Asian people in working class areas, has taken the heat off Labour just at the time when we might've expected working class discontent to blow up in the party's face.

Come the elections, of course, the BNP play another role too. They provide the demon which the self-styled 'mainstream' politicians use to scare voters back into line and back into the polling booths.

But there's a danger for Labour politicians when they play this game. There's always a risk that BNP candidates could pick up enough votes to become local powerbrokers, in the same way the French National Front have managed to do in the past.

New Labour have come to see the BNP as a threat, and the government's propaganda machine has been cranked up in response.

Mohammed Azan, the coordinator of the Coalition against Racism, recently said that "all mainstream opinion" was opposed to the BNP in Burnley and Oldham. But it's not mainstream opinion the BNP are courting, so our opposition to them can't be based on mainstream opinion either, if it's going to be effective.

The BNP thrive because of white working class disgust at social democracy's betrayals. Just because the party turns class anger in on itself doesn't mean the anger isn't legitimate in the first place.

The best vote winner the fascists could hope for would be if their opponents decided to adopt a strategy of getting people out to vote Labour (or anyone else). This would prop up the status quo and it would discredit anti-fascism in the process. It would be an entirely deserved discrediting.

There's a leaflet from dodgy 'anti-fascist' mag *Searchlight* which details the criminal convictions of prominent BNPers, as if a criminal record ought to exclude people from participating in political life.

Of course, if a law were introduced to this effect, it wouldn't only be the BNP who would be kept out. Large numbers of the disenchanted working class wouldn't be able to stand or vote either.

We have to take the threat of the British National Party seriously. But the government mustn't be allowed to use the fascist threat as an alibi for their own actions.

The only way for us to counter the BNP is by working to reforge the militancy and independence of working class communities, not by retreating to the cloisters of the campus or the demos of the anti-war movement.

We have to make it clear that the battle lines lie between poor and rich, and not – as the BNP would have us believe – within our communities. Activists will undoubtedly mount a challenge to the BNP that's both political and physical. But most of all we have to remember (as the Labour-tailing left won't) that our main enemy is the government itself.

## Readers' letters

### Mayday farce

Dear *Freedom*,

We've just seen the flyer for London's latest Mayday events. The flyer says that the events have been organised in response to the question, "what are you for?". The answer to this, apparently, is a week-long farce of radical yoga, face painting, dressing up as clowns, gender awareness spaces and other New Age, middle class bullshit.

A number of your writers – Nick S. and Mark Barnsley in particular – have written regularly and eloquently about the need to reorientate the anarchist movement towards working class communities.

On the evidence of the Mayday plans, we'd go even further. The anarchist movement has been hijacked by middle class radicalism to such an extent that we ought to ditch it and – when we struggle to reorganise our class – deny all contact with it and drive it out of working class areas when it appears. It's usually the avant garde of gentrification any way.

The Mayday events don't address any issue that matters. There's nothing on housing, crime, poverty or debt (last year the Mayday mob thought action against working class debt consisted of dressing up as clowns outside Coutts, the merchant bank!). All we get is an order to "be spontaneous" and the reduction of radical politics to a kindergarten – the demand that life be a carnival, organised by and for those whose life already is. Is this anarchism as Kropotkin or Berkman understood it?

Linda and Paul Maguire

### Good riddance

Dear *Freedom*,

I'd hope the death of HRH Granny Windsor

('Another one bites the dust', 6th April) was of as little interest to anarchists as the death of any other irrelevant showbiz figure. A few lines at the bottom of page 7, perhaps, but not the front page lead – or did you think we might have missed it in all the other news media?

What should be of concern to anarchists is the death of the institutional form, 'monarchy'. Once that's in the dustbin (or crematorium) of history, we'll have made progress. True, not much of it is replaced by a republic, but a little. Its replacement would provide more cause for a modest gloat than the passing of an overprivileged individual anachronism.

Colin Johnson

Dear *Freedom*,

Like many others, I was sickened by the BBC's unctious and sanctimonious manipulation of the programme schedule. I wrote this poem in response. Perhaps it will redress the balance for some.

*Shame on the BBC, the Queen of Soaps,  
Trying hard to take over the role of the Pope.  
Trotting out has-beens and bumpkins galore,  
To sanctify Betty Bowes-Lyon who, alas, is  
no more.*

*Social Security are in no doubt at all  
A really good customer has gone to the wall.  
Their tears will be genuine, like their thick skin,  
That one even stronger will hold out a bin.  
Royalty, like Hydra, when it loses a head,  
Grows many more to plague us instead.*

Garry Bradford

### US smokescreen

Dear *Freedom*,

Stephen Booth is absolutely correct in saying we must oppose America's crusade against Iraq and Iran ('Viewpoints', 6th April), but

the oil issue is just a smokescreen. A draft of a document entitled *Defense Planning Guidance* was leaked to the *New York Times* in 1992. It was written by Paul Wolfowitz (now a leading Pentagon hawk) for George Bush senior, then president.

Just two quotations from it are enough to explain the present situation. Wolfowitz argued that Washington should "discourage the advanced industrial nations from challenging our leadership", and he said that the United States should maintain military dominance, thus "deterring potential competitors from even aspiring to a larger regional or global role". So there we are, it's America versus the world.

Terry Russell

### Not the first

Dear *Freedom*,

I'm pleased that a conference on prison abolition was organised in January ('An effective ABC network', 6th April). But in fact it wasn't "the first ever British conference on prison abolition", as your correspondent claimed. A group called Radical Alternatives to Prison (RAP) organised several conferences in the 1960s, in which the abolition of prisons was advocated as the ultimate aim. RAP had an office near St Paul's cathedral in London, and its chair was Canon Collins, a member of the Labour Party.

I'm told the Religious Society of Friends (the Quakers) had already called for the abolition of prisons, and so presumably held meetings on the subject, in the nineteenth century. We mustn't suppose that anarchists are the only people who want to be rid of plainly cruel institutions.

Charmaine P.

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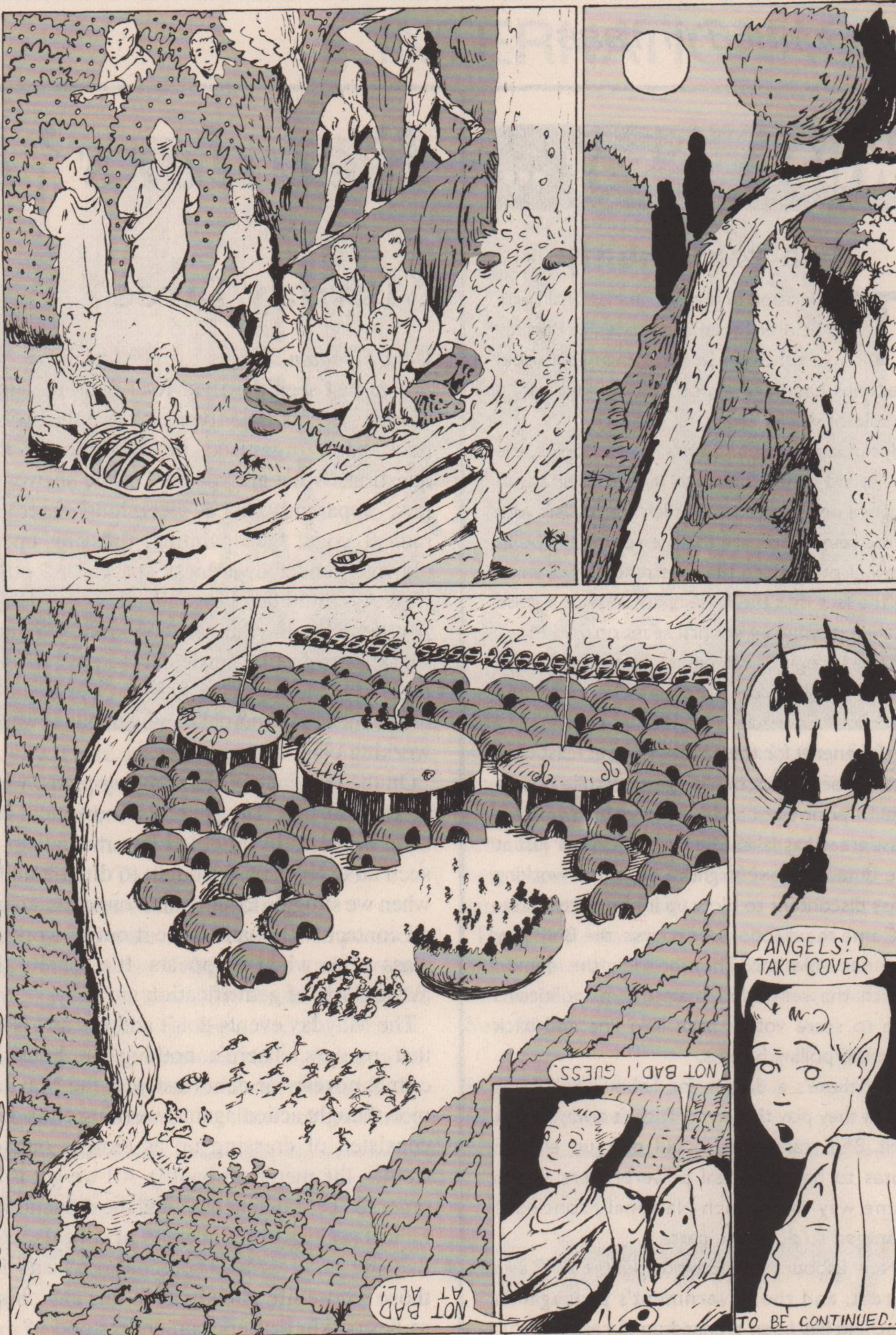
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Part of a London-wide network of social centres with a wide range of events to empower our lives and shape our futures  
The Radical Dairy, 47 Kynaston Road, London N16  
contact: theradicaldairy@hotmail.com

**OPPOSE NF IN BERMONDSEY**  
20th April at 11am • South Bermondsey station  
Prevent the National Front marching through Bermondsey.  
Bring your friends, red & black flags and anything else useful.  
We are a collection of militant anti-fascists, not a political party.

**BELPER GREEN FAIR**  
Saturday 20th April from 10am to 6pm  
at The Fleet Art Centre, Belper, Derbyshire  
A gathering of radicals and greens in the heart of Derbyshire  
more info from ain@ziplip.com

**BENEFIT GIG FOR LDMG**  
Saturday 20th April from 8pm  
Union Tavern, Camberwell New Road, London SE5  
Robb Johnson plus support • £5/£3 concs  
Legal Defence & Monitoring Group: ldmg@mail@yahoo.co.uk

**RADICAL DAIRY HEALTH DAY**  
Saturday 20th April from 10am to 6pm  
An open alternative health/healing day in order to learn more about how our bodies work, their relationship with the earth and how we can empower and help one another in the community.  
Featuring classes in radical yoga, shiatsu, swedish massage, aromatherapy, self-defence, medicinal herbs, food, info, etc.  
contact: theradicaldairy@hotmail.com

**CARNIVALISTA CAFÉ NIGHT**  
Monday 22nd April from 7.00pm  
at Bonnington's café, Vauxhall Grove, London SW8  
contact: carnivalista@yahoo.co.uk

**IWW LONDON BRANCH MEETING**  
Monday 22nd April at 7.30pm  
back bar at The Bricklayers Arms, Grasse Street, London SW1  
(nearest tube Tottenham Court Road)  
contact Industrial Workers of the World at  
PO Box 4414, Poole, Dorset BH15 3YL  
see www.iww.org.uk

**RADICAL YOGA CLASSES AT LARC**  
Tuesdays from 23rd April • 5.30 to 7.00pm  
Free radical yoga classes at the London Activist Resource Centre, 62 Fieldgate Street, London E1  
contact: radicalyoga@clara.co.uk or LARC

**SOFT CITY**  
paintings by lauranorder 1997-2002  
From 24th April to 4th May, 3pm to 10pm, at Oval House Theatre, 52-54 Kennington Oval, London SE11 5SW  
contact: softcity@hotmail.com

**GET KISSINGER!**  
Wednesday 24th April at 7.30am  
Meet at Royal Albert Hall, Kensington Gore, London SW7 for blockade in the morning, rallies, street theatre and public tribunal of Kissinger throughout the day

**SIMON JONES PROTESTS**  
Wednesday 24th April  
On the fourth anniversary of Simon's death there are a number of protests for a national day of action against casualisation  
• Brighton: meet at noon outside Personnel Selection, West Street  
• Oxford: Meet at noon at Carvax Tower  
• Liverpool: meet 1.00pm at Lime Street station. People Not Profit.  
• Bristol: contact bristolacc@hotmail.com  
Also plans for actions in Birmingham, Leeds, Leicester, London and Manchester in preparation  
contact simonjonesaprilaction@hotmail.com  
see www.simonjones.org.uk

**PICKET AUSTRALIA HOUSE**  
Thursday 25th April from 5.00 to 6.30pm  
Meet at Australia House, The Strand, London WC2 to demand an end to detention of children seeking asylum in Australia.  
see www.noborders.org www.woomera2002.com  
www.melbourne.indymedia.org

**LONDON ANARCHIST FORUM**  
Meets Fridays at 8pm at the Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London WC1 (nearest tube Holborn). Admission free.  
• 26th April: LAF's contribution to Festival of Alternatives  
• 3rd May: Post Mayday debate  
• 17th May: Anarchy's Big Problem (speaker Steve Ash)  
LAF, Box 4, 84b Whitechapel High Street, London E1 7QX

**REVOLUTIONARY ANARCHIST**  
summer school • 27th April • 10.30am to 4.00pm  
A day of discussion organised by the Anarchist Federation at Big Issue Office, 25 Summer Lane, Birmingham  
contact: brumafed@hotmail.com or 07866 443 407

**CHOKO ON IT!**  
Monday 29th April at 6.00pm, Downing Street  
The first anti-jubilee action of the summer campaign from MA'M Movement Against the Monarchy 07931 301 901  
www.fuckthejubilee.com

**BLACK PANTHER TOUR DATES**  
Speaking tour with Robert King Wilkerson and Althea Francis  
Monday 29th April: The African and Caribbean Community Pub (formerly Grants), 181 Royce Road, Hulme, Manchester M15, at 7.30pm  
Tuesday 30th April: London time and venue to be arranged. contact war21war@yahoo.co.uk  
Wednesday 1st May: Local Amnesty International groups in Manchester  
Thursday 2nd May: The One in Twelve Club, 21-23 Albion Street, Central Bradford, at 7.30pm  
Friday 3rd May: Fundraising meal and talk at Misty's Vegetarian Café, Unit 3, Longsight Shopping Centre, 531 Stockport Road, Manchester M12, at 7.00pm. Phone 0161 371 1113, tickets £10  
Saturday 4th May: film evening and talk at The Masque Theatre, Seel Street, Central Liverpool, at 7.30pm  
Sunday 5th May: talk and discussion at Manchester Radical Bookfair. See www.radicalbookfair.org.uk

**FIGHT LIKE TIGERS!**  
Wednesday 1st May at 7.30pm  
Fight Like Tigers! is a play about Mary Harris (Mother Jones) at the Working Class Movement Library, 51 Crescent, Salford  
contact: enquiries@wcmf.org.uk or 0161 736 3601

**MANCHESTER RADICAL BOOKFAIR**  
Sunday 5th May from 1pm to 5pm  
at MERCi, Bridge 5 Mill,  
22a Beswick Street, Ancoats, Manchester M4 7HR  
Workshops and veggie food available throughout the day  
contact: manchesterbookfair@hotmail.com  
see www.radicalbookfair.org.uk

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