

# FREEDOM

22 NOVEMBER 2003

50P ■ ANARCHIST NEWS AND VIEWS

## GOOD RIDDANCE, ASSHOLE

The future prospects for Iraq may soon become clearer, following discussions between King Bush and his Minnie Blair in London this week. In particular, writes Terry Flute, the results of the Anglo-American summit (which is what the 'state visit' really amounted to) might impact on the Pentagon's earlier promise of \$100 million towards building what it called a 'fair and balanced' media network in the country.

In a growing headache for the president and his closest advisers, it looks increasingly likely that he will have to sacrifice some of America's ability to influence the development of the Middle East (the main reason for his invasion) if he's not to see his forces bogged down in sustained guerrilla warfare. He now faces the nightmare scenario (for him) of having to withdraw before a US puppet regime is securely installed. This could leave the American situation in the region worse than it was before the invasion, should the new government be overthrown by the growing resistance movement.

The new media arrangement, dubbed the Iraqi Media Network (IMN) by the Pentagon, was due to be based on the infrastructure of Saddam Hussein's own state-run version. If it went ahead, it would operate under close supervision from the American administration in Baghdad led by Paul Bremer.

But US officials only began to solicit bids for the contract to run IMN as recently as last month. They told journalists at the time that their ambition was to create a 'world class' operation, including a 24-hour satellite channel, two terrestrial channels, two radio channels and a national newspaper. There would also be television and film studios in every region of the country. They said

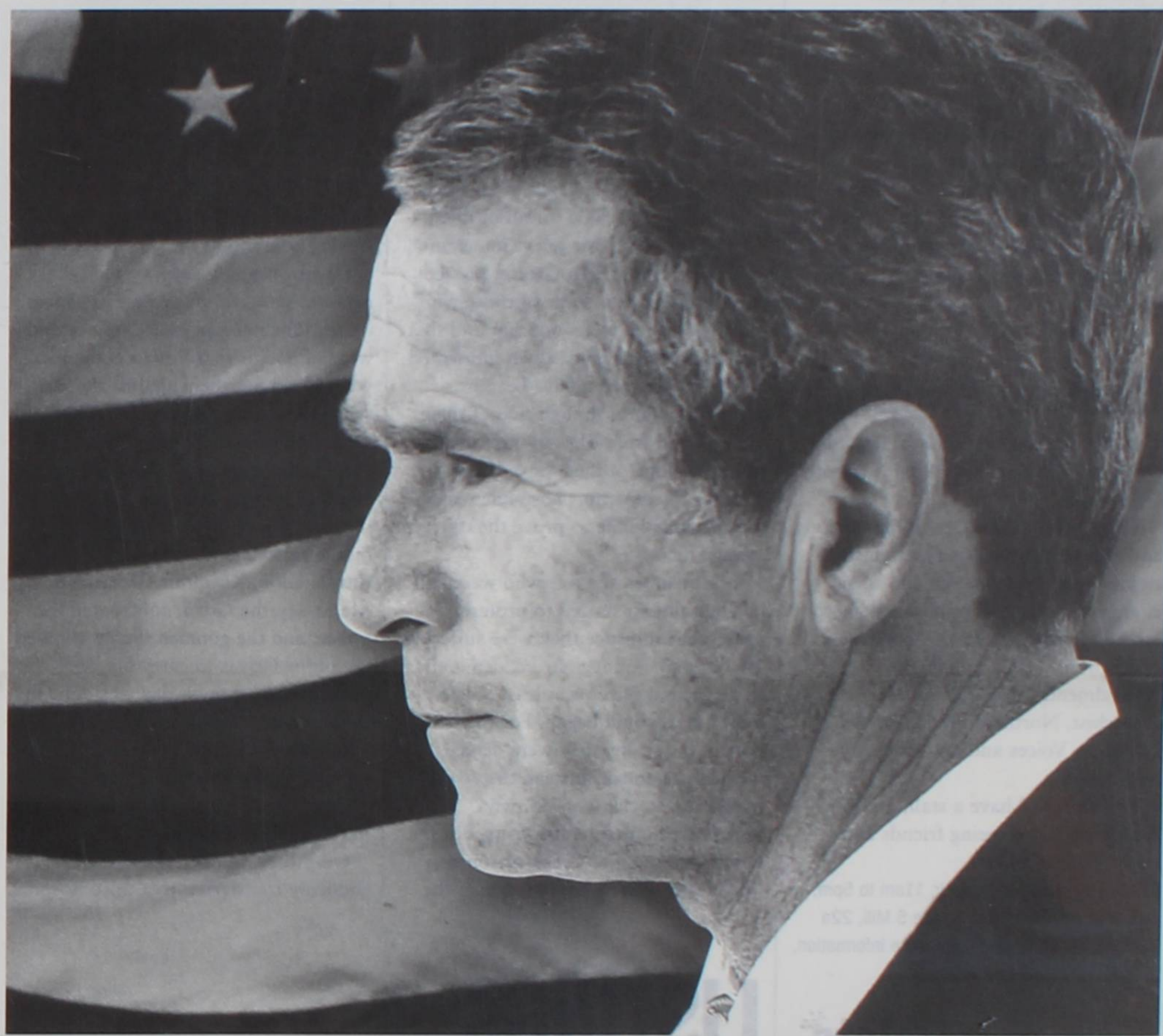
it was important that, if a democracy were to be established in the country, they should create an informed citizenry as well. To this end, they said they wanted to provide "comprehensive, accurate, fair and balanced news."

American anarchists were quick to scoff at this justification, saying that a free media was at odds with the highly-controlled, centralised operation that seemed to be under consideration. It looked as though Iraqis agreed. One person interviewed by the Village Voice newspaper said that people had looked forward to getting balanced news from the US but now viewed IMN with "the same distrustful eye" they regarded Saddam's media with - "same TV, different autocratic rulers."

Anarchists also asked what had changed since April, when General David Petraeus of the US Army 101st Airborne Division seized control of Mosul's only television station because it was broadcasting al-Jazeera (Petraeus explained himself by saying "we have every right as an occupying power to stop the broadcast of something that will incite violence"). In addition, they asked why the money would be provided by Special Operations and Low-Intensity Conflict, the division of the Defence Department which handles psy-ops.

• The US Department of Defence has begun a recruitment drive for local draft boards, raising fears that conscription might soon be reintroduced. The boards will decide who can be exempted from service if and when the draft returns. Conscription was abolished in the United States in 1973, the year American troops withdrew from Vietnam.

Anarchists said that the new draft move only served to reinforce comparisons between Vietnam and the situation in



George Walker Bush and his unfeasably large entourage were due to fly back to Washington DC on 21st November, following their thrills n' spills visit to Britain. If only they'd taken Blair with them ...

Iraq now. They said it was unlikely that the draft would be reintroduced in the next two years, as this would play havoc with Bush's attempts to regain the White House, but that if it weren't then an embarrassing withdrawal by

the occupying forces was the most likely development.

"Bush won't admit it, but the United States government is beat", said one activist. "It's got the firepower, but the American people aren't as gung-ho as

their political leaders would like to believe or would like them to be. There's a difference between having the firepower and using that firepower. Bush hasn't got the mandate to use it, simple as that."

## THESSALONIKI 7

Demonstrations were held around the world last week against the imprisonment of Simon Chapman and six other activists in Greece. They were all detained during the EU summit in June and remain in custody on trumped up charges. On 8th November around eighty people gathered outside the London home of the Greek ambassador to let him know how they felt. Mark, one of the participants, reports.

In solidarity with the Thessaloniki Seven, five of whom are on hunger strike, their supporters picketed the Mayfair home of the Greek ambassador. Naturally he refused to open the door to answer the protesters' questions, nor to receive his almost-empty box of Ferrero Rocher chocolates (the others had been replaced by demands to free the seven).

Members of the Gas Mask Theatre Company staged a re-enactment of the arrests, and the crowd chanted along to the Rhythms of Resistance samba band. An impromptu march to the Greek tourist board off Regent Street completed the picket. Bond Street was temporarily blocked, with a positive reaction from many people (a couple of fleeing idiots in suits were heard to cry that it was the Animal Liberation Front - can't you read?).

The bully boys of Tactical Support Group G were waiting with batons raised and they assaulted a few of the marchers as they decided to cordon the area. Some police tried to search others as they left, but unfortunately for the tooled-up and obviously hungry-for-aggro police, the protest was non-violent. See [www.freesimonchapman.org](http://www.freesimonchapman.org)  
More on the Thessaloniki Seven, page 2

## COPS TAKE THE RAP

A protest was held in Birmingham on 12th November in solidarity with Tim Caines, a local man wrongfully imprisoned for a 1994 murder. This was followed on 15th November by another demonstration against West Midlands Police, this time in memory of Michael Powell, who died in custody earlier this year.

Tim, who is black, was convicted of Joint Enterprise with persons unknown to kill a solicitor, Colin Hickman. The murder was witnessed by Colin Hickman's girlfriend, who testified that there was only one assailant, who was white.

When he was arrested, Tim was told he wasn't really thought to be the murderer but that he would be "just another black off the streets." He maintains that his prosecution and

conviction were motivated by racism. Earlier this month, it was revealed that at least twelve serving members of West Midlands Police are paid-up members of the British National Party.

The second protest was held to commemorate Michael Powell, who was arrested in Lozells on 7th September. He was taken to Thornhill Road Police Station in Handsworth, where he collapsed. He died later in hospital.

The protesters marched towards the station, but roads around it had been sealed off and riot cops stood behind a large metal barrier to prevent them from reaching it. The marchers, carrying banners which read 'another death in police custody - we remember Mikey Powell', were watched by residents who lined the streets in respect.

Michael's partner, Marcia Williams, and his three children took part in the march. Marcia said she wanted justice. "There's a huge amount of feeling in the community about the police", she said. "We feel the officers involved should be taken off duty while the investigation goes on".

• Over 300 people have died as a result of police action in the last six years, it was revealed earlier this month. The figure of 328 deaths between 1997 and 2002 included both those who died in custody and those killed in pursuits, Home Office flunkey Hazel Blears told Parliament. Nearly half the deaths, 158, had occurred in custody or just after release. In 2001-2002, the total was 70 deaths, including 22 in custody.

# News

## FREEDOM

Volume 64 Number 22

### Anarchism

Anarchists work towards a society of mutual aid and voluntary co-operation. We reject all government and economic repression.

Freedom Press is an independent anarchist publisher. Besides this newspaper, which comes out every two weeks, we produce books on all aspects of anarchist theory and practice.

In our building in Whitechapel we run Britain's biggest anarchist bookshop and host a social centre and meeting space, the Autonomy Club. We're currently developing open-access IT provision for activists to use.

Our aim is to explain anarchism more widely and to show that human freedom can only thrive when the institutions of state and capital have been abolished.

### Radical Bookfair

The fifth Manchester Radical Bookfair takes place in Ancoats on Saturday 6th December.

There will be books, stalls, discussions and workshops covering anarchism, peace work, direct action and social change. Groups and publishers due to attend include AK Press, Anarchist Federation, the Cunningham Amendment, Class War, Green Anarchist, Northern Herald Books, Northern Voices and the Solidarity Federation.

Freedom will have a stall, and we look forward to seeing friends and comrades for a chat.

Manchester Radical Bookfair, 11am to 5pm, Saturday 6th December, Bridge 5 Mill, 22a Beswick Street, Ancoats. For more information, visit [www.radicalbookfair.org.uk](http://www.radicalbookfair.org.uk)

### New pamphlets

Two new Monsieur Dupont pamphlets are now available for donations. To get copies of *Suspicion*, *Suspicion*, *Suspicion* and *Wind Down of the Clockwork Lips*, write to Monsieur Dupont, Box A, Arjuna, 12 Mill Road, Cambridge CB1 1MD. The MD book, *Nihilist Communism*, is available from the same address, again for donations.

See Commentary, page 6

### Black Flag

The new issue of *Black Flag* is out, with news and views from around the world. There are feature articles on the Independent Working Class Association, Chile 1973, class and sectarianism in Northern Ireland, anarchist views on democracy and Mayday. Andrew Flood, of Ireland's Workers Solidarity Movement, provides a penetrating critique of Hardt and Negri's *Empire*, which has become a new bible for some sections of the left.

Available from Freedom for £2 (add 50p postage in the UK, £1 elsewhere)

### Next issue

The next issue will be dated 6th December and the last day for copy will be Thursday 27th November. You can send articles to us by snail mail or to [FreedomCopy@aol.com](mailto:FreedomCopy@aol.com)

# Welcome to hell

Greece is proving to be a laboratory for experimental 'Guantanamo-type' repression, says Kleanthis Grivas, Simon Chapman's doctor, who has witnessed the appalling treatment meted out to the Thessaloniki Seven at first hand. The Greek state is carrying out an oppression just as bad as that enforced by the American Empire in its new-style colonies and protectorates.

Following the EU summit in Thessaloniki last June, seven of the arrested demonstrators were kept in jail while 22 were freed. There was no logic to this and no legal reason either. The bills of indictment were exactly the same for all of them. Videos from ET3, the television channel which serves northern Greece, proved beyond doubt that some of those who remained inside were innocent and that the accusations against them fabricated by police. The seven have been in prison ever since, though two of them were moved from Thessaloniki in the summer. None of them have been brought to court for the simple reason that it's impossible to prove the charges against them.

In September, the five who were still in Thessaloniki started to protest against the injustice they were suffering. They began a hunger strike, demanding to be tried at once or at least bailed until a trial could begin. For the first part of the strike, they were denied medical treatment. Instead they were assigned a 'social worker', who arbitrarily limited family visits. For the families of the non-Greek prisoners, this meant spending more time in the

country than they could afford. In other words, the prisoners lost the support of their families, who couldn't afford the luxury of a long stay in the country.

After some time, the first symptoms of starvation appeared. On 3rd November, Carlos Martin-Martinez was taken to the city's St Paul Hospital under heavy security. He was accompanied by thirty special police, masked and dressed in black, and armed with automatic weapons. The police stayed during every examination, acting like pistoleros to the doctors and lawyers. They also harassed Carlos, to the anger of medical staff, who later publicised his mistreatment. The next day, he was returned to jail on the grounds that he 'refused to be hospitalised' through his refusal of food. Throughout, the police acted like criminals, brutally contravening every measure designed to protect prisoners' rights. One masked police officer told a woman doctor that "those commies, you should put them against the wall, shave them and start fucking them."

On 7th November, police took the five hunger strikers to the Ippokratia Hospital, again under the strictest security. The three doctors appointed by the prisoners, Alexandra Efthimiadou, Kleanthis Grivas and Maria-Myrthe Griva, confronted the police, and the gunmen finally allowed Kleanthis Grivas to carry out an examination, though this was done in the presence of six, heavily-armed men. Ten more were outside the door. Carlos's mother, who'd travelled from Spain, was allowed to see her son for a few minutes in the same conditions.

On 8th November, the five were suddenly transferred to a third hospital,



Simon Chapman's treatment by Thessaloniki police, June 2003

the Papanikolaou. Police had already transferred all the other patients elsewhere (while the clinic's director wasn't present) and put the prisoners under armed guard. Medical examinations were carried out under the same conditions as before, one police officer telling the doctors that touching the prisoners was 'prohibited'. On 11th November, the prisoners were transferred to a hospital within the Korydallos state prison in Athens.

• The five prisoners began their hunger strike on 5th October. As it entered its sixth week, they were described by their doctors and supporters as being in "an extremely weakened physical condition".

On 11th November, they were moved

from Thessaloniki to an Athens prison hospital, a cross-country trip of around 200 miles. This was carried out at night. The prisoners were caged in the back of a police van for the whole journey and forced to sit upright for a period of several hours. Although it was very cold they were refused blankets.

One Thessaloniki source described the convoy of vehicles in which they travelled. "At least seven police cars and buses drove to Athens. All along the way other police vehicles blocked side roads."

Apart from Simon, the hunger strikers are Solaiman Dakdouk, a Syrian resident of Greece; two Spanish activists, Carlos Martin-Martinez and Fernando Perrez-Gorraiz; and Spyros Tsitsas from Athens.

## LISTINGS

### Brighton

**27th November** How to do a zine, talk and workshop from 6pm at The Cowley Club Bookshop, 12 London Road. Tel 01273 696104

**13th December** Introduction to Housing Co-operatives meeting at Brighton Unemployed Centre, 6 Tilbury Place. Free admission, but book yourself a place on 01273 327480

### London

**30th October to 29th November** No Gods, No Masters (viva anarchy) exhibition of ten artists at Freedom Press, 84b Whitechapel High Street, E1 from 10.30am to 6pm, Mon to Sat

**5th November to 24th December** Leo Baxendale exhibition at The Cartoon Art Trust Museum, 7-13 The Brunswick Centre, Bernard Street WC1, and on 11th November at 6.30pm Leo Baxendale will give a talk. For details call 020 7278 7172.

**10th November to 24th December** Billy Childish exhibition We Are All Phonies at The Aquarium, 10 Woburn Walk, WC1. See [www.aquariumgallery.co.uk](http://www.aquariumgallery.co.uk) or call 020 2387 8417

**25th November** No Sweat benefit gig with London's finest anarcho-punks at The Swan, Tottenham High Road from 7pm, admission £4

**28th November** Drop Bush Not Bombs, direct action organised by Food Not

Bombs will be in London at Use Your Loaf, 227 Deptford High Street, SE8. See [www.eroding.org.uk/loaf.htm](http://www.eroding.org.uk/loaf.htm) or [www.foodnotbombs.net/europe\\_tour.html](http://www.foodnotbombs.net/europe_tour.html)

**28th November** London Anarchist Forum lecture on Bakunin and Chaos, speaker Justin Hooper Jackson, from 8pm to 10pm at Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, Holborn

**29th November** London Mayday 2004 Conference, 1pm to 5pm in Room 3a, University of London Union, Malet Street. See [www.ourmayday.org.uk](http://www.ourmayday.org.uk)

**30th November** Noam Chomsky: Power, Politics and Human Nature talk by Gary Holden, 11am at South Place Ethical Society, Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, Holborn

**6th December** Boycott Coca Cola activist conference from 2pm to 6pm at School of Oriental and African Studies, WC1. For more info call 07743 743941 or see [www.colombiasolidarity.org.uk](http://www.colombiasolidarity.org.uk)

**12th December** Gay and Lesbian Humanist Association talk on Federico Garcia Lorca, 7.30pm at Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, Holborn

**13th December** Poetry evening with Moniza Alvi at News from Nowhere Club, The Epicentre, West Street, Leytonstone, E11 from 7.30pm to 10pm. Contact 020 8555 5248 or see [www.newsfromnowhere.info](http://www.newsfromnowhere.info)

**20th December** Freedom party at 84b Whitechapel High Street, from 2pm til

late. Have it large with the Freedom massive, and bring a bottle if you can **Every Wednesday** the LARC Library will be open from 1pm at 62 Fieldgate Street, E1.

### Manchester

**6th December** The Fifth Manchester Radical Bookfair from 11am to 5pm at Bridge 5 Mill, 22a Beswick Street, Ancoats. If you'd like to run a stall, discussion or workshop contact [info@radicalbookfair.org.uk](mailto:info@radicalbookfair.org.uk). For info see [www.radicalbookfair.org.uk](http://www.radicalbookfair.org.uk)

### Newcastle

**3rd December** My Feminism, showing at the Side Cinema (near the Crown Posada pub on Dean Street on the quayside), 7pm. See [www.sidecinema.com](http://www.sidecinema.com)

**22nd December** Dance for Peace and Solidarity benefit at Rutherford Hall, University of Northumbria from 8pm. Entry £7/£4/£3

### Oxfordshire

**29th November** Tenth anniversary of demo at Campsfield refugee detention centre, Langford Lane, Kidlington, from 12 noon to 2pm at main gates, with guest speakers and music. Bike ride for Freedom, meet 10am at Martyr's Memorial, St Giles, Oxford, and cycle to join demo. There's also an Oxford town centre protest, meet 3pm

in Broad Street. For more details contact 01865 558145 or 01993 703394. See [www.closecampfield.org.uk](http://www.closecampfield.org.uk)

### Sheffield

**29th and 30th November** No Sweat Conference at Sheffield University Students Union from 12 noon to 6pm on Saturday, 11am to 3pm on Sunday, with benefit. For more details see [www.nosweat.org.uk](http://www.nosweat.org.uk) or call 07904 431959

### Swansea

**22nd November** Beyond TV, annual video activist festival at Swansea Environment Centre, Pier Street. For further info call 01792 455900, email [helen@videonet.org](mailto:helen@videonet.org) or see [www.undercurrents.org/beyondtv/index.htm](http://www.undercurrents.org/beyondtv/index.htm)

### Worthing

**25th November** Worthing Against War meeting upstairs at Downview pub (opp West Worthing station), 7.45pm, with Tom Hickey on The World Order After the War on Iraq

### Animal Rights

**10th December** Fifth International Day for Animal Rights with worldwide events to campaign for fundamental rights to be bestowed on non-human animals. Contact 0114 272 2220 or [info@uncaged.co.uk](mailto:info@uncaged.co.uk)

# Britain

## Sneaky Blunkett makes his move

The government last week announced plans that would see ID cards introduced by stealth, reports Anton Pawluk

The Home Secretary apparently wants to "proceed incrementally", phasing cards in over the next ten years. Although they're likely to be called UK Subject Identity Cards, many feel that the word 'subject' would be better replaced with the word 'suspect' and are calling for the cards to be resisted. Blunkett has laid out a number of steps to smooth their introduction. Legislation will be published in January, stipulating that those applying for a passport or driving licence (five million people a year) will automatically be issued with an identity card, requiring their details to be stored on a national database and demanding that they undergo iris and fingerprint scans to provide 'biometric' data.

By 2007, all of the 4.6 million foreign nationals living in Britain will be expected to exchange their residence permits for a new identity card. Blunkett estimates that about 80% of the population will have one by 2012. Parliament will vote on whether to make them compulsory in 2013. If this were carried, those without a card would then be forbidden access to housing, education, employment and medical care. Thereafter it will cost the majority of citizens around £77 every ten years even to be able to claim a right to such provision.

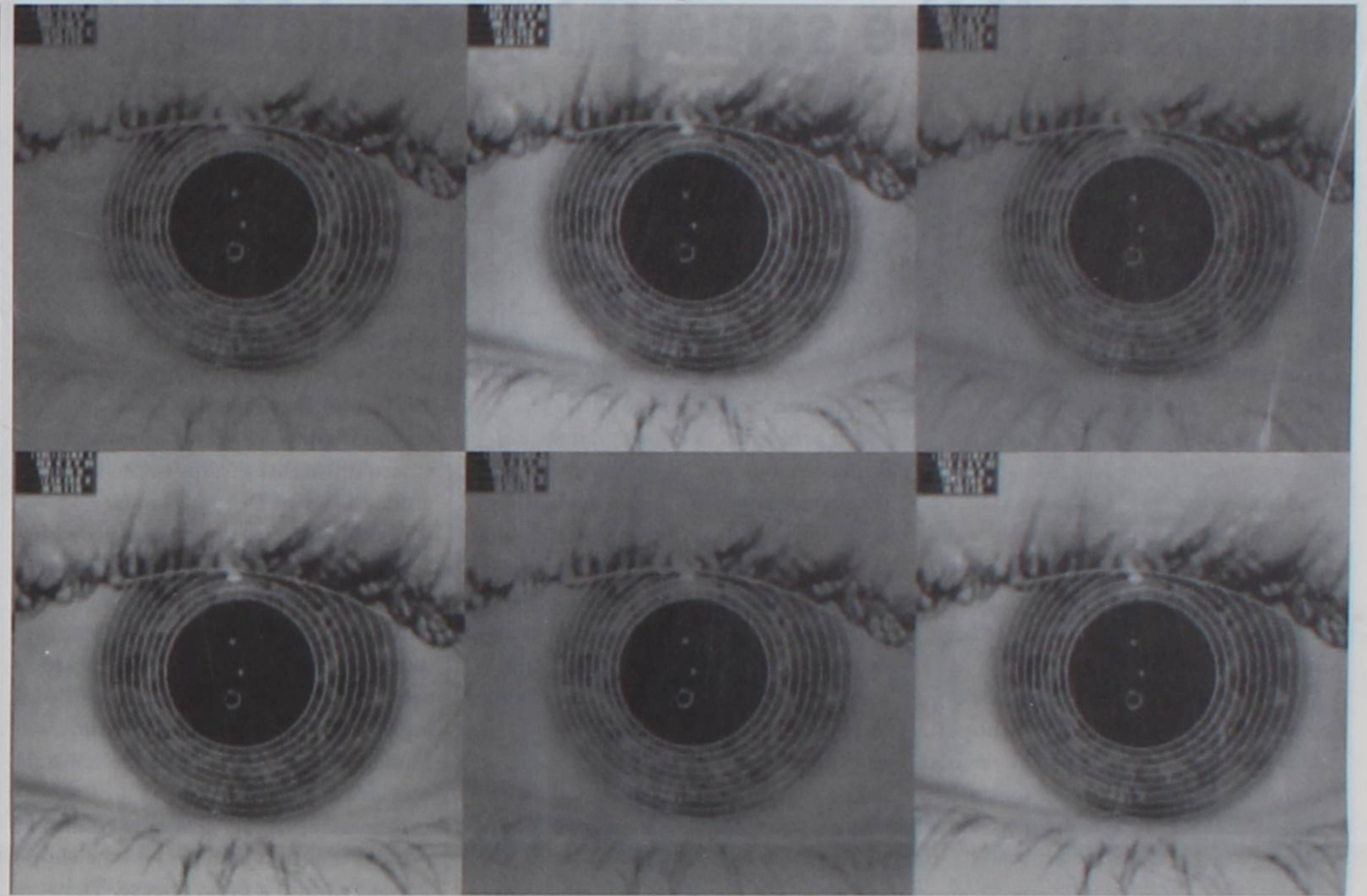
Blunkett seems to regard the cards as a panacea for all of what he considers modernity's ills. He hopes they'll be effective in tackling 'illegal' working, benefit 'fraud', immigration 'abuse', terrorism and organised crime. In reality the likelihood is that the cards will be far more harmful than they will be beneficial. Criminalising work or

immigration is a clear abuse of civil liberties and can only prove socially divisive. The terrorists responsible for the attack on the World Trade Center had legal residence in the United States. And organised crime will be rubbing its fingers in gleeful anticipation of the cards' introduction.

Pressure group Privacy International point out that the "technology gap between governments and organised crime has narrowed to such an extent that even the most highly secure cards are available as blanks weeks after their introduction. Criminals and terrorists can, in reality, move more freely and more safely with several fake 'official' identities than they ever could in a country using multiple forms of 'low-value' ID such as a birth certificate."

"No one has anything to fear from being correctly identified," Blunkett has said, but such assurance clearly depends on who is identifying who and for what reason. Anti-terrorist legislation introduced since September 11th has blurred the distinction between terrorists and activists to the extent that police are now regularly using their powers to clamp down on demonstrations. Cards and a national database would further facilitate the racial profiling that's already led to discriminatory targeting of Asian and Muslim communities.

Unsurprisingly, Blair has given Blunkett his full support. "If we're going to have the right security and the right systems within our public services for the future," he claims, "we do need to contemplate things that maybe a few decades ago we wouldn't." Quite why this follows he hasn't bothered to explain.



And if these policies were objectionable in principle decades ago, why aren't they objectionable now? Perhaps he'd claim that technological advances have at least made such approaches practical, but all the evidence suggests that this simply isn't the case.

Identity cards will only ever be as accurate and efficient as the databases that underpin them. The largest iris database presently in existence holds only 30,000 records. Privacy International point out that neither the knowledge

nor the experience exist to make a working database of 60 million records. The group's representatives suggest that any such system would need to be one million times more accurate than the systems devised so far. Yet Blunkett says he envisages the national database being ready in three years.

So the cards will do nothing to promote security. Ultimately, they'll contribute to an atmosphere of suspicion rather than trust, even though it's trust rather than suspicion that will promote the necessary

openness and frank debate on which genuine security must rest. But Blunkett's mind's made up.

Defy-ID, a group which resists the introduction of identity cards, is calling on people to develop ideas about how to put their opposition into practice. They're proposing to convene a conference next spring but, in the meantime, they can be contacted via their website. Visit [www.defy-id.org.uk](http://www.defy-id.org.uk)

See Anton's review of David Lyon's book *Surveillance Since September 11*, on page 7.

## A fine but private place

In 2008, Liverpool will be handed the title 'European City of Culture'.

Already the local press and television are bombarding people with news of plans for future cultural events and the 'regeneration' of the city centre, with help from European grants. But all is not as it seems, finds Mersey activist Solitage.

In theory everything looks rosy, but scratch beneath the surface of regeneration and something much more sinister is happening. The misnomer, 'City of Culture', has nothing to do with the ordinary people of Liverpool, or our vast (multi) cultural heritage. It has nothing to do with our history of resistance to the excesses of capitalism and the state.

This history can be traced from the wave of strikes that heralded the syndicalist revolts before the First World War, through the 1926 General Strike, the working class militancy of the late 1960s and 1970s, the uprisings on the streets during the 1980s and the working class resistance to the poll tax.

This is our culture, but the money-makers and racketeers who operate inside and outside Liverpool City Council are trying to reinvent the city for themselves. For regeneration, read gentrification. For cultural renaissance, read opportunities for greedy profiteering. For caring for the needy, read sweeping them off the streets of the city centre, away from the expected visitors and the cash they bring. For the money-hungry, it's a case of out of sight, out of mind.

It's planned that key areas of the city centre, including the actual streets, will be privatised and patrolled by privately employed security (bully boys in pseudo-police uniforms). If you don't match the stereotype of newly-gentrified Liverpool, then you can expect to be moved on and hassled out of the area.

'Riff raff elements' won't be welcome. Various activities on the privatised streets will be controlled, even banned. Alcohol and food will only be consumed in designated areas, sleeping won't be permitted, skateboarding and roller-

blading won't be allowed. Vagrants and tramps will be moved on, begging will be prohibited, street entertainers will need permission and demonstrations will only go ahead on the say-so of the police. They will be given a controlled meeting place in which to work. Added to all of this will be a ban on any type of flyposting or leafleting, unless authorised and paid for in advance.

Outside the privatised area corporate interests – the interests of the powerful and wealthy – will be protected by increased CCTV surveillance. It's likely that this will include cameras that use parabolic microphones, monitoring conversations as well as recording images in public areas.

But resistance to the plans is growing, as this newspaper has reported (Freedom, 11th October). By taking to the streets, together or as individuals, in the glare of surveillance cameras or under cover of darkness, we have the means to stop the theft of our land and our culture of resistance. We need to fight these moves.

## News in brief

**GM ain't no goddam good**

Around 100 anti-GM demonstrators gathered outside Bayer's Newbury Head Office on 13th November. This was part of their campaign to persuade the agricultural products conglomerate to stop producing and marketing genetically modified seed.

Armed with pots and pans, drums, a couple of sound systems and other noise-making objects they demonstrated noisily for three and a half hours, until a small group of protesters tried to make their way round to the other side of the building, where the staff were leaving for lunch.

"The police quickly formed a line and gradually kettled about fifty of us in to a pen," said one campaigner. "This wasn't done without resistance, though. Most people were pushed and several were thrown into the pen. Some managed to escape over a fence. After hiding in a garden for half an hour, they asked the owner if she minded and left through her house."

"The rest of us were told that under Section 14 we were only allowed to protest in the area we were in: the pen. Much more noise was made until a solicitor confirmed what we already knew – that the police could only hold us if we continued to demonstrate. So we all left and went down the pub."

**Schizophrenics' Salvation Network**

Anyone who has schizophrenia suffers from a diabetes of the mind, which might be caused by a lack of intimacy in childhood and adolescence. We're misunderstood and stigmatised, subject to a health system which invalidates us and takes away our liberties.

People like us are often used as scapegoats by society and guinea pigs by the drug industry and other forms of social control. Ours is a dirty job and somebody has to do it. We need mutual support groups for discussion, therapy and protection.

Dave

020 7790 0269

## International

# Science shops quietly point the way

Mike Hamilton hails the work being done in Holland's universities and asks if the same thing could happen here

A group of universities has devised a secret weapon to stimulate student learning and, at the same time, address urgent social problems. Their method is low cost, popular on and off campus, easily adapted to diverse local circumstances, and it doesn't increase faculty workloads. It's been working now for three decades. Why is it still secret? Probably because the universities in question are in the Netherlands. The idea, however, could be readily adopted by just about any town or city with colleges and further education facilities.

Dutch universities have established a network of fifty public 'science shops' that conduct, co-ordinate and summarise research on social and technological issues in response to specific questions and concerns posed by community groups, public interest organisations, local government and workers. Each shop's paid staff and student interns screen questions and refer challenging problems to university members and students. The shops provide answers to several thousand enquiries per year.

The shops developed independently in the 1970s, when small teams of interested professors and students began volunteering their time. As a result, they vary widely in structure, financing and operational procedures. During the shops' formative years faculties generally performed the research, but now graduate and undergraduate students do much of the work, under faculty

supervision (a few shops have the staff to conduct original research in-house, sometimes with the aid of recent university graduates).

The students who participate frequently receive university credit, in some cases turning their investigations into graduate theses or adjusting their career plans to reflect their new-found sensitivity to social problems. Because students are doing research and writing papers, and faculty are supervising and evaluating their work, both groups are doing what they would be doing as part of their regular workloads. Extra time demands and costs are minimal. The difference is that project results aren't simply filed away and forgotten. Instead they help people in the real world to address important social problems.

For a question to be accepted by a science shop, the enquiring group must show that it lacks the resources to pay for research, that it isn't commercially motivated and that it will be able to use the research results productively. Some shops also accept socially relevant enquiries from organisations, such as national environmental groups or local government, which can contribute to the costs of the research. They don't pursue questions posed by individuals, so avoiding idiosyncratic concerns that wouldn't have broader societal relevance.

Over time, many of the science shops have specialised in different areas of research and now direct citizens to the centre best suited to their concerns. It's estimated that each of the thirteen universities in the Netherlands has

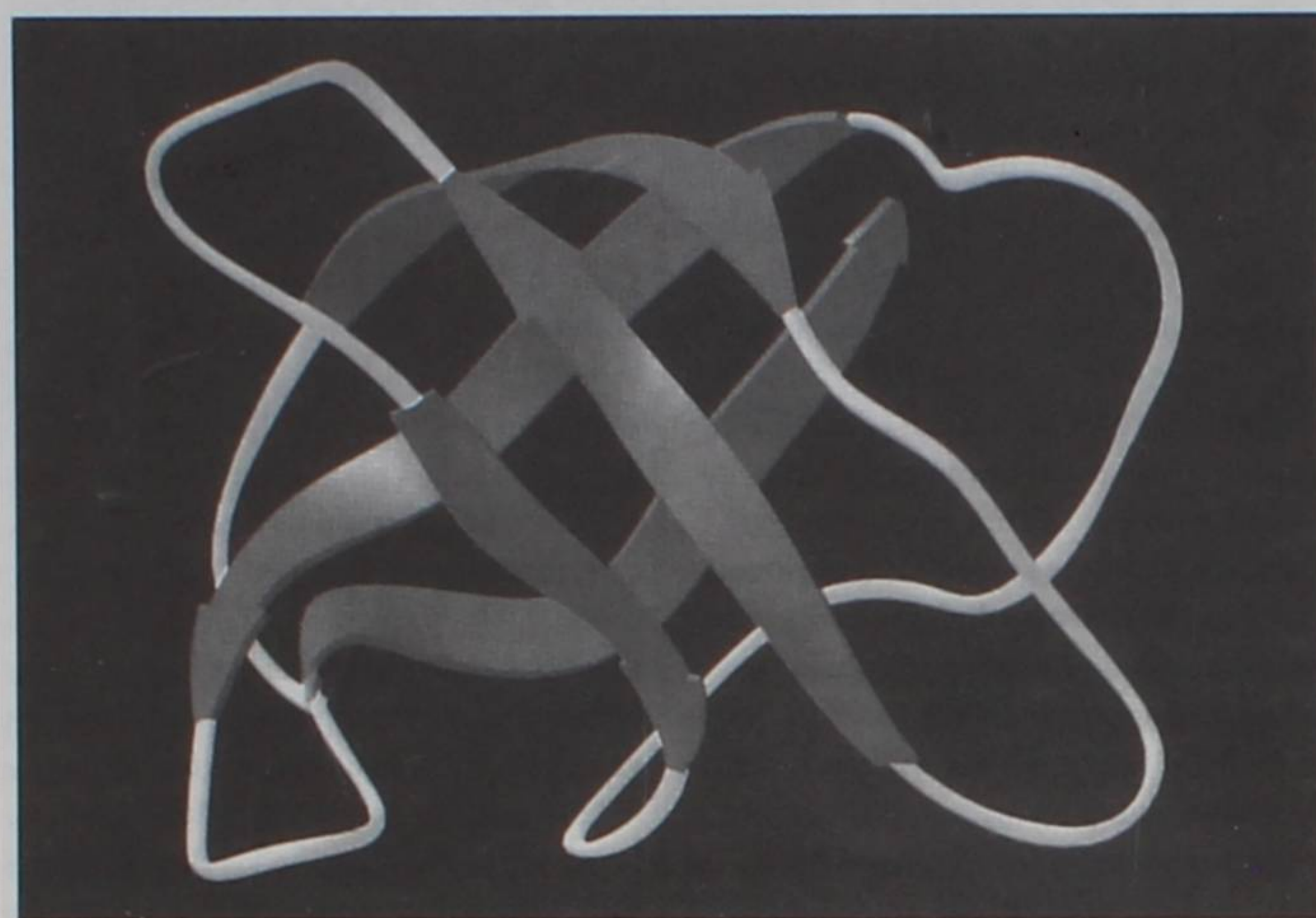
between one and ten science shops. The movement has, among other things, helped environmentalists to analyse industrial pollutants and workers to evaluate the safety and employment consequences of new production processes. In 1990, Amsterdam University's 'chemistry shop' branched out to undertake a study of air contamination on behalf of several environmentalist groups in the severely polluted city of Drog, Hungary.

About 5% of the questions posed by Dutch organisations focus on the problems confronting developing nations (as these examples suggest, the questions addressed by the shops are apt to involve knowledge and methodologies from the social sciences and humanities as well as from the natural sciences or engineering).

Research projects generally result in a printed report, a summary in the shop's newsletter and a press release. The resulting media coverage has, in turn, benefited universities. As a result of their work with science shops, some professors have conducted follow-up research projects, published articles on new topics, developed innovative research methods, forged new interdisciplinary collaborations and modified the courses they teach.

Through the shops, the Dutch university system now serves society more directly and, inspired by the Dutch model, science shops have now been created in other European countries such as Austria and Germany.

What better time to try and commit



some of our institutions to providing similar facilities here, given that war and its aftermath leave a lasting 'footprint' on them otherwise. We as a movement should be offering more than knocking on the doors of arms manufacturers! UK research facilities, provided by public subsidies (yes - yours and my taxes), are overwhelmingly preoccupied with military research and development, or private enterprise needs and government contracts. All at taxpayers' and consumers' cost!

One previous experiment along these lines was conducted under Red Ken's leadership at London's County Hall, in a revolutionary move that linked the North East London Poly with the shop stewards of the Lucas Aerospace Combine, CAITS (the Centre for

Alternative Industrial and Technology Systems). Under its banner, research was conducted and items manufactured (such as working models), for example a road-rail bus which could travel on both the mainline network and alight at village stations to go round outlying villages on the narrow roads.

The communities where we live and work require all sorts of technological and natural systems that will enhance the environment, provide jobs which add to the skills base and generate inventions which keep us out of the clutches of the multinational corporations.

By encouraging colleges to set up science shops here, we're in with a chance of taking practical steps towards change.

## Thousands say no to this dangerous cargo

Colourful and determined resistance last week greeted a transport of atomic waste from France to a storage facility in northern Germany, reports SD.

Special trains carrying 'Castor' containers of nuclear waste leave Le Hague, France, every year, heading for the facility in the village of Gorleben, in a region known as the Wendland. On 8th November there was the traditional yearly demonstration in Dannenberg, the small town where the Castor containers are lifted off the rail cars on to low-loader trucks.

The demo saw six thousand people come from all over Germany. This was more than last year and twice as many as police and organisers had expected. Local farmers took part, using almost two hundred tractors. The same day, twelve activists occupied the pithead tower of a salt mine that's earmarked as the permanent repository for the atomic

waste. A similar action had taken place a week before. After twelve hours they left the tower voluntarily.

Lüneburg was the focal point for action this year. The train has to pass there on its way to Gorleben, and it's also a major junction for the police and the base for many of the district officials politically responsible both for the Castor transport and for the police deployment to defend it.

In the Wendland itself resistance was concentrated on the 'Regio Aktiv' in the Gohrde Forest, along the track from Lüneburg to Dannenberg. Additionally, there was a camp in the Elbe resort town of Hitzacker, and actions were planned for the three resistance villages of Gusborn, Grippel and Laase by the Resistance Alliance (Bündnis Widersetzen).

But the protests have come under pressure from the state government. The protest was certainly obstructed in Lüneburg, while in Karlsruhe known

opponents of the nuclear industry were forbidden from demonstrating and had their premises searched. The mainstream media added to the criminalisation of resistance by inventing reports of violence, while independent journalists were hindered in their movements, threatened or directly attacked.

### Political context

The ongoing transportation of atomic waste is extremely controversial for many reasons. Every transport threatens people and the environment, and no final repository has been decided. Because of leaking sediment, Gorleben is definitely an unsuitable location, yet officials keep 'exploring' the salt deposit beneath the village. In May the federal environment minister, Jürgen Trittin, a Green, convened a commission to look for other storage locations throughout the country.

But regardless of where the waste will

be dumped, final storage in the sense the atomic industry means it will never happen. No geological formation, whether it's salt or granite, can be guaranteed not to change in the thousands of years the waste will keep radiating. This in itself is reason to shut down all atomic power stations immediately.

Despite this, the federal government and the nuclear industry have agreed that German atomic power stations should continue to operate for at least thirty years, in which time the amount of waste will double. Because the industry can distribute electricity generation at will between the nukes, the closure of the Stade power station, announced earlier this month, can't really be seen as a victory. It just means that other nukes will operate for longer.

Even now the existing atomic plants are being expanded and new ones opened. Although new waste arrangements, due to begin in the next few

years, will save the industry from the embarrassment of the Castor transports, currently the main focus of resistance, nothing will change in the general situation of nuclear waste production and the risks inherent in it.

The expansion of a uranium enrichment facility at Gronau, the first step on the atomic spiral in Germany, is also being continued. The research reactor FRM II, inaugurated this year, was the first completely new reactor to start in Germany in fifteen years. The FRM II project has been sharply criticised internationally because it uses highly-enriched, weapons-grade uranium.

Time and again the peace movement and opponents of nuclear power have pointed to the link between nuclear energy, reprocessing of fuel into weapons-grade fissile products and nuclear armament. There's a strong military interest in maintaining the operation of nuclear power stations.

## Green and Black Bulletin

# Mass society

## Destroy the Cultural Pangea: a critique of industrialism and mass society from a member of the Wildfire Collective

In recent years I have become increasingly frustrated by the unquestioning beliefs of many of my fellow anarchists and radicals, who recognise the necessity of abolishing the state and capitalism yet fail to critique mass society/ industrial progression itself.

It seems to me that the cultural hegemonists of both left and right are intent on creating a cultural Pangea. The great Pangea was a super-continent, a landmass from which all landmasses escaped some 250 million years ago. And it is to this that these 'globalists' (on all sides) aspire: the amalgamation and homogenisation of culture and the collapse of diversity. They simply want to replace capitalism's identikit culture (wage labour, commodity fetishism, scientific rationalism and a belief in industrial progress) with their own (i.e. workers self-exploitation, proletarian fetishism, scientific rationalism and a belief in industrial progress). This reactionary brand of 'communism' simply mirrors the global designs of capitalist 'culture', replacing one Pangea with another.

The slow abolition of autonomous cultural identities (animism, nomadism) and its replacement with work and mass culture is easy to co-opt by left 'radicals'. At their core, they share the same hegemonic cultural aspirations as their capitalist counterparts, namely a world stripped of individuality and diversity where the old god of profit is superseded with the new god of global human community; the most frightening god of all to paraphrase Kropotkin.

While I accept that the economic and social relations of the multitude will be greatly improved by the destruction of capitalism and class-based society, these new models simply iron out the inequalities inherent inside capitalism (class stratification, access to resources etc.). However, the western model is still seen as the ideal, as something 'denied' the majority world by the privilege of a highly militarised and 'advanced' West and, come the destruction of capital, something to be exported to those denied its 'wonders'. This uncritical view sees the advancement of industrial progression and hi-technology as a natural human 'given' and not as a manifest by-product of successive bourgeois needs.

Industrialisation would continue apace with all its incumbent horrors in a leftist-utopia. Again, I recognise the 'green' arguments put forward by left anarchists (syndicalists and communists alike); that production would service the needs of the community and not abstracts like profit. But industrialisation itself is inherently destructive. Can they not see that solar panels and 'green' cars will continue to need raw resources to be built? (Mining and habitat destruction) and who's going down the

mine? Those in the global south again? Me? No thanks! Even industrialised recycling plants need power! And specialised workers to man them.

The division of labour, enforced work and bureaucracy is inherent to mass society, not only to capitalism. Still don't believe me? Think about this for a minute: picture society tomorrow post-capitalism. For this example I will chose London as my starting point and some traditional arguments for community organisation put forward by these 'left' anarchists.

If the city stays then the streets in London will still need power in the form of heating and light; its population, food, health care, and access to other resources. So how do you distribute these resources fairly? How do you co-operate with other streets/houses? By recallable delegates and 'workers' control of the means of production?

Think of the delegates alone. In a city the size of London (eight million people) you would probably need over 100,000 (a fair estimate) I would surmise. Where do they meet? How is your community's voice heard in the cacophony of other, just as desperate, voices? And how and who's needs are prioritised first? Do those in the 'countryside' still have to provide food for the beast? How long before larger geographical areas band together out of necessity and how long before proportional forms of governance return to haunt you?

By placing technologies and skills in the hands of a few through 'workers control' you immediately become beholden to their skill/resources for you and your communities existence. Of course power plants can suddenly spring legs and relocate but 'natural' resources cannot. (I'm not intending to be environmentally determinist here, but truthful. Why should people's actions be defined by the resources they live near or more importantly why should they be beholden to an external need? Such as copper miners?) Now lets extend that process 'globally' as Negri suggests in 'Empire' (by 'democratising' globalisation). To every town, village and outpost. How do those in the global North communicate let alone convince a community in the global South, who may wish to harness nuclear energy, that doing so is a bad idea? What a fucking nightmare. And the left claim these primitivists want Mad Max dystopias!

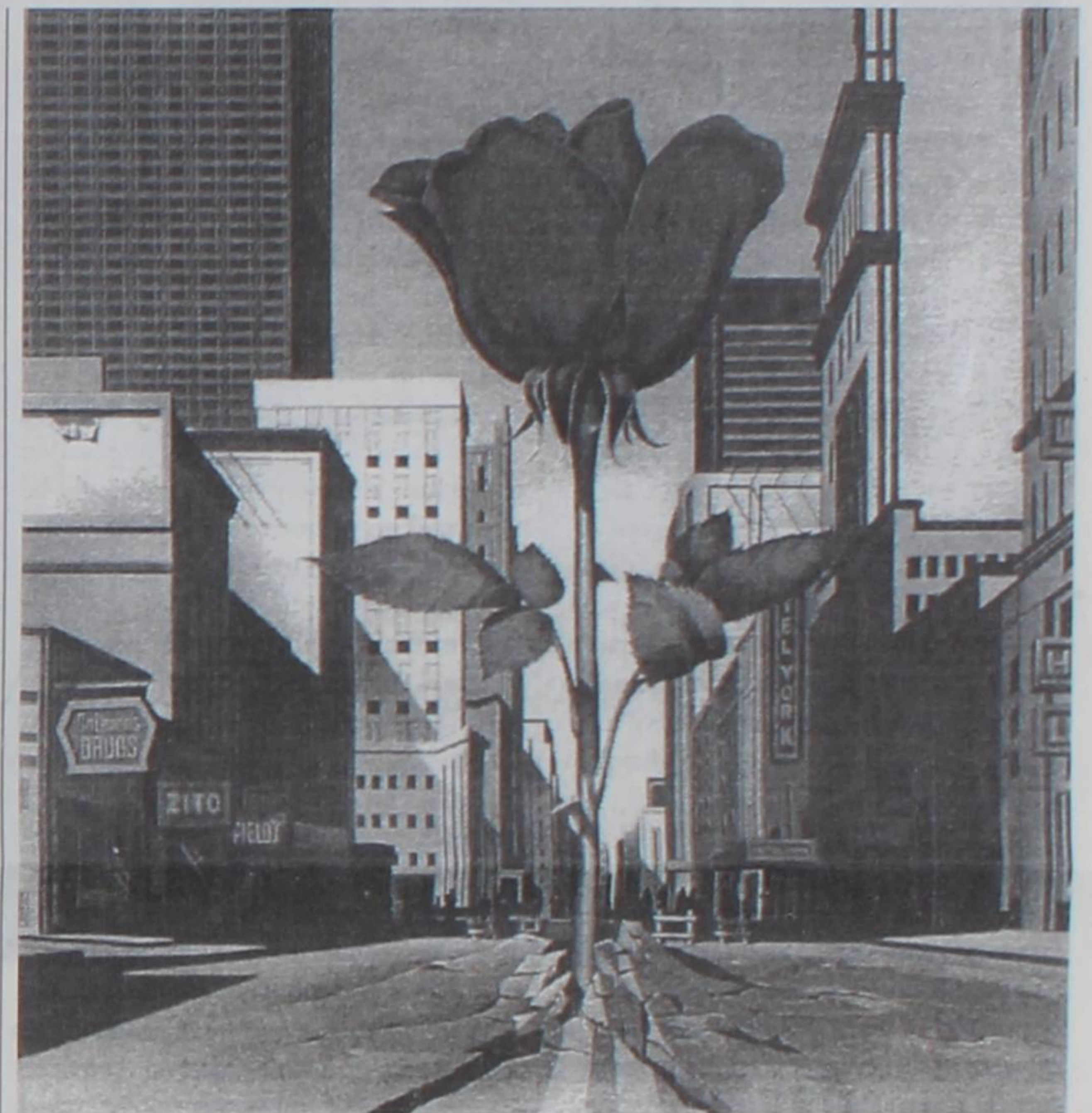
For large-scale industrialised societies to continue, they cannot and will not be anarchist. Call mass industrialised society anything you want but despite the name change it will still be a state. It will be bureaucratic. It will use enforced divided labour (workers self-exploitation!) and be culturally hegemonic. The one thing that all anarchists agree on is the abolition of the state. If we mean this then lets get serious or resign ourselves

to changing guards every couple of hundred years. But, thanks to civilisation's current obsession with industrialisation, we might have to kiss the next hundred years goodbye.

Capitalism is a mode of production and a series of social relationships. But it is not the only mode necessary for civilisation's continuance, and therefore the continuance of domination of both our species and the rest of nature. Civilisation, mass society itself, is our enemy. It is in the growing rejection of civilisation that I find some hope in establishing truly global classless human relations.

In recent years many anarchists, informed by ecological, anthropological and archaeological perspectives, have sought to establish where power relationships truly originate, and are realising that their enemy isn't simply the ruling class or a biased series of social relationships. This is not a rejection of class politics, or class as a point of critique, in fact far from it. The bourgeois must be wiped from human history, but so must their conditioning of us. These refreshing theories are at their core a recognition that the only truly classless community is one that has rejected the bureaucracy of civilisation and not just the replacement of one form of production with another, even if it is 'for the people'. These perspectives have freed anarchists from the alibi of 'seizing the means of production'. By recognising that there is nothing of worth in industrialised mass production to save, we free ourselves from the greatest stitch up of all: the Marxist-Capitalist trap of industrialised work.

In the immediate term I believe only a return to small scale land-based culture offers us any real long-term



autonomy; a future all anarchists espouse. This may seem a ridiculous assertion, given our current connection to the land in the global north, but more ridiculous is to continue to fetishise industrial work. (A tool of our oppression not our liberation) Small-scale communities have no need for representation or hierarchy. The smaller the group, the less likely it is to develop specialised individuals. This is not to say that aptitude to certain activities will no longer be present, in fact individuals unique abilities would shine through in a smaller community. The

smaller the group the easier it is for good revolutionaries to spot and deal with hierarchical power development.

By producing our own food and technologies in relation to our community's need and the sensitivity of our specific bioregion, no community would be beholden to any other. Cultures would spring up like randy rabbits. The autonomy and freedom anarchists' desire 'globally' would pollinate our shared future world, without hegemony or the threat of ecological meltdown, enforced work or the mass division of labour.

## News from the frontline

**Martinsville, Indiana: 24th October**  
We visited a construction site for a new Wal-Mart store. We pulled up dozens of survey stakes, spraypainted building walls and machines. Sabotage was done to over a dozen pieces of heavy machinery and vehicles by putting sand in the fuel tanks, slashing tires, and cutting engine hoses and tubes. Before leaving we broke out 20-30 construction machine windows.

We are overwhelmed by the amount of shit society offers us. We look around us and see our lives displayed in neon lighting ...

But what life is to be found in this? Some will have us believe that this is what should be desirable to us. Things are just large enough to keep us looking and shopping. Things are just fast enough that we never even have to leave our cars

for most of our transactions, as we speed off to work. Everything is convenient and people are satisfied.

Most people are content with this, but we are not. We know that life does not have to be one monotonous routine played out over and over again. We know, because at times we have experienced a break with this reality, and know that other possibilities exist.

For us, sabotage may not be a means to change any world but our own, as an expression of our feelings toward this society. We strike for ourselves, out of our own frustrations, and rage and despair ... as a means of therapy and adventure. Because to not act, or to resign oneself to such an impoverished life of working and consuming is not good enough for us. We are not content

and we intend to express this. This society offers us shit ... how can we repay them?

**West Papua: 5th November**

Two hundred TNI troops (Indonesian Army) went to the village of Yalengga, in West Papua at about 3am where they killed ten people. At least four of those murdered are believed to be civilians whilst some of the others are known OPM (Free West Papua Movement) soldiers.

This is believed to follow an informant giving information to TNI on the whereabouts of OPM soldiers who they believe to be responsible for an attack in April on the Wamena armoury. For more information on the struggle in West Papua see [www.westpapuanews.com](http://www.westpapuanews.com)

# Editorial

In December 1945, literary critic Cyril Connolly wrote that he was living in a time of 'phony peace'. The struggles of the day, he said, were "to get our prison system cleaned up, to get rid of identity cards and restore our free-born privilege to use a false name once in a while ..." Over half a century on, has anything changed? The prisons are overcrowded, while Home Secretary David Blunkett has been successful in his aim of introducing a new national identity card.

Making sense of the repeated assaults on civil liberties is no easy task. The key is to recognise that our time too is one of 'phony peace'. The Labour Party has reduced the role of government to a mere policing function. ID cards, stop and search, the expansion of CCTV and phone taps ... we're spied on by the state and, through monitoring of our spending patterns, by business 24 hours a day. For the rest, the government contents itself with pimping the public services - health, education, housing - to private finance.

It succeeds because of the apparent cessation of hostilities in the war that was waged ruthlessly by its predecessor: the war against organised labour. The Tory governments which took on the miners, healthworkers, steelworkers, dockers and so on after 1979 smashed the effective organisation of the working class at work. The policing of everyday life which followed was intended to regulate our sense of collective identity to the point where we became conditioned against revolt.

The recent spate of wildcat strikes suggests that the class war is far from over, and that the phoney peace in industrial relations may be coming to an end. We must accelerate the rekindling of hostilities. But this isn't the only 'phony peace'. In his annual speech at the Guildhall last week, Tony Blair described the invasion of Iraq as "a battle of seminal importance for the early 21st century." It would, he said, "define relations between the Muslim world and the west" and "influence profoundly the development of Arab states and the Middle East."

The 'seminal importance' has little to do with a 'war on terror'. The Middle East is the West's chosen arena of conflict for two reasons. Firstly, because of the importance of oil to the fuel needs of capital and, secondly, because of capital's perpetual need to expand into new markets. A subservient Middle East is essential to this, Islamic terrorism the expected form that national resistances in the region will take. The various forms of 'anti-terror' legislation are intended to shackle both domestic opposition to new wars and attempts by national resistance movements to 'bring the war home'.

Our response to the 'two wars' is the same. Capital's war drive in the Middle East will be paid for in blood there, and in school and hospital closures, wage and benefit cuts here. There may be two wars, but there's only one fight.

## Quiz answers

1. It's the story of a colony in Brazil, set up in 1890 by Italian anarchists. It includes the colony's eventual collapse, three years later.
2. He changed it in 1916 to protest against German xenophobia.
3. The SWP-dominated Socialist Alliance in some (hastily removed) press advice on its website.
4. One that doesn't include Utopia.

# Commentary

## Black and blue

I'd like to add my criticism to Iain McKay's rebuttal of the Green and Black Bulletin (Commentary, 8th November). The Bulletin says it wants to redress the "class-blinkered focus" of the anarchist movement. That's up to them I guess, but why give them space in a class struggle orientated paper?

I won't bother to address the issue of 'primitivism'. It's been refuted well enough in issues of Black Flag and Organise. In any event, the Green Anarchist crew failed to respond to any of the theoretical issues raised then, resorting to sectarian abuse instead.

Primitivism is the lunatic fringe of anarchism. Nobody takes it seriously and if you seriously intend to use Freedom as a means of advancing class struggle anarchism, touting the ideas of primitivism in most working class areas would make you a laughing stock. It's like telling the poor they're not yet poor enough!

When the primitivists have been asked how they'll manage to run the film of history backwards they've had no answer (except for Green Anarchist, which advocated irrationalist violence like that of the Aum cult). Indeed, it's impossible to see how a society of billions could be 'returned' to primitive agriculture without mass starvation as a result.

Primitivism has more in common with Pol Pot than with Bakunin. If you want to be taken seriously, providing space for this crew isn't the way to do it. In any case, given that John Zerzan and his followers believe that any form of abstract, non-verbal communication is likely to repeat the process of reification that led us into the civilised mess in the first place, aren't they compromising themselves by producing a bulletin at all?

John Shute

As a member of a class struggle anarchist group, I wholeheartedly welcome your refreshing, diversifying approach, particularly your decision to carry the Green and Black Bulletin. To be 'working class' doesn't mean that one disregards the world existing outside the factory gates or off the slave-driver's premises. Prisoners, pensioners, primitivism, protests, proletariat - I'd say the last few issues of Freedom have pretty much had it all.

Those who don't like the way the new-look Freedom is shaping up can always reject it. But at least, at last, let's hear it: for far too long the anarchist milieu has been depressingly sectarian, closed off to all but anarcho-perspectives that align very precisely each to their own. None of us have rights to the anarchist Holy Grail. We should listen to and learn from one another, work together where we can - that is, much more often than some are apparently willing to do at present.

Frankie Dee

## Platitudes

May I respond to Peter Gibson's thoughtful letter on my alleged 'anarcho-babble' and his apparent repudiation of what is generally thought of as anarchism. The notion of an anarchist 'establishment' that is anti-science is largely a figment of his own imagination. What most anarchists are reluctant to embrace are the dubious theories of sociobiologists and ultra-Darwinists like Wilson, Dawkins and Dennett.

That the 'state' is simply a 'concept' and doesn't 'exist' is idealistic revelry, critiqued long ago by sociologists and anarchists alike. Of course the 'state' is a concept, but it refers to real social

phenomena - to a coercive social system with its governments, bureaucracy, ideologies, prisons, police and techniques of surveillance. That the state isn't a monadic entity doesn't imply that it has no existence. 'Genes', 'species' and 'capitalism' are all concepts used by Peter but, like the 'state', they do refer to a material reality.

Apart from his enthusiasm for sociobiology, genetic determinism and the expression of individual interests, it's difficult to grasp just what exactly Peter is advocating. But he seems to be an advocate of anti-state free market capitalism, along with private property, the stock exchange, its competitive ethos and possessive individualism. This now seems to be a fashionable trend, with books coming out on 'market anarchy' and 'free market syndicalism'.

But rather than being original, innovative and progressive, as Peter contends, such a trend is old-fashioned, outdated, retrogressive and reactionary. Like many other anarchists, I'm all for freedom and solidarity, even if these concepts sound like 'platitudes' to Peter. He seems to have his own set of 'platitudes', regarding us all as automatons under the control of selfish genes.

Brian Morris

## Two fingers

I have to thank Rob Rodgers ('Still confused?', 8th November)? He presses home my point about the non-existence of the state, police and capitalism - the whole mirage. My argument is that, as concepts, they're unhelpful because they obscure any clarity of thought. Rob, confessed neophyte that he is, attempts to illustrate the concept of a concept by reference to electricity, which he claims can't be felt. To test his hypothesis I suggest he sticks two fingers into a live light socket.

He also claims that capitalism, by contrast, exists. Again, I can only suggest he tries sticking his two burnt fingers up the nose of capitalism. He can't do it. Undeterred, he goes on to say that only by understanding can anarchists overthrow the state and so on - my very point, it's just that we have different understandings. His anarchism, a popular one, is going nowhere.

To say, as Rob does, that the state or the army isn't a collection of individuals beggars belief. Am I missing something? If there were no soldiers there would be no armies and there would be no wars. QED.

Oddly, though giving different reasons, he does make the point I'm attempting to make. The state is the "embodiment" of "their [the capitalists'] interests," he says. The argument hinges on the word 'their'. Our (we are real people) 'interests' lie between our ears. If we can understand these interests, we understand the mirage we're discussing.

Capitalists, soldiers, the anarchists are simply expressing how they (real people) think their best interest can be implemented. However, we all have the same interests (that's why we understand one another) but how we implement them simply depends on expediency. It's all cycles of advantage and disadvantage. Rob is still confused. The state doesn't ignore the interest of the individual, as he says it does. To be pedantic, perhaps, the state can't ignore anything as it doesn't exist.

The state is made up of individuals who, were they to think, would claim that their interests were being served by it. And Rob can't realistically, at this moment, offer them anything better. If he could, they'd be behind him in

droves. That's the problem. They aren't interested in concepts, only what they can put in their mouths and where men put their dicks. It's as banal as that.

I love it. Rob says, "the state has nothing to do with genetics." Give me a break. What's driving these 'interests' that Rob is talking about, if it isn't genes? Again, he says, "power in society is not genetics." This is pure poetry. If it weren't for genes, we wouldn't bother to get out of bed in the morning, let alone fuss with power and the meaning of life.

Rob goes on to explain anarchism in simple terms that I might understand. Nice of him, but it's because I'm educated in the philosophy of anarchism (I have the t-shirt) that I'm arguing for biology and genes as having more relevance to the state and power (as Rob understands them).

He denies the importance of genes and then lectures us on how we can be free from them - "we win real freedom [from genes?] by controlling our destinies." My point exactly, classic anarcho-babble. The only freedom we've won came through developing the flush lavatory. The problem is what to do with its contents. Anarchists haven't made a great job of this. Their woolly thinking is why.

Peter Gibson

## Robust defence

As always, Amorey Gethin is a model of polite and constructive opposition ('Commentary', 8th November). But that doesn't stop me from disagreeing with most of what he says, and I think our disagreement is deep-rooted. First things first. Amorey says that, in my original contribution, we saw "anarchist violence defended by abstract generalisation". On the contrary, I tried (maybe unsuccessfully) to break away from "abstract generalisation" entirely.

My rejection of pacifism is based, in part, on the fact that it puts abstract generalisation in place of a hard look at reality. Pacifism, at least of the sort Amorey seems to endorse, is the abstract generalisation, "no violence at any time". If that's not abstract, I don't know what is. He asks what the "robust defence" I support might look like. Each situation might have countless variations of its own, but I gave the (historical) example of Berkman's attempted assassination of Frick.

A question, genuinely meant: what does Amorey make of the argument put by Ferdinand Isserman, Reform Rabbi of St Louis, Missouri, in 1937? Appealing to Jewish people generally (not just in the USA - he presumably felt he had a message for German Jews as well) he called on them to forgive and be reconciled to the Nazis in the wake of Hitler's Kristallnacht persecutions, "so that the hearts and minds of the persecutors may be changed."

Incidentally, Amorey seems (to my mind) to confuse matters in his second paragraph, where it looks like he's arguing that destructive acts against property are 'violent'. I took violence to cover only those acts which comprise attacks on sentient beings.

Finally, Amorey says, "as to 'moralism', I'm not sure what Johnny means. Anarchism is nothing if it isn't a moral philosophy." I realise that this is a semantic minefield (!), but in brief I'd argue strongly that anarchism needn't be a moral philosophy and I don't consider my own to be so. To me morals, like religion, are part of the problem. Or, at the very least, they're not part of the solution.

Johnny M.

## Line upheld

I was amazed to read Martin Gilbert's attack on your anti-imperialist line (Commentary, 25th October). He suggests that, because Freedom has opposed the occupation of Iraq by the United States military, it's "increasingly leaning to dogma over logic." This seems ironic, given that his own position has nothing to do with anarchism.

He asserts that Freedom offered nothing to the anti-occupation demo on 27th September except "crude anti-Americanism and tacit support for the Trots". Presumably, it was Freedom's clear criticism of the SWP that provoked the latter comment. So much for 'logic'.

As for Martin's first charge, of anti-Americanism, it's as baseless as the second. America, like all nations, is class-ridden and hierarchical. Americans, as a people, don't determine policy and, as such, expressions like 'the US' or 'the Americans' are simply shorthand for the elites who do set policy - the highest echelons of government, the state bureaucracy and the capitalists: in other words, the ruling class. This, for an anarchist, should be obvious.

Based on this anarchist analysis, it's equally obvious that it wasn't anti-war anarchists who were expressing 'crude anti-Americanism'. In terms of harming the interests of the vast majority of actual Americans (the working class), the US ruling class was and is the main culprit. Not only did they lie to the American people to justify the invasion and occupation of Iraq, they sent ordinary Americans to kill and be killed in the process.

At home, it's ordinary Americans who are suffering due to the Bush Junta's policies - its attacks on their living conditions and liberties, its efforts to make them pay for the occupation of Iraq. But such comments should be truisms, following logically from anarchist theory. Of course, the charge of 'anti-Americanism' is levelled by those who actually do most harm to America, if we understand by America the majority of the people who live there rather than the state which rules the country or the capitalist elite which owns it.

It's ironic that Martin repeats these smears, particularly as he himself inflicts the most 'crude anti-Americanism' on us by saying that "most Americans learned nothing from the Vietnam war or 9/11"!

Justifying his argument in favour of a US occupation of Iraq, Martin argues that the "withdrawal of troops would create more misery for Iraqis". This ignores the fact that American occupying troops are killing Iraqi civilians every day. Infrastructure is constantly being destroyed in the fight against what most Iraqis, rightly, consider a foreign occupation.

It's an occupation that will continue to suck up resources - which could be used to benefit the Iraqi people - as remorselessly as the profit margins of the US corporations charged with 'rebuilding' the country.

Lastly, Martin seems to suggest that Iraqis can't rebuild their own society, a position which mirrors the prejudices of the occupying power. It has more to do with racism than with any form of anarchism I know. He also seems to forget that the US occupying power is reshaping Iraq in its own image, an ultra free-market capitalist regime which will, if history is anything to go by, heap yet more misery on the Iraqi people's heads.

# REVIEW

## In its sophistication and hard-won optimism *In the Cut* is probably Jane Campion's best film yet, finds Tom Jennings

This is a movie which explores women's sexuality and personal agency. It continues director Campion's project (previously seen in *The Piano*, *Portrait of a Lady* and *Holy Smoke*) to represent, in diverse contexts, the ambivalence, conflict and pain, and potential for individual freedom, growth and fulfilment, found in women's experiences. These come in the face of the powerful forces, both internal and external, which constrain all of our efforts to live better lives. Based on a bestseller by Susanna Moore, who co-wrote the screenplay with Campion, *In the Cut* references many cinematic subgenres. This 'postmodern' strategy can just reinforce and celebrate shallow style over content, but here it enhances depth and potency.

Dion Beebe's cinematography conveys well the claustrophobic paranoia of life in New York (or any other contemporary city), with an inspired combination of blurring and sharp focus, restless camera movement and judicious hints of classic film noir's dark shadows and neo-noir's flashiness. But rather than mysterious femme fatales or the glossy predators of *The Last Seduction*, these female characters echo the troubled formulae of sexual expression, pleasure and danger found in films like *Klute* (1971) and *Looking for Mr Goodbar* (1977).

Similarly, while it's promoted as an 'erotic thriller', the narrative has more in common with straight-to-video softcore pornography (it often foregrounds female erotic sensibility and empowerment) than the blatantly exploitative and hysterically misogynist blockbusters based on softcore source material, such as *Fatal Attraction* or *Basic Instinct*.

Further complicating the identification of viewers with the stars is the fact that both female leads are cast against type – Meg Ryan from vacuous romantic comedies and Jennifer Jason Leigh as hapless, helpless and not at all a latter-day Katherine Hepburn. Finally, unflattering close-ups and a lack of make-up (among other devices) avoid

the cheap titillation that the explicit sexual imagery might otherwise provide in portraying the complexities of desire.

Succeeding in this precarious balance places *In the Cut* in the company of the new wave of European art cinema aspiring to sexual-emotional 'realism'; for example *L'Ennui* (1998), *Romance* (1999), *Le Secret* (2000), *The Piano Teacher* (2001) and *Swimming Pool* (2002). Yet *In the Cut*'s layering of genre conventions and resolutely female perspective arguably take it to a level beyond even these brave and intelligent films.

Although Campion reportedly felt that it was crucial she make the detective story work, many mainstream critics have panned *In the Cut* as a failure on this score. True, the police procedure is shoddy and the poor calibre of the red herrings allows viewers to identify the psychokiller with ease. But bungled policework is hardly uncommon where women victims have 'dubious morals', and there's only time to sketch the various male 'suspects' (candidates as lovers and/or murderers) who were treated fully in the novel.

All this misses the point, anyway. The crime framework was primarily deployed to weave together the efforts of Meg Ryan's character, Frannie, to make sense of life, on several levels. Her Oedipal fantasies of her parents' courtship, her own awakening desires and fears, and her public, professional role as an English professor researching urban slang and poetry – all these revolve around romantic myths and conventions, hope and tragedy. In short, her quest is to understand the relationships – both in language and culture, and in bodily, lived reality – between the search for passionate fulfilment and the risk of spiritual death.

And, while psychological dynamics, identity and desire have been underlying motors for many crime narratives (classic private dicks/dangerous women, Hitchcock's vulgar Freudianism, lesbian detective fiction), this film achieves an unusually intricate mesh of popular cultural form, gender-political content



and philosophical depth.

Campion's films, though, can hardly even begin to resolve some dilemmas. In particular, her heroines' white middle class trajectories damage any feminist generalisability. In her earlier film, *The Piano*, Ada (the luminous Holly Hunter) exemplified high-bourgeois colonial taste, reproducing perceptions of New Zealand plantation Maoris as lazy, passive sub-humans, while only Harvey Keitel's Baines (a Western immigrant 'gone native') offered a path to aesthetic, sexual and economic salvation.

Things are a little less static in the multicultural modernity of *In the Cut*, where Frannie's stepsister (Leigh) has a lower class background, hinting at a

rather different perspective on women 'choosing' physical danger in pursuit of pleasure. But the stereotypical shorthand of race, ethnicity and class still signpost the male threat. The working class Irish/Hispanic cops' schoolboy sexism and the black student's lack of sexual restraint carry a sinister charge hardly matched by the inadequate narcissism of Frannie's WASP middle class ex. At least the ascription of obsessive, delusional, violent and masochistic tendencies is spread round among the characters, making possible a response in terms of our own social situations.

Finally, the lack of any sense of collectivity obscures the political usefulness of stories like *In the Cut*. But

the film can still be read as pointing towards the whole array of interconnecting levels where liberation is sought – from the unconscious, social, and cultural to the public and institutional. Intimate personal relations are likely to be heavily implicated in all of them. The film's central (erotic) relationship is the most convincing and promising, with characters who admit their flaws and share vulnerability. That prospects for change and redemption, in an honesty of purpose, are best found in the messy human reality of everyday life, rather than in the deadly idealisation of grand romantic narratives, should be an affirming message for revolutionaries as well as those seeking love.

## BOOKS

**Surveillance after September 11**  
by David Lyon  
Polity Press, £12.99

David Lyon is a professor of sociology who has spent the best part of the last twenty years studying surveillance. He describes his approach hitherto as having been scrupulously neutral or disinterested, but says that developments in surveillance since September 11th have alarmed him so much that he's found himself shifting to a more avowedly critical perspective. His latest book is an attempt to put the case against a knee-jerk reliance on automated surveillance and its virulent spread. Broken down into six chapters, it sets out first to understand exactly what surveillance is and what its effects are.

He then considers the ways in which it's been intensified recently, the ways in which it's been automated and the ways in which it's been integrated – state surveillance agencies since 9/11 have made increasing use of commercial databases such as the ones supporting customer loyalty schemes. The last two chapters of *Surveillance after September 11* consider how surveillance been globalised and how it can be resisted.

Displaying a comprehensive knowledge of his subject, Lyon offers a blistering critique of the clandestine attempts of the powerful to secure a firmer grip on their populations at the expense of hard-won civil liberties. His tone is always measured and it's all the more persuasive for being so.

Although at times a bit dry for the general reader (but not choked with

academic jargonese), the strength of the book's arguments and the weight of information it contains make it invaluable – especially in the current fight against ID cards.

Anton Pawluk

Available from Freedom for £12.99 (add £1.30 postage in the UK, £2.60 elsewhere)

**Perpetual War for Perpetual Peace**  
by Gore Vidal  
Clairview, £8.95

Gore Vidal has been one of the foremost critics of the American government for many years. A successful novelist from the age of 21, he comes from a wealthy background and moved in the powerful circles he now criticises. He was a

friend of JFK and he's a member of the same Gore family that provided the previous US vice-president. This means he can add a personal dimension to his attacks on government.

Vidal is a libertarian, rather than an anarchist, but we would agree with much of what he says. The essays in this book cover the 1993 FBI massacre at Waco, the 1995 bombing of a government building in Oklahoma by Timothy McVeigh (subsequently executed), the failure of the so-called war on drugs and more. Occasionally self-indulgent, always brilliantly written, *Perpetual War for Perpetual Peace* is one of the best things I've read this year.

Mo Mosely

Available from Freedom for £8.95 (add £1 postage in the UK, £2 elsewhere).

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# Commentary

page 6

So it seems to me that Martin's logic places him squarely in the same position as the Bush Junta – that the Iraqi people should shut up, be grateful it's been 'liberated' and let the US get on with rebuilding Iraq. But anarchism argues that nothing good comes from above and that freedom can't be given – it has to be won. This then leads inexorably to the anarchist opposition to imperialist war and occupation.

Of course a post-occupation Iraq won't be perfect, but it will undoubtedly be the only chance for Iraqis to build the society they want. Moreover Martin's position, if applied, would simply embolden the US elite to wage more imperialist wars. Authority is never weakened, never mind destroyed, by kow-towing to it. Asking anti-war protestors, never mind anarchists or the Iraqi people, to express such servility in the face of power is truly incredible.

In summary, to dismiss the only logical, principled and consistent anarchist position as 'dogma' suggests that Martin doesn't know what anarchism is. The logic of his argument shows that it isn't Freedom that's expressing 'naivete' or being 'immature'.

Iain McKay

## Rat-a-tat-tat

There's recently been debate in Freedom about fascism and what to do about it, but little analysis of what fascism is or of its function. Space is short, so I'll do the rat-a-tat-tat.

1. Fascism is an ideologically-based surface phenomenon of capitalism, just one response of the bourgeoisie to the disconnection of chunks of the working class from bourgeois society. It's not a working class problem, just projected on to the working class as justification for managerial intervention.
2. Fascism is interchangeable with democracy, each one cynically deployed as occasion dictates, democracy as an ideal or a weakness, fascism as a threat or a destiny.
3. Fascism as a dominant ideology is as impossible in Western Europe as 'loony left' parliamentary socialism, but both are given enough rope locally to cause disquiet, to legitimise 'moderation' and to suck into dead ends the otherwise uncontrollable slum elements.
4. Fascism, like imperialism, is cynically promoted by the leftwing of the state in order to increase its expert importance, to recruit from ethnic minorities, to distract from the absence of its revolutionary values and to channel dissident energy into reformist popular-front campaigns under its own leadership. Anti-fascism is the bourgeoisie's class hatred writ large and left. It's disgusted at the fools who hang on its hooks, the fools who have swallowed its lies on scarcity. Anyway, the working class isn't a police force. It's absolutely not the workers' role to defend the state against a fascist

coup, crime or any other social ill, all of which are a result of capitalist alienation. If minorities are to be defended then this defence must arise from neighbourly solidarity, it must be done spontaneously and locally. The pro-revolutionary milieu must trust people to get on with it and concentrate its own attentions on the revolution itself.

It mustn't tell people what to do; to get all Hobbesian about this, you could say a healthy working class body will eventually develop its own antibodies to resist what's against its interest. Let's not forget that it's the failure of the leftwing of the bourgeoisie to combat capitalism, allied to its ruthless application of drippy multi-cultural mystification, that's caused this situation.

Any more interventions by the Anti-Nazi League, or any other middle class consciousness-raisers, can only increase support for fascism (which of course is what the left really wants).

The workers, as the workers, can never be organised under a political banner. They've been tricked that way for two hundred years. The two political functions the working class does have are, firstly, to be force-fed bullshit so they keep on working and, secondly, to overthrow capitalism in its entirety.

With reference to this revolutionary function, there's no political movement to be built, no short-term campaigns to be mounted, no change of consciousness required. The working class isn't a community, it's not an ethnic group and it's not a culture. It's a function of the economy, and it's working class only at the point of production.

It's here in the factories where it has power, and it's only in the factories where capitalism can be stopped. On the street, in the pubs, in the newspapers, at the football it's all mystification, all ideology, bourgeois culture designed to be consumed by the masses, to distract them and trick them.

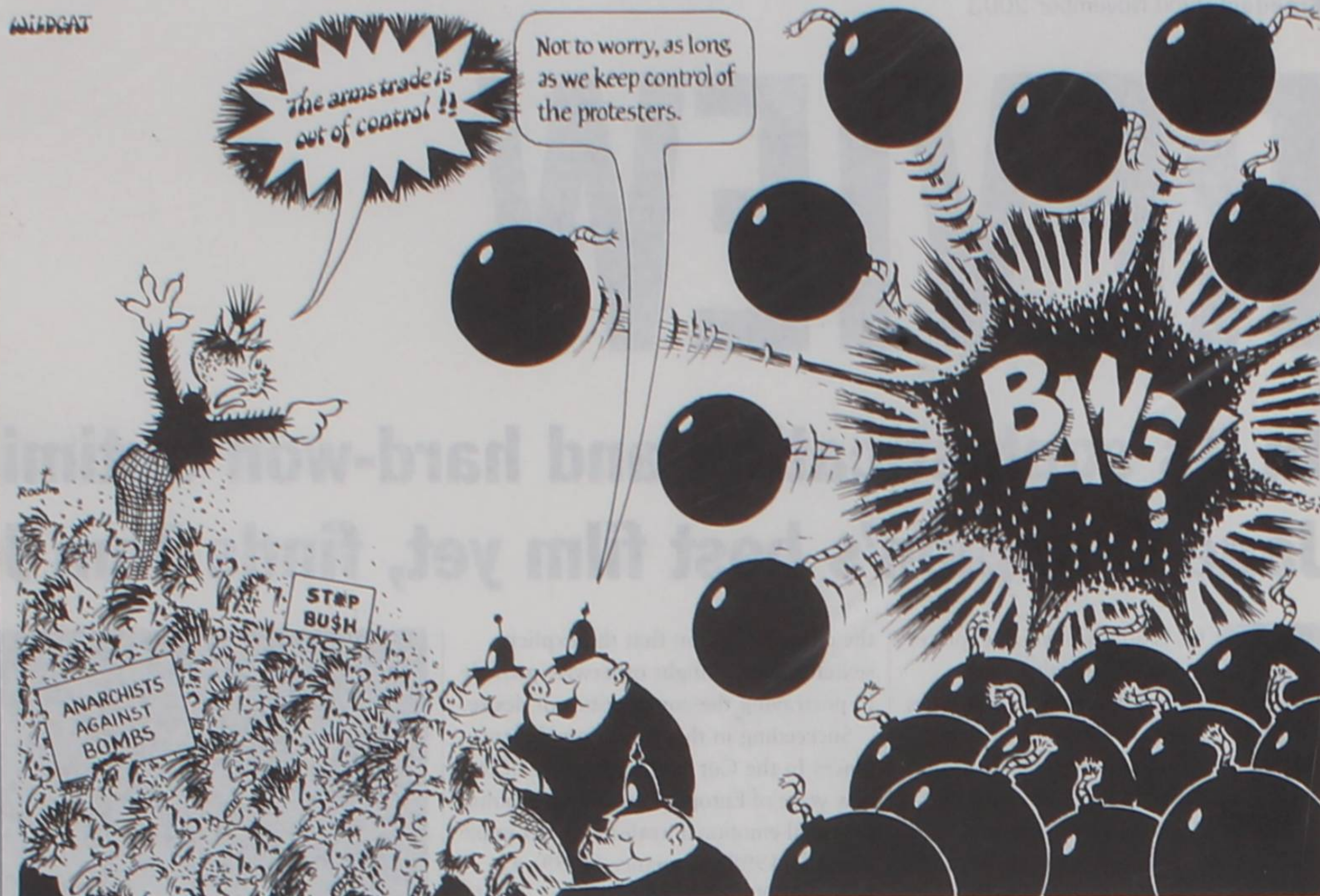
The revolutionary role of the working class isn't to support 'revolutionary groups' or movements, not to stop fascism, not to self-manage its misery but to abolish itself as it abolishes its work. The death of the working class is the death of capitalism. The fact that this sounds so fantastically out there only shows how far the pro-rev milieu has drifted from revolutionism into leftist realpolitik.

There's been some further debate in Freedom between AR and Paul Maguire concerning the theoretical grounding for this debate (Commentary, 8th November). Paul condemns the reading of saucy French writers. Why, he's decreed that they have no relevance though, like Mary Whitehouse, he seems able to expose himself to such depravity (given a recent reference of his to Negri and Hardt) without any evident corruption.

The need for understanding is essential in the milieu, and it's unfortunate that theory has been so impoverished in recent years as a result of, on the one hand, 'classless' anti-capitalist activism and, on the other, leftist fetishisation of struggle.

I think the problem is even more profound. It's not only a question of

ALDQAT



'which theory', but of what to theorise. At present, mine is the only voice within the pro-rev milieu that's raised in support of the disorganisation of the milieu itself. I'm the only one who predicts that this milieu will never become a movement and that our ideas won't, can't, be communicated under present conditions and that this doesn't matter.

The milieu has collectively forgotten the importance of spontaneity. It's convinced that there can be no revolution without a politicised movement. But it's wrong. Every previous attempt at social revolution has occurred despite the activity of revolutionary groups, not because of them. The revolution is not a movement affair, comrades.

The ideas the milieu has and the contributions it can make are only viable in moments of social upheaval. Otherwise, at other times, the milieu is to the working class like having the fire brigade living in your house just on the off-chance it might catch fire. The milieu must resist its tendency to try and organise other people, particularly the working class. It's rubbish at it and it's patronising.

And, once again, I insist that it lets the working class get on with what only the working class can do. The class war continues, with no leadership or political consciousness, across many fronts and during every minute of the day. The milieu must abandon its leadership impulse in the face of this hidden but nonetheless real conflict and it must learn to trust this stumbling and imbecilic beast that is the proletariat with the fate of the world.

There's some hardcore free communist theory out there, a lot of radical ideas contributing to the milieu and its revolutionary potential. What's really astounding is that, without the imperative of building a 'revolutionary movement', we don't know how close revolution is, nor how simple it will be.

Monsieur Dupont

## A sideways look

The state visit of George Walker Bush to Britain tells us all we need to know about this country's 'special relationship' with the United States. It's one of total subservience. The trappings of a state visit, such as Bush taking tea with the Queen, are merely photo opportunities for his election campaign. The theory behind this is that the Queen and the Pope are the only foreign heads of state most Americans can recognise, so being photographed with them shows that Bush is a statesman of international stature. The fact that neither actually wield the powers most people associate with heads of state is irrelevant. And Bush already has the Pope in his photo album.

Before the president arrived, the Metropolitan Police denied that they were being pressured into sealing off miles of London so that Bush could be afforded the same respect as Jiang Zemin (the Chinese boss was shielded from protesters waving Tibetan flags during his visit to the UK). There were armed US Secret Service personnel escorting him, though we admittedly had the advantage of being able to understand any warnings they shouted, in English, unlike the Iraqis killed daily at US checkpoints.

Funnily enough, those well-known anti-capitalists at the London Evening Standard reported that the United States government wanted a "virtual three-day shutdown of central London." John Stevens, the Metropolitan Police Commissioner said his force were working on the visit "two-and-a-half-times harder than we did at the height of the Irish terror campaign." Good to see that ordinary people feature so high in police priorities.

So, Blair (and it really can't have been anyone else) invited someone distasteful to stay with the royals. At the same time he surrendered a big chunk of Britain's much-vaunted sovereignty to allow US agents to kill anyone who looked like they might harm Bush. Like terrorists. Or pretzel vendors.

The only people to gain out of this were the Bush team (and the Windsors, hoping that it would keep Charles out of the headlines for a bit). It made Blair look like he was even more up his master's arse. Most of the police can't have relished the aggro. Even the SWP won't have gained as many members as they liked to think they would. And couldn't £4 million be better spent in almost any other way than protecting this dimwit?

The visit was condemned by relatives of British soldiers killed in Iraq, one of whom said that Bush had "a nerve coming over to this country after all the

misery he's caused". But what if this had been a visit from a Euro-politician who'd really pissed off people in this country by his or her actions? There'd have been widespread press condemnation, together with outraged talk of how our national sovereignty was being eroded by those pettifogging Eurocrats, blah, blah, blimp ...

Sovereignty is a bit of a jaded term in these globalised days, but if we ignore the royalist overtones and treat it as a concept – that countries should decide what happens within their boundaries – it becomes a bit more useful. Now, I'm not for one moment suggesting that we have effective or even useful means of making these decisions, but the principle that decisions should be made by those who are affected is good, however loosely we have to draw it, and one that anarchists endorse.

From this I draw my own opposition to Brussels diktat, which I share with most anarchists, some on the left, and the British Conservative Party (hey, even a stopped clock is right twice a day). Where I differ from Tories is that I extend my opposition to diktats from the US and from anyone else, Westminster downwards.

When it comes to utter subservience to the American government, New Labour have form. In March, David Blunkett signed a new Extradition Treaty with the United States. He didn't even consult parliament on this ludicrous one-sided treaty. Basically, the US can request the extradition of people from the UK without evidence, but not vice versa. And that's before we even start on the military bases or the promotion of GM crops.

So, the next time I hear British sovereignty being vigorously defended against those who would have us buy our cheese in kilograms, I'll ask how they feel about a foreign police force taking over a chunk of London to save someone's face.

Svartfrosk

## The quiz

1. What is Italian film 'La Cecilia' about?
2. Anti-fascist artist John Heartfield, famous for his photo-montages, was born Helmut Herzfeld in Berlin in 1891. What made him decide to change his name?
3. Which well-known political organisation advised its activists to try "not to come across as a hate-filled dogmatist – no matter how much that might reflect your real personality" when involved in media debates?
4. According to Oscar Wilde, what map of the world isn't worth looking at?

Answers on page 6

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