

FREEDOM

1 OCTOBER 2004

80P ■ ANARCHIST NEWS AND VIEWS

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GET ORF MOI LAND!

The countryside came to London last week, as thousands of hunt supporters clashed with riot police outside Parliament. But rather than dismiss them as sadistic bumpkins we should listen to what they have to say, argues Luke Kelly.

The list of grievances of the rural working class is a long one. The decline of post offices and local shops everywhere has been well documented and in the countryside the absence of reliable public transport, or even the existence of public transport, has compounded the difficulties this creates. Rising house prices in urban areas have led to a huge increase in commuters with corresponding rises in house prices which have been unmatched by rural wages. Since there are no work pensions for farm labourers the erosion of the state pension has had particularly harsh effects in the countryside, especially when combined with the physical isolation of small villages. And there are the traditional complaints, even after advances in wages and conditions during the first half of the '90s, farm labourers will still typically earn £10,000 a year working 12 out of 14 days. There has also been a steep and constant reduction in the number of people employed on farms over the last 50 years and with no jobs replacing them obtaining any kind of employment has been increasing tricky for those not prepared to bow to the demands of capital and 'get on their bike'.

The Countryside Alliance and its campaign for the continuation of fox hunting initially appear odd vehicles for the expression of these grievances. The CA is led solely by middle, if not upper class people and, despite its claims to stand for more than just fox hunting, it was formed in response to a possible ban on fox hunting through a merger of the British Field Sports Society, the Countryside Movement and the Countryside Business Group, all groups who existed solely to perpetuate blood sports. Fox hunting is also predominantly (although not exclusively) a middle class activity. Yet to see the Countryside Alliance and associated demonstrations solely as a middle class vehicle for a middle class pursuit would be to miss how it has responded to the more general demands of the rural working class and has become a vehicle for these desires.

Issues that primarily affect the rural working class, and the culture surrounding the rural working class (that working class people can wear tweed, fish and shoot is something the leaders of groups such as the Socialist Workers Party have failed to comprehend) have been ignored by the left to such an extent that the CA has been able to masquerade as the defender of these 'rights', whilst actually centering its campaign around the bosses' rights. And because of the CA's role as vehicle for these issues it is very easy to miss the significance of the increased radicalism and mobilisation



Flying smoke bombs, fireworks and shotgun shells fill the air in Parliament Square

of the rural working class in the same manner as much of the left dismissed the fuel protests as reactionary rubbish. But it is important, both as a sign that the political forms of the rural working class are changing to reflect how their

employment relationships have changed and also because it presents an opportunity for the left (in the widest possible sense of the word) to reconnect with the rural working class and begin to respond to its desires rather than ignoring its

existence entirely or dealing only with an idealised and imaginary rural working class that has never existed.

For an account of the riot and subsequent media coverage, see page 3

JOB ONSLAUGHT

New Labour want to slash £21 billion from public expenditure by sacking one in five public sector workers. Across government 104,000 jobs will be lost over the next three years. A further 20,000 jobs will move out of London and the South East. Workers will have no choice of where they and their families will move too.

Already in Kent, for example, it has been announced that the Department of Work and Pensions are shutting 14 sites and sacking 500 people. Nationally 42 social security offices, job centres and employer direct centres will close. Typically the government is refusing to even to consult the unions over where the jobs will go. The first the unions heard of the scale of the cuts was in the media.

"You do not sack employees by TV" said the main civil service union PCS after Blair spoke to the TUC Congress last month, "you do not get in a Dutch auction with the Tories and the Lib Dems as to who can cut the most civil servant

jobs." All the main parties are planning to cut civil service jobs. At their conference last week the Lib Dems announced that they would shut down the Department of Trade and Industry if they ever got elected. All the parties see job cuts as an easy way to raise money and avoid tax increases. Forget any talk of efficiency, public sector workers are being thrown out of work to pay for votes.

It is not though only the workers who will suffer. PCS has pointed out that the job cuts will hit services and it is the most vulnerable who will be hit the hardest. The poor, sick, elderly and invalid. Fat cat bosses might be happy though at the cuts in Inland Revenue staff should let them get away with more tax fiddles.

At the TUC Congress last month unions passed a motion backing the civil service strike. Over 200 delegates packed a fringe meeting on the subject. 290,000 PCS union members are currently being

balloted for strike action on 5th November. Unfortunately while this is a national civil service strike it is just a single day. This is not enough. A day of action isn't going to stop the government's onslaught on jobs. All out action is needed. PCS also called off a planned demo at the Labour Party conference because of fears that "their members safety could not be guaranteed" following the Countryside Alliance's demo! For one of the so-called awkward squad PCS General Secretary Mark Serwotka acts very timidly!

It is a basic tenet of anarchism that we show solidarity to workers in struggle. PCS are attempting to build support across the union movement for their protest and with the users of public services. Anarchists should not stand by and let the state throw 104,000 workers on the scrap heap.

For up to date information on the campaign see the PCS website: www.pcs.org.uk

IMAGINE IF ...

Body Shop's board were discussing the strike at their Soapworks factory. Sat at the head of an enormous table, Anita Roddick knocked back her sixth Fair Trade coffee of the evening. The caffeine rush had left her hands gently shaking, so she moved her hands under the table to gently grip the 'No Sweat' label of her T-shirt. Be-suited men had been chattering away in front of her for some twelve hours now, while the Mexican tea-lady (Maria was it?) shuffled in and out with ever more hot drinks to keep them going.

Executive Director Colin was wittering maniacally: "What can we do? We have to protect the integrity of the brand! Our products are overpriced and generally rubbish, this Ethical Fair Trade stuff is all we've got!"

Anita finally lost patience. She slammed her fist down and the assembled executives snapped to attention, gazing lovingly at 'their

founder'. She stood, and rebuked her workforce: "Change has always come about by moral dissenters and to the persistence of small, committed groups of people willing to fail over long periods of time until that rare, wonderful moment when the dam of oppression, indifference and greed finally cracks and those in power finally accept what people have been saying all along that there now has to be a revolution in kindness."¹

She paused, sipped her coffee, shuffled her documents. She pointed to herself. "Those are my words."

"The Company does not formally recognise any Trade Union as representing any of our employees, and has no plans to do so."² She pointed to a picture hanging on the wall. "Those are the words of Stuart Rose, the former managing director of the Body Shop." She smiled benignly at her board.

Home and away

FREEDOM

Volume 65 Number 19

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. Freedom's editors wish to present a broad range of anarchist thought, and as such the views expressed in the paper are those of the individual contributors and not necessarily those of the editorial collective.

Angel Alley

Freedom has been an eight-page paper for quite a while, but we seem to have even more people writing for us now. We're also finally getting to grips with our dire financial situation - which isn't totally sorted, but we're getting there, thanks to a price rise and many generous donations (see below) from our readers, which are always appreciated. Nevertheless, we still need new writers, and people to help edit and mail out the paper, so if you want to see us grow and improve please get in touch via our copy address, below.

All has been quite quiet at the Press this past fortnight, no disasters and no expensive things going wrong. The shop has been open at regular hours for a while now from Tuesday to Saturday, but new volunteers are always appreciated, especially to keep the shop open on new days. If you want to help then mail or write to the shop (address below) for more info.

Donations

- F.H., £10; H.J.W., £10; S.C., £28; W.H., £3
- Standing orders (regular donations, amount indicates per year) J.P., £40.

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Next issue

Contributions are wanted for future Freedoms. The next issue will be dated 16th October 2004 and the last day to get your copy to us will be Thursday 7th October (see contact details above for where to send your letters/articles). If you are interested in writing regularly for Freedom we want to hear from you!

News from the inside

Freedom for prisoners

As many of you may know, Freedom provides free subscriptions to anyone in prison. If you have friends or family in prison, or regularly write to a prisoner, if they are interested we will be happy to send them a free sample issue or sub. If you are a prisoner yourself we can provide subs to any of your fellow inmates if they so desire. Please also feel free to write to us with any news about your imprisonment, developments in your case, requests for penpals or anything else!

Wandsworthless?

Wandsworth could be handed over to the private sector if standards don't significantly improve by the end of next month, according to the Prison Service. The last 16 months at one of Britain's biggest jails have seen a massive deterioration of standards and raised 'serious concerns', according to the Prison Inspectorate.

Wandsworth Prison in South London scored poorly in safety, respect, resettlement and purposeful activity.

Prisoner numbers haven't fallen since

January 2003, when it was acknowledged that overcrowding was a serious problem in the institution. Prisoners from ethnic minorities have consistently complained about racism, and staffing remains inadequate.

As a result, entire wings have closed, to allow higher staffing on each wing, while prisoner numbers have remained, leading to even more cramped accommodation. The mentally ill are now living with regular inmates.

Prisoners reported they felt more unsafe since the last report, and health-care, particularly in the field of suicide prevention, has deteriorated.

The report was sceptical that any improvements would be made before their next report, given the state of prison funding and overcrowding nationally.

Prison governor Jim Heavens said: "The report wasn't saying anything that we didn't know about."

Pigs might fly

Police officers involved in a 'death in custody' case should have their suspensions lifted despite an ongoing

investigation into their behaviour, a policeman's union said.

PC Tony Lewis and PC David Hadley were charged with common assault after father of three Mikey Powell died in their care last September. They failed to show up for the case's recent preliminary hearing at Birmingham Magistrate's Court.

Four other officers are waiting to see if they will be implicated in Mikey's death. Their continued suspension has been described as 'disgraceful' by the Mr Tonks, the local Union rep, who prefers they be sent back to work while investigations into their role in the alleged assault remain unfinished.

The delay in charges and sentencing, now reaching fifteen months, is largely due to the nature of Mikey's death, which remains unclear, according to the Crown Prosecution Service.

Friends of Mikey Powell - Campaign for Justice
<http://www.mikeypowell-campaign.org.uk/>

Unjust imprisonment? Surely not...

Six out of ten women are jailed to await trial and then given community service or freed, says a recent report by

the Prison Reform Trust. The report reveals that the number of jailed women has trebled since 1994, and relating severity of crime to punishment, is now four times the comparable rate for men.

The rise in female incarceration has led to an upsurge in suicides, with 11 killing themselves so far this year.

Fewer than one in ten of the women held in 2002 were facing charges for violent offences, with the majority of women being sent to prison for shoplifting.



LISTINGS

Bristol

Every Sunday the Kebele Kafe from 6.30pm, 14 Robertson Road, Easton. For info call 0117 9399469

London

6th October Early Globalisation: transnational anarchism as practice and mediated imagery in the late nineteenth century, Brunel Gallery Lecture Theatre, School of Oriental and African Studies, 10 Thornhaugh Street, WC1, 6pm. See www.britac.ac.uk/events

7th October Squatting 1946-2003, a walking tour with the South London Radical History Group, meet 6pm at Tolmers Square, NW1 (in or around The Square pub). For more info contact mudlark@macunlimited.net

10th October Tony Allen talks about Speakers' Corner, organised by SPES, 3pm at Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, Holborn
27th October to 7th November Grin and Blair It: ten years of political cartoons at the Mall Galleries, SW1. See www.cartoontrust.org.uk

27th November Anarchist Bookfair at ULU, Malet Street, WC1 from 10am to 7pm. See www.anarchistbookfair.org
Every Wednesday the LARC Library from 1pm at 62 Fieldgate Street, E1.

Nationwide groups

Anarchist Federation
Network of anarchist-communists
Box 2, 84b Whitechapel High Street, London E1 7QX
www.afed.org.uk

Antifa
Militant anti-fascist organisation
Box 36, 84b Whitechapel High Street, London E1 7QX
www.antifa.org.uk

Class War Federation
Class struggle anarchist group
PO Box 467, London E8 3QX
www.classwaruk.org

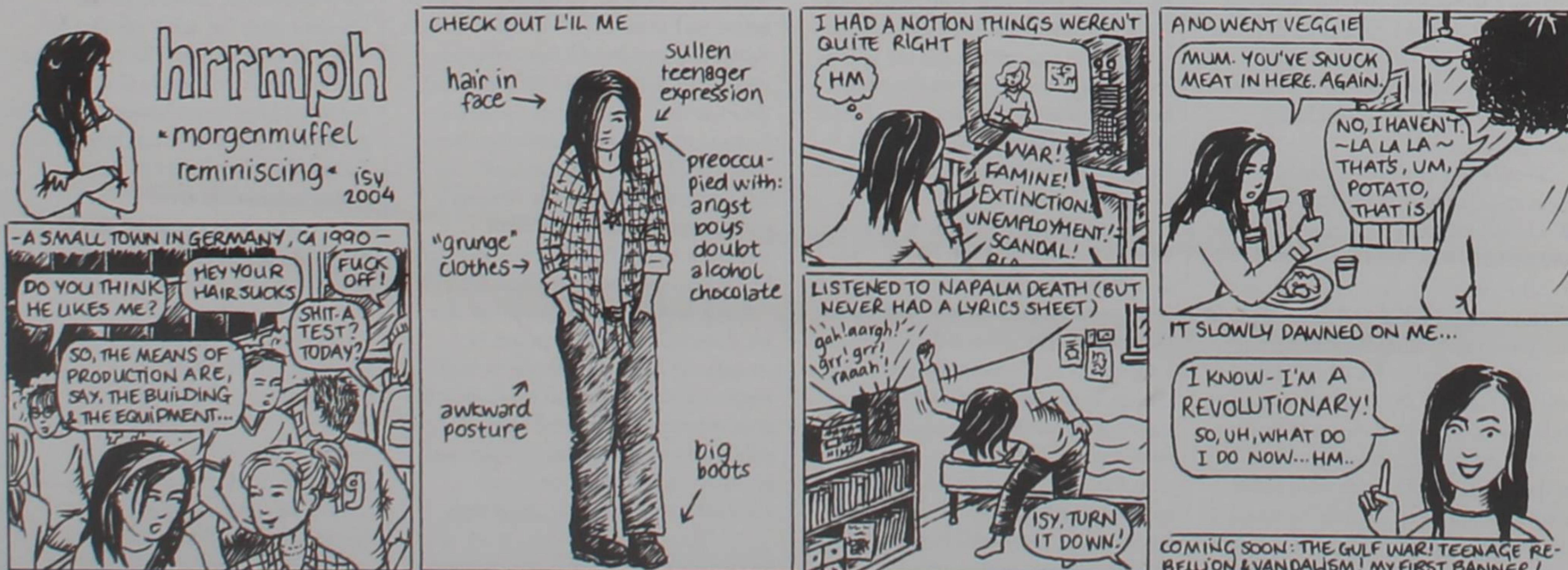
Dissent
A network of resistance against the G8
www.dissent.org.uk

Earth First!
Ecological direct action network
www.earthfirst.org.uk

Industrial Workers of the World
Revolutionary DIY union
PO Box 74, Brighton, BN1 4ZQ
www.iww.org.uk
Solidarity Federation
Anarcho-syndicalist organisation
PO Box 469, Preston PR1 8FX
www.solfed.org.uk
For details of smaller and local groups see www.enrager.net/britain

Social Centres
Autonomous Centre of Edinburgh (ACE)
17 West Montgomery Place, Edinburgh
www.autonomous.org.uk
The Cowley Club
12 London Road, Brighton BN1 4JA
www.cowleyclub.org.uk
Freedom
84b Whitechapel High Street, London E1 7QX
www.freedompress.org.uk
Kebele
14 Robertson Road, Easton, Bristol

BSS 6JY
www.kebele.org
Lancaster Resource Centre (LaRC)
The Basement, 78a Penny Street, Lancaster
www.eco-action.org/lancaster
London Action Resource Centre (LARC)
62 Fieldgate Street, London E1
www.londonlarc.org
Printworks Social Centre
58 Albion Street, Glasgow
www.glasgow-autonomy.org
The Rampart
7a Rampart Street, London E1
SUMAC Centre
245 Gladstone Street, Nottingham NG7 6HX
www.veggies.org.uk/rainbow/
1in12 Club
21-23 Albion Street, Bradford, West Yorkshire, BD1 2LY
www.1in12.com
56a Infoshop
56 Crampton Street, London SE17
www.safetycat.org/56a



This is the first in an exclusive series of cartoons for Freedom. You can get Isy's 'zine from www.actedistribution.org

Home news

Mixed signals

After the TUC Congress in Brighton, are there signs of increasing militancy on the horizon, asks Richard Griffin

Tony Blair, leader of the political wing of the labour movement came to address the industrial wing of the movement at the TUC Congress in Brighton earlier this month. The reception he received was only slightly less frosty than the one he got a few years ago at the Women's Institute. The bosses' paper *The Financial Times* joked that the prime minister got a standing ovation: three delegates and a journalist! Blair does not like the unions. He is happier talking to bosses. The unions don't particularly like Blair but like a loveless marriage they seem stuck with each other. This though is a marriage the unions need to get out of.

Blair heads a government that is about to slaughter 104,000 civil service jobs. Manufacturing, once the heartland of the unions, continues to shrink. At the end of Congress it was announced Jaguar plan to shut its plant in Coventry with the loss of over a thousand jobs. Add to that the robbery of workers' pensions, New Labour's attack on the ill and disabled, the war in Iraq, privatisation of public services, the lack of decent employment rights and it is hardly surprising Blair got such a muted response. It could have been worse though.

A year ago the talk of Congress was about how many unions would break away from Labour following the RMT's lead. In the end the union bosses pulled back. Only the FBU followed the example of the rail workers and left the party that they helped set up.

This was a mistake, of course. Labour has done the unions no favours. Addressing the TUC Blair boasted of the employment rights his government

had bought in, but almost all of these were forced on him by Europe. In Britain workers have to be in a job for a year until they even get rights. As the recent Wembley steel workers dispute shows bosses can sack workers without any notice. The so-called Warwick agreement between New Labour and the big unions thrashed out last month contains little of real substance – the 'right' of unions to be able to negotiate on pensions, extension of employment rights to temporary workers and four weeks holiday included. Big deal! This is hardly revolutionary stuff.

TUC membership has been in decline since Labour reached power. Last year affiliated unions lost 200,000 members. There are now under 6.5 million workers affiliated to the TUC – the lowest number since 1945. One union that has not seen its membership fall though is the RMT which has added 11,000 members since disaffiliating a year and a half ago. The RMT has also managed to save the pensions of its member by threatening industrial action, something less militant unions have not achieved. Increases in other non TUC affiliated unions led to an overall rise in union density last year. Just under 30% of the workforce are union members. This is not huge but the trend is upwards.

There are other glimmers of hope. There was no talk of 'partnership' at Congress this year – recognition at last that the point of unions is not to get into bed with the enemy but to defend workers' rights. In response to the job cuts threatened in the civil service the PCS union has called a national strike which was backed by Congress. The

Wembley strikers who, as reported in *Freedom*, have taken wildcat action were joined on the picket line by Curran last month. His predecessor John Edmonds would have condemned the strikers for breaking the law, despite the fact that their militancy won them all re-instatement. Unions at Jaguar are urging their members to 'stand and fight' and are preparing to ballot for action in the companies two other plants.

It is of course the workers not the general secretaries who are taking the lead. It is only now that general secretaries like Curran and Tony Woodley of the T&G are catching up with them. In fact union bosses have been pathetic so far. As workers pensions were lost the TUC called a single march in response. As jobs were lost token one day strikes were held. As workers' struggle under the most labour restrictive laws in Europe the unions set up a committee with the government. As fat cat bosses reap millions in bonuses the union bosses preached partnership. No wonder millions of workers decided that there was little point joining a union.

Faced with a growing crisis in membership union leaders are beginning to wake up to the fact that what workers want are unions that will fight for them. There is little doubt that there is a growing militancy amongst British workers. But there is a hitch. There is an election on the horizon. Union leaders have done a deal with Blair. In return for agreeing at Warwick to such vital rights as extending the remit of the Bank of England's Monetary Policy



Leading the way – firefighters disaffiliated from New Labour

Committee, which sets interest rates, to include employment information when making decisions on rates unions have to work to get Labour back in. That means handing over millions of pounds of members' money. It means not rocking the boat and getting union workers to canvass for the party. Industrial militancy will be stifled if it threatens Labour's chances of being re-elected.

For all their faults unions act as a defence against capitalism. There are encouraging signs of growing militancy

and class consciousness amongst workers. Capitalists like the bosses of Jaguar act in their class interest putting profits ahead of the livelihoods of working people. So does the state. Unions need to take a lead from the RMT and act in the interests of the working class. Breaking from the Labour Party would be a big step forward, so would breaking the power of the union bosses. This is something anarchists should be arguing in their workplaces.

Gene genie

The New York Times (21st September) reported on a new study by EPA scientists on the spreading of genes from GM plants. The results are alarming as the results show the genetically engineered bentgrass pollinated test plants of the same species as far away as they measured, around thirteen miles downwind from the test site. For wild grass of different species, these were pollinated by the gene-modified grass nearly nine miles away.

This is a much greater distance than had been found in previous studies. One reason is that the sample used was much larger (400 acres with thousands of plants). Given that once GM crops are actually used in commercial applications they are grown in much larger numbers than in scientific studies, there is reason to doubt that the conventional wisdom on how far altered genes can spread may be unrealistic. Indeed, according to one

scientist quoted, this is the first realistic study done.

Combine this with the fact that commercial growers will hardly be using the rigorous growing regimes used in scientific test sites and we have cause for concern. While the article indicated caveats, such as bentgrass genes being more likely to be excessively mobile than those in standard GM crops like soybeans, it is a timely reminder of the unknown dangers that biotech and agribusiness corporations are inflicting on us and our planet in the name of profit. Once out, this particular genie may be impossible to put back in its bottle.

But surely this is worth it to feed the poor? This GM grass has been produced by Monsanto and another company called Scotts for use on golf courses and it is resistant to Monsanto's herbicide Roundup. Are they trying to combat world hungry by feeding the poor golf balls?

Iain McKay

The genteel mob

Being in Parliament square for the Pro-Hunt demonstration is uncomfortable to say the least. I feel like a Rabbi strolling round Mecca during the Haj. Fortunately I've had the foresight to remove my piercings and put on a lumberjack shirt and the disguise seems to be working.

The broad-based mask that the Countryside Alliance hid behind has well and truly fallen off; this was never about village post offices or schools or even rural unemployment. Hunting has always been the single issue and every chinless speaker from the platform confirms this fact. One of them even has the audacity to describe the ban as 'Class Warfare'. If only ...

At first the Terrier men and other cap-doffing hunt muscle are nowhere to be seen. This I find a little odd as they have always been the loudest and ugliest feature of these demos. A short walk up Victoria street and I come across hundreds of the aforementioned

hunt protectors getting seriously tanked up outside a succession of pubs. This 'peaceful demo' is not going to last.

When it does go off the police are taken by surprise. Not only are the opposition beefier than the direct action types they are used to (they probably shovel half a ton of pig shit every morning before breakfast), but they are also well prepared. The cops get pelted with hundreds of fireworks, smoke bombs, bottles paint filled eggs and shotgun cartridges. They reply by battering everyone in sight and before long there are dozens of injuries on both sides. This comes as a shock to many of the huntsmen who are well used to beating hunt saboteurs with pickaxe handles while local cops respectfully look the other way. An upper class woman remonstrates with me as I interview her blood soaked companion: "You press are just scum, you don't care about our jobs, you just misrepresent us." "Now you know how the miners felt" I reply.

More predictable are the headlines that follow. The Evening Standard announces 'Enquiry into Police Baton injuries'. The Mail on Sunday says, 'What did they expect from Labour's boot boys in blue'. Every corporate media outlet carefully ensures that the coverage is balanced and the demonstrators get their say. The injured cops are nowhere to be seen.

So where were the headlines about 'The Hate Filled Mob'? At what point during the press conference did the Commissioner assure the media that the police were examining footage and would soon make arrests? I saw more violence directed at the cops than on any Mayday that I have been to. The fact is that not only are these 'rioters' lackeys for the countryside ruling class, they will also loyally defend their masters and the system that they are a symptom of, rather than ever challenge it. The powers that be are clearly well aware of this.

Dave Gremlin

News

Germany versus globalisation

Car workers gear up to fight neo-liberalism and bosses go on the attack, writes Jack Ray

One hundred and seventy five thousand Volkswagen workers are presently facing an uncertain future as bosses threaten their job security and working conditions in upcoming contract negotiations. Bosses took the unusual step of preceding negotiations with threats to outsource thirty thousand jobs, even in the event that workers accept a two year pay freeze, longer hours and the introduction of performance related pay.

In some circumstances it might seem bizarre for an employer to actively pursue conflict with their workforce in this way, but provocative pre-negotiation statements, described by the German metalworkers union chief negotiator as "pouring oil onto the fire," show a determination on the part of management to court confrontation.

But then, Volkswagen is not just any German employer. The largest auto manufacturer in a nation famed for its car making, the battle of Volkswagen will set precedents not just within this industry but across German workplaces. Which of course is part of the bosses' agenda, Volkswagen's personnel director Paul Hartz is infamous across Germany for being the author of the government's modernisation program – the 'Hartz IV' plan. Hartz and other so-called 'modernisers' are keen to take on and beat the German trade unions to push through their neoliberal reforms.

The likes of Hartz have reason to be confident. Earlier this year, we saw the two and a half million strong IG Metall union agree to an astonishing sell-out of one hundred thousand DaimlerBenz workers; agreeing to a 2.79% wage cut from 2007, a four hour extension to the working week and changes to working conditions that compel workers to move position and factory on management's command. Those workers had already demonstrated their willingness to fight with warning strikes, large demonstrations and even organised international solidarity strikes from fellow Daimler workers in South Africa and Brazil. In one show of defiance, two

thousand workers in Stuttgart blockaded the main road into the city. Identical retreats also occurred when the workforce at Siemens were similarly threatened. The threat to outsource thousands of jobs saw both unions fall into line behind management and insist their members accept what will inevitably be the thin end of the wedge.

It will not though be so easy to isolate VW workers. Since the events at Siemens and Daimler, Germans have begun to rally against the modernisation agenda, echoing the mass mobilisations that brought down Communist East Germany. For the last seven weeks more than one hundred thousand Germans have been involved in 'Monday Marches' across hundreds of German cities. The Social Democrat government is pushing forward with an attack on unemployment benefits (affecting 4.6m claimants) as another prong to the neoliberal offensive; a policy which saw it take catastrophic losses in recent regional elections, claiming its lowest share of the vote since the Weimar Republic, a result buoyed only by the fact that the conservative opposition were unable to capitalise on dissent from the left. Pushed by an increasingly pressurised IG Metall union many in the SPD have threatened to split the party if Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder doesn't rethink his policies. Workers in Germany's Vauxhall plants know that negotiations with their management are also imminent, that similar attacks will soon be made on their terms and conditions, and that they must stand with their colleagues at Volkswagen.

Dissent is widespread across Germany, with no real democratic parliamentary outlet; restricted so far to fairly impotent but strong and regular protests, conflict at Volkswagen could be the spark to send this rage boiling over. Clearly it's management's intent to stop the shadow boxing and begin applying physical muscle in its self-declared intent to cut 30% of its labour costs by 2011, already announcing that it has confirmed the support of the German government in using police forces to control militant protest or heavy picketing.



The shipyards of Spain are in revolt again

Shipyards workers have been regularly taking to the streets across Spain recently, blocking motorways (above), bridges and railway lines amid fierce battles with the police. The workers are fighting new plans proposed by the Government to carve up the shipyards and privatise the State-run shipbuilding industry. After a six month lull in fighting (see Freedom, 6th March) while the mainstream unions asked the workers to wait and see what the 'new Labour' PSOE Government would do to help them, the revolt has returned with a new ferocity in response to this slap in the face. Official strike days have been called for the end of September, but the most interesting events have been happening 'unofficially'.

Within the dispute itself VW holds most of the cards and on the face of it this is a no lose situation for them. If the workers stand and fight they have an opportunity to exact punishment in the form of lay-offs that they already want to carry out. If they capitulate then the big battle is postponed and their profit gets a boost for the year. Militant action even across VW's workforce will not in itself be enough, even a moral-boosting victory cannot keep the globalisation wolf from the door indefinitely; the fact is that in the long term German manufacturers want to pack up and leave, no matter how

'competitive' the German workforce becomes. It should be remembered that both Daimler and Volkswagen are turning billions of euros in profits every year, these companies are already perfectly viable businesses, who are simply trying to represent their greed as necessity.

If the long term agenda of German industry is to pack up and leave then the only possible answer to this kind of capital flight has to be physically preventing it, with all the infringements upon private property that would entail. Not something that will be contemplated by the professional union negotiators and bureaucrats of the likes of IG Metall,

nor most likely by the SPD left gathering behind former moderniser (and present political opportunist) Oscar Lafontaine. The growth of political disillusionment, the presence of protest on the streets and the growing distance between compliant union leaders and discontented members demonstrated in the Daimler strike suggests certainly that Volkswagen workers will be involved very soon in significant industrial action and nationwide protest, but victory will depend heavily on the involvement of other sectors of the union movement, and crucially the anti-reform movement as a whole.

News in brief

Wannabe BNP councillor has a really bad night

After an election defeat, a wannabe BNP councillor's night gets even worse. At the recent Laindon ward council election in Basildon (23rd October), David King, a former BNP treasurer was standing for a seat. Unite Against Fascism held a meeting a week prior to the election, with fifty people present, but no picket of the election count was organised.

On the night it was announced that King had come third, and the twenty BNP members and supporters left the town hall defeated, but unopposed. Two minutes down the road, were seven anti-fascists who just happened to be drinking in town. When the two groups met (despite being outnumbered three to one), a 'full and frank discussion' with King and other members ended with them on the floor, and later receiving treatment from an

ambulance crew. One of the BNP 'security' entourage panicked and managed to spray two anti-fascists with mace, as well as half his mates. No arrests were made. For more information about fighting fascism, contact Antifa www.antifa.org.uk

If you can't beat em...

China began a new round of trade talks with finance ministers from the seven top world economies (G7) last week in

Washington. Negotiations, which centred around moves to promote China to the top table of world economic power brokers, are being held up as a 'historic' step forward for East/West relations.

China is well known on the world stage for its double digit growth, massive industrial expansion and growing use of oil and steel. On the regional stage, it's known for its ruthless denial of union rights,

invasion of peaceful neighbours, threats to other neighbours, huge military arsenal, systematic imprisonment of critics, unaccountable leaders, media censorship, and human rights abuses. G7 officials have said they will try to address the main barrier to Western acceptance of Chinese domestic policy – its tightly managed floating arrangement of the Yuan.

Feature

Free the GNU

Part two: Asa Winstanley on alternative software sources, explaining the concepts of free software, copyleft and GNU/Linux

Free software is available for use and improvement by anyone, anywhere. Although fees can initially be charged to those who want to use improved software, subsequent passing on of that information can't be stopped. This is enforced by the legal concept of 'copyleft' – a rolling contract which stipulates all copies and modifications of software can be freely used, and any resulting software must be re-licensed under the same terms. Copyleft has been used with enormous success in GNU/Linux, a free operating system, to create a strong rival to non-free 'proprietary' operating systems such as the Microsoft Windows series. Both copyleft and the GNU/Linux system owe much to Richard Stallman, the 'liberal leftist anarchist' driving force behind both concepts. In this week's concluding article, Winstanley expands on free software and its implications:

The Copyleft concept beyond software

In his lectures about copyright, trademarks and patents, Stallman notes the copyleft concept used in software may not be appropriate for all spheres of life. Indeed, he believes it is the conventional conception of copyright that enforces one model for all kinds of works, technical or artistic. Stallman rejects the term 'intellectual property' entirely, saying: "I have no opinion about intellectual property, and neither should you." He reasons it's simply a propaganda term that capitalists use to conflate several entirely separate concepts: copyrights, trademarks and patents. Free software and copyleft represents a challenge to the right of large corporations and unaccountable bodies like the WTO and WIPO to commodify ideas, information and even genes and living organisms. What would result if the spirit of these concepts were adapted to other spheres? There have been several movements in this direction. As well as the GPL the FSF

developed the Free Documentation license, because "free software ought to have free documentation." This license has spread the copyleft principle to written works, and not only technical ones. O'Reilly, a computer books publisher popular with the GNU/Linux community publishes some of its works under the FDL and makes them available for no charge on its web site. The excellent, voluminous Anarchist FAQ is licensed under the FDL.¹ There is also an FDL licensed online encyclopaedia called Wikipedia. The name reflects their use of 'Wiki' software (which is GPL, naturally).

A Wiki is a libertarian concept. Quite simply it enables anyone to modify any page of the website, with all versions of each page retained. Sceptics may think that this would result in chaos, but in fact it has resulted in an encyclopedia of excellent quality, with over 200,000 articles and counting. Wikipedia is also generally more free in its ideology, giving space for various points of view. It has some good anarchism-related articles as the starting point for many was the CIA World 'Fact'-book...

Organising Methods of the Free Software community

GNU and copyleft have captured the hacker community's imagination, for both practical and political reasons. The copyleft agreement has become a symbol of idealistic and technical achievement as well as of personal and political integrity. Here anarchists can see a vindication of their ideas working out in 'the real world'. But what about their organising methods? Many simpler free software projects are written by small groups of hackers working over the Internet. This is done in spare time or during a day job if they can get away with making it (officially or unofficially) a part of their job description. Many are students and academics. The small size of the groups makes them very effective, while still being able to draw on the power of the wider community via peer review, bug reports and testing. However, some of the larger free software projects are often meritocratic or even authoritarian in their organising structure. The organisation around the Linux kernel itself is perhaps best described as a meritocratic dictatorship. It is collaborative in the sense that hundreds of 'patches' and bug reports are submitted by large groups of people every week, but ultimately it is 'Linux', and Linus has the final say on what goes in and what does not. There is also a small scale meritocratic hierarchy of people appointed by Linus; those considered the best people for the job at hand based on the skills and knowledge they have demonstrated in previous contributions. It would be instructive to see how a kernel created

in a more democratic fashion would pan out.

Our favourite web sites use free software

It is worth remembering that anarchists and activists in general use plenty of free software. If you are reading this article on enraget.net you are using free software as you browse, even if you used a Windows or Apple machine to access the site. You are using GNU/Linux and other free software every time you use the following web sites (only a few among thousands): IMC UK, Infoshop, Google. Many of the community based online software systems, forums and open content packages for web sites are free software, including the Indymedia code bases.

Crossover

There are already some points of contact between the free software movement and anarchist movement, as well as the wider anti-capitalist movement. One example is the ActiviX group, who arrange training days to help activists learn GNU/Linux. There are also 'Hack Labs' in Europe – open computer access in political spaces. Such work should continue and increase and the connections need to be drawn more. Anarchists would do well to seriously consider the implications of the movement to social and industrial theory. For too long anarchist theorists have had to point to past examples of libertarians creating and maintaining complex systems. With the advent of GNU/Linux, we no longer need to rely on the past alone. Caution though should be used in such analysis. As noted above, the free software movement is not totally anarchist, nor even fully libertarian.

Nevertheless, we probably don't need to be overly concerned with interest shown in the 'open source' movement by Trotskyist and other leftist authoritarian groups. The small groups of free software programmers that work together over the Internet guard their independence jealously. In his campaign against anti-authoritarian ideas within the First International, Engels asked in a letter written in January 1872 "how do these people [the anarchists] propose to run a factory, operate a railway or steer a ship without having in the last resort one deciding will, without a single management."² Anarchists know full well that the way in which co-ordinated work takes place – authoritarian hierarchy or by freely co-operating groups electing recallable delegates where needed – makes all the difference. Now we have in GNU/Linux and the rest of free software movement many compelling examples of complex systems that have no leader, no central government or management (Linus may be the 'dictator' of the Linux kernel, but attempts no



domination of other projects, even if that were feasible, which it is not).

The contradictory role of big business

Big businesses with a vested interest in GNU/Linux like Sun, HP and IBM often employ their programmers to adapt it to add a new feature which will make it more usable with one of their hardware products. The nature of the GPL, however, means that these modifications and additions must be shared with the community. Why would large corporations give stuff away for free?

It should be remembered that these are generally companies who make their money from hardware, not software. Software is regarded as an expense. Being able to draw on the resources of the community is a big plus to them, and this is something that the Open Source movement has often argued to get them on board. This accounts for the corporate embrace of GNU/Linux and 'open source' in recent years. Apple's OS X used as its core the BSD UNIX free software operating system. However, because BSD uses a more permissive non-copyleft free software license, the freeness of BSD did not 'infect' OS X and it remains non-free. The core of the OS (without the nice graphical Mac interface) is maintained separately as 'Darwin', and is still free software. This is a good example of why copyleft should be used in free software to protect common property.

The Future

So anarchists should realise that although free software pushes the

boundaries of freedom, ultimately, it works within capitalism and could never 'infect' the whole system. It does nothing about more general wealth-sharing, decision making in other industries (or even many in its own), or wider social relations. Although the concept of copyleft (expressed in the software world mainly by the GNU GPL) is revolutionary, we should not be fooled into thinking such concepts alone will lead to a free society.

At one point or another, the free software movement is going to meet its limits. Either limits in its own vision, limits imposed by the system of capital itself, or even limits aggressively imposed by threatened businesses. In fact, we can see the beginnings of this in current threats to free software: things like the Microsoft anti-GPL propaganda, SCO's law suit against the Linux kernel and the advance of software patents in the US and threat of them in the EU.

The limits are very real ones, especially when you consider that the Internet itself is, in the words of Chomsky "an elite institution", with the majority of the world's population not even having used a telephone. Free software would certainly be one part of a future free society. Although it can not fully thrive under capitalist conditions, like independent media, it should be encouraged to go as far as it can – pushing back the walls of our current prison.

Footnotes

1. An Anarchist FAQ; Introduction - <http://www.geocities.com/CapitolHill/1931/intro.html>
2. The Marx-Engels Reader, p. 729, cited in 'An Anarchist FAQ', section H 1.11

GET STARTED

www.enragemet/culture/computer

Your one-stop shop for free software, file sharing and radical IT services

www.linuxemporium.co.uk

Place to buy GNU/Linux CDs for non-broadband users.

www.seedsforchange.org.uk/aktivix1.html

www.fraw.org.uk/cltc

Projects to train activists to use GNU/Linux

www.redhat.com www.debian.org

GNU/Linux distribution

www.wikipedia.org

Collaborative encyclopaedia you can edit yourself

Editorial

If there is one thing that most readers of Freedom should agree on it is that they will not be voting in the next general election. Whether you just read the paper, belong to a national group or a local one the chances are you will not be planning to take part in that con of liberal democracy – the election.

There will be an election within the year. The smart money is on May. Three things seem certain – Blair will win, Labour's majority will be cut and turnout, already at a historic low will fall further. Substantially more people will not vote than will vote for the winning party. Non-voters, those who reject the whole charade will carry the day but will get no say. In Parliament it will be business as usual.

The on-going decline in participation in elections and the crisis of legitimacy it creates will be welcomed by anarchists but we need to be cautious. In the 2000 presidential elections in America just 51.3% of eligible voters turned out. That did not bother the US state. Bush happily went on to implement policies less than a quarter of the US population endorsed, let alone the UN or the poor people of Iraq!

Capitalist states can deal with low turn outs, after all turn out in British local elections has been in the low thirty percents for decades and no one is clambering to shut councils down on the basis that no body is supporting them. Capitalist states argue it is up to you whether you vote. It is your choice. The state will also claim that non-voters are either lazy or that the problem is the way people have to go out and vote. Make voting easier, for example e-votes and turnout will rise. There is little evidence for this. There is also a hint that non-voters are stupid and ill-informed people.

Working class people who make up the bulk of non voters are not of course lazy or stupid. Quite the opposite. They know voting makes very little difference. They do not trust politicians and for very good reasons.

For anarchists though just not voting in itself isn't enough. The forthcoming election creates an opportunity for us to explain why not voting is an important and positive action. Anarchists need to expose the sham of liberal democracy. We need to campaign against voting. By doing this we will set ourselves apart from the authoritarian left who remain unable or in their lust for power unable to break from election-ism. A member of the CPB (the Morning Star lot) recently argued with me that I should vote for anyone as long as it was not Blair because there was a 'historic opportunity' (communists love 'historic opportunities') to get rid of him. Yeah and then what? We could have Howard, great, or Labour led by Gordon Brown, the same Brown who is making 104,000 civil servants redundant. No thanks I don't want any of them.

A big section of the far-left are trapped by their need to engage with liberal democracy either by seeking to gain election often at any cost like Respect or through bazaar 'anyone but Blair' lines. Anarchists need to do something about this. We need to present the arguments for true direct democracy and participation and not for the rubbish that passes for elections in this country.

We need to start planning now. Time is not on our side. Anti-election work strikes me as an issue that the movement should be able to unite around and share the work. The anarchist milieu should be able to produce a national anti-election leaflet and stickers. We should be able to hold national and local public meetings and a lot more besides.

Commentary

Not Voltaire ...

If Nicolas Walter were still with us, I wouldn't have needed write this letter to you. He would have already done so! Amorey Gethin repeats a common error by attributing to Voltaire the saying "I disagree with what you have to say, but I shall defend to the death your right to say it" (Freedom 18th September). In fact Voltaire never said it – he didn't believe in total 'freedom of expression' and certainly wouldn't have defended anything to the death.

As our old friend Nick Walter pointed out on many occasions: The saying originated in a book written many years later by S.G. Tallentyre (pen name of British author E Beatrice Hall) in *The Friends of Voltaire* (1906).

Nevertheless, I and I hope all anarchists, *would* have supported Voltaire if he *had* said it!

Bob Potter

Happy customer

Just a short letter to say I think the paper is excellent, and the best it's been for many years. Keep it up!

John McArthur

Voting

Forget for a minute that the Bush versus Kerry ballot-battle will take place in November, because there is the small matter of the plebiscite on the North East Regional Assembly! Who cares which middle-aged white male millionaire Christian fundamentalist runs the planet? I try not to think about it. Yes, to hell with those two Masonic morons: people living in the North East of England are to have their say on a proposed Regional Assembly. Hooray and hurrah, more government ...

John Prescott's pet project attempts to increase voter turnout by giving us more elections. Whatever happened to 'don't vote, it'll only encourage them'? You had the Council, the General and the European; now try the Regional. They tried Mayoral Elections, but people in Hartlepool made a monkey out of them – by electing a monkey. They considered having a referendum on the European Currency, but hey, who cares what money we use? Bank of England. The vote on EU membership is much the same: like a slave being asked by his master whether he prefers one type of manacle or another.

Yes, the hot new market in parliamentary democracy is Regionalism: 'this is a local government for local people'. For the politicians, and their wealthy puppet-masters, the great thing about Regionalism is that while it is reminiscent Nationalism, it lacks the racist connotations and it gets positive coverage on local radio and television, and in the region's newspapers. By Balkanising 'the people' you give them the impression that they have more of a say in how things are run. And it's easy to promote: the Tories (Her Majesty's Secret Opposition) are against it, though I can imagine Prescott spluttering to his cronies 'For fuck's sake don't mention the Scottish Parliament'.

The fact that less people are voting could be due to their desire to be free from wealthy politicians, wars, lies and fat cats. But is anyone listening? The North East will get an Assembly, whether it wants it or not, and while I will relish the chance to spoil my ballot papers, I am sure that those politicians who were very publicly anti will be fighting for a seat in the place. To me,

it makes no difference where the government is, if it's nearby Durham, London, Brussels or even Washington DC – it's all loathsome. The loudest voice will be that of Capital; the Assembly members will be financed by the same people, pampered by the same lobbyists, and they will trample on the same people.

James Doran

Resigned

I have been keeping the mail drop box, Box A in Cambridge going for five years now. The arrangement has its advantages: it is free, it is located at a vaguely sympathetic address, it is anonymous. Box A is therefore a resource that ought not to be lost. But now I am old and weary and I am ever-so, ever-so marginalised. I want to stop, I want to disengage completely. I wonder if there is anybody in the Cambridge/Anglia area who would like to take Box A over (I will renew the box's sub to Freedom as an enticement)?

As the anarchist milieu continues to allow itself to be determined by news events and political issues I find I do not have, and perhaps never did have, anything in common with it. From my perspective the milieu now resembles a headless Trotskyism that cannot escape the basic figurations of eat-your-mouth morality, group patriotism and this week's orthodox left-wing controversies.

Now, it seems to me, although I have spent twenty four years operating within the milieu, I have only really ever made contact with and been inspired by those who exist outside of it, to the rest I have always been an embarrassing irrelevance. I feel humiliated like a dog who has stayed loyal even after his master's death, only to be told, after many years of vigil, that he has been guarding the wrong grave.

If there is anybody interested in appropriating box A then please contact me at signalpilot1@btinternet.com and we shall make the arrangements.

monsieur dupont

The anarchist academic

The anarchist academic I would like, through a series of occasional pieces, to discuss anarchist ideas through the experiences of the world of work, in particular, the experiences of being an anarchist academic. I work in an environment that is, in many ways, an anarchist heaven (is that an oxymoron?), but unfortunately, instead of progressing through successive stages towards an anarchist ideal, we are being thrust backwards towards the dark days of Blake's satanic mills.

Anarchism is about freedom, the freedom to choose how we want to live, so long as we do not impinge on the rights of others to live as they wish to live. Some of us work in jobs which allow, or should allow, the expression of anarchism. Working in a university is, or should be, one of those jobs. I am not talking necessarily about revolution, but the application of anarchist principles, distorted through the realities of living and working in the UK today, with mortgages, debts, kids at school, cars and insurance policies to run.

Academics at universities traditionally have had academic freedom. We are free to think and write what we like, as long as we can provide support for our arguments. By examining aspects of society (anything from understanding Marxism to the role of the slug in the

organise garden – or in my case looking at the hows and whys of human behaviour) we hope to find ways of improving society.

Academics work best when they are free to choose the groups in which they wish to work. Some choose to work alone, some in small groups, some in larger networks which might consist of people from many different countries. Academics tend to prefer egalitarian approaches; they are not good at ordering each other around. They prefer to discuss, to argue, to write. In other words, they are natural anarchists!

Unfortunately, there are constraints on the way academics work. These constraints impact seriously on the job, particularly for the anarchist academic.

As a good anarchist I do not like constraints on the way I work. Some constraints are more acceptable than others, such as timetables. At such and such an hour on such and such a day the students and I will turn up at a predetermined room and we will have a lecture/tutorial/workshop/seminar/lab. This constraint is acceptable up to the point where work life starts to impinge on family life. In my case, if and when the university tries to make me lecture in the evening or at weekends. While others enjoy teaching in the evenings, I prefer to garden, cook and be with my family.

Other constraints are less acceptable. These are generally imposed by members of that parasitic class, managers. When I first entered Higher Education academics hated management. Unfortunately, too many now become managers. Now, I would not want to say anything critical about managers (sic), they play a useful role (sicker), but in academia management is about administrating the essentials (timetabling and the like). Unfortunately too many are now believing they have a right to order academics around. They confuse management with leadership, and end up being good at neither. Ordering academics around is like trying to herd cats – don't try it at home folks!

Academics are highly educated people. They know how to do the job. They do not need an army of managers leading badly and inspectors checking unnecessarily. Academics work in an environment that should be essentially anarchic.

In the future I will try to look at the relationship between anarchism and the academic life in more detail. At the moment there are serious issues relating to academic pay and conditions of work, how Higher Education should be funded, and the rights of people to education.

Dr Nigel Hunt

Imagine if ...

page 1

"You see, it's not me, Dame Anita Roddick, champion of the oppressed and fighter for global justice, who bullies the workforce at SoapWorks, that's why I employ *you*."

"Jan," she said, turning to her bespoke SoapWorks manager, "write this down, you're delivering it in the morning: 'Anita Roddick is a non-executive director of Body Shop and has no responsibility for the management of SoapWorks, it would be completely inappropriate for her to intervene'"

Footnotes

1. Two paragraphs from Roddick's speech on 'Trade Justice' May 2003
2. From an internal Body Shop document from May 1996
3. Company official responding to criticism from the TGWU, September 2004.

News in brief

page 4

Let Norwich Union put a boot on your face

Another 1,000 jobs look set to go overseas, as Norwich Union announce their third major outsourcing move in 18 months. Around a third of all the company's call-centre jobs are due to disappear by 2007, with no end in sight. The 'increased competitiveness' cited by (among others) Patricia Hewitt will help force other employers to do the same, leading to the loss of two million jobs by 2008, according to research by general union Amicus.

Working Time Directive bust-up Big Business and the UK V Big Unions and mainland Europe! It's all to play for in round three of the fight over Britain's Working Time Directive (WTD) opt-out.

In their most recent attempt to subvert the controversial clause, the European Commission have proposed dropping a total ban, instead suggesting that unions gain a veto over the WTD in Britain. Attached to a ban on working over 65 hours and a ruling that the directive must be actively renewed once a year, it would significantly weaken the UK's undermining of worker's rights in Europe.

Pro business coalition CBI, in co-operation with the UK trade and industry department, have countered with the argument that individuals shouldn't be pressured into not signing out. This contrasts markedly with their own well-known practice under current legislation of unofficially linking signing the opt-out to an individual's job prospects. The CBI further complained it would create a lot of paperwork.

Quiz answers

1. Mao Zedong.
2. As an "anarchist who rejects compulsory power but not as a non-governmentalist who objects to autonomous government." Which might explain his position on the Provisional Government in Exile during the Japanese occupation.
3. Because while he was dying, he was writing articles defending Mbeki's stance that HIV does not lead to AIDS (and by implication – the SA government doesn't need to pay for expensive treatment for its millions of sufferers).
4. The Place de Greve in Paris was where unemployed and workers demos traditionally assembled. It was also the site of the guillotine! It is now the Place de l'Hotel de ville.

There's one DIY space in the UK where you can get zines like: Slug & Lettuce, Profane Existence, Maximum Rock n Roll, Heartattack and R.T.B., music from labels like: Broken Rekids, Active, Skuld, Havoc, Malaria, Flat Earth and Mortahate, books from AK Press, Freedom, Rebel Press, and many others!

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REVIEW

To learn of a time in Britain when people really believed they could change the world, read *Granny made me an Anarchist*

Stuart Christie needs no introduction to British anarchists. If the subtitle doesn't give it away, he's notorious for being arrested in Spain (carrying explosives to assassinate Franco) and acquitted in Britain of conspiracy with the Angry Brigade. He has re-founded the modern Anarchist Black Cross and running Cienfuegos Press (both with Albert Meltzer) to his credit, too. So this is not just the story of a life: it covers a lot of history, of CND and 'Scots Against War', of the anarchist movement in Europe in the sixties and seventies and of the wider political turmoil of those times. The sixties seem relatively idyllic now, what with May '68 and the global resistance to capital and authority. But this was partly a response to the grimness of the times: Cold War, Cuban missile crisis, imperial war in Vietnam and everywhere governments (East and West) preparing to suppress their unruly subjects. A book like this has no easy answers of how to rebuild that kind of movement (and momentum), but it should get people asking the question.

This book talks about armed struggle, but more importantly the context of high expectations and general combativity in which it took place. Christie makes it clear that political violence wasn't one-upmanship or some kind of revolutionary shortcut but a response to conditions of the time.

"How you get change is by pushing at the boundaries with whatever methods are available to try and ameliorate things – writing to your MP, demonstrations, petitions, pickets, civil disobedience and occupations. Violence only comes into the equation when people reach the limits beyond which the powers-that-be will permit no more reform. It is then up to each individual whether or not they should turn back or go beyond those limits. But, to paraphrase Mrs Beaton and Noam

Chomsky, you first have to reach those limits."

The Anarchist resistance to Franco had two strands. First were the many plans to kill Franco: not to re-enact the 1890s, but because he was the lynchpin holding competing factions of the regime together. Alongside this were direct actions against Spanish targets: attacks on buildings and planes – without causing casualties – and kidnappings to pressurise and isolate the regime. Christie was part of a failed plan to do the first, and with hindsight he reflects that failure probably did more to expose the regime than success would have. The First of May Group probably were fighting a losing battle to destroy the Spanish tourist industry (which kept Franco's economy going, but like emigration also broke down the fear and ignorance on which the regime depended). However, the careful targeting of their attacks kept public opinion on their side and defeated the insinuation (beloved by governments and the media) that political violence has to be irrational and homicidal – unless sanctioned by the state, of course.

Christie also recounts how the anarchist movement and the activist groups in particular moved beyond purely anti-fascist actions to revolutionary solidarity. Franco's regime remained a target, but it was by no means the only one as the events of the sixties hotbed up. Part of this development was the rise of the Angry Brigade, who also followed the policy of symbolic actions which were obviously not attacks on the public. Christie places them in their domestic context of Heath's class war: an earlier version of what we came to know as Thatcherism. Even the show trial arranged for the 'Stoke Newington Eight' was not the triumph the police imagined: half the defendants acquitted, and an appeal for clemency from the jury for the rest. The three who made their own spirited political defence almost turned the tables on the police

(1) Madrid, Aug. 15 (AP)--Stuart Christie, 18, a native of Glasgow, Scotland, who was detained by the Spanish police complicated terrorist bombing campaign in Spain. (AP/WIDEWORLD).mf-stgr-



conspiracy case. Christie's account of the grim months on remand in Brixton shows how the legal system makes sure even the innocent get punished.

Acquitted but unemployable, Christie tells of the origins of Cienfuegos Press, one of the most important libertarian publishing projects, before finishing, aptly enough, with the (drawn-out) demise of Franco. This is described with well-earned venom: "Jesus clearly didn't want him as a sunbeam." Finally, he can reflect with satisfaction that "I at least had no one's blood or life on my conscience – not even Franco's."

Granny made me an Anarchist is an edited version of the rewritten Christie File (originally published in 1980, now expanded to three volumes: *My Granny*

made me an Anarchist, *General Franco made me a Terrorist* and *Edward Heath made me Angry*). Both new versions are much more reflective than *The Christie File*, inevitably, given the extra time between them and the events they discuss. They're also much more open: the original Christie File was started while Franco was alive, but there's little chance of the Spanish secret police reopening any of their files now. *Granny made me an Anarchist* lacks some of the background on the Anarchist resistance and also some of the anecdotes from Christie's own adventures which appear in the various volumes of the long version. However, the publishers have thankfully retained the layout of integrated illustrations

and text boxes to help the reader navigate the many people, places, films and songs which form the chorus to Christie's story. *Granny made me an Anarchist* is a worthy successor to *The Christie File* and an excellent account of the anarchist movement from the inside. Intelligent and well written, covering both the personal motivation (how anarchists are made) and political activity (what anarchists do, and why) it effortlessly punctures most journalistic stereotypes of Anarchism. There more widely it's read, the better, so get a copy and then pass it on!

Granny made me an Anarchist: General Franco, the Angry Brigade and Me by Stuart Christie, published by Scribner, price £10.99

BOOKS

Just a small selection of Freedom Press titles, all available from Freedom at 84b Whitechapel High Street, London E1 7QX (post free in the UK, please add £1 per book for overseas orders). Our new mail order catalogue should also be available shortly.

Anarchy in Action

by Colin Ward
£4.95

This book is not intended for people who have spent a lifetime pondering the problems of anarchism, but for those who either had no idea of what the word implied or knew exactly what it implied and rejected it, considering that it had no relevance for the modern world. It is about the many ways in which people organise themselves in any kind of human society ...

About Anarchism

by Nicolas Walter
£3.50

Today the word anarchism inspires both fear and fascination, but few people seem to understand what anarchists believe, what anarchists want and what anarchists do. This book puts case for anarchism as a pragmatic political philosophy. It has often been reprinted and translated into many languages, including French, Spanish, Japanese, Serbo-Croat, Chinese, Polish and Russian.

George Orwell at home and among the anarchists

£7.95

Here for the first time is a full collection of the photographs by Vernon Richards showing George Orwell both at home

and in unexpectedly informal settings, and which give an unusually intimate view of an extremely private man. These photographs are accompanied by a series of essays on George Orwell from the anarchist perspective, by Vernon Richards, Colin Ward and Nicolas Walter.

William Blake

by Peter Marshall
£4.50

William Blake was a poet, painter, engraver and visionary. Considered eccentric, if not mad, in his own time, he now appears as a key figure in English romanticism. This study offers a lively and perceptive account of Blake's thought and presents him as a forerunner of modern anarchism and social ecology, and reveals the light

which shines behind the misty mountain range of Blake's symbolism and mythology.

The Last Capitalist

by Steve Cullen
£3.50

In this future world, Anne Riordan's particular fancy from the bad old days is the crime fiction of the twentieth century – she loves those cool and resourceful private detectives. Here she embarks on a quest through a future Britain of federated communes, as she searches for one particular obstinate refuser known as the Last Capitalist. Readers are drawn into the life of the patient sleuth Riordan searching for this hangover from the past, which reveals quite a lot about the shape of the future.

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The Top Ten



Continuing our new series of reader-written lists, this issue we can divulge the first five (in no particular order) of our Top Ten Strangest Things You have Ever Seen At a Demonstration.

1. Radical dog-catcher
 "Not really strange but amazing in its own way - at an animal rights / anti-militarist demo at Porton Down I saw a man who was being chased by a police dog (Alsatian) pick the dog up and run with it for a good thirty yards before he was pulled to the ground ... People did just stop and watch and cheer and then boo..."

2. Ice cream breather
 "In the middle of a full scale riot in the Falls Road area in Belfast in the late '70s during a bust up between us and the Brits over their attempt to impose a curfew over the entire area (martial law under any other name) - out pops an ice cream van, music blaring, the whole shebang! Both the rioters and the Brits were stunned into silence, and then a cheer went up as all the fighting stopped and the rioters got their refreshments while the army got theirs from their side. After about ten minutes of this it was game on as we beat the fuckers back into their barracks in Northumberland Street station ... from whence they did not emerge for another two days after licking their wounds."

3. Molotov milkman
 "I haven't seen this myself, but was told by a mate of the Oldham riot in 2001 being punctured by the sound of an electric milk float travelling towards the rioters' side from behind them. It had apparently been stolen several days before, and when it got to them they noticed that it was full of molotov-milkbottles. It all kicked off from there."

3. Legs of fury
 "At a Wapping picket I had the surreal experience of seeing a mounted copper getting twatted (along with his nag) with a mannequin's leg. I actually had to take a deep breath and ponder whether I was in the throes of a bout of DTs, but when I looked up again it was still going on."

4. Playful police dog
 "Protestors tear down Shannon Airport fence and run onto the airfield. There's only about 20 cops trying to stop a crowd of 70. One of the cops has his police dog trying to look all bad-ass. But the cop trips and falls onto the grass and the dog just jumps on him wanting to play. Was such a joke!"

5. Crustie mountie
 "On that first big demo against the rave legislation/Criminal Justice Act where it all kicked off in Hyde Park - one of the mounted police became unseated and his horse was grabbed by this crustie bloke who then galloped around the park on it!"

Don't miss the second part of this Top Ten in our next issue.

Strikewatch

• Four hundred thousand Israeli workers have walked in a massive two-day public sector strike over unpaid wages. Workers claim that some wages have remained unpaid for several months largely because of Benjamin Netanyahu's financial reforms are squeezing council budgets. Industrial action affected banks, hospitals, postal services and public transport, costing an estimated \$214m per day. Israeli trade unions have claimed victory in the dispute with the country's labour council being ordered to pay the owed wages in full.

• Demonstrating Malawi tea workers were dispersed with live bullets and teargas following a large rally in protest at government lay-offs in preparation for the privatisation of their tea plantation. Workers were demanding the prompt payment of their severance pay and threatening to burn the tea fields if their demands went un-met.

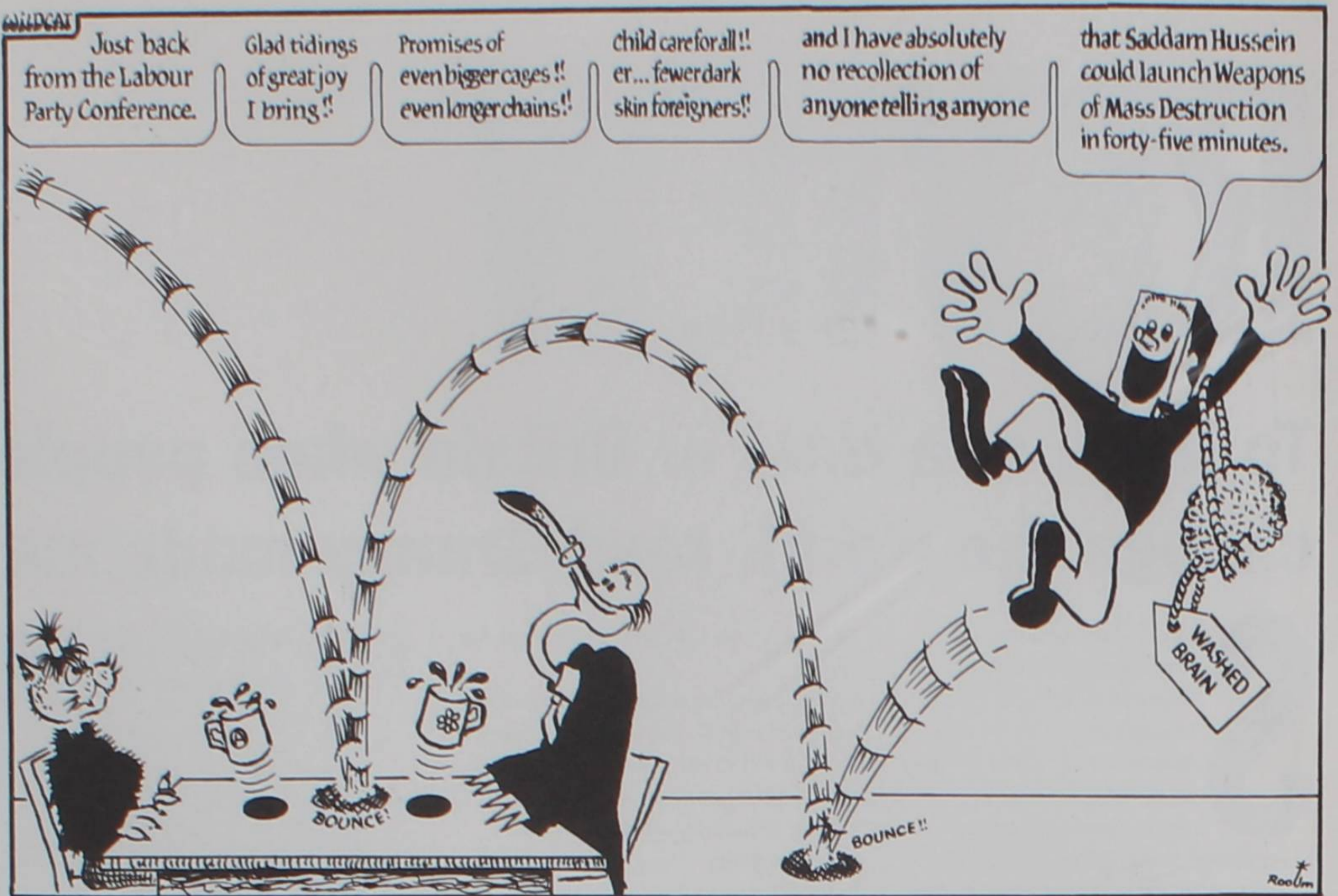
• An estimated 800,000 South African government workers struck on 23rd September against the inadequate pay offer from the Public Service and Administration Ministry (run by Communist Party of South Africa leader Geraldine Fraser-Moleketi). Leaders claimed the action to be the largest strike in the country's history. Further actions were called off, but walk-outs will resume pending negotiations.

• Striking refuelling workers at Heathrow were surprised to learn from bosses and commercial media that their actions were having absolutely zero affect on the running of the airport. Apparently they were further confused when management capitulated to their demands on Saturday 25th as a result of this supposedly non-existent pressure.

• Cycle and motorcycle couriers at SMS (who deliver passports and credit cards) began a spontaneous walk-out on 17th September after representatives chosen to speak to management regarding pay and conditions were sacked. Workers complain that the company pays them half the industry standard rate (a piece rate of 48p per passport and 70p per credit card) which results in many working 13 to 15 hour days. SMS is the largest UK courier company and has a £55m contract with the home office.

32
 Number of RESPECT votes in High Peak borough Simmondley by-election

32
 Number of Muslims living in the ward, according to government statistics. It looks like dropping the 'shibboleths' of women's and gay rights from the agenda has really worked for them!



A sideways look

A couple of weeks ago, I took my daughter on her first march. She's three. It was local and not one that I judged would see any trouble. She coped well enough but by the end was cold and bored (I'm sure all you demo-hardened veterans out there appreciate this).

It was a protest against the Mayor's plan to close the local swimming pool. This of course was exacerbated by the fact that it was only reopened earlier this year after being closed for eighteen months for 'refurbishment'. What this refurbishment consisted of was asbestos removal and a coat of paint as far as I can see, but I'm no expert. And then, shortly after it had re-opened, the Mayor announced it was to close in 2007. Its replacement will be ready by 2010 - though don't hold your breath as the replacement pool for Downham was meant to open this year and now won't be at least until 2006.

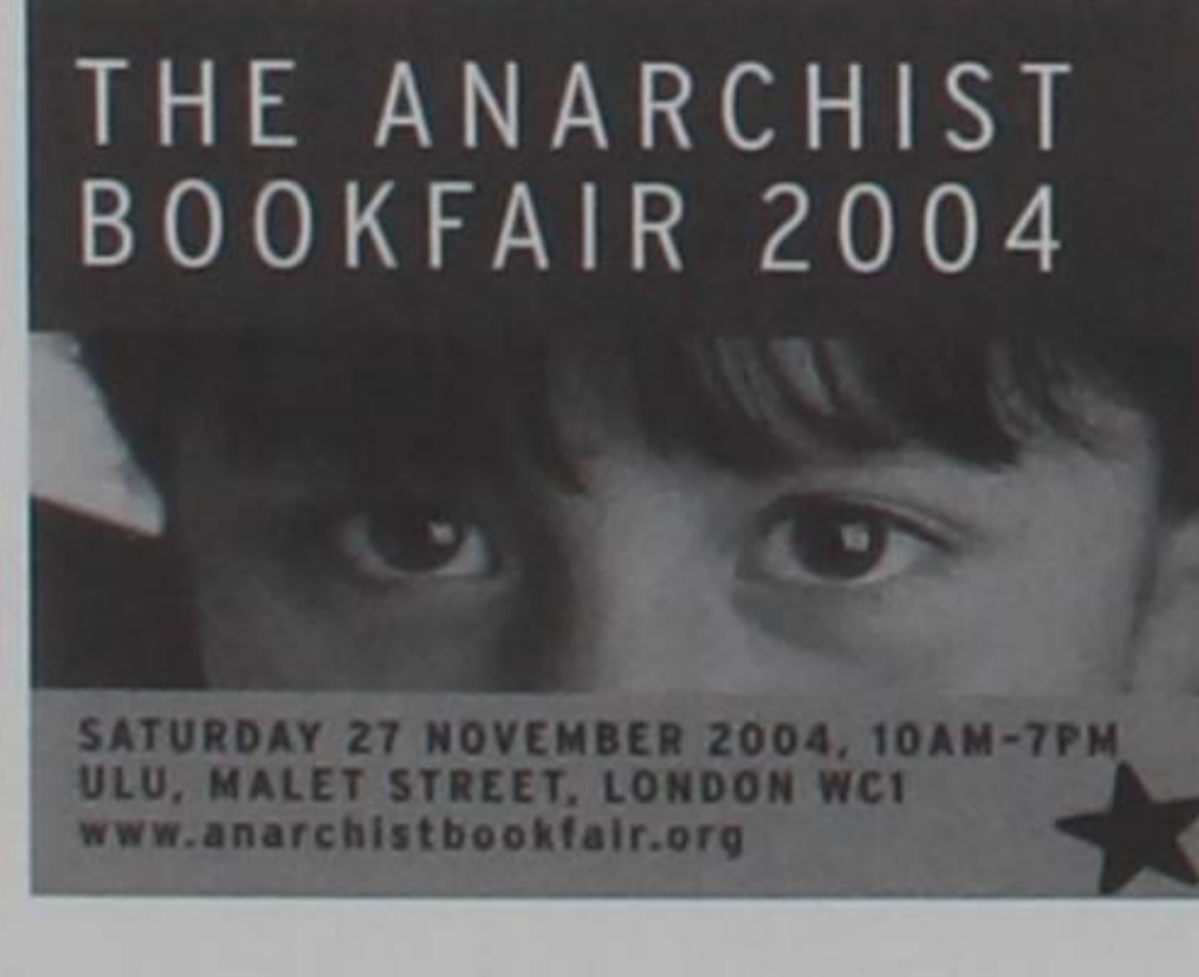
Lewisham Council have long promoted a slogan of 'Best Place in London to Live, Work and Learn'. It's one of those aspirational things that's meant to appeal to the middle classes who are Labour's natural constituency round here. But it falls flat when confronted with reality. The borough is already bereft of a cinema: the only large concert venue has a non-stop diet of tribute bands: leisure centres are too expensive for all but the most dedicated: work is fleeing the borough as industrial sites are developed into housing and the council privatises ever more services: and as for learning, it leads us into a sorry tale of political incompetence.

A few years ago, the council decided to close down the 'failing' secondary school on Telegraph Hill. Despite it being allegedly failing, this was not a popular decision and led to a shock result in the council elections, with the Local Education Action by Parents group

taking a seat under a banner of 'New School for New Cross'. Labour responded by demolishing the school and building a sixth form centre on the site. They then suggested the police station in Lewisham, together with some adjacent listed buildings, would be a suitable site. Apart from them not being in New Cross. Or likely to be sold to the council. And being too small a site.

All these points were made to Labour and the council officers. 'We know what we're doing', they replied. Meanwhile they were closing a primary school in neighbouring Hither Green, again because the school was 'failing', and against local opposition. Now, the sort of cynical person who thinks politicians only lie when their lips move (or when they type in this digital age), might see this as a ploy to back up the inadequate site they'd used as cover for their lack of secondary school places. The Mayor is willing to consider other sites, so that the pool doesn't have to close early, he says. Well, one of the questions he ought to answer is why didn't he build the sixth form centre in Lewisham and the school in New Cross? There were even some buildings there, which would have saved the cost of demolition and construction. Or is that just too simple? Was it the buildings themselves that were 'failing'? I know there's a whole lot of competition for London's Worst Borough, but at least that's one where Lewisham can be something other than 'aspirational'.

Svartfrosk



Blast from the Past

Freedom is one hundred and nineteen years old this month. First published in October 1886 and costing just a penny, this extract outlines the optimistic future envisioned by its first publication.

"We are living on the eve of great events. Before the end of this century has come we shall see great revolutionary movements breaking up our social conditions in Europe and probably in the United States of America ... The end of each of the last five centuries has been marked by great movements which have helped Freedom to gain ground ... No doubt our century will be no exception to the rule. It is sufficient to look around us, to observe. All those facts which foreshadowed the approach of revolutions in times past, cannot but strike the unprejudiced observer ... Millions of workmen, driven away from the ever-growing cities, are wandering about without work. We boast of our gigantic cities, and unheard of misery grows up ... all the wealth of the world is spent in an unhealthy luxury, amidst the rags and destitution of the poor."

The quiz

1. Which future dictator, according to a biography in 1936, was once "highly influenced by anarchism."
2. When he returned to Korea after World War Two, how did the anarchist national liberation hero Yu Rim describe himself?
3. South African president Thabo Mbeki's spokesman and personal friend, Parks Mankahlana, died in 2001, of AIDS. Why was this significant?
4. Where does the French word for strike, *greve*, come from?

Answers on page 6

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