

# FREEDOM

80P ANARCHIST NEWS AND VIEWS

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## GATE GOURMET'S NEW TERMS

**G**ate Gourmet and the T&G union have negotiated a settlement over a mass sacking of 667 workers at the company's Heathrow site.

Managers at the catering supplier, which stands accused of union-busting in its attempts to get rid of 675 of its staff, have said everyone, whether sacked in the canteen or the car park on 10th August or still at work at the caterer, will be asked if they want to stay or go.

Around 1,400 offers of voluntary redundancy have also been sent out to the company's remaining UK workforce. The offer is reputed to be more than twice the statutory minimum requirement.

T&G's chief negotiator Brendan Gold said: "After a constructive meeting, we have made initial progress towards resolving the problems with an outline of how to go forward that would apply to all workers. Further discussions will now take place."

In a statement, Gate Gourmet said that "the framework will allow the company to address its ongoing staffing needs in a way that is fair to all employees. This is the same level [of redundancies] agreed upon by unions last June. The voluntary programme could be followed by a compulsory redundancy programme.

"The company, at its discretion, may accept or decline these requests for redundancy. Our duty is to protect our 1,400 workers who have stood by us during this time."

Six of the sixteen unionists who had previously been excluded on the grounds of their union activities and subject to an injunction have now been included in the deal.

Brendan Gold said: "We have always said our people are decent, hard-working individuals not militant troublemakers."

The company continues however to refuse to lift an injunction against ten of the most active, who they accuse of being ringleaders for an unofficial strike last month which led to the sackings.

The company have also obtained a more general injunction limiting picket numbers directly outside the plant to six. However, much larger demonstrations continue nearby.

The 'troublemakers' have allegedly threatened workers and blacklegs at the plant who continue to undermine their colleagues' rights and give the company a bad name.

An investigation by one newspaper discovered on 26th August that the casual workers brought in to replace the sacked staff for lower wages were creating some serious hygiene problems due to lack of cleanliness and care at work.

EU law bans the use of such temp agency workers to undermine strikes, but the Labour government have refused to bring these rules into force in the UK.

Party chiefs pledged to end their opposition to it in July last year as part



of the 'Warwick agreement' between the party and major unions, which also promised consultation over pension reforms and new PFI schemes.

Gate Gourmet's Texan owners have threatened to put the company into administration if they can't

reach the required number of job losses, or if BA don't pay them more money.

BA have theoretically agreed to extend Gate Gourmet's contract, and give them more money, in exchange for an end to the industrial dispute.

Donations to support the strikers can be sent to the Gate Gourmet Hardship Fund, c/o Mr E. McDermott, Regional Secretary, TGWU, 218 Green Lanes, London N4 2HB (please make cheques payable to Transport & General Workers' Union and write 'Gate Gourmet' on the reverse)

## ROLLS ROYCE STRIKE

**W**orkers at Rolls Royce's Bristol engineering plant have walked out on indefinite strike in solidarity over the illegal sacking of unionist Jerry Hicks. The 96 engineering staff involved in the strike – who provide the final testing for jet engines before they are allowed to fly – have demanded that Jerry Hicks is reinstated.

The company allege that he was fired for undermining disciplinary procedures and organising an illegal strike earlier this year. Amicus, the union involved, say it is a simple case of Rolls Royce management attacking a vocal trade unionist.

Rolls Royce fired the union convener in July, but later offered to pay him off

to drop the issue. He refused. Jerry Hicks denies the charges, and will be taking the company to a full tribunal in February after a preliminary hearing found he had "probably been dismissed on trade union grounds".

Amicus conveners in the shipbuilding and aerospace industries, representing 70,000 members, voted at a meeting to organise petitions calling for Jerry Hicks's reinstatement and to provide a strike fund supporting the 96 workers already on strike. A further 1,000 workers could be balloted for strike action within the plant itself.

Amicus's Regional Secretary, Nev Jackson, said: "Trade unionists within Rolls Royce and outside are appalled by the treatment of Jerry and are supporting the strike and campaign for his reinstatement."

Up to 600 people attended a two-hour rally on Jerry Hick's behalf on Thursday 24th August at the Moorways Sports Stadium in Derby; Rolls Royce refused to allow the rally to take place on their property. Workers had their pay docked

for the duration. It followed a rally of 400 the previous Wednesday with representatives of 22 unions turning out in support.

Rolls Royce said in a statement: "We have a great business in Bristol and would urge employees considering strike action to think carefully whether supporting the unlawful actions of one individual is in their best interests, or those of our customers."

The company is not in any severe financial danger. It recently won a new contract to provide jet engines worth billions of dollars to the US and successfully tested a new form of quiet propulsion for ships. The company has also posted record profits this year. Share prices for Rolls Royce continue to rise.

Jerry Hicks said: "I have never felt so proud in my life at the courage of people prepared to do something on a point of principle, and I have never felt so ashamed of Rolls Royce."

A third rally will be held on Friday 2nd September at College Green, Bristol from 1pm.

## ZANON SURVIVES

**T**he self-managed Zanon ceramics factory in Argentina has moved a step closer to permanent recognition of their workers' co-operative, after a court ruling stripped the former owner of any rights to the facility.

The ruling, in Buenos Aires Commercial Court, declared the company that formerly ran the factory to be officially bankrupt, terminating former boss Luis Zanon's right to the company.

Zanon was also found guilty of an illegal lockout, asset stripping and fraudulent administration. The stage now looks set for the recognition of control by the Fabricas Sin Patronas (Fasinpat – Factory without Bosses) co-operative and the social ownership of the factory by its workers, with the judge indicating his intention to turn over control to the plant's trustees and subsequently to Fasinpat.

The Zanon Ceramics factory achieved international prominence over the course of its employees' struggle to maintain workers control and social ownership at the factory after first occupying the site during October 2001.

The plant in Neuquen, a town in the Patagonia region of the country, was at the forefront of a movement that saw 10,000 workers take over more than 100 enterprises in 2001 and 2002, together with neighbourhood assemblies and unemployed workers' blockades creating a revolutionary situation in the country.

The Argentine government led by President Nestor Kirchner was able to incorporate many of the fledgling workers' co-ops into plans to restore 'normal capitalism', through a mixture of government contracts, workplans and conversion into profit-oriented businesses sub-contracting to private industry.

Zanon has been a notable exception, maintaining the model of worker management and control, equal pay and community development. The factory remains the only co-operative in the country unrecognised by the Kirchner government and has had to resist several eviction attempts.

The workers of Zanon continue to demand the definitive expropriation of the factory under workers' control.

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# Home and away

## National Front 'march'

On 27th August, despite a police ban, the NF turned up in Chatham, Kent, attempting to stir up race hate. They were greeted by around 70 anti-fascist demonstrators including local anarchists (some Antifa members), Asian and white youth, trade unionists and others.

It was made clear to the NF that they were not welcome in the Medway Towns. A grand total of 30 fascists eventually showed up.

The police, who were present in large numbers, marched the motley bunch from Chatham station to nearby Ordnance Gardens where they were moved to a bandstand much to the annoyance of a group of lads who were playing football nearby. Eventually the police marched the NF back to the station putting them on a train back to London.

While pleased that a reasonable counter demo was organised, local anti-racists are concerned at a growing rise in racist activity in Kent.

## Shac flak

A guinea pig farm has closed after a lengthy campaign by animal rights activists. Darley Oaks farm in Staffordshire was one of the major suppliers for UK animal testing. The government and the drugs corporation Glaxo Smith Kline are trying to persuade the Halls to change their decision.

The campaign, which allegedly included measures such as the theft of the body of a member of the family in charge of the site, has been running for six years. In a statement, the Halls said: "We are planning a return to traditional farming and have no plans to be involved in any way in the breeding of animals for medical or scientific research."

See letters, page 6

## Dale Farm update

Residents at Britain's largest traveller site have obtained a temporary high court injunction against Basildon Council to stop eviction plans. While the case is under legal review contracted company Constant and co. are legally bound to stay away from the site.

Self-styled eviction specialists Constant, who have been notorious in recent years for their brutal tactics in expelling traveller communities, are already facing possible contempt charges for their illegal actions during an eviction of nearby Hoverfields Avenue in Wickford. The bailiff company drove JCBs over land protected by another high court injunction.

Basildon voted to evict Dale Farm in July, by just three votes after a two year battle between the residents and conservatives in the council. No provision has been made to re-home the community, which includes over 200 children, despite the lengthy appeal process and orders from central government.

## Vioxx fallout

Multinational drugs corporation Merck could face a legal bill topping \$50bn over the impact of its lethal painkiller Vioxx, according to analysts. Vioxx, which has been linked to fatal heart attacks, could lead to up to 100,000 claims in America alone, according to a Federal court judge in the US. Issues over the testing, marketing and continued use of Vioxx, after concerns were raised over the possible dangers of the drug, have prompted several high-profile recent cases.

A Texas jury recently awarded Carol Ernst, a Texan whose husband died in 2001, \$26m after an original award of \$253.4 was overturned by state laws capping compensation.

# Around the world

**FRANCE:** An Indymedia supporter has been arrested by French Gendarmes as 'editor-in-chief' of the non-hierarchical group.

The state is attempting to prosecute him on 8th September as an administrator, and on 22nd as editor.

In a statement, Indymedia France said: "The first case concerns a campaign of anti-Semitic spam posts (that lasted for between two weeks to a month). These spams were hidden, then completely censored when (Indymedia) realised what was happening.

"Articles were being sent using the web site feature 'send to a friend'. Immediately after the articles were posted, they were copied and pasted, further disseminated, posted totally or in part on other web sites and mailing lists, with the purpose of blackmailing the Paris IMC."

**MANILA:** Workers from the garment factory, Gelmart Industries, alongside Solidarity of Socialist Filipino Workers (BMP) forcibly occupied the pro-capitalist Labour Department in Intramuros in Manila.

Workers condemned the anti-worker 'Assumption of Jurisdiction' that Secretary Patricia Sto. Tomas had recently declared to ease out the Collective Bargaining Agreement deadlock between the union and management.

The BMP said: "The deadlock between the union and the Gelmart management was over the amount of wage increase, signing bonuses, the retirement trust fund and the retroactivity of the benefits in the concluded CBA."



On 22nd July, Tomas granted a P12 and P14 wage hike for 2005 and 2006 respectively. The union and the management, meanwhile, wanted a yearly increase of P32.50 and P6 correspondingly. The Labour Department also ordered a P200 signing bonus while the union negotiated for P3,000.

**SPAIN:** An indefinite strike by CNT workers in Seville has entered its third month, as the company continues to refuse to acknowledge workers' grievances.

The Municipal Car Crane workers began, on 16th May, an indefinite time strike after the sacking of four workers and a number of work sanctions to all the workers that had followed a previous strike. The indefinite time strike began because of these reprisals on the side of the company.

The sacked workers have also had a eight-day hunger strike while locked at the Seville cathedral. The offer of the company is to admit only two of the four sacked workers but under employment and wage suspension for 11 and 25 days, insisting on the other two dismissals. This is totally unacceptable to the workers and the CNT.

The strike was convoked basically to demand the readmission for all the sacked workers, without counterweight. Otherwise there is no possible solution.

**MEXICO:** Mexican anarchist group CIPO-RFM have reported an upsurge in violent paramilitary activity against sympathetic communities. On the 20th July, the only road into La Soledad was cut by around 20-30 people armed with rifles, sticks and machetes, controlling the flow of people in and out of the community. Local police have participated in the blockade and threatened the lives of CIPO-RFM members.

**PALESTINE:** The withdrawal of Israel from the Gaza strip has dominated international news headlines, prompting anger in the Palestinian community.



Over 13,000 Palestinians were made homeless in the Gaza Strip in the first 10 months of last year alone – in comparison, the Israeli settlements being closed down held 8,500.

Palestinian families were usually given a maximum of five minutes warning before their houses, and life savings, were crushed by Israeli armour-plated bulldozers (see picture, above). If they turned round or delayed, they risked being shot.

Needless to say, anyone who resisted the troops were not given the sympathetic coverage and accolades the media strew upon the racist right-wing fundamentalist Israelis who protested the ending of the 38 year old occupation of Gaza.

The Israeli state is retaining control of all land, air and sea borders. Sharon has made it clear that West Bank settlements meanwhile will be expanded and more Palestinian homes will be destroyed.

**USA:** The US National Labour Relations Board (NLRB) has stated that workers' activities outside of work can be controlled by bosses; upholding the legality of a regulation for uniformed employees at Guardsmark, a security guard company, that reads, "you must not ... fraternise on duty or off duty, date or become overly friendly with the client's employees or with co-employees."

**USA:** Pat Robertson, one of the most influential Christian evangelists in the US, has called for the assassination of the democratically elected left-wing leader of Venezuela.

And as for Robertson's case against Chavez? Chavez, according to Robertson (pictured below), "is a terrific danger." He "has destroyed the Venezuelan economy" and will the country a "launching pad for communist infiltration and Muslim extremism all over the continent." How atheists and religious bigots aiming for an Islamic state would get along is left to the imagination.

Robertson has been in trouble before. His views on women are well known, stating that feminism "encourages women to leave their husbands, kill their children, practice witchcraft, destroy capitalism and become lesbians." Now he has turned to advocating assassination, urging the murder of a head of state whose policies he disagrees.

The US have been quick to denounce the comments, pointing out that it would be against international law. Presumably that would be the same international law which would have prohibited, for example, foreign involvement in the 2002 coup against Chavez?



# Yarl's Wood

## Yarl's Wood hunger strikes

A Ugandan woman on hunger strike against her deportation has been freed on 22nd August from Yarl's Wood detention centre in Bedfordshire. Harriet Anyangokolo, was on hunger strike for 33 days, and was joined by up to 30 other Ugandan women at the centre.

Harriet, who is a spokesperson for the hunger strikers, had been critically ill, but was denied specialist healthcare before her release, according to supporters. Eight women are continuing to refuse food.

Legal proceedings mean her asylum claim is now being reconsidered. A woman from the Yarl's Wood Befrienders group accompanied Harriet to Bedford Hospital where she was treated for dehydration. The hunger strike, into its fifth week as Freedom goes to press, is designed to raise awareness of poor conditions at the detention centre, and prevent

repatriation of the strikers, some of whom are HIV positive, to highly dangerous conditions.

Ms Anyangokolo expressed her heartfelt thanks to everyone who supported her and all the women on strike. She said "Women have said they will continue fighting for their rights and against deportation – we deserve safe accommodation not imprisonment, because we are not criminals, we are simply asylum seekers who deserve protection under international law".

## Striker removed to Scotland

On Sunday 2st August, Charity Mutebwa, who is also gravely ill and weakened from her hunger strike of almost a month, was removed from Yarl's Wood in handcuffs and driven over 400 miles to Dungavel Detention Centre.

For the 12-hour journey she was allegedly kept in a small cell within the

prison van and, prevented from standing, forced to sit on a hard chair the entire time. When the drivers stopped for a break, Ms Mutebwa said was left inside and denied access to fresh air. She added: "I had bruises and pain in my wrists from the handcuffs and pain in my back – it was a torture not knowing where I was going or why I have been moved. As detainees we have a right to know what is happening and to speak with our representatives."

## 16-year-old rape survivor suffers broken arm resisting deportation

On Saturday 20th August the immigration authorities tried to deport one 16-year-old rape survivor. The Home Office disputes her age, though it is alleged she was never given a medical examination. Her left hand was broken during the deportation attempt.

Since being returned to Yarl's Wood she has been vomiting blood. Legal

Action For Women understand she has not been given any medical treatment other than Nurofen. They are pressing for her immediate release.

In a statement, LAW said: "Home Office guidelines say victims of torture should only be detained in extreme circumstances but it is clear that this is not what is happening."

For more information contact: Legal Action for Women, Crossroads Women's Centre PO Box 287 London NW6 5QU tel 020 7482 2496 (minicom/voice), fax 020 7209 4761, mobile 07980 659 831, email law@crossroadswomen.net





# News

## Superunion merger draws closer

### But big union bosses are struggling to explain their failures to a falling membership, reports Rob Ray

**A**head of the TUC's annual conference in Brighton, negotiators from the Transport and General Workers' Union, Amicus and the GMB have set the beginning of 2007 as the target for launching a merger between the three.

Two union sources have confirmed the date, which would have to be approved both at the unions' respective national conferences and via internal referendum. The superunion, which is yet to be named, would comprise 2.4 million members, represent a third of the total membership of the TUC and hold a 26% bloc vote at the Labour party's annual conference.

All three unions have recently been involved in high profile fights. The T&G have become heavily involved in the strikes and pickets at Gate Gourmet, GMB have been subjected to intense union-busting tactics at road recovery group the AA, and Amicus are currently fighting to get union convener Jerry Hicks reinstated at Rolls Royce (see page 1).

Yet despite recent fears raised in the right wing press over a return to 'Spanish working practices', this year has so far been one of the least militant on record, and disastrous failures by senior union figures have badly tarnished the union movement's reputation.

Britain suffered more redundancies and outsourcing than any other country in the EU in 2004, and union membership fell by 177,000, while hesitation over standing up against pensions reform in the public sector has weakened the movement's public perception.

Ministers are now preparing some concessions over planned changes to public sector pensions, after increasingly militant language from the major unions

in the run up to the TUC conference.

Industrial action has been threatened if ministers don't back down on a number of the proposed cuts in public sector schemes that would leave the government £9bn up, and take tens of thousands of pounds away from individual employees.

Measures proposed currently include the ending of the final salary pension scheme and an extension of retirement age from 60 to 65. Neither issue is currently up for discussion by the government, they are only looking at ways to reduce the scheme's impact on 40 to 50 year olds.

The concessions fall far short of what had been suggested before the election, when the government promised a climb-down in exchange for the TUC's co-operation in getting the party re-elected.

Freedom exclusively reported in April on public sector union Unison's unilateral ballot cancellation on a possible general strike, despite widespread opposition at grassroots level, and vocal predictions that the government would renege on their promises.

Sheila, a rep for the PCS union, who also had to call off ballots, noted at the time: "People are really pissed off and no-one is fooled. My members know that after the election the government will shaft them."

The government has since failed to keep to an agreement made last year that they would consult unions over new PFI schemes and over pensions.

The failures, strongly linked to actions decided by leadership figures which excluded the wishes of the majority membership, have raised further questions over the efficacy of a merger which would further remove union leaders from their grassroots support,



particularly following rumours that the size of the superunion could provoke a power struggle between leading figures from the merged group and the TUC.

One member of SolFed, British branch

of syndicalist international union the IWA, said: "It's inevitable that the less accountable you are to your membership, the less likely you are to follow your members' wishes. If the unions were

more directly influenced at the grassroots level, and able to stand up for their members, perhaps they wouldn't have to hide their continuing decline behind merger talks."

## Menezes inquiry next year

**T**he report into the death of Charles de Menezes will not be published until after any potential criminal charges have been brought against the police officers who killed him.

Confirmation that the officers could be prosecuted came from Richard Latham, a lawyer for the Independent Police Complaints Commission, at a brief preliminary inquest hearing in London's Inner South District coroner's court. "There is an intention to report before Christmas. In due course there may – I emphasise there may – be recommendations to the Director [of Public Prosecutions] that criminal proceedings should be initiated or a recommendation to the Metropolitan Police or the Metropolitan Police Authority that disciplinary proceedings may arise."

The report could be held up for as long as a year while this separate investigation takes place. But leaked reports have continued to hint at larger revelations contained within the IPCC report.

Police have admitted that Menezes, an

electrician, had not been wearing any heavy clothing or baggage, which may have concealed a bomb, after a whistle blower leaked secret documents from the investigation.

A series of question marks over the level of information officers had to hand have also been raised, as the undercover army officer charged with watching Menezes was relieving himself as the electrician left his flat, and CCTV footage of the incident has mysteriously vanished.

Menezes was not photographed on his way to the station, but a code red was nevertheless authorised, allowing the use of deadly force. The Met have alleged it was the fault of the inattentive officer that Menezes was shot.

The attending firearms team had photographs of the suspect which did not bear any resemblance to the innocent man.

Two teams entered the station, where they went out of radio communication, and one joined Menezes on the tube carriage, where he was seated, and shot

him in the head from a distance of 12 inches.

A clerk alleged to have given out the information has since been suspended. Among the items distributed to the press were officer statements, a pathology report and photographs.

The new information has led to calls for Sir Ian Blair, Commissioner of the Metropolitan police, to step down after his original comments, that Menezes was ignoring challenges from the police, leading to the shooting, were proved false, as were claims that the electrician leapt the barrier, or ran for any other reason than to catch the train.

Further reports, from tube workers who have told investigators that at least three of the CCTV cameras were working during the shooting, also contradict police claims that there is no footage.

Hundreds of people held a vigil for Menezes outside Downing Street on 24th August.

## Metronet cut jobs

**F**ollowing damning reports of missing public money and widespread failures in service, tube repair firm Metronet may axe 285 jobs despite a "satisfactory and improving asset performance".

The cuts, representing approximately 6% of the company's total workforce, come despite Metronet falling up to a year behind schedule on its maintenance targets and after a reported 36% profit hike for Balfour Beattie, a major company supplier who also own 20% stake in the enterprise, to £55m this half-year.

Freedom reported in August that Metronet had earned more than £9m in bonuses for 2004/5 despite missing its self-defined targets, and that £97.9m in public funds remained missing.

Balfour Beattie had said just days before the job loss announcement that the new management team at Metronet would "address and resolve" any problems with delays over the coming year.

The TSSA union's General Secretary, Gerry Doherty said: "PPP was sold to

Londoners as the panacea for delivering much needed improvements on the Tube, which it has failed to do; so how could it possibly make things better by employing fewer staff?"

"The private companies primary loyalty lies with their shareholders, not with the passengers using the Underground. It's PPP – the promotion of private profits – that's driving these cuts.

"There's no question that the Tube needs investment. But like our national railways, it's the taxpayer that ultimately pays. Why waste public subsidies on lining the pockets of shareholders when the money would be better invested directly in upgrading the network."

Metronet said the number of frontline staff affected would be kept to a minimum, with most losses taking place in support roles. The company can't have its performance reviewed for another 5½ years under the PPP contract, although Ken Livingston has said the city could try to re-negotiate the contract within three.



# News

## A capitalist famine

The ongoing famine in Niger is a man-made one, as avoidable as it is tragic, reports Iain McKay

Famine has engulfed the west African country of Niger, with 800,000 children in desperate need of food. There is sufficient food to alleviate the suffering, but government policy has prevented the distribution of free food – denying access to the poorest sectors of society.

Effective relief efforts have been ruled out through Niger's adherence to the International Monetary Fund's Heavily Indebted Poor Countries programme – one of the conditions attached to the recent G8 debt relief plan.

Niger, the second poorest country in the world, has markets in some parts of the country full of produce. A few minutes drive from these markets is the unseen face of Niger – starving people under canvas tents with aid workers trying their best to help them.

The last harvest was only 11% below the five-yearly average. Yet the price of grain has gone through the roof, with a 100g bag of millet, the staple grain, nearly doubling in price since last year – from around £13 to £25. The problems started when locusts ate crops and cattle fodder, then the price of food shot out of reach of the poor. Traders in Niger have been exporting grain to wealthier neighbouring countries.

Niger is reliant on donors such as the EU, which favour 'free-market' solutions to poverty. The Niger government, eager to implement G8 policy, initially refused to hand out free food to the starving to prove its "free market" credentials, instead offering millet at subsidised prices, which the poor could not afford. The G8 had

written off some of Niger's debt, but only on the condition that it implemented approved economic reforms. Its debt relief programme for Highly Indebted Poor Countries stipulates that recipients must remove subsidies for food, reduce subsidies for food production and increase the intake of tax, as part of a programme for 'free market reform'. The UN agreed with the Niger government and refused to distribute free food, arguing that this would interfere with the free market.

Finally, the Niger government, along with its foreign donor countries and the UN, reversed this policy and agreed to allow the distribution of free food. This delay has resulted in a total of 3.6 million people being affected by the food crisis, with around 874,000 people needing free food to survive.

Médecins sans Frontières said the famine was avoidable. "This is not a famine, in the Somalian way. The harvest was bad in 2004 and the millet granaries are empty. Yet there is food on the markets. The trouble is that the price of the food is beyond anyone's reach." Médecins sans Frontières stressed that the IMF and the EU had pressed Niger too hard to implement a structural adjustment programme. "No sooner had the government been re-elected [this year], than it was obliged to introduce 19% VAT on basic foodstuffs. At the same time, as part of the policy, emergency grain reserves were abolished."

This exacerbated the market induced problems, but such state intervention is as necessary to create capitalism as it is



to maintain it. IMF imposed policies are just the latest in a long history of state actions required to separate workers from the land and force them to become wage slaves.

The main causes of the Niger famine are man-made. The reason for the tax rise, said the Niger government, was that it helped meet the conditions of IMF-imposed reforms (i.e. a structural

adjustment programme). The majority of reportage has focused on the natural roots of the famine, suggesting that the Niger government is blameless, irrespective of IMF and G8 stipulations.

## Can't pay won't pay

The Chicago-based Voices in the Wilderness, which organised over 70 humanitarian missions to Iraq to deliver modest but symbolic amounts of medical supplies, said it will not pay a \$20,000 fine imposed by the US Federal Court for importing goods to Iraq without the necessary licence.

"Voices will not pay a penny of this fine," Voices said in a statement issued shortly after Federal District Judge John Bates's ruling. "The economic sanctions regime imposed brutal and lethal punishment on Iraqi people. The US government would not allow Iraq to rebuild its water treatment system after the US military deliberately destroyed it in 1991.

"We chose to travel to Iraq in order to openly challenge our country's war against the Iraqi people. To pay the fine would be to collaborate with the US government's ongoing war against Iraq. We will not collaborate."

The ruling punishes Voices, who were founded in 1996, even though the Iraqi Sanctions Regulations state that "donated foodstuffs in humanitarian circumstances and donated supplies intended strictly for medical purposes" are permissible.

Under the presidencies of Bush senior and Clinton sanctions overseen by the UN but at US direction deprived huge segments of the civilian population of medical supplies, health care, education, access to potable water and a peaceful life. The sanctions are estimated to be responsible for more than 500,000 deaths.

The ruling against Voices contrasts sharply with the treatment of corporations found guilty of breaking sanctions. In May public testimonies, in the senate Foreign Investigations Committee, exposed how two Texas-based oil companies had been involved in smuggling

operations in Iraq between 2000 and 2002.

The Bay Oil company had paid Saddam Hussein's government to secure contracts; the UN notified Office of Foreign Assets Control but no action was taken. According to testimony at the same time, Odin Oil docked at least half a dozen oil tankers at the port of Khor al-Amaya and was unloading oil smuggled by US ally Jordan. Odin Oil were assured by the US navy that their illegal efforts would not be interfered with.

Kathy Kelly, founder of Voices, said: "Voices in the Wilderness wants to take this opportunity to conscientiously object to war, in concert, we hope, with the growing confidence in [the US] that we have a responsibility to bring these troops home, bring them home now, bring them home alive, and pay reparations to Iraqi people for the terrible suffering we have caused."

Louis Further

## Ecuador oil halted

Protesters demanding the redistribution of oil wealth to the poor have occupied oil installations, airports and roads, bringing the industry to a halt and forcing a state of emergency in Ecuador.

People from the Amazonian provinces of Sucumbios and Orellana began demonstrations on the 13th August, forcing the suspension of oil production in the region after five days of direct action – including the occupation of key production facilities, damage to pumping equipment, the use of dynamite to destroy pipelines and other forms of sabotage.

The government of Ecuador refused to negotiate with the protesters, declaring a 'state of emergency' allowing for the censorship of local and national media, as well as restricting freedom of movement and assembly.

The army was also called up and in the three days between the 17th and 20th August was used to forcibly evict demonstrators using tear gas and water cannon.

The government and oil companies are now counting the cost of social unrest; the industry is responsible for 25% of the country's GDP and it is estimated production will not resume at full capacity until November.

President Alfredo Palacio, who came to power after a popular uprising against neo-liberalism dislodged his predecessor Lucio Gutierrez, has moved quickly to form an agreement with community and protest leaders that there will be no repeat of the occupations.

Demands for increased investment by private oil companies in local infrastructure, healthcare, the environment and economic development have been agreed to by the government, with petroleum companies agreeing to construct roads and income taxes on the industry being diverted to the social needs of the region's people.

One sticking point remains – regarding the immunity of protesters from criminal charges relating to direct action taken against the oil installations.



## Feature

# Chill winds

## An exclusive investigation by Rob Ray uncovers massive holes in corporate proposals to concrete over the Suffolk countryside

A new development that has been going through the planning stages at Great Blakenham, a village near Ipswich, has stalled in recent months. The site is supposed to host a £300m indoor 'snow dome', but has been unable to persuade planning officers in the country to give it a clean bill of health. An exclusive Freedom investigation can reveal an extraordinary catalogue of environmental, cultural and economic flaws surrounding the SnOasis plan in Suffolk. We can reveal why the controversial project plans have been held up since June last year, following so-far failed attempts by site owners Onslow to make Mid-Suffolk's planning department approve them based on completely inadequate research.

Documents leaked to Freedom have exposed huge differences between Onslow's original claims for the project's benefits, and their concrete proposals, which have been heavily criticised by the planning department.

Internal council notes for a March briefing over the project said: "Much

delay has occurred due to the reluctance of the applicant to provide the necessary clarity of information."

Analysis of the SnOasis plans, explained by a council insider who wishes to remain anonymous, shows exactly how weak the research provided is.

Volume nine of the report for example, talks about SnOasis' potential relationship with the landfill site next door, which is barely 800m away.

'Identified potential risks' include flooding, surface and groundwater contamination (the area is a major source of drinking water for the region), 'gas migration' (the landfill smells), dust blowing off the landfill which could cause a hazard to people and buildings, noise, litter and vermin at the potential holiday spot.

The report said: "Insufficient data exists at this time to quantify these risks."

Dr Wendy Le-Las, Planning Consultant to the National Association of Local Councils wrote a letter to SnOasis on behalf of 15 local Parish councils in November 2004. She said: "How can any officer, or LPA consultant, write a comprehensive report to advise lay members, when the information on all three applications is so incomplete? Any such report is bound to be misleading to a greater or lesser degree."

A spokesperson for Onslow said: "There is no risk of flooding. The environmental agency have agreed with us, they don't see it as a flooding risk."

Economically too there have been problems. Onslow specifically state in their Sustainability report that: "All relevant facilities will be provided on-site and reduce off-site trips." The implication – that there will be little financial trickle-down for the community, has further worried planners.

John Field, Parish council chairman for Baylham, also believes that the potential positive impact on jobs is severely limited. He said: "We really don't have much unemployment around here. The 1,500 long term jobs they are talking about will mostly be part-time, so that might help some people, but the wages will be very low, and they will probably employ people from outside the area."

Onslow's spokesperson said: "We will create up to 1,500 jobs. The nature of these jobs are ranged across the board from management to sports staff."

But it has been transport issues which have been the major target of council ire. The internal March notes report: "Onslow's transport assessment has not got off the ground properly yet as they opted for an outdated traffic impact model."

"Onslow has offered very little in terms of off site works and public transport measures and for a scheme of this scale, this is unacceptable."

"Taking account of our requirement for a station to be provided and Onslow's



Wasteland? Onslow have stressed that the land they will be building on is an ex-quarry – these pictures show, it is anything but. In fact, up to 95% of the 2km-long development will be on what is currently greenfield land.

reluctance to acknowledge its necessity, despite the submission of a planning application ... which states that the developer will fund the station, the proposals are essentially flawed."

A spokesperson for Onslow Ltd, said: "The issue was more whether the existence of the station was a requirement. The development was never pre-required. Mid Suffolk say that it was. Onslow will fund it if it's agreed that it will go ahead. We have been having a discussion with Mid Suffolk District Council about that."

But the council's draft planning brief, which followed a 2003 planning report, specifically states that for the council's 'Scenario 2+' major recreation development option, the provision of a station was required, according to correspondence shown to Freedom.

A look at Onslow's application shows why. In less than an afternoon, Freedom found projected customer attendance figures that varied between 715,000 people (estimates from water drainage provision report), to 737,000, 750,000 and a million respectively in their transport assessment. A conservative estimate of parking facilities from their preliminary sketches showed they might provide for up to 2.5 million people a year working at full capacity.

The Onslow representative responded: "Our assessment of visitor numbers is pretty robust if you look at our Locum report."

Transport planning for this influx revolved around the idea of hourly traffic averages to show that the impact on surrounding villages would be light. John

Field however has grave misgivings. He said: "The (Affected B1113) road carries heavy traffic now and there have been predictions made that appeared to be based on people visiting SnOasis throughout the day. That the arrivals and departures would be spread throughout the day. That is unlikely to actually occur."

"The traffic would be much more peaked than the claims that they have made. That's one of the key issues. The others are, are the estimates right?"

"The number of people you say will make the site viable is not the number you hope to attract. If the thing is successful there will be far more visitors than suggested and they aren't likely to be spread out throughout the day. You would run into severe problems."

The impact of the potential traffic surge has upset leading local businesses at nearby technology park Orion Court. In their own application to Mid-Suffolk, which began two years before that of SnOasis, the developers wrote: "The SnOasis proposal ... has at the heart of its outline application, road and highway proposals which appear to be inadequate for the traffic which will be generated."

Even the feasibility of the project as a profit-making enterprise has been brought into question. Mid-Suffolk's March notes say: "The economic viability work submitted by Onslow was weak and late and has necessitated the commissioning of our own study."

The council had to put aside £120,000 for that study, which they have requested be repaid by SnOasis, according to a

March 2004 position statement.

The demise last year of a similar project, based in Tokyo, could also be an indicator on the future viability of the snowdome.

Tokyo's SSAW (Spring, Summer, Autumn and Winter) snow dome was 40 minutes from the centre of the city. In less than a decade it closed, and is now to be demolished. SnOasis, meanwhile, will be well over an hour away from London – a longer journey than its potential rival in Milton Keynes, Xscape.

Discussions over the application are ongoing. Onslow's spokesperson said: "The locum report shows that it is highly viable and there is a big market for this sort of project. It has support from the Suffolk Chamber of Commerce, the Institute of directors and the local National Union of Farmers."

"They recognise the huge potential for local businesses. There will be opportunity for local businesses to apply for a range of services to SnOasis. My colleagues met with Mid Suffolk council a week ago to discuss the current planning application."

The spokesman did not know whether local traders would be the preferred bidders.

A decision over the future of the project is expected to be reached this autumn, according to John Field, but could take substantially longer.

If approval is given, the application will be forwarded to GO East, who will effectively act as a government-level referral.

### Rehashed and inedible

The SnOasis application may simply be a rehashed version of a proposal made to Horesham district council in West Sussex, which was withdrawn after questions were raised over the project's transport and environmental impact.

The application, which was, like SnOasis, backed by construction giant Alfred McAlpine, was made at another closed Blue Circle works, a 20-30 hectare brownfield site called Upper Beeding.

Proposals for an ice rink, cinema, bowling and hotel facilities closely match the West Sussex proposal, as do the traffic problems which, in that case, contributed to the project permanently stalling in 1999.

Helen Thorne and Emma Evans, from Nettlestead, researched the Sussex plans. In an open letter to the parish, they said: "All arguments that great Blakenham was the prime geographical location for this development are clearly untrue."

"If the proposals are turned down at Great Blakenham, will Blue Circle and McAlpine merely seek another 'prime location' in yet another quarry?"

Tony Stephens, who was director of planning for Horesham at the time, explained what happened to the earlier application. He said:

"They couldn't get the financing, there was a question about its viability. The information there was submitted was sketchy."

"The road network wasn't capable of handling the traffic generated. The site is next to an A-road but there was a question as to whether it should be dualled."

Onslow denied that there were any links between the two projects.



# Commentary

## FREEDOM

Volume 66 Number 17

### Anarchism

Anarchists work towards a society of mutual aid and voluntary co-operation. We reject government, and all forms of exploitation and domination.

Freedom Press is an independent anarchist publisher, founded in 1886. Besides this newspaper, which comes out every two weeks, we produce books on all aspects of anarchist theory and practice – see our website for a full list.

In our building in East London we run Britain's biggest anarchist bookshop and host the Autonomy Club meeting room and the Freedom Hacklab open-access IT space.

Our aim is to explain anarchism more widely and to show that people can work together and use direct action to practically improve our lives and build a better world.

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

Well for some of you, the last issue will have come out close to on time, but for others, unfortunately a stationery delivery of envelopes and labels went astray at a crucial moment.

How about that? No unbelievably huge editorial screw-ups to apologise for, frankly we're a little bit shocked ourselves.

Apart from all the back slapping and general confusion over what exactly we should be doing with our time now there's no paper-related lateness to constantly panic over, Freedom seems to be ticking over relatively well in general.

The shop is having a slow month for sales, as is apparently fairly usual at this time of year (presumably you're all off doing something more exciting than browsing through our back catalogue, though what this could possibly be we've no idea) but has had a major re-stock.

The hacklab has been getting some custom, but nothing terribly regular which is a shame, as it's a really good donation-based resource for internet access and we'd like it to fulfil its remit and provide a resource for the local community. A good place to come and visit when you've got time (though whatever you do, don't mess around with the router, it'll be more than your life is worth).

### Contact details

Freedom Press, 84b Whitechapel High Street, London E1 7QX  
Tel/fax: 020 7247 9249  
[www.freedompress.org.uk](http://www.freedompress.org.uk)  
Enquiries: [info@freedompress.org.uk](mailto:info@freedompress.org.uk)  
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[distro@freedompress.org.uk](mailto:distro@freedompress.org.uk)

### Next issue

The next issue will be dated 17th September and the last day to get your copy to us will be Friday 9th September (see contact details above for where to send your letters/articles).

### Darley Oaks farm

Congratulations to those involved in shutting down Darley Oaks farm. To avoid accusations of misanthropy, however, might not now be the time to apply similar methods to bailiffs, Benefits Agency fraud staff, etc? Just a thought!

Paul M.

### Terrorism and treason

1. The author Lionel Shriver, writing in The Guardian on 9th August 2005, postures that, "It is the moral primitiveness of terrorism that exasperates me. Is it a good idea to knock down tall buildings with people in them? Duh. This isn't even Ethics 101 – it's Baby Learns Right From Wrong."

Ms Shriver has of late done a good job of presenting herself as a right-wing American-in-exile hack. She also appears infected with the moral primitiveness she wants to make the property of Islamic terror. Terror is a weapon of war-suicide bombings – a weapon of the weak during wartime.

Shriver wants to suggest that Baby Learns Right From Wrong is a skill the 'terrorists' need to develop. It wasn't political Islam that devised the term 'collateral damage' to bury from scrutiny the scale of civilian casualties in its interventions in Afghanistan and Iraq. It is a fact of history that war has been a weapon of political change and that war necessarily involves deaths of both combatants and civilians.

This is true of every military conflict. War is the use of military force to achieve political ends. Unless we wish to be blind to our own history, we cannot pretend that the West has somehow conducted itself during warfare in a way that conveys an ethical superiority.

As a way of making the civilian populations of imperialist nations endure briefly the conditions endured daily by occupied peoples, terror is a weapon *par excellence*. We can contend that such methods are counter-productive, but we cannot pretend that on their own terms they are ineffective, or that 'we' enjoy a moral superiority as regards the conduct of war.

2. A connected argument is that deployed by William Pfaff, writing in The Observer on 21st August. "Like the anarchists of the 19th and early 20th centuries, these people (Islamic terrorists) have no realisable goals and make no meaningful political demands, only Utopian ones. For that reason they present a profound problem to governments accustomed to dealing with rationally manageable threats, enemies and demands. Reason has no answer to nihilism."

This is equally specious. Leaving aside the fact that anarchist violence in the period cited was always a response to state terror, the fact remains that the violence of political Islam is always justified in reference to the presence of US/UK imperialism in the Gulf, intervention in Afghanistan, and the denial of self-determination to the Palestinians. Thus, political Islam is the form anti-imperialist resistance takes in relation to imperialist intervention in Muslim countries.

To suggest that it has no political programme, only a utopian one, is arrogant self-serving nonsense. The constituency of political Islam is precisely

Muslim youth politicised by the imperialist adventures of recent times.

3. The fact of that politicisation gives us a clear opportunity to seek to win those drawn to political Islam towards a militant secular anti-imperialist politics and away from the fundamentalist dead-end, on condition that our opposition to the British state is seen as intransigent as their own, albeit founded upon an entirely secular basis, and that our opposition through direct action can be demonstrated as more effective than reactive terror. In pursuing any such strategy we should seek to avoid dead-end theological debates and concentrate our critique upon the ineffectiveness of theocratic anti-imperialism – viz the supposedly principled mujahedin Bin Laden's willingness to take the Great Satan's dollar during the period of resistance to Soviet intervention in Afghanistan; the inability of Quaran-derived politics to address the political issues of 21st century capitalism – thus the inability of the Islamic state in Iran to do anything other than fracture into sectarianism in the face of the issues thrown up by its hold on power, and the failure of Iran, the Taliban in Afghanistan, the Zia ul-Haq dictatorship in Pakistan et al to address the fundamental social inequalities in their own societies. If, as the founder of the Muslim Brotherhood contended, "The Koran is our constitution" it's served as a pretty poor one in practice.

4. In wartime the state shows its true colours. Thus, Blair has used the fact of suicide bombings in the UK as a justification to push through an assault of civil liberties begun with the review of anti-terror legislation New Labour carried out upon coming into office – before 9/11. It is now possible to be deported from the UK if you speak in support of the right to armed resistance in Iraq, Chechnya, Afghanistan, Palestine.

We should be steadfast in our resistance to New Labour's anti-democratic agenda. As the mobilisation of the Brazilian community in the face of the murder of Jean Charles de Menezes has shown, the brutality of the state will create new allies for us. If resistance to British imperialism is to be a crime, let us be active criminals!

There is much talk of treason in the air. The Treason Act defines treason as levying war against "the King in his realm". In that sense then treason is our duty and we should not let the threat of the state deter us from building the anti-imperialist resistance our times require. There are many who were once fellow travellers of the left – Nick Cohen, Christopher Hitchens et al – who have become Lord Haw-Haws for US/UK imperialism once 'our own' state has come under attack. It is a pressure we must resist.

John Shute

### Slow food movement

As a direct result of McDonalds opening its first fast-arants in Italy a group of food producers and restaurateurs got together and formed the Slow Food Movement. Its aims are to restore to the Cities and Towns of Italy and the rest of the World, local food produced by traditional methods and cooked in traditional ways.

Corporate capitalism is being fought by local people who not only reject shit

bland factory produced food but, and this bit is crucial to everyone on the globe, are asserting the primacy of indigenous practices and customs. Not only are we 'What we eat' but we are surrounded by local customs; folk-lore and webs of relationships which make us the social creatures we are and express our cultural and historic heritage.

To quote their Manifesto "Our century, which began and has developed under the insignia of industrial civilisation, first invented the machine and then took it as its life model." We can unplug their machines!

This movement has members now in most European cities, including London, encouraging the spread of local recipes and places to eat in which the customer is seen as being some one interested in tasting wholesome food in a relaxed and convivial atmosphere. "A firm defence of quiet material pleasure is the only way to oppose the universal folly of fast food" (Slow Food Manifesto).

This builds a self-confidence in the food producers and chefs and establishes a demand for locally grown organic food. Which in turn leads to less food miles and more jobs in the local economy increasing the money spent and saved locally. Unlike the global corporations which extract the profits out of local communities returning it to overseas banks.

All this renewed emphasis on all things local gives us the opportunity to actively campaign in our neighbourhoods for the decision making processes.

Along with our local bread and food we can also plant energy crops to fuel our combined heat and power unit. District heating schemes are being set up around the country – including my own East Midlands Region, with our own utilising chicken-guano and discarded wooden pallets (Sibley Energy Trust).

This approach to self-managed energy supplies not only counters the centralising tendencies of big government, but also prevents central power companies holding local people to ransom by the cutting off of their electricity supplies.

Wind, solar and bio-mass (methane) all offer greater freedom to communities and consequently allow for greater diversity in the natural world. With renewable energy sources in place local democratic decision making cannot be undermined by bureaucrats of the political type or foreign power companies operating profit making companies. We can and should construct our lives around sustainable energy technologies leading to diverse communities both of humans and the environment.

Food grown by ourselves is a start but, much better to rent two or three allotments as a group and grow organic fruit and vegetables to sell to your neighbours or local shops and restaurants. In the East Midlands we have number of Farmers' Markets allowing a group of us to sell our produce to the people of one particular market town.

The act of growing food suggests further employment prospects for example the transporting of it from the fields or the preparing of box-schemes. It can also lead to local celebrations of the crops or food tasting sessions. This long slow journey back to vibrate communities can only be begun by people with vision. But, I believe the time as never been better given the renewed interest in all things local and peoples' total distrust and disrespect of all so-called experts and politicians.

Even traffic without noise and pollution is now a reality. Solar power generation

of electricity (photovoltaics) means both the supply and operation of electric trams and ultra-light railways can operate silently through our settlements without pollution or noise either.

This adds a further dimension to the ability and autonomy of mass-transit transport systems transforming our everyday lives. Taking back the streets becomes a real possibility when we propose these forms of transport. Remember if you don't argue and campaign for people friendly transport models you local unfriendly transport expert will be imposing larger roads and bypasses.

This is not a plea for techno fixes, just a recognition that certain technologies have a potential to enhance the quality of everyone's lives. Both the scale of the technology and its energy sources counter the imperatives of corporate capitalism. We build it we own it. No long term mortgages hanging over us either financial or in terms of toxic waste waiting to kill our grandchildren. Let's do it to them before they do it to us.

Milo

### Social work

Thank you for the review of our book Anarchists in Social Work: known to the authorities (Freedom 6th August). Please could you also mention that copies are obtainable from me, 4 Sandhall, Wilverston, Cumbria, LA12 9EQ, or from [www.anarchistsinsocialwork.org.uk](http://www.anarchistsinsocialwork.org.uk).

Martin Gilbert

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### Book reviews

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voices of the coming generation", these are voices of another land, albeit a land we all contributed to. Now that we have the template, by people like Studs Terkel and these two indefatigable activist-authors, it is time we started producing our own true stories, so that we can inspire the rebel voices emerging in our societies here.

### Quiz answers

1. Halifax Bank of Scotland apologised after two Scottish workers came into work to discover a cabbage and a cauliflower on their desks. Supposedly this was to get them to work harder but I'm afraid that particular management insight has passed me by.
2. Because August Spies described anarchists like these small sea birds, as "stormy petrels, harbingers of the coming storm." The publishing was linked to the AF.
3. Doctor John Creaghe.
4. Staff working for Members of Parliament. Five staff who work for the Scottish Socialist Party group have recently joined the IWVW.



# REVIEW

## Sports, a new book argues, can provide sites of resistance in modern society, leaving Robert Allen in agreement

In *Manufacturing Consent*, Noam Chomsky criticises the role of sport in the lives of people who appear to be passive, racist and tribal. Modern sport is now shaped by profit, with a corporate structure aimed at exploiting those who invest much of their lives in a passion that loosens their purse strings and lessens their political voices.

According to Chomsky, sport is a major factor in controlling people. "Workers have minds; they have to be involved in something and it's important to make sure they're involved in things that have absolutely no significance. So professional sports is perfect. It instills total passivity."

Dave Zirin, in his book *What's My Name, Fool? Sports and Resistance in the United States*, acknowledges that "people use sports as a balm to protect themselves from the harsh realities of the world"; and he notes that Chomsky is correct about the use of our intelligence when it comes to sport, as opposed to the political issues that affect our daily lives.

But Chomsky, argues Zirin, does not understand sport, which weakens his argument, because "it disregards how the very passion we invest in sports can transform it from a kind of mindless escape into a site of resistance".

Zirin adds: "It can become an arena where the ideas of our society are not only presented but also challenged. Just as sports can reflect the dominant ideas of our society, they can also reflect struggle."

"The story of the women's movement [in the US] is incomplete without mention of Billie Jean King's match against Bobby Riggs. The struggle for gay rights has to include a chapter on Martina Navratilova. When we think about the Black Freedom

struggle, we picture [baseball player] Jackie Robinson and Muhammad Ali in addition to Martin Luther King Jr and Malcolm X.

So is sport different in the United States? Are the issues that Chomsky raises relevant in Europe? Is Zirin's argument an element in our sports, that sports can become sites of resistance? Is European society so very different from the US that we don't see our struggles mirrored in the sports arena?

Not if we look closer. Sports and resistance do go hand in glove in Europe because for many people sport is a way out, for both participants and for spectators. For those lucky enough to have the skills to play football or athletics or snooker, it is a giant leap out of wage-slavery.

We should not be surprised that many people do not see it as a political act, because some do and some never forget their roots or the struggle for justice and survival. For those who watch, it is more than a balm, it is existence combined with solidarity.

Zirin is right and Chomsky is wrong in their respective positions on sport. What Chomsky objects to is the exploitation inherent in modern sport, its profit desire and its controlling influence. What Zirin recognises is the spirit that runs through sport, which celebrates the positive aspects of competition and the intense feeling of belonging to something that stirs the passions.

What we need in Europe is a similar book, that highlights the sites of resistance that exist in our sports. All the elements that have played a part in societal change in America have echoes in Europe; they are the same yet different – like Robbie



Fowler tearing off his football shirt to reveal on his vest support for the Liverpool dockers, a gesture that got him a fine; like the Wimbledon and Manchester United supporters who, instead of following their corporate team to the promised land, set up their own clubs to retain their communal identity.

For the abuse that Jackie Robinson received read Clive Best, Viv Anderson, Laurie Cunningham. For the respect that Billie Jean King was given, read, in

our modern era, Kelly Holmes. We can go deeper; through his honesty snooker player Ronnie O'Sullivan has highlighted mental health issues.

It is easy, as Zirin points out, to see sport as, at its core, the essence of cut-throat competition, insane salaries and drug abuse. Tell that story to the competitors of not that many years ago when the pay was pitiful and supporters were regarded in much the same way that workers were treated – like fodder for the benefit of the ruling elites.

Sport has changed all our societies in ways that are not obvious and if Zirin's book, albeit with its US orientation, can be seen as a celebration of sports as sites of resistance, which embrace people rather than profit, then maybe Chomsky will realise that not all sports people, players and supporters, are passive.

*What's My Name, Fool? Sports and Resistance in the United States*, by Dave Zirin, published by Haymarket Books, \$15, available via [www.haymarketbooks.org](http://www.haymarketbooks.org) website

## BOOKS

### Powerdown: options and actions for a post-carbon world

by Richard Heinberg  
Clairview, £10.95

### The Party's Over: oil, war and the fate of industrial societies (second edition) New Society Publishers, £15.50

In recent years Richard Heinberg has emerged from his shell as a green anarchist and his empathy towards primitivism to become the darling of the neo-liberal crowd, who are convinced that Armageddon is lurking over the horizon.

Until Heinberg came along with his anarchistic perspective on a post-carbon world, the neo-liberals were scratching around in the dark, unsure what they can hope to get from such a scary scenario. In recent months Heinberg, who resides in California, has been in Africa and in Europe, lecturing to these neo-liberals – a fine position for any anarchist to be in, never mind one with primitivist sensibilities. And, if nothing else, Heinberg has made the subject respectable because he has taken the fate

of industrial societies seriously by presenting paradigms that in any other era would have been called utopian models. He also knows his readers.

In *The Party's Over* he tells them how it will be. "The strategy of individualist survivalism," he writes, "will likely offer only temporary and uncertain refuge during the energy downslope. True individual and family security will come only with community solidarity and interdependence. If you live in a community that is weathering the energy downslope well, your personal chances of surviving and prospering will be greatly enhanced, regardless of the degree of your personal efforts at stockpiling tools or growing food."

Researching and writing *The Party's Over* disturbed Heinberg so much that he decided he needed to write a second book, *Powerdown*, that spelled out exactly what kind of world we can expect. The energy downslope, he explains, needs to become a powerdown that relies on co-operation, conservation and sharing alongside a lifeboat strategy that is built on community solidarity and preservation.

But Heinberg is realistic, so he offers the alternative options, the real scary

scenarios, which, at this moment, look far more likely than the utopian visions he presents in *The Party's Over*. These alternatives are not really options because – right now with wars, human-made droughts and famines, climate change, societal competition and rampant consumerism defining our daily lives – the thought that humanity could fight down to the last one standing in a war for the remaining resources is frighteningly plausible. That is the direction we appear to be heading because, as Heinberg puts it, there are a lot of people (neo-liberals among them) who are waiting for a magic elixir and are in denial.

What is really scary, from a European point of view, is that Heinberg wants us to believe that the American people are working their arses off to change society and bring about cultural renewal, and that when the time comes the right decisions will be made. The evidence right now appears to suggest that the people of the Empire are not capable of making the decisions Heinberg desires and by making the wrong choices they will drag the rest of us down with them.

### Global Uprising: confronting the tyrannies of the 21st century

edited by Neva Welton and Linda Wolf  
New Society Publishers, £15.50

If ever a book sought to identify the core problems with the so-called "anti-globalisation movement", this is it. These are the stories from a new generation of activists, we are told – all 60 of them, and if you ever wondered why some people can't stand Americana, this will give you some clues. There's lots of good stuff in here, but this is a not a book about global uprising, it is a book about the individualism that has come to define a movement moving further and further away from community and worker organising.

The authors completely ignore the roles that anarchism, in all its diversity, has played in recent decades in raising the profiles of community and worker struggle. The fact that the book is aimed at a north American audience is no excuse for ignoring what is happening in the areas of the world that Americans have never heard of, but it is an indictment of the editors that they have revised anarchist organising out of the history.

### Voices of a People's History of the United States

by Howard Zinn and Anthony Arnove  
Seven Stories Press, £10.99

Howard Zinn is like a rash on the left-libertarian movement in the US, not least because of the rise of publishers such as Seven Stories Press, the reborn South End Press and his co-author's initiative, Haymarket Books. Contrast this with Britain and Ireland, where there is nothing resembling a left-libertarian press to publish books like this mighty 660 page tome, and it is easy to feel that anarchism is now an American institution, trailing behind it a rich European tradition.

Zinn and Arnove have collected just over 200 voices, stretching all the way back to that infamous year, 1492, when the world was turned upside down by a vain man who should have stayed at home, in Europe. The collection ends with the voice of Patti Smith, the punk-poet. In between there are enough anarchist voices to prove that anarchism in the US has a real history.

What this book does is inspire but, while the authors dedicate it to the "rebel



## A Sideways Look

Back in the politically-charged eighties, a lot of employers were challenged by an anti-racist movement that was growing in confidence. Equal opportunities policies in central and local government and the NHS had forced local managers to follow procedures to make sure they didn't just recruit people like themselves. There were major battles at Ford, where the union was accused of not doing enough to promote anti racism when it came to recruitment.

However, as with all stories, there's more to it than first appears. Some of the strongest unions who were criticised at this time for maintaining an 'all white' (and often all male) workforce really did have a lot of control over who they worked with. Until Eddie Shah and Murdoch's assault on the print unions they operated a closed shop and could enforce union discipline because expelling anyone meant they lost their job. Similar levels of organisation existed in various manual trades in local government, parts of the Post Office, the docks, the mines and the railways. Some of these unions, most notably the NUM, took anti-racism seriously. When the anti-racist movement made its quite reasonable demands, the smarter employers saw this as another means to roll back the unions' control.

While the principal reason that the unions lost influence from the eighties onwards is that they were fighting a vicious class war, often with both hands tied behind their back, the period marked a shift back to management controlling all aspects of hire and fire. In the public sector this was hedged around with procedures designed to stop any individual manager's bigotry from overly influencing the process.

However, now that the organised working class has been seen off, employers are once again free to indulge their hobby horses. In local government and the NHS, temp agencies are making a mint as cash strapped authorities and trusts try to balance their need for workers with their need not to enter into any long term financial commitments (like employing someone). Some local authorities shamelessly wait until a week before a temp worker would accrue rights and then sack them. Recruitment, even for permanent staff, is done through agencies like Reed and Addecco, who pass on their substantial costs to the employer.

Many private sector companies now operate an 'introduce a friend' scheme to bypass the cost of going to agencies. It's not hard to see why, as according to the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development, more than eight out of ten firms experience recruitment difficulties. As well as saving in recruitment costs (which can easily reach five figures), applicants are also 'of higher quality', though this is of course pretty subjective.

Employers using these schemes claim that they are not reducing the diversity of the workforce. In a lot of places one can guess that they're only being used

for bottom end jobs, which tend to be the most diverse anyway.

Why is this important, though? I'd say there are two reasons. For many people plugged into one community work is often the only place they regularly encounter people from different communities. But also there are opportunities in terms of getting like minded people into the same workplace. Having recently had someone else prepared to stand up for himself join our team at work has kept management on their toes a bit more. (I don't have a clue what his politics are but he enjoys baiting management.) When Black Flag advocated 'fives' (basically groups of militants who tried to get themselves into the same workplace) and later workers' clubs they were echoing the turn of the century workers who had created the *bourses du travail* or labour exchanges. These weren't just a focus of organising - they were also places where you could go and hear about where there was work available.

Svartfrosk

## Blast from the Past

The TUC asks for more power, taken from Freedom of 3rd September 1955: The report which the general council of the TUC will present to the annual congress at Southport next month is to ask the congress to alter the rules of the RUC to enable the general council to intervene in disputes wherever there seems a likelihood that they 'may effect the working lives of others.'

What this means in effect is that the TUC is so concerned with the inter-union strikes which have taken place this year that it wants more and more power to itself in order to deal with them under the pretext that other workers affected by 'thoughtless' strikers must be protected.

The government knows which side the TUC is on.

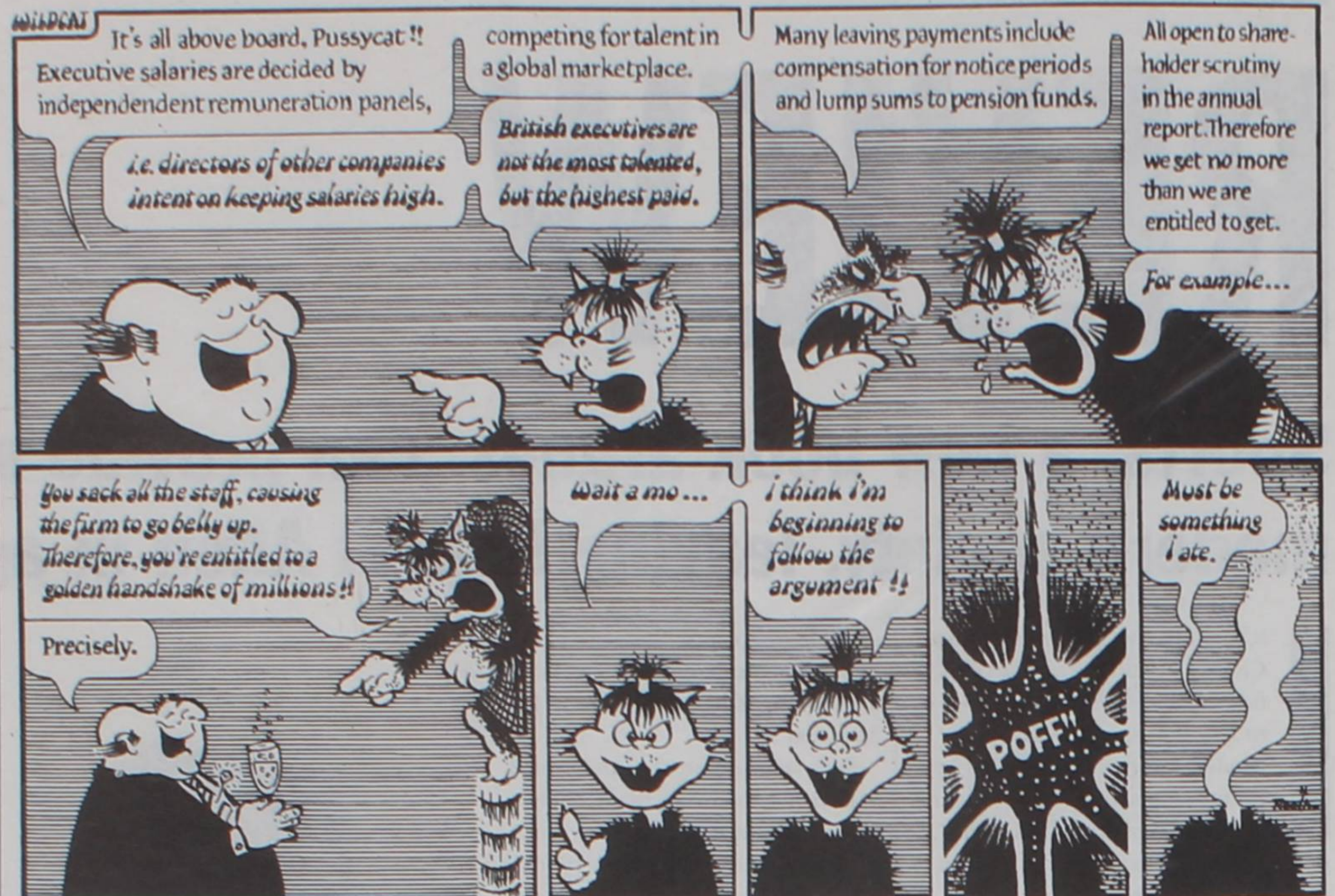


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## The quiz

1. Which bank had to apologise recently after managers started using vegetables as motivational tools?
2. Why was an anarchist publishing house called 'Stormy Petrel'?
3. Which anarchist doctor founded papers in Sheffield and Buenos Aires, aided the Mexican revolution and died in poverty in the US?
4. Which group of workers are represented by the T&GWU in London and, among others, the IWW in Edinburgh?

Answers on page 6



## Imagine If...

Mike sat at his desk, waiting for the text to scroll down his autocue and wondering what all the fuss was about.

He'd only spoken the truth. Men were emasculated and controlled by women. His co-presenter, a pretty brunette, sat down beside him with barely a glance.

Oh so it was going to be the cold treatment was it? Typical woman.

"This is why I've never risen above my position you know." He motioned at her, annoyed. "All you women are in the top jobs and cold shoulder me for no reason at all."

"Must be why you still work as a massively well-paid broadcaster, even being so incredibly old Mike. Sadly, I can't say the same about my job prospects when my looks go," she replied.

Mike couldn't think of a witty reply. Typical. "It's because they're all stupid and I'm really smart and should be in charge." He thought.

"Don't chew on the boom Mike, it interferes with the sound. We've told you before." A voice sounded in his ear, his female producer.

Mike winced. A man wouldn't have told him off in that way. This was the problem with women, no reticence, stoicism, or single-mindedness.

The news began, and Mike started reading.

"Thirty Ugandan women are into the fourth week of a hunger strike today against being sent back to a country where they allege they are in danger of being raped and killed."

Typical women, always moaning. You wouldn't catch a man doing that...



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## Listings

until 10th September Vegan and vegetarian dolphin camp in Wales (not a place where vegan dolphins stay, but a chance to see dolphins!) contact [cetaceadefenceuk@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:cetaceadefenceuk@yahoo.co.uk)

5th September Bristol Indymedia film night at Cube Cinema, Dove Street South (off King's Square), Bristol, screening Rebel Without a Cause and exclusive footage from the recent G8 protests - doors open 7.30pm, film starts 8pm.

8th September Haringey Solidarity Group discussion meeting at 69 Woodlands Park Road, starts 7.30pm, topic 'Our media versus their media'.

13th to 16th September Disarm DSEi arms fair at ExCeL Centre, London Docklands, contact 07817 652029, [disarm@dsei.org](http://disarm@dsei.org) or see [dsei.org](http://dsei.org)

17th September Home Education Fair from 1pm to 5pm at Westbourne Grove Church, Westbourne Grove, London W11, call 020 8969 0893 or email [info@choicesineducation.org.uk](mailto:info@choicesineducation.org.uk)

22nd September World car-free day, see [carbusters.org/wcfd](http://carbusters.org/wcfd)

24th September London Anarchist Forum talk 'William Blake, mystic, madman or anarchist?' (speaker: Steve Ash) at 2pm in the Autonomy Club at Freedom, 84b Whitechapel High Street, London E1, see [eventsandissues.bravehost.com](http://eventsandissues.bravehost.com)

25th September Demonstration at Lakenheath, for info contact 01508 550446 or [info@lakenheathaction.org](mailto:info@lakenheathaction.org)

25th September London Vegan Festival from 10am to 7pm at Kensington Town Hall, Hornton Street, London W8, see [londonveganfestival.org.uk](http://londonveganfestival.org.uk)

27th September to 2nd October Peoples' Global Action conference in Haridwar, Uttaranchal, North India, see [agp.org](http://agp.org)

1st October Star Wars: an international activists conference, organised by Yorkshire CND, for more info see [cndyorks.gn.apc.org](http://cndyorks.gn.apc.org)

1st October Planning meeting for climate campaign demo (to be on 3rd December, midway through the next round of UN climate talks in Montreal), from 12 noon to 5pm at the Asian Cultural Centre, Manzil Way (off Cowley Road), Oxford, for info see [campaigncc.org](http://campaigncc.org)

16th October International day of action against McDonald's, to mark World Food Day, call 020 7713 1269 or see [mcspotlight.org](http://mcspotlight.org)

22nd October The 24th London Anarchist Bookfair at the Resource Centre, 356 Holloway Road, London N7, from 10am to 6pm, for info see [freespace.virgin.net/anarchist.bookfair/](http://freespace.virgin.net/anarchist.bookfair/)

23rd October Freedom to Protest conference in central London from 11am to 5pm, for more info see [freedomtoprotest.org.uk](http://freedomtoprotest.org.uk)

26th and 27th November BeyondTV International Festival, Swansea, see [www.undercurrents.org/beyondtv](http://www.undercurrents.org/beyondtv)

3rd December International Day of Climate Protest, see [campaigncc.org](http://campaigncc.org)

## Introducing...

Earth First!

Ecological direct action network

Last month saw the Earth First! summer gathering, which has been running since 1992. The gathering is highly security conscious, waiting until a week before the event to tell people the location, and banning mobile phones from the area. One person who attended said:

"It was very good, we had discussions about the G8, which was the first real chance to take stock ... Two discussions about Peak oil and a dam in Iceland which is being built by an American company were some of the best, and there was stuff about nanotechnology and green cards."

Website: [earthfirstgathering.org.uk](http://earthfirstgathering.org.uk)

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