

FREEDOM

80P ANARCHIST NEWS AND VIEWS

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1 OCTOBER 2005

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BACKROOM BOSSES FRONTLINE LOSSES

EXCLUSIVE

Children's charity ChildLine is facing the closure of its Newton Abbot centre within the next few months, and major cuts at a second centre in Leeds.

The NGO, which specialises in providing a counselling and care service for vulnerable children, will be imposing widespread cuts and redundancies across the service.

The charity, which confirmed the cuts in August amongst senior staff, had no plans to tell its workforce until December and have imposed non-disclosure agreements on key personnel.

The reluctance of leading figures within ChildLine to tell staff what is going on has infuriated workers within the organisation.

One said: "The thing which sticks in the throat is we have a semi-formal [union] stewards network who are almost the only people who know what's going on except senior management."

"There is something about charities where they are incredibly secretive. They have even banned the chief exec's secretary from handling her mail just in case she finds out."

ChildLine, founded by television personality Esther Rantzen in 1986, has been in financial crisis for most of this year. The leaked cuts follow warnings made in late July that the 24-hour service currently provided by the charity could close, significantly impacting on their

ability to cope with approximately 2,300 calls daily.

ChildLine chiefs blamed a drop-off in charitable donations in the wake of last year's tsunami in Asia and announced a new drive for donations. They claimed a drop of up to 30% in revenue after donations to the tsunami relief fund meant other charitable giving dried up.

Staff were told that the charity was in financial trouble in an internal email on 19th July. Chief Executive Carol Easton said: "Trustees and Senior Management are discussing various options and will be formally consulting with staff and staff representatives over the next few months. In particular we are:

- Reviewing the size and structure of the senior management team
- Reviewing the structure of the administration function and support services throughout ChildLine."

In August, a second email from Easton suggested optimistically that renewed fundraising appeals were having an effect, though admitted it would not solve the problem entirely. She said: "I wrote last before the launch of our emergency fundraising appeal and much has happened since."

"We have received a fantastic amount of coverage – television, radio and press – and have so far raised an amazing £270,000."

"Money is still coming in and the income has made a substantial difference to our immediate situation."

But the financial crisis intensified later



ChildLine

that month, with ChildLine falling into deeper financial trouble.

Freedom's source at the charity said that it wasn't just the tsunami that was to blame for the crisis.

Among the cuts are nine of 13 directors posts, raising questions over the need for so many executive positions in a charity that raised just £12.7m in 2004

and has only 268 full-time employees. Salaries amounted to £6.4m in 2004, with the charity's top two executives receiving up to £59,999 and £79,999.

In the summer 60% of those employees voted on trade union recognition. Following a 91% vote in favour, Amicus became the trade union at ChildLine. Tina Mackay, Amicus Regional Officer,

commented: "Here begins a new era in ChildLine."

ChildLine operates out of eleven counselling centres around the UK at: Belfast, Glasgow, Aberdeen, Leeds, London, Nottingham, Manchester, Swansea, Rhyl, Birmingham and Newton Abbot.

Rob Ray

TOXIC SHOCK MISLEADING

Campaigners have welcomed a damning report from the Royal Commission on Environmental Pollution on the dangers of crop spraying, but remain sceptical of proposed solutions.

The report, Crop Spraying and the Health of Residents and Bystanders, found evidence that government safety policy regarding crop spraying has been weak and misleading.

Since concerns were raised over two decades ago, no clear moves have been made to improve the quality of information received, to warn local residents in good time or to restrict dangerous spraying.

The report recommends that residents should be warned of all crop spraying,

and that five metre buffer zones be placed on all farms. Detailed records should be kept for future reference.

Alison Craig, from the Pesticide Action Network UK said: "The report vindicates campaigners who have been fighting for years on this issue, but whose evidence has been denied, suppressed and ignored."

"[We are] concerned, however, that a five metre buffer zone should not be seen as a universal panacea."

Buffer zones are designed to provide a space for pesticide drift, when spray falls outside the target area of field and affects plants, animals and crops it was not meant for.

One ex-crop sprayer said: "When you are in an aeroplane even a very slow wind, say three or four miles per hour, can have a tremendous effect on drift. You get less effect on the ground, but even so I'd say the break should be more like fifty metres, not five."

The report was scathing about "the level of confidence expressed in advice to ministers", calling it weak and misleading. The report points to a review of policy

last year to back its case. In 2004 there was a government consultation of less than 1,000 people, mostly made up of pro and anti lobbyists. Following the consultations, the minister in charge said: "The independent scientific advice to me is very clear that the existing system provides full reassurance on that score. For this reason I have decided against the introduction of compulsory no-spray buffer zones."

A new study made by the Commission as part of their work found that around 1.5 million people are potentially affected every year by spraying, though due to poor recognition and documentation, the number of people actually rendered ill is impossible to quantify.

Following a study by the University of Aberdeen, which suggests that pesticide exposure dramatically increases the risks of Parkinson disease, the report found evidence of "Parkinson's-like tremors and motility problems" among some affected people they interviewed. Others shared symptoms with Gulf War Syndrome victims.

NESTLE MURDERS

Separated by 10,000 miles union leaders Luciano Enrique Romero Molina and Diosdado Fortuna died within 11 days of each other, shedding light on the brutal reality of industrial relations in their respective countries.

Both headed union branches of foodworkers for different subsidiaries of the same multinational corporation. Molina was a member of Sinal Trainal, a Colombian union that has long been on the receiving end of government and paramilitary violence, working at a company called CICOLAC, owned by the Swiss pharmaceutical and food corporation Nestlé.

He was dismissed, amid death threats, on October 2002 following a dispute with his employer. After requesting to be placed in the Colombian government's protection programme for union leaders and human rights activists, he was sent on his way with two mobile phones for his protection.

After nearly three years avoiding retribution for his defiant activities, Molina was found dead on 11th September in the paramilitary controlled La

Nevada district of Las Palmas; he had been tortured.

Diosdado Fortuna, president of the Union of Filipino Employees Food and Drug Alliance (UFE-DFA), representing 660 members at the Nestlé factory in the Philippine region of Laguna, died in hospital after being shot twice in the back returning from a picket line at the factory.

Fortuna and his union had been on strike since January 2002 and his wife Luz blames management for his murder, "My husband has no other enemy except Nestlé management."

"He doesn't deserve to die like this. He did nothing wrong but to fight for what is due the lowly workers like him. What an injustice."

Fortuna became president of his union following the assassination of his predecessor, Meliton Roxas, killed in a 1989 picket line in front the same factory. The Philippines has in recent memory been the sight of other brutal murders of strikers and union leaders, notably the Hacienda Luisita massacre last year. See page 2 for more on Diosdado Fortuna.

ISSN 0016-0504



Vol 66 No 19

Home and away

Gourmet solution?

Around 300 of the sacked workers at catering firm Gate Gourmet have accepted voluntary redundancy terms, as negotiations between the T&G and the company draw towards a close.

A further 400 workers, who had stayed on throughout the dispute, are also taking up the offer, but the company have continued to pledge that up to 200 of the most militant strikers would not be allowed back regardless.

Negotiations have been continuing between Gate Gourmet and T&G since August, when an industrial dispute led to the mass sacking by megaphone of 667 workers at the catering plant just outside Heathrow.

T&G negotiators have said they are confident a full agreement can be reached by November at the latest, with a waiver deal regarding workers' ability to take Gate Gourmet to court over the redundancies still on the table.

Judge Dredd

Police supremo Ian Blair has told the government that police officers should be given the ability to seize driving licences and cars and issue ASBOs at will.

The London Met boss, who declined to leave his post having presided over the killing of an innocent Brazilian man a few weeks ago, denied the measures were contributing to a police state.

The measures would only be available to senior officers, as it is assumed they wouldn't misuse the powers. However, critics have pointed out that high profile exposés of racism and anti-left views within the police system undermine this view that senior officers can be trusted.

Other plans by the police chief include using ex-army soldiers, who are often part of mercenary groups in Britain, to provide a partial service as hired weapon support for officers.

Superconstables, a title labelled as Robocop and Judge Dredd by opponents, would receive more pay and could have their actions challenged in the courts.

HP to axe 968

Computer giant Hewlett-Packard will cut 968 jobs across Britain in 2006.

The cuts are designed to hit the human resources, IT and finance sectors of the business, and are part of a much wider series of cuts across Europe.

The cuts are part of a new package being brought forward by chief executive Michael Hurd in response to poor stock market performance last year and a desire to increase profits for the financial year.

In July, a worldwide series of cuts were announced amounting to nearly 6,000 jobs with more than half coming from Europe.

Amicus, who have the largest presence in the sector, said they would "do all they could". HP has seven sites in Bracknell, Birmingham, Bristol, Glasgow, London, Reading and Warrington.

George Fox Six

The trial of the George Fox Six started at Lancaster Magistrates Court on Monday 26th September. Six student activists faced charges arising out of an action that took place at Lancaster University in September 2004.

The six had gone into the George Fox building to hand out leaflets and talk to people at the 'Corporate Venturing' Conference – a networking meeting for multinational corporations.

Police attended and told the protesters they were doing nothing wrong, but some months later they received summonses through the post.

Around the world

• **PHILIPPINES:** A strike leader at Nestlé Philippines has been gunned down at a plastics factory in Barangay Paciano Riza. The death of Diosdado Fortuna, 50, (pictured below) was condemned by leftist labour groups, with one claiming political motivation.

"We are certain that the killing is politically motivated. Arroyo's hands are bloodied once more," said Elmer Labog, national chair of the Kilusang Mayo Uno. "We will seek justice for his death and will send the evil perpetrators of this murder to hell where they belong."

Fortuna died of two gunshot wounds in the back as doctors tried to save his life at the Calamba Doctors' Hospital. Fortuna heads the Union of Filipino Employees-Drug and Food Alliance, the coalition of employees of the Nestlé factory in Cabuyao, Laguna.

The group has been on strike since 14th January 2002, after talks for a collective bargaining agreement with management on retirement benefits stalled.

Pedro Dy-Liaco Jr, communications director of Nestlé, said in a statement that the Nestlé management was shocked over the killing. "We condemn this act



of violence and extend our sympathies to Fortuna's family and relatives. We are prepared to extend help to his family and to the Calamba police for a swift resolution of its investigation."

Fortuna's wife, Luz, blames Nestlé management for the killing.

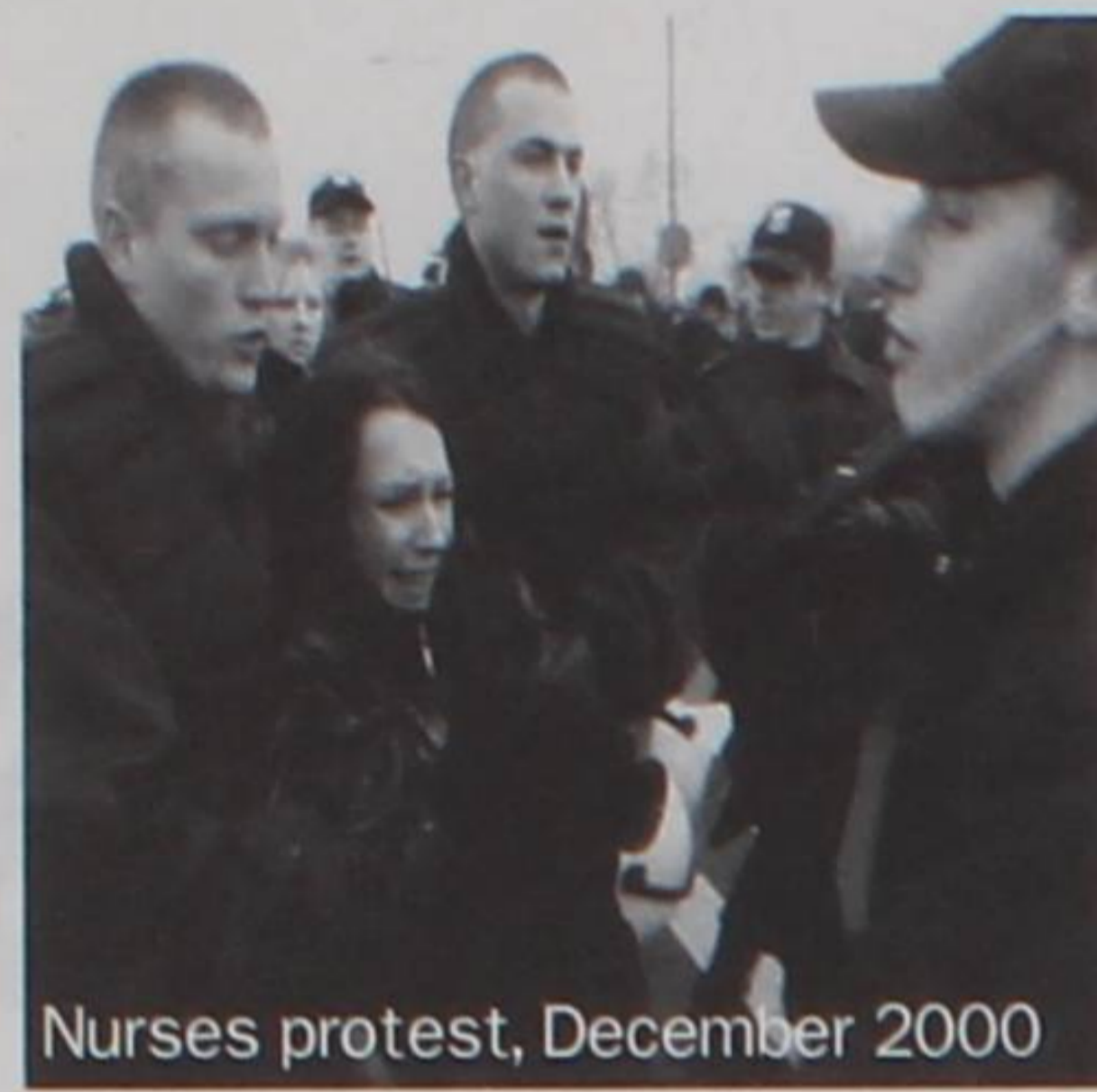
• **COLOMBIA:** Another trade unionist has paid with his life for the impunity which nourishes institutionalised violence and the relentless war against trade unionists in Colombia.

Reynel Duque Ramirez, a local peasant leader of the IUF-affiliated UNAC (Union Nacional Agroalimentaria de Colombia, the national agro-food workers' federation) in the municipality of Montañita, Department of Caquetá, set off for work in his canoe on the morning of 16th September. According to the available information, he was seized by unidentified armed men in uniform. His body was later discovered with bullet wounds in the head.

Reynel, who was also a municipal leader, leaves behind a widow and five sons with no means of subsistence. The tools with which he made his living – a canoe and a motor – have been hidden or destroyed, presumably to conceal evidence of the crime.

• **POLAND:** On 27th of September 2005 in Warsaw's Regional Court (IXth penal department for appellations) the trial of Andrew Smosarski began. Andrew is an independent journalist, social activist and a member of Red Collective-Leftist Alternative, who is accused of battering a policeman during a December 2000 nurses' protest. This trial is a second instance process – in the first instance Andrew was sentenced to a 3,700 zloty fine with a commutation for 100 days of confinement. There is high risk that the verdict will stay in force.

Both accusations and the punishment that has been adjudged in the first



Nurses protest, December 2000

instance can be seen only as repression for his social and political activity – in fact the so-called 'battering' never took place and was a fabrication done by police – which has been accepted by the court.

The All-Poland Trade Union of Nurses and Midwives organised a mass of rallies and demonstrations over wages. The protests were in reaction to the poor material and social situation of nurses and midwives. The trade union demanded a rise in wages for healthcare workers to 203 zlotys. The nurses' demands have been accepted by the government but it was preceded by many demonstrations – that sometimes were very radical.

• **CHIAPAS:** The first plenary of the Other Campaign, a 10 year initiative of the Zapatista Army of National Liberation to build a national plan of struggle, came to a close in the community of La Garrucha, Chiapas.

The plenary was organised into six themes dealing with the organisation and character of the Other Campaign. Subcomandante Marcos, spokesperson for the EZLN, made it clear that the form of the Other Campaign must be decided by all those who take it up. "The Sixth and the Other Campaign," he said, "no longer belong just to the EZLN, but to everyone who embraces them".

He also announced a proposal for the next stage of the campaign: a tour, to

begin in January, of consultations in every region of the republic. Marcos himself will be the primary actor of the Sixth Committee, and, in order to perform the post, will be stepping down as spokesperson for the EZLN.

The meeting was transmitted on the internet by indymedia chiapas and a coalition of independent and participatory media gathered for the event. It was relayed in FM in Oaxaca and Mexico City, among other places. In addition, the independent media activists present in La Garrucha formed a proposal for a national network of independent media.

Present at the Plenary were 91 social organisations from throughout Mexico, 36 political organisations, 129 groups, collectives and NGOs, 26 indigenous organisations, 196 individuals.

• **IRELAND:** The five Mayo men jailed in Dublin for refusing Shell access to their land in Erris, in the west of Ireland, were freed on Friday 30th September, ahead of a protest march on Saturday 1st October.

The Irish High Court will decide this month whether they will face charges for breaching a court injunction not to interfere with the construction of Shell's Corrib Field pipeline.

The Rosspoint Five spent a total of 94 days in jail.



Yarl's Wood

Ms Gloria Chalimpa, a bisexual woman who suffered years of rape and other violence from the age of six and was later arrested and imprisoned for kissing another woman in a nightclub, has been given a temporary reprieve from deportation to Uganda.

An independent GP who gained entry to Yarl's Wood Removal Centre diagnosed her as unfit to travel in her current condition, but she continues to live under the threat of deportation if her condition improves.

Ms Chalimpa has been on hunger strike for over six weeks along with many other women in Yarl's Wood protesting against their deportation and the conditions in detention.

The women's action was tragically highlighted by the suicide of a father, taken with his teenage son from their home of three years in Leeds, and threatened with imminent return to Angola, where their lives were in danger.

Two lesbian women from Zimbabwe (see below), one of whom has been detained in Yarl's Wood for nearly three months, are also fighting for asylum.

In July, over 30 women, mostly from Uganda, went on hunger strike in a desperate attempt to draw their situation to public attention – most are rape survivors, some are HIV positive and all have allegedly suffered appalling legal representation, resulting in their cases not being fully presented and refused by the Home Office.

Ms Chalimpa, who is currently on suicide watch, has never had any expert report made on her psychological state after escaping from Uganda, where she was a child soldier and endured horrific abuse. Solicitors attempting to bring in independent experts have complained of difficulties in gaining permission for the diagnosis.

Ms Thando Dube (HO Ref TN1/117226)

Ms Dube left Zimbabwe for South Africa in 1994 after being physically abused and persecuted by her parents and others in the community for being a lesbian. On three occasions while in South Africa she was detained by the authorities as an illegal immigrant, on

one occasion for almost a year.

She was threatened with removal to Zimbabwe but managed to bribe her way out of detention. In desperation about the harassment she faced as a lesbian, she started a relationship with a man by whom she became pregnant. But when her mother told him she was from Zimbabwe, he became violent and attacked her so violently she now cannot walk properly.

In 2003 Ms Dube came to Britain, leaving her child with friends. Her asylum claim was refused because the Home Office does not believe she is from Zimbabwe and want to return her to South Africa. In 2004 she was finally able to contact her mother, who is now caring for her son and has secured documents that confirm she is from Zimbabwe. She has been detained in Yarl's Wood for almost three months.

Ms Lindiwe Mujakachi (HO Ref: M124 8852)

As a teenager, Ms Mujakachi was expelled from school – accused of being a lesbian – and once this became public

knowledge she received threats of sexual violence and verbal abuse.

In 2001 a group of men attacked her for being lesbian and beat her until she lost consciousness. Fearing for her life, a friend helped her over the border into South Africa. She began living with her partner in the Eastern Cape, but after elders in the community accused her of 'immorality' and being a bad influence on their daughters, she began to suffer homophobic abuse and violence.

She moved to Johannesburg where she continued to suffer physical and verbal anti-lesbian abuse. This culminated in a brutal gang rape by a group of men, after which she tried in desperation to return to Zimbabwe.

Ms Mujakachi fled to seek safety in Britain. Before making her asylum claim, Ms Mujakachi was threatened with removal and taken to the airport to be put on a plane to Zimbabwe.

The High Court has now ruled that there must be full consideration of two test cases about the dangers of returning 'failed' asylum seekers to Zimbabwe, and Ms Mujakachi was released on bail.

News

Safe from arms?

Blockades, occupations, marches and demos greeted dealers and police at the DESi arms fair in London, reports Mat Danaher

Despite police harassment and surveillance of campaigners, a series of actions and protests accompanied the Defence Systems & Equipment International (DESi) arms fair at the Excel Centre in London's Docklands.

On Monday 12th September, 400 people marched from East Ham central park to Excel. When the demonstration approached Prince Regent DLR station, police blocked the road. Several speeches were made by local groups, and eventually the crowd dispersed. Nearby, a Baby Bloc action took place outside Custom House station, where kids donned police helmets and riot shields whilst imposing a Section 60 on any adults inside the designated protest zone. In central London a unit of the Clown Army visited companies involved in the arms trade.

The second day of action included a Critical Mass bike ride, an attempt at storming Custom House Docklands Light Railway station, and affinity group actions targeting the fair, including road blockades, and people climbing on trains. Traffic around Excel was disrupted during the day and many delegates had serious problems getting to the fair. Around 27 people were arrested.

On the Thursday, under the slogan 'Make Love Not War', a small group of activists managed to get among the delegates on the train to Excel, where they were offered advice on lovemaking techniques and a choice of sexy phallic toys to replace the more harmful ones at the exhibition.

The main course came in the evening when around a hundred people gathered for hours outside the Dorchester Hotel,

where a banquet was being held for arms dealers and customers. People gathered outside the hotel front door holding banners and placards, playing drums and shouting abuse. The police deployed hundreds of officers and vans in Park Lane and in the streets surrounding the hotel.

Section 14 was imposed. This prevents any demonstration taking place unless it is in the 'protest designated areas'. After a group of about 70 people and cyclists blocked the main traffic lane, police pushed people over the fence into Hyde Park. Police then tried to make some arrests, which were prevented by the crowd who managed to de-arrest one protester. This resulted in some scuffles when police kicked demonstrators and used fists and batons.

Eventually the atmosphere became a bit calmer, as the remaining group of 50 people stayed inside the park's perimeter, drumming and shouting at delegates starting to leave the hotel. While this was going on two smartly dressed activists managed to stroll into the hotel and, although they failed to get into the banquet, found an empty room to view the action from. Five arrests were reported.

DESi – what and why

DESi, which is organised by Spearhead (owned by publishing corporation Reed Elsevier) in association with the Ministry of Defence, costs the taxpayer around £4m, including £400,000 in direct subsidies plus massive logistical and policing costs.

Spearhead said 927 companies (including BAe systems, Glock, and Heckler & Koch) exhibited up to



20,000 customers from countries such as Israel, Pakistan, and Angola. Items on sale included weaponry and equipment that is illegal to export from Britain, including cluster bombs, leg irons, and stun guns.

Opposition to the two yearly event has been on the increase and now ranges from the likes of Ken Livingstone, Mayor of London, Newham Borough Council, and sections of the Metropolitan police (it is claimed that some rogue

officers even tried to charge those dealers selling illegal arms at the 2003 fair!).

Met boss John Stevens said policing costs should come from the organisers, not the taxpayer.

The moderates are coming

Moderate unions have abandoned their neutral stance at the TUC conference to declare a stand against public sector pension reforms, doubling the number of unionists prepared to strike to three million.

Fifteen unions, including strong moderates, have declared their opposition to government plans to increase the age of retirement for public sector employees.

The announcement, made at the TUC conference on Wednesday 14th September, ridiculed attempts by Trade Secretary Alan Milburn to make an offer of a five year delay to the reforms.

The one-day strike could be organised as early as the end of this year, with supporting stoppages by single unions following afterwards.

Dr Beverly Malone, General Secretary of the usually liberal Royal College of Nursing, said: "The message from nurses is clear: they overwhelmingly reject any move to raise their retirement age and feel strongly enough to consider taking industrial action if the need arises."

Major unions were united in militant language to the government, saying they would not "back down".

Janice Godrich, PCS president, said: "If we are to succeed in protecting the futures of the millions of public sector workers then unity needs to continue. There must be no divide and rule by the government."

Dave Prentis, Unison, said: "The employer's initial proposals are a slap in the face for millions of scheme members who have already shown they are prepared to strike to protect their pensions."

The calls for action were followed on Friday 22nd by a series of employer proposals for short-term pension changes sent to the trade union bosses. The proposals have outraged unionists, who see the new proposals as worse than those offered in March, before both sides climbed down for the election.

Brian Stratton, GMB National Secretary for Public Services, said: "The Trade Unions and John Prescott narrowly

avoided industrial action in March but sadly our predictions that things would only get worse seem to be coming true.

"The GMB believes that there is still room for compromise but not on the employer's terms. We urge Government to help broker a resolution and avoid another confrontation."

Under current proposals, as well as an increase in the retirement age from 60 to 65, there would be other measures such as the withdrawal of final salary pensions, which would leave pensioners with 50% less by 2050.

The unions who have come out in favour of strike action are: Amicus (local government, NHS, MoD), ATL (teachers), AUT (lecturers), FBU (Fire brigades), FDA (senior civil service), GMB (local government), NASUWT (teachers), NATFHE (lecturers), NUT (teachers), PCS (junior civil service), POA (prison officers), Prospect (local government), RCN (Nursing), TGWU (local government, NHS, MoD) and Unison (local government, NHS).

Sympathy for the TUC

The government has told the TUC there will be "no return to the 1970s" after the congress' annual general meeting heard a unanimous call for legislation to restore the right to secondary picketing.

There was condemnation of Labour for entering their ninth consecutive year in power without changing the Thatcherite anti-union measure.

Bob Crow of the RMT transport union suggested a march on parliament in support of workers' rights, while others, such as Judith Griffiths from the CWU communications union, suggested that union funding of the Labour Party might be reconsidered.

But the call failed to impress the cabinet. Employment relations chief Gerry Sutcliffe warned, in an article for the Tribune, that union bosses would be judged on their actions rather than words and he demanded that the unions continue "reasonable discussion" on the subject.

Former Freedom editor and T&G member John, now part of the libcom collective (an online resource for libertarian communists) said: "The only thing, which affects what government does in regard to labour law (and almost everything else), is working class power and action".

Under the current law picketers are protected if it is done in connection with an industrial dispute at or near the workplace. By injunction the court can limit the location and number of pickets and impose conditions on their conduct.

Secondary picketing – picketing at a workplace or premises where a picketer doesn't work – does not have the same civil law protection, but is not a criminal offence. The police do not have any enhanced powers over secondary pickets and it is not their job to enforce the civil law on picketing, even if an injunction is in force. Their general powers allow them to move on threatening or obstructive pickets.

News

Bush: the looter of New Orleans

The rich will benefit and the poor will suffer again as the rebuilding of the proud old city begins, reports Iain McKay

Like all politicians, Bush blames his problems over Hurricane Katrina on a lack of power rather than having too much. Thus he sees the solution as being to provide him with "greater federal authority." It is hard to understand why this lack of authority made Bush eat cake and play guitar on holiday while people died or if giving more power to Condi Rice will stop her shopping for shoes and taking in a show in the face of a natural disaster.

Since 9/11, Bush has claimed he is a competent and decisive leader protecting America. Given his actual performance on 9/11, it is amazing that the charade was accepted by so many Americans. Katrina exposed the reality behind the image. Ahead of next year's election the right has lost its aura of competence — if they cannot respond coherently to an approaching hurricane, how can they keep America safe from a terrorist attack?

In reality, the state concentrated authority in the hands of incompetent morons who care little about working class people. People are dead because of this, because Bush had more important things to spend money on — like cutting taxes for the rich, no-bid contracts to corporate donors, invading Iraq and ending social security.

Bush opined in his post-Katrina speech that "there is also some deep, persistent poverty in this region as well. And that poverty has roots in a history of racial discrimination, which cut off generations from the opportunity of America. We have a duty to confront

this poverty with bold action." His track record hardly supports these words. His tax cuts have only enriched the rich. Wages for working people have stagnated or fallen, with poverty levels rising from 11.3% to 12.7% and household incomes failing to rise for five consecutive years.

But do not say that Bush does not act swiftly to help the greedy. He was already suspended the Davis-Bacon law which requires prevailing wages for public construction contracts. Instead of refugees coming back to decent-paying jobs while they reconstruct their communities, they are to get low-wages while Bush-supporting companies get subsidised profits. The disaster area will be, like Iraq, used to create a Republican utopia. This is Bush's "Gulf Opportunity Zone" — a blank sheet upon which the far-right will unleash their social engineering. Schools vouchers, low wages and waived regulations to accommodate bosses — all under the guise of economic revival premised on the belief that corporations freed from trades unions, workers rights, environmental restrictions and taxes will reap huge profits. And who is getting the no-bid, cost-plus contracts for reconstructing New Orleans? Old pals Halliburton and Bechtel.

All of which means that as well as the poor being harmed most by the hurricane, they will suffer the same fate in the "reconstruction" process. So, for American capitalists, there is an upside to Bush's incompetence and his feeble attempts to improve his tarnished image as a great leader. His attempts to



repackage himself as a visionary builder of New Orleans will allow the right the chance to reshape Louisiana without even going through the motions of winning an election.

Not that the plans outlined in Bush's speech from New Orleans helped his opinion poll ratings. Seemingly lavish

spending plans for the area have gone down badly with his conservative base. Following the speech, Bush's rating for handling the Katrina crisis fell eight points among Republicans. So it appears you can allow 9/11, start two wars, precede over torture, cause 100,000 civilian deaths and economic

misery for millions but once you talk of money to the poor, then the "compassionate" right will finally turn against you. Perhaps they will come around to Bush's spending spree once it dawns on them that this \$200 billion federal line of credit is aimed by corporate, not human, welfare?

FBI watch list

The American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) has presented new evidence that the FBI has been engaged in widespread political surveillance on large numbers of activists. So far the ACLU has been partially successful in exposing the FBI's use of Joint Terrorism Task Forces to engage in political surveillance. ACLU affiliates in 15 states other than Michigan have filed similar requests on behalf of more than 100 groups and individuals. Organisations targeted include Greenpeace, United for Peace and Justice, Code Pink, People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA), the American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee, the Muslim Public Affairs Council and Food Not Bombs. In response to the lawsuit, the FBI has revealed that it has thousands of pages of documents mentioning those groups.

Sarah McDonald, of named group Direct Action responded: "We're disturbed and dismayed that the FBI is misusing its power by spying on anti-

war groups and monitoring political dissent to target activist groups. We've protested the war, racial discrimination and the military recruitment of the high school students, but we're certainly not a terrorist group."

Ben Wizner, an ACLU staff attorney and counsel in a lawsuit seeking the release of additional FBI records pertaining to the abuse says, "When the FBI and local law enforcement identify affirmative action advocates as potential terrorists, every American has cause for concern."

The document released by ACLU on 30th August is an FBI report entitled, 'Domestic Terrorism Symposium'. It describes a meeting whose purpose was to "keep the local, state and federal law enforcement agencies apprised of the activities of the various groups and individuals within the state of Michigan who are thought to be involved in terrorist activities."

Kary Moss, Executive Director of the ACLU of Michigan, comments, "Labelling

political advocacy as 'terrorist activity' is a threat to legitimate dissent which has never been considered a crime in this country. Spying on people who simply disagree with our government's policies is a tremendous waste of police resources."

The ACLU is now demanding FBI files on groups and individuals targeted for speaking out or practicing their faith and information about how the practices and funding structure of the task forces, known as JTTFs, may be encouraging rampant and unwarranted spying.

The ACLU also claims proof that the FBI used the Patriot Act to spy into library records; something the government has previously denied. The FBI apparently demanded records under the National Security Letter provision of the Act. This allows the FBI to demand personal records without court approval including the identity of someone visiting a particular website on a library computer, or engaging in anonymous speech on the internet.

Louis Further

No Hatewave

Greek anti-fascists fought police on September 17th in protest at a gathering of neo-Nazi youth group Chryssi Avgi earlier in the day. The Nazi gathering had been called in frustration at their inability to hold Eurofest 2005 (also known as Hatewave 2005), a three-day festival for Fascists from across Europe.

Around 1,000 Police fired tear gas to disperse hundreds of protesters after intervening to prevent protesters attacking some 150 fascists gathered just streets away. Anarchists and leftists responded with a barrage of molotov cocktails and stones.

Demonstrators had initially assembled outside the Athens Polytechnic University (scene of barricades and a confrontation with police this May) to confront the far right meeting in nearby Exardia. Police intervened by stationing riot vans between the two groups and tear gassing anti-fascists to prevent them

moving toward Exardia. Several police cars were damaged and no arrests were made.

Hatewave, focused on proposals of muslim Turkey joining the EU, brought groups from Germany, Spain, Italy and Romania together. Originally planned as a closed gathering, attempts to host the event were derailed by hostile responses from local communities at proposed sites at Melighalas, Kaiafas and Aghios Konstantinos. Eventually the 17th September meeting occurred outside the Fascist's own offices in Athens. Due to an inability to safely meet anywhere the organisers had been forced to play hide and seek with activists determined to shut down the festival.

Earlier in the same week Antonis Androutsopoulos, a fugitive leader of Chryssi Avgi surrendered to the police after a seven year flight from his conviction for attacking an activist, he faces four years imprisonment.

Feature

The sorry state

James Horrox takes a look at the state and its current and projected treatment of terror

On Friday 22nd July, 27-year-old Brazilian Jean Charles de Menezes, an innocent civilian going about his day-to-day business, was shot dead by plainclothes police on the London Underground. Opposition to this very public display of heavy handed police behaviour was encouragingly widespread in the weeks following the shooting, not least because it nudges the UK government's darker side into the scrutiny of the mainstream media. With the nation's political executive now firmly locked into a US-style post-9/11 mindset, remarks like "we're turning into a police state" and the incredulous cries of "we've always been a free country" are becoming increasingly commonplace.

Comments like these prompt long overdue questions regarding the political system the British as a nation seem to cherish with such misty-eyed reverence. Considering their increasing prevalence in recent accusations levelled at the British government, the issue of state terrorism and the actual concept of a Police State should be looked at in some detail, ideally as part of a wider discussion concerning the nature of liberal democracy in the United Kingdom.

Thus the following exploration of the issues surrounding the increasingly Orwellian behaviour of the British government represents the coalescing of a number of at once disparate and inter-related ideas fundamental to the United Kingdom's brand of 'liberal democracy'. First of all, the concept of a Police State, or, and let's not be shy about this, a Terrorist State, demands serious discussion. Is the UK turning into a Police State? Can I, as a citizen of the United Kingdom, view my government the perpetrator of state terrorism?

State terrorism (as distinct from state-sponsored terrorism) is a contested and nebulous concept and a difficult one to pin down with any accuracy, so to fully understand the subject of state terrorism, it is first crucial to decide upon a definition of terrorism itself.

While a single, comprehensive definition of the concept remains elusive, Professor David George's tripartite explanation of terrorism is close. In essence, George's definition boils down to 'A commits violence against B in order to communicate a message to C', that is the punishing of one individual in order to communicate a message to a wider audience by instilling fear.

Whereas many other widely used definitions are often restricted in their application merely to certain specific circumstances, George's definition holds true for almost all occurrences of terrorism, from IRA attacks on crowded city-centres, to Hamas suicide bombings, to Red Army Faction and Action Directe kidnappings and assassinations.

So if this is terrorism it can be seen to translate onto a state level, in the words of Dr Jeffrey Sluka, as "the use or threat of violence by the state or its agents or supporters ... against civilian individuals and populations as a means of political intimidation and control, (i.e. as a means of repression) – the state using violence against one individual or group in order to instil fear and thus communicate a given message to a wider target audience.

Already though, we have a problem; at the risk of obfuscating an already complex issue, many contend that what Sluka calls state terrorism cannot in fact be seen as terrorism *per se* as the state by its very nature has the monopoly on legitimate violence and needs to threaten this violence as a deterrent in order to enforce its laws. In other words, what Sluka defines as state terrorism simply describes how a state, by its very nature, functions.

To illustrate this, let us take the death penalty as a clear-cut example of use of violence against the individual. The state inflicts lethal violence on one individual as punishment for a crime, and in doing so communicates a message to a wider audience by creating fear.

This process is wholly and irrefutably congruent with Professor George's tripartite definition of terrorism, as one commentator recently observed, "since violent punishments [such as this] do evoke fear and are often justified by their punitive, deterrent value it is sometimes hard to distinguish the administration of punishment from the process of terror." In other words it is possible to say both that "the state is terrorist by its very nature" and also "the state cannot be termed terrorist because an integral part of the idea of terrorism is violence which the state has deemed illegitimate". That said, it is possible to draw a number of distinctions between state terrorism and the legitimate use of force by the apparatus of the state.

The real question is not a conceptual one regarding whether or not state terrorism exists, but whether it exists as distinct from the violence inherent in the very nature of the state rather than being simply an extreme form of that violence, the logical extension of the fundamental principles on which the state is founded.

Either way the state emerges in an equally bad light, and it can be found in the Lockean notion of the legitimate scope of state activity. According to a Lockean viewpoint, every citizen has certain inalienable rights. The citizen expresses their tacit consent to the state's monopolisation of violence up until the point where the state infringes on the individual's natural rights to life, liberty and property. If the individual commits an act prohibited by the state to which the citizen has tacitly consented, the individual forfeits these natural rights and the state's use of violence against the



citizen is seen as legitimate. However, and this is in many ways the crux of my argument, the state's infringement on these rights in the absence of a proven crime constitutes an illegitimate action on the part of the state.

In such a situation the state is acting *ultra vires*, (i.e., in direct violation of the terms on which it itself exists). Therefore it no longer has the monopoly on violence, as the state's legitimacy is nullified. This means that even the Weberian conception of the state's monopolisation of violence does not negate the possibility of state terrorism existing as distinct from the everyday use of punitive violence by states against their own populations.

So how does such an argument relate to the present goings-on in the United Kingdom? The shooting of de Menezes may not be an example of state terrorism as described above, as the shooting was probably not deliberately carried out in order to instil fear in the wider population (although that has certainly been a very real side-effect). While it represents the state infringing on an individual's inalienable rights in the absence of a proven crime this only fulfils two thirds of George's tripartite definition of terrorism.

It is, however, clearly symptomatic of a relationship between individual and state that needs looking at in some depth, a relationship, which ultimately does point to the increasingly arbitrary use of state power and the terrorist tendencies of the British government.

The Terrorism Act of 2000 and the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act of the same year, followed by an avalanche

of similar legislation including the Anti-Terrorism, Crime and Security Act (2001) are perhaps the most flagrant illustrations of the hitherto largely latent terrorist inclinations of the British state. The implications of this legislation have been repeatedly highlighted by the human rights lobby but, for whatever reason, have not to my knowledge been referred to in the context of state terrorism on the part of the British state, at least not to any significant degree.

However, this legislation specifically allows the state to "infringe on the individual's inalienable rights in the absence of a proven crime in order to send out a message to a wider audience", i.e. to other would-be wrong-doers, the Muslim population (allegedly), and arguably the population as a whole. Not only is this congruent with some or other definitions of terrorism, this is state terrorism in its purest form.

As such, to go back to the Lockean argument, this directly contravenes the terms on which the state itself exists.

It has been well documented recently, particularly following the case of the Belmarsh detainees, that the Anti-Terrorism, Crime and Security Act (2001), the legislation that held the fourteen Belmarsh prisoners, and now the Prevention of Terrorism Act (2005) effectively enables arbitrary arrest, indefinite imprisonment without trial, and denial of access to legal representation.

It is legislation such as this that allows agents of the state to act in the absence of hard evidence, as exemplified by the de Menezes shooting. Not only does

this legislation fulfil all the criteria of state terrorism as defined in academic terms by Professor George *et al*, but it should be obvious that these ideas are features fundamental to states traditionally deemed as 'terrorist'.

In any case, even the most politically acquiescent among us must surely realise that laws like the ones alluded to above are directly and unashamedly antithetical to everything a liberal democracy stands for. And slowly but surely they are, as demonstrated by the growing number of Brits now whining "How can they do that? We've always been a free country." Well, has it?

How is it possible for the UK, paragon of liberal democracy and bastion of the Free World, to suddenly become a Police State or terrorist state, exercising power in this way with such impunity? In order to provide any kind of valid answer to this it is necessary to have a long hard look at some of the fundamental elements of the United Kingdom's political bedrock.

In part due to its pattern of historical development the UK is a democracy wherein constitutional governance – i.e. government by the rule of law as opposed to the influence of arbitrary power – is traditionally far from secure. The UK constitution is neither codified nor entrenched in basic law; unlike most liberal democracies there is no authoritative document placing limits on the legitimate scope of government power and laying out a clear bill of rights for UK citizens; the 'constitution',

Commentary

FREEDOM

Volume 66 Number 19

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

It has been a state of mild chaos around the bookshop this week as the long awaited (some would say dreaded) stock-take has finally swept across the building.

The back of the work has been broken, though there is still a lot to do and no conclusions can yet be drawn on the state of the place, according to one worker at the co-operative.

Scott said: "It's still a bit messy – we aren't quite finished yet, but it will look a lot better once we're done. We've actually found more books downstairs than we should, which we reckon means they're breeding. It'll certainly keep costs down."

On a different note, we've got a room booked for the Anarchist Bookfair, so you curious (and in some cases quite angry) folks who have been wondering what the hell happened to your paper can come with impunity and pelt at least one of the co-op members with shoes.

The plan is to discuss the future direction of the paper, explain what has already happened and solicit support and contacts. The paper has gone through some big changes, and what with lateness, missing mail, staffing crises etc. there are lots of issues we'd like your help on.

All are welcome, no stilettos or steel toe-caps please.

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Next issue

The next issue will be dated 15th October and the last day to get your copy to us will be Friday 7th September (see contact details above for where to send your letters/articles).

Sporting chance

A review of a book by Dave Zirin (Freedom, 3rd September) suggests that sports are "sites of resistance which embrace people rather than profit". That a handful of professional sports people have resisted the establishment in no way warrants such praise.

Noam Chomsky's observation that sports instill passivity refers to passivity towards the ruling elites as an opium of the people. On the other hand professional sports instill overly aggressive and competitive actions and attitudes towards one's fellows. Consider football, hockey, boxing, wrestling. In addition, sports is big, big business, usually dirty business, and on a par with all the giant corporations.

Harold Barclay

Unacceptable behaviour

It is, in the UK, legal to support certain forms of international terrorism. If, for instance, you believe that the US is right to occupy and oppress Iraq and that the number of Iraqi civilian deaths is a matter of such little consequence as to be not worth counting, then you will enjoy the full protection of the law, whether you are a UK national or an Iraqi.

If you believe that it is laudable that Egypt, Syria and Algeria all have a nasty habit of unlawfully detaining, torturing and killing Muslim activists, and that such activities are to be encouraged, then, again – you'll be fine, whoever you are, whether UK-born or Algerian.

If however you believe that the oppression of the Palestinians and Chechnyans is a blood-drenched obscenity that should be resisted by any means necessary, then, if you are not UK born, Charles Clarke will have you deported to your country of origin as a 'terrorist sympathiser'. Clarke has published a list of 'unacceptable behaviours' sufficient to facilitate deportation orders.

The behaviour complained of amounts to "writing, producing, publishing or distributing material ... to express views with forment, justify or glorify terrorist violence in furtherance of particular beliefs."

The list will not apply solely to the tabloids 'mad mullahs' but any foreign national who articulates militant opposition to US/UK foreign policy, or resistance to any government friendly to US/UK interests. It is a blatant attempt by New Labour to proscribe all forms

of political debate that do not either conform to Blair's imperialist agenda or the 'legal, constitutional' routes of (least) resistance. It's also a fairly blatant attempt to make sure that the anti-imperialist sentiments of those foreign nationals who've been on the receiving end of British foreign policy don't 'pollute' the home population. In seeking memoranda of understanding which will 'guarantee' deportees will not be tortured, Clarke has found a way of franchising out torture while quieting the civil liberties lobby.

All of this was entirely expected, and none of it has anything to do with the recent terror attacks. A policy to deport foreign militants would have done nothing to prevent UK-born kids who appear not to have run any websites, bookshops or journals before their suicide attacks from taking out their rage on whoever happened to sit near them.

The reason for the legislation is simply that the focus of US/UK imperialism in coming years will be upon the oil reserves of Iran and central Asia, and the possibility of maintaining an Afghan oil route to the Arabian Sea, and the greatest threat to the uninterrupted exploitation of the natural resources and labour of the region will come from Islamic nationalist resistance groups. Thus, such groups, if targeted by Western proxy states, will not be allowed safe haven to regroup and publicise injustice within the belly of the beast itself.

To say we should seek to resist such a strategy is to state the obvious. We should reflect though on the fact that when Clarke says he intends to crack down on "extreme views that are in conflict with the UK's culture of tolerance" what he really means is that only those opinions from now on which support the status quo will be given space and the rest will in the end be silenced.

Clarke is perhaps doing all of us in the UK who treat revolutionary politics as a form of sociological theory, with lots of debate and smiling paper sales, a massive favour, in reminding us that effective revolutionary activity is, by definition, illegal, and if Clarke has moved quickly to tighten the grip of the law on effective action, so also a good many of us have fallen a long way short in practice of the 'unacceptable behaviour' which our resistances ought to manifest.

If as Blair and Clarke insist, the rules of the game have changed, perhaps we should remind ourselves that revolution was never supposed to be a game, and start to act accordingly.

John Shute

The sorry state

page 5

such as it is, is flimsy, flexible and exists in an ill-defined combination of Statute Law, Common Law, parliamentary conventions and age-old works of authority. More pertinently however, it can be amended more or less at the will of Parliament in the same way as statute laws or the evolution of conventions, which basically means that Parliament has the capability to create and rescind laws as it sees fit.

This leaves the basic rights of the citizen in a permanent state of vulnerability. But why? Why is this? We live in a supposedly enlightened age, where freedom, democracy and/or liberty are the buzzwords of the Western political elites. So how come the British government is still effectively in a position to exercise arbitrary power? Well, however much of a leap this might seem, it is an inescapable fact that the development of the UK constitution has long been impinged by the traditions of the arbitrary power of the monarchy, an idea explored by Jonathan Freedland in his book, *Bring Home the Revolution*.

As Sir William Blackstone once put it: "that the King can do no wrong is a necessary and fundamental part of the [British] constitution", an historical truth that has left its mark today; the British constitution is still, to use the famous simile put forward by eighteenth century British jurist A.V. Dicey, "as slippery as procreating eels". While the reigning monarch no longer wields any kind of real power, traditional powers of the monarchy have been conferred onto Parliament, or The Crown-in-Parliament. Far from meaning that the UK is therefore now protected from arbitrary rule, this simply means that it is Parliament that is able to effectively exercise the arbitrary power rather than the monarch, and this has been illustrated beyond doubt by the actions of the Labour government in the post-9/11 period. As recent events have demonstrated, the state is still in a position to "invoke the monarchical claim to be above the law".

Put simply, and this is perhaps even more pertinent now than when Dicey wrote it, "Parliament has, under the British constitution, the right to make or unmake any law whatsoever". The absence of a proper constitution means that no act of parliament is open to challenge by the courts on the grounds that it is unconstitutional. In a nutshell, we basically still don't have a government answerable to the rule of law, the single defining feature of liberal thinking.

The UK's legal system has historically provided some safeguards against human rights abuses, the Habeas Corpus Act for example safeguarding against arbitrary arrest, but as Parliament retains the prerogative to change or rescind laws at will in this way, these safeguards are always open to governmental interference.

Indeed this has been demonstrated beyond doubt by recent government actions, as the Habeas Corpus Act itself has been effectively nullified by the Terrorism Act (2001) and the various other new laws discussed above, which deprive any citizen suspected of terrorist offences of the legal rights under Habeas Corpus. This represents perhaps one of the most clear cut examples to date of how easily the spiral towards a Police State can occur in the UK political system.

So, I would argue that the absence of a clear and entrenched declaration of the legal rights of the citizen precludes

the existence of a clear-cut legal framework where political activity can take place, a situation addressed by the constitutions of most other liberal democracies. Take the central ideas of the US constitution of 1787, limited government, an almost revered Bill of Rights, and the dispersal of power; these concepts are etched into American culture and the collective consciousness of US citizens, thus creating a concrete framework where political debate takes place. In the process of drafting the constitution of the United States, a document specifically designed to keep the institutions of government inaccessible to any threat resembling the arbitrary powers of monarchy, Charles Montesquieu, one of its chief architects, was quick to emphasise that "without separation of powers, there can be no liberty". According to Montesquieu: "Powers of the executive, legislature and judiciary should be kept separate and balanced to prevent any concentration of power in a political system which could be employed to threaten an individual's liberty." The UK, of course, operates via the polar opposite idea, a fusion of powers, which sees an enormous concentration of power in a legally un-restrained central government.

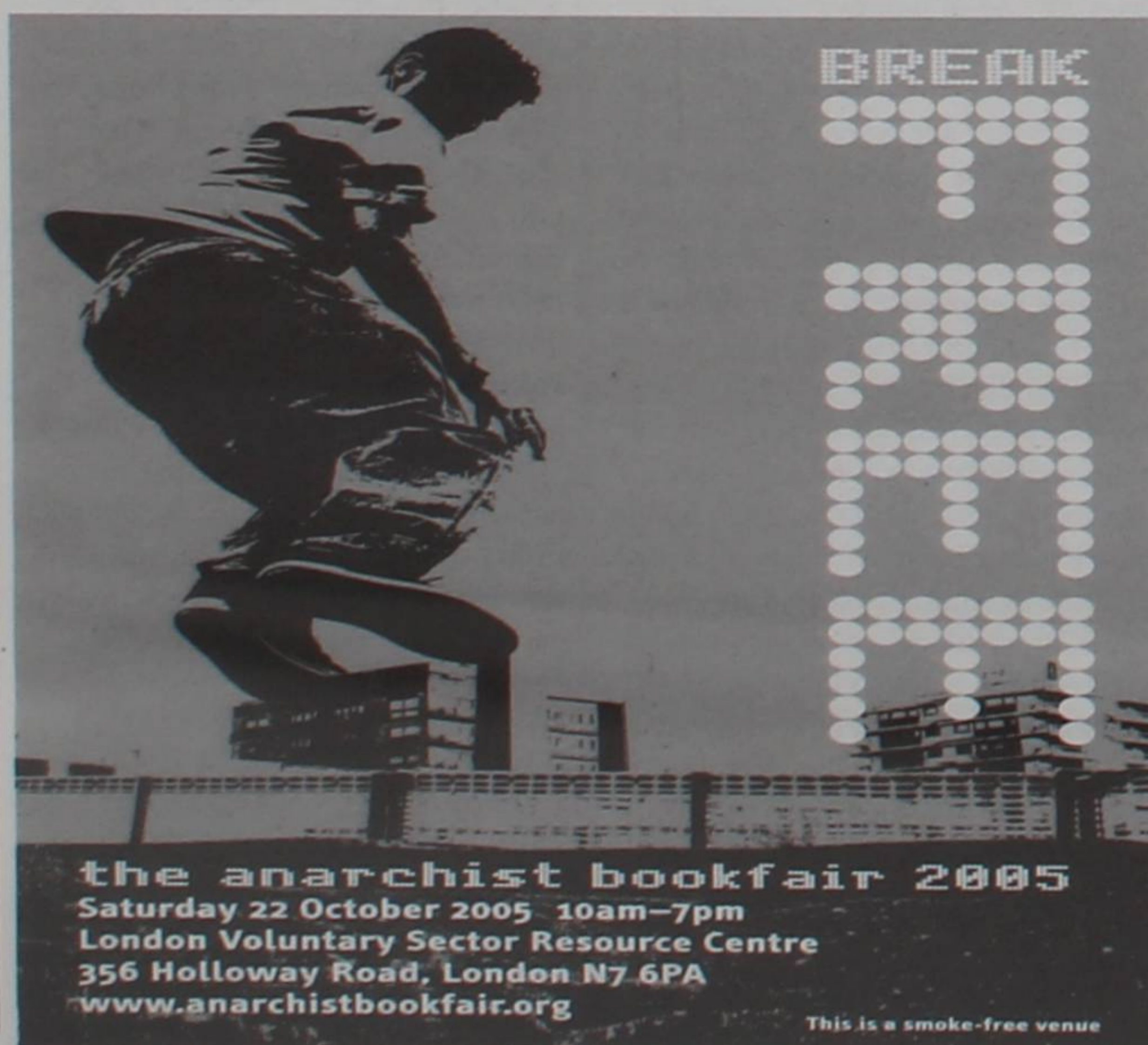
Perhaps a better example (given the Bush dynasty's apparent abuses of the US constitution via, for example, Patriot and Patriot II acts) is that of the Federal Republic of Germany, whose constitution was specifically designed to rule out any possibility of a repeat of the country's experience of totalitarian rule – one only has to look at the kind of constitutional rule espoused by states like Germany and the US to see the gaping holes in the UK's own political system.

It is worth pointing out that most constitutional documents throughout history, the US and German constitutions have arisen as by-products of fundamental political change but, with the exception of the commonwealth period of 1649-60, the UK has not seen any such change since 1066. This goes some way to explaining why the monarchical heritage of Britain can still be seen to permeate our system even in this day and age.

The UK's top-down system of governance, based on fusion of powers under a constitutional monarchy, absence of codified bill of rights enshrined in law, and immense concentration of power in the institutions of central government, is one which includes no significant checks and balances on the misuse of that political power. All of these flaws, all of these loopholes, have their origins in a pattern of historical development dominated for centuries by monarchical rule, the end result being a political system that begs the question: "Is it really any surprise that the UK can turn so easily into a Police State"?

Quiz answers

1. A BNP spokesman said "Islam is not compatible with Western Christian values in Britain but it is not their printing works that are dangerous to our way of life, it is the other things they do."
2. Their papers were impounded at customs. The party that wants to "put British workers first" couldn't find a British firm willing to print their crap, so had to go to Slovakia instead.
3. That you can't find those in charge.
4. The winner of a competition to find a new nursery rhyme. In it, 'Baker Tony' calls yellow sawdust cheese and uses dye instead of tomatoes which makes the children cry. Its author was inspired by the war on Iraq.



REVIEW

Tom Jennings judges John Waters' *A Dirty Shame* to be a riotous, often adolescent ride

For nearly forty years John Waters has exposed the damaging hypocrisy of respectable sexual morality, using aesthetic and narrative shock tactics to provoke disgust, fascination and outrage – in the process demonstrating how close psychologically these responses are.

Long before Howard Stern, Jerry Springer and sundry other media gross-out specialists paved the way for 'reality' TV, Waters (the 'Pope of Trash') tested the limits of acceptability with a series of extravagantly awful underground cult classics. *Hairspray* (1988) then initiated a cycle of films which increasingly subsumed rampant sexual excess under more explicitly critical and progressive aims – in effect, ironically echoing the social suppression of dangerous libido he made his reputation attacking, while travesty-ing his own biography in the process.

And although mainstream success and talk-show celebrity status certainly coincided with a blunting of the early edginess and impact, *A Dirty Shame* rediscovers some of Waters' original Queer aesthetics and trademark tastelessness. Mixing in deeper social, cultural and political insights, it is both profoundly silly and genuinely innovative.

Prudish shop assistant Sylvia Stickle (Tracey Ullman) refuses husband Vaughn (Chris Isaak) sex – bemoaning the moral degeneration of their working class Baltimore neighbourhood (a location Waters always returns to), and locking erotomaniac daughter Caprice (Selma Blair with enormous prosthetic breasts) in her room to stop her stripping as 'Ursula Udders' in local bars.

However, Sylvia becomes uncontrollably randy after a tail-ending en route to work when awoken from concussion by breakdown mechanic and sexual evangelist Ray Ray Perkins (Johnny Knoxville). He proclaims that her liberated libido will usher in the "resurrection" and "day of carnal rapture" to win the war of the freedom-loving perverts against the sex-hating fascistic neuters.

Her frenzied and public search for pleasure antagonises her mother Big Ethel (Suzanne Shepherd) into leading a burgeoning campaign for the "end of tolerance". Sylvia encounters other locals emerging from their closets after also hitting their heads, revealing a

cornucopia of unlikely and obscure fetichisms that inexorably cross-fertilise and proliferate, overwhelming the decency brigade and climaxing in communal head banging orgiastic bliss.

A riotous roller coaster of affectionate naffness, slapstick, pastiche and kitsch complete with pathetic dialogue, ham acting, dodgy plotting, goofy design and editing, and evenhanded comic stupidity, *A Dirty Shame* is often hilarious (if you can recapture your scatological adolescence). It also insidiously introduces several arguments subverting conventional wisdom about sex, society and politics (which most critics predictably missed).

So, while clearly favouring sexual indulgence over oppressive restriction, Waters locates moral degeneracy in both extremes as childish self-absorption precluding negotiation and coexistence – but where each depends on the other for its coherence. Smug liberal clichés are thus avoided – exemplified in the city slicker yuppies who advocate cultural diversity in theory but leave town unable to handle the messy ramifications in practice.

And when older neuters make comments like "I'm viagravated and I'm not gonna take it any more!" and "It wasn't this bad in the '60s!" the film's surreal retro Baltimore comes into focus as a contemporary USA where the puritans are presently winning politically and in the culture wars.

Bad taste and good sense

But this is no ordinary blue-collar America. There is no portrayal of sex-related work, abuse, exploitation, media or policing – neither prostitution nor patriarchy nor pornography, and precious little in the way of actual physical sexual relations either. It is actually rather chaste and almost childlike in its innocence. There is plenty of rhetorical posturing, though, and what makes *A Dirty Shame* scandalous is what it says, how, where and by whom this talk is conducted, and the use made of it by various vested interests.

Paradoxically, in retreating from recognisable realism, the film scores by flirting with the dominant modern discourses rendering sex so problematic – revelations of original sin and ecstasy; the obsession with sexual identity as the core of human personality and society; and the consequent institutionalisation,



control and commodification of sexual expression. In the realm of individual privatised consumption, sexual energy thus provides the means to divide, discipline and profit, whereas in uncontrollable vulgar public display it exposes and threatens power and prompts moral panic.

Waters' finely-tuned cultural class-consciousness replaces the fashionable intellectual niceties of twentieth century sexology with contemporary working class lives dominated by drudgery, misery and no expectation of fulfilment.

Sexual desire is here embodied in conjunction with exhaustion, frustration and resentment, so that carving out space for pleasure is a serious and difficult matter. Its achievement is often thus wild, reckless and even destructive – but far from the relaxed decadence of upmarket erotic gourmets.

Further, given that the strategic security-blanket of respectability is heavily reinforced by religion and the state, sexual license is highly inconvenient to all sides of the status quo, and thus

always under threat. But the perverts simply present a mirror image to those who deny their own dirtiness. Both attempt to impose religious regimentation on unruly diversity – recalling Michel Foucault's insight that injunctions to rationalise and classify sex extend biopolitical government of the body by imposing shame and neurosis on physical intimacy, and thus wrecking autonomous ethical practice.

Fortunately *A Dirty Shame* offers escape from this intransigent dilemma. Generally mistaken as merely the crowning glory of its freak show, the 'head banging' hypothesis simultaneously evokes the parents' impatience with squabbling children and skilfully answers both apologists for censorship and apostles of sexual liberation. If the biographical origins of sexual preference lie in the rich texture of personal responses to random events, then conflictual diversity is simply inevitable. Attempts to analyse, normalise, legislate for and reform personality as rigid individual certainty necessarily fail to

do justice to this differentiation while violating its subjects (fixation, indeed).

Meanwhile the inherent inseparability of physical, emotional and psychological sensation in the complexity of felt experience weaves together fantasies and relationships with intensities of pleasure and pain. Subsequent patterns of arousal and behaviour yield ongoing social performances of self that sediment the most salient recurring tendencies into the structure of identity while always remaining subject to change.

Of course, the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune that shape and change one's course are more or less traumatic and susceptible to conscious understanding, and may or may not be associated with the sinister motives, misplaced love or carelessness of others. That's life. The trick is dealing with it without wishing away the unwanted complications – and this neither neuters nor perverts will be inclined to be capable of.

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BOOKS

Hope in the Dark: The Untold History of People Power
by Rebecca Solnit
Canongate, £7.99

To rival the dominant 'great man' theory of social change, there is the 'people power' theory of history: the observation that significant change has come about because groups of oppressed people recognised their shared interest as a class and worked together to improve their conditions.

This is history from below, history as if the people mattered. Often, outbreaks of people power are spontaneous; they are referred to as revolts or rebellions, but they are truly uprisings. The focus of popular history is on the lives of the rich and famous; just think of what is taught in schools and related on television by people like David Starkey – all monarchs and militarism. We are to admire the great men who once ruled, and to know our place in history.

In *Hope in the Dark*, Rebecca Solnit

reminds us of some of the dates in recent history that give us cause for optimism. From the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, through to the Zapatista uprising in 1994, the 1999 WTO meeting in Seattle, and on to the anti-war movement in 2003, Solnit explores these events in terms of their meaning to us now. Names and dates are not so important here; the point is to uncover the human nature of these events and to show that the people power theory works in practice.

Though it is not worth the cover-price, in terms of quantity the cost is irrelevant. Solnit's prose is both weighty and flowing. This is the sort of book that you might give to a pessimistic friend or relative, or pick up when you are feeling demoralised.

It is worth noting that Solnit acknowledges the importance of anarchistic methods of organisation in what is nebulously called "the global justice movement", though she is somewhat reluctant to use the A word

overtly, even if she advocates the main tenets of anarchism. This is small 'a' anarchism, the anarchy that dare not speak its name. It is this aversion to labels that makes the book more palatable for a mainstream audience, and although some may find this ideological vagueness off-putting (or even infuriating), Solnit's purpose is not to proselytise but to motivate. And, as a kind of self-help book for radicals, it works.

James Doran

A Sideways Look

Last time I wrote, events overtook my copy even as Freedom was heading to the printers and the hapless Michael Brown resigned as chief of FEMA, despite the public backing of George W. Bush. I might be pushing at an open door here, but hopefully what I'm writing about today will be in the dustbin of history by the time Freedom hits the streets.

The government's draft anti-terror bill is a fairly draconian response to the 7th July attacks. It doesn't surprise me (nor should it surprise you) that the government are hoping to push through some more illiberal legislation on the back of the outrage. The key points of the bill are that it extends the maximum period of detention from 14 days to three months; it creates a new offence of indirectly inciting terrorism; gives the government the power to ban groups who glorify terrorism; and makes it illegal to go on a terrorist training camp.

What is spectacularly bad, even by the standards of New Labour, is the new offence of 'glorifying terrorist acts'. So, should I say that I thought ETA did a good job blowing up Admiral Carrero Blanco and thus paving the way for the end of Francoism in Spain, some political plod will come a-knocking? Oh, hang on, that was more than twenty years ago, so maybe they won't. Who knows? Certainly not the government.

Should someone in the cabinet with a Stalinist background play up the rather ineffectual role of umKhonto we Sizwe in ending apartheid, will anything happen? The Home Office have already announced that the Easter Rising of 1916 will be exempt, which at least means Irish folk singers can breathe easy.

Anyone sensible can see the holes in this offence, particularly as most struggles that involve a bit of terrorism have deep historical roots. Labour have also been criticised for the ever-widening definition of terrorism. Those of us old enough will remember how effective the draconian response to the IRA was. Thousands were interned, there were show trials and supergrasses and famous miscarriages of justice. The IRA regarded British policy as its best 'recruiting sergeant'. Labour boast that they are motivated solely by 'what works'. Well, if what you want is a 'clash of civilisations' carry on. It's not as if the government isn't stuffed full of loopy Christian extremists, some of whom are members of secretive organisations inspired by fascists. Remember comrades, neither Mecca nor Rome!

And no prizes for guessing who won't be prosecuted for inciting terrorism, indirectly or not, as the grinning God-botherer still denies any link between him ordering the deaths of thousands in Iraq and militant Islamists blowing up Tube trains. How long before these new offences are used against animal rights activists or environmental campaigners? Will the Earth First! Camps be reclassified as terrorist training camps, with participants thrown in jail for three

months before being told that it was because they'd attended a workshop on non-violent direct action?

And lastly, how can anyone possibly be satirical when faced with politics that grow more absurd with every pronouncement.

Svartfrosk

Blast from the Past

From Freedom of 22nd September 1990, entitled Bailiff Busters!

On Friday 2nd August, the Vale of Glamorgan council sent bailiffs from the Bristol firm of Roche & Co into Barry to recover the poll tax owed by 30 non payers.

One of those who received notice that the bailiffs would call sent notice to Cardiff anti poll tax group and throughout Friday a picket of over 60 remained in the council estate guarding against bailiffs.

At lunchtime the bailiffs were spotted at the council offices. Once there, protestors quickly disabled the bailiff's van by jamming the locks and letting down it's tyres. (Which one Socialist Workers' Party member who was present described as individualistic terrorism!) Local brewery workers also helped by blocking the van in with their lorry. The police were called and it took eight coppers to free one lock! This was enough for the bailiffs, who returned to Bristol empty handed.

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The quiz

1. When the virulently anti-Muslim BNP were caught using an Arab-owned printers staffed mainly by Muslims to print their paper, what was their defence?
2. What went wrong with the BNP's next lot of printers?
3. Malcolm Starbrook, the editor of the East London Advertiser complained about the subversion of his rag by campaigners against the DSEi Arms Fair, who put out East London Adversaries. What was the "whole thing about anarchy" according to him?
4. What is "Baker Tony's Pizza"?

Answers on page 6



Imagine If...

Richard Curtis scratched his head. He couldn't understand it. Okay the whole 'making poverty history' thing wasn't going very well - in fact it was fair to say it wasn't going at all, what with the \$40bn write-off in jeopardy, and so many strings attached to even that.

But he hadn't realised the big advertising campaign they'd been running to 'save the life of an African child' was going to get the coalition of 530 NGOs into so much trouble. Apparently the generalised plea to world leaders for reform was too much for Richard's good friend Tony. His good friend Bob sat next to him, also casually scratching. Curtis wondered whether he'd caught something from those long greasy locks, and shuffled away slightly. This prompted one of Bob's numerous useful remarks.

"They don't know what they're fuckin' doing, the fuckers. We're trying to save the fuckin' wuuuurld here."

Ofcom, the television regulator, had banned MPH from running their 'click' adverts, where liberal celebrities such as Kylie Minogue and Brad Pitt snapped their fingers every three seconds to simulate the death of a child.

Apparently, despite their best efforts to make the whole thing non-political - a team of experts had even checked through the whole production to make sure beforehand that there were no political reasons for or solutions to 'solving poverty' involved - regulator Ofcom had banned it.

Still, Richard thought, at least it had been banned before the revelations about fellow clicker Kate Moss, otherwise they could have been accused of sending 'the wrong message' to kids as well.



Listings

27th September to 2nd October Peoples' Global Action conference in Haridwar, Uttaranchal, North India, see aggp.org

29th September Bubbling up Down Under, workers' struggles in Australia, members of Melbourne Anarchist Communist Group speak, 7pm at the Autonomy Club, Freedom, 84b Whitechapel High Street, London E1 (meeting convened by Anarchist Federation: London)

1st October Star Wars: an international activists conference, organised by Yorkshire CND, for more info see 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

6th October Ken Campbell Impro Show at The Inn on the Green, 3 Thorpe Close, London W10 from 8pm, see newagenda.demon.co.uk/perclub.html

15th October Miscarriage of Justice Day with workshops from 10.30am, meeting starts 2pm, at Friend's Meeting House, Mount Street, Manchester, see unitedagainstjustice.org.uk

16th October International day of action against McDonald's, to mark World Food Day, call 020 7713 1269 or see mcspotlight.org

22nd October The 24th London Anarchist Bookfair moves to a bigger venue, where you can get the latest books, pamphlets, magazines, etc., plus meetings and discussions on all aspects of anarchist activity, which are open to all, as well as a professionally-run creche and hot food. The venue is the Resource Centre, 356 Holloway Road, London N7, from 10am to 6pm, see freespace.virgin.net/anarchist.bookfair/

22nd to 24th October Put the brakes

on Rolls Royce Raynesway, Trident Ploughshares are organising a weekend of action against Rolls Royce in Derby (the driving force behind Trident, this plant in Derby produces reactor fuel for Trident submarines - essential for Britain's nuclear WMD), for more info see tridentploughshares.org

23rd October Freedom to Protest conference at The Resource Centre, 356 Holloway Road, London N7, from 11am to 5pm, for more info see freedomtoprotest.org.uk

29th October Vegan food fair from 12.30 to 3.30pm at Methodist Church Hall in Percy Road, Hampton, for info contact Lesley@vegan4life.org.uk or 020 8941 8075

3rd November Ken Campbell Impro Show from 8pm at The Inn on the Green, 3 Thorpe Close, London W10, see newagenda.demon.co.uk/perclub.html

10th November The tenth anniversary of the execution of Ken Saro-Wiwa, see www.remembersarowiwa.com

26th and 27th November BeyondTV International Festival, Swansea, see www.undercurrents.org/beyondtv

3rd December International Day of Climate Protest, see campaigncc.org

Introducing...

Cambridge Action Network

The city-based network, who attended the G8 mobilisations, recently opened a squatted social centre, now closed.

A member of the group said: "At the moment we are working towards holding a 'Wild Time' cafe for fundraising. We're involved in local Critical Masses and ongoing traveller support, and we are also working on an ethical guide to Cambridge."

Website: cambridgeaction.net

Email: cambridge@lists.riseup.net

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FREEDOM fortnightly ISSN 0016 0504