

FREEDOM

80P ANARCHIST NEWS AND VIEWS

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INSIDE ►►

Dead by 60: Glasgow's shame page 3

The dockers have won page 4

A raver's story page 5

Svartfrosk page 8

THE 'WIRELESS REVOLUTION'

EXCLUSIVE

Major companies are set to introduce a broadband technology to keep control of telecommunications across the UK despite cheaper, more robust open systems being available.

Following a recent agreement over the introduction of a new global standard, WiMax is to begin testing in the UK for a nationwide roll-out possibly as early as next year.

But 'media commons' groups, operating community-based free systems, have already rejected WiMax as clumsy and unreliable compared to other available systems.

Sascha Meinrath, an expert in telecommunications technology, is involved in the Champaigne-Urbana community wireless project in Urbana, Illinois. The project has spent the last five years creating a free integrated open network for the community, with great success. He said: "There's a huge political-economic combine fighting to utilise this technology. Mainly, it's about money and profit margins.

"[Champaigne-Urbana] haven't rejected WiMax *per se*, but we're utilising 802.11 [the Wifi frequency] because it's a set standard, one that we know works, one that is widely available and one where devices are increasingly inexpensive.

"We have yet to see off-the-shelf WiMax devices, and most of the technological claims seem more hype than reality. We'll see how things develop, but for now, WiMax isn't even in the same ballpark as Wifi for DIY wireless."

The WiMax broadband system, which would be designed to bypass phone lines

through the use of 'hub and spoke' wireless transmission systems, has been hailed by major media groups as a massive technological leap forward.

Hub and spoke systems rely on a base antenna set in the middle of a serviced area, which beams information to and from computers. The system however is severely limited by its reliance on 'line-of-sight' to maintain a strong signal. It is also extremely vulnerable, with whole areas being cut off should anything happen to the relay station. Finally, it is more expensive, as vulnerabilities and high maintenance costs are borne by end users.

'Mesh' wireless infrastructures offer multiple points of connection to the network without a central tower. Tiny Wifi relay stations and transmitters are placed around a given neighbourhood, and connect to the internet at multiple points. This network is cheap to construct, easy to expand and has none of the vulnerabilities of hub and spoke systems. The system is also potentially less harmful, as it requires lower signal outputs from any single base.

Mesh has been largely ignored by major manufacturers, as it is very difficult to build into a 'proprietary' (company-controlled) network. For community groups such as Champaigne-Urbana, however, it has proven a far better system than WiMax.

Sascha commented that: "Wifi Mesh networks are cheaper to build, cheaper to maintain, have faster connectivity (especially within the community network itself), they're more scalable, and more dynamic."

However, Sascha agreed that WiMax



Whaler dangers: Canadian Greenpeace whaling activist Texas Joe Constantine, was dragged overboard into the freezing Antarctic waters after a harpoon was fired over his inflatable and the rope became entangled in the craft. Constantine spent a few minutes in the water in his survival suit, before his compatriots could manouvre their craft to pick him up. The harpoon killed the whale almost instantly after a chase lasting an hour. The incident happened off the Mawson coast in the Australian Antarctic Territory, 2000 nautical miles south-west of Perth. The Fisheries Agency of Japan claims it is conducting a scientific research programme. Greenpeace and Sea Shepherd say the hunt is nothing more than commercial whaling in disguise. After the whales have been measured and weighed by the scientists, the whales are cut up and boxed for the market.

could have uses in more rural areas of the UK. Suggesting where might benefit most, he said: "Rural areas and licensed service providers - places where you want to cover large areas and don't have a lot of users.

"WiMax can handle roughly 45MBps bitrate* on a channel - so if you're talking about a coverage radius of 30 miles

(which is touted by its supporters) you're talking about 45MBps available over a roughly 2800+ square mile area ... clearly, this isn't something that'll work well in an environment with lots of users."

The technology has been restricted to two major companies, Pipex and PCCW, who will, in conjunction with existing current providers such as BT, be looking

to retain control of the lucrative telecommunications market.

Pipex has declined to comment on the rollout.

For more information on the divide between Wifi and WiMax, go to freepress.net/wifi.

* Some big businesses utilise similar levels of bandwidth individually.

NHS SICKENS

As news arrives that 1,000 NHS staff are facing redundancy in the West Midlands under plans to save £250m a year, 200 staff at the NHS Pensions Agency (NHSPA) have gone on strike against the proposed privatisation of pensions.

80% of those taking part in the ballot voted in favour of a one-day strike on 20th January, and no unionists scabbed, according to Joanne Leadbetter, representative for the Public and Commercial Services (PCS) Union.

The one day stoppage saw around 90% of the workforce on strike and was heralded as a huge success as pickets were well-attended despite extremely poor weather.

The agency, which looks after the pensions of approximately 1.25 million NHS staff, is set for privatisation this year without a tender process or any competition.

Joanne Leadbetter, PCS Chairperson for the Pensions Agency Branch, who was on the picket, said: "Interim management are already talking about redundancies even though there has been no bid submitted by the contractor and no identification of how services will be delivered if jobs are cut. Should this go ahead staff are seriously concerned about the detrimental impact this decision would have on their job security and future employment prospects."

Mark Serwotka, PCS general secretary, said: "The level of support has been fantastic and illustrates the strength of feeling against this flawed privatisation. Members striking today have sent out a clear message that they are not prepared to sit back and let the agency that deals with the futures of 1.25 million health staff be handed to the private sector without a thorough business case."

• **BREAKING NEWS:** As this article was being written, a new investigation has found that last month 81 Health and Trust authorities, representing approximately one-fifth of the total in the UK were under emergency investigation by KPMG, the multinational auditing and accounting firm, over financial problems.

The number of under investigation by specialist 'turnaround teams' dwarfs the generally quoted figure of 50 trusts,

ARGENTINIAN 'JUSTICE'

Campaigners fighting for justice for the murdered piqueteros Darío Santillán and Maximiliano Kosteki have vowed to target the former government officials who ordered the dispersal of pickets after the sentencing on 9th January of Police Commissioner Alfredo Fanchiotti and his adjutant Alejandro Acosta to life imprisonment for the killings.

Darío Santillán's father Alberto said after the verdict, "This will not return my son back to life, but it is the first step toward justice," adding that, "now it is time to go for the masterminds."

Piqueteros and human rights activists now want to carry the fight to the Duhalde administration which ordered the attack on a blockade at Pueyrredón bridge in the Argentinian capital of Buenos Aires which led to the murders of Santillán and Kosteki.

Eleven government officials are to be investigated in a parallel case.

Carlos Soria, then director of the State Intelligence Ministry has said that the attack was carried out to "reaffirm the authority of the state" under what he describes as "an institutional threat to democracy."

Fourteen former government ministers, including the former President Eduardo Duhalde and cabinet chief Alfredo Atanasoff, were called to give evidence but only three actually appeared in the witness stand.

Atanasoff had noted at the time that any attempt to block the bridge would be taken as a "declaration of war".

It was while clearing the bridge on 26th July 2002 that Fanchiotti shot Maximiliano Kosteki in the chest.

As Kosteki was taken away for treatment by fellow demonstrators, Darío Santillán was then shot in the back by Fanchiotti and Acosta.

Altogether 30 piqueteros were shot

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Vol 67 No 02

► page 6, column 5

► page 6, column 5

Home and away

Action in the post

Following protests by antifascists in West Yorkshire Mail Boxes Etc (MBE) have terminated their contract with the nazi British People's Party (BPP) and closed their accommodation address in Leeds. The decision follows protests outside MBE's office in Great George Street, Leeds, and numerous complaints to the company. The protests were organised by The 635 Group, the West Yorkshire arm of Antifa.

In a statement, The 635 Group said: "The closure of the BPP's accommodation address is a significant victory for antifascists, and the first step in closing down this Hitlerite sect once and for all."

For their part, the BPP are clearly very upset. A laughable statement reads: "We tell the Reds here and now. *Nothing* will stop our growth. We will not back down to Communist threats and violence! We are White Nationalists. We fight back and we grow."

Cut n shut

Following the breakdown of talks with senior Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) officials over job cuts and deteriorating services, the union has gone on a two day strike for 26th and 27th January.

The 48 hour-stoppage hit Jobcentres, benefit offices, pension centres and the Child Support Agency (CSA) across England, Scotland and Wales. The strike follows cuts of approximately 15,000 jobs in the DWP as the department seeks to cull a total of 30,000 jobs by 2008.

Despite the DWP being ahead of target in cutting jobs and deteriorating service levels leading to increased benefit waits, the department has refused the union's offer of halting the cuts whilst an objective joint assessment of adequate staffing levels based on operational need is carried out. The DWP has also refused to guarantee that there will be no compulsory redundancies.

Sex worker victory

An employment tribunal has just found that GMB member Irene Everitt, who worked on live adult chat lines, was unfairly dismissed by her employer Datapro Services Limited. Mrs Everitt was dismissed in March 2005 having been accused of gross industrial misconduct. She worked for the company in Grays in Essex from 1997 to 2005.

Mrs Everitt was employed as an operator in the adult live chat industry and after a number of years was promoted to supervision and training of the other operators. She was able to do much of the work from home. The relationship with her employer deteriorated "due to the lack of respect for the operators".

This is the first case that a trade union has won at an Employment Tribunal for a worker in this part of the economy.

Virgin rail strike

Guards on Virgin CrossCountry trains have gone on strike for the third time over Sunday working payments. An RMT organiser said they were unhappy that a deal agreed with managers had been blocked by the board.

The RMT union's organiser in the Midlands, Ken Usher, apologised for the disruption to passengers, but said: "It's not a dispute that we wished to enter into anyway, the company know exactly where we're prepared to negotiate."

The effectiveness of the strike was hampered by managers being brought in to run a scab service. The RMT claims the introduction of a 35-hour week has led to its members losing money.

Around the world



HAITI: A strike called on 9th January by the Haiti Chamber of Commerce has come two days after the death of the commander of UN military forces in Haiti, Lt. Gen. Urano Bacellar (pictured above). His death was initially reported as a suicide, but UN Special Envoy to Haiti Juan Gabriel Valdes has implied in recent interviews to the Haitian press that it may have been an assassination by forces trying to disrupt the electoral process. And finally, the right-wing opposition of president Mbeki in South Africa with ties to Haiti's elite ridiculously implied that a sniper from their country, at the behest of Aristide, killed the general.

For their part, the Brazilian police have officially stated that they consider the death a 'suicide' citing their own autopsy results. The investigation into all of the evidence continues.

For most residents of Cite Soleil, the Chamber's call to shut down businesses and transportation is an ominous and frightening portent of things to come. They do not see the strike as a call for national unity to combat crime and violence; rather they view it as another attempt by Haiti's wealthy elite, and those attempting to forestall upcoming elections, to force the UN to launch military attacks against the neighbour-

hood. They see it as a repeat of events that led to the massacre of 6th July 2005.

THAILAND: Ahead of a proposed US-Thailand Free Trade Agreement, the international medical organisation Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) has warned that acceptance of the US proposal could restrict access to essential medicines in Thailand and endanger the country's national HIV/AIDS treatment programme.

MSF is concerned that the US, as it has succeeded in doing in other regional agreements, will push for provisions that could extend patent terms and limit Thailand's ability to protect the health of its people by producing low-cost generic versions of patented drugs.

Although the US proposal remains secret, based on US negotiating positions during other regional agreements, most recently with the Central American Free Trade Area (CAFTA), it is believed that the US will again seek provisions for the protection of intellectual property that far exceed international norms set out by the World Trade Organisation (WTO) in the Doha Declaration on the Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) Agreement and Public Health. The Doha Declaration unambiguously prioritised public health over the protection of intellectual property.

Using locally produced medicines, the Thai government has initiated a programme of universal access to subsidised treatment that currently reaches over 80,000 Thai people living with HIV/AIDS.

USA: On 14th January 2005, members of the Chicago General Membership Branch of the Industrial Workers of the

World labour union (IWW) called for an informational picket to boycott the Ideal Hand Car Wash in Chicago's Albany Park area (see picture below) after the managers and owners of the business refused to pay Neil Rysdahl, a long-time member of the IWW, the \$227.50 he was owed for over 45 hours of work he'd done for them.

The picket effectively shut down business at the car wash for the morning, as most drivers who intended to use Ideal drove away after talking with picketers or seeing signs blasting the business for unfair labour practices.

After only three hours of picketing, Eduardo 'Eddie' Amanero, a manager of the car wash, agreed to pay Rysdahl in full, in cash, on the spot, in order to bring an end to the picket.

During the protest, the owners and managers of the business tried to intimidate picketers, calling them 'losers' and 'faggots'.

"When the owner and his goons showed up, and tried to start a confrontation, I tried to put them at ease and told them we didn't want any trouble, we just wanted to make things right for Neil," said one member. "When I went inside to negotiate for Neil and to collect payment for him, the guys the owner brought with him threatened us."

When asked what he was going to do



Prison news

Armley jail unfit for human habitation:

Parts of Armley prison in Leeds have been condemned as unfit for human habitation by Anne Owers, the Chief Inspector of Prisons for England and Wales. Her report was published following a 'surprise inspection' of the rat-infested and overcrowded Victorian jail, which has had a reputation for brutality and inhumanity for many years. Up to 40% of prisoners said they felt intimidated at the jail, and there were numerous complaints of brutality and racism. The notorious segregation unit came under particular fire, with the 'militaristic' running of the unit, and the overuse of a 'special cell' being criticised, as well as the high incidence of the use of the formalised brutality known as 'control and restraint'.

325 launch website: The anti-prisons/anti-capitalist/anti-repression magazine 325, is now available online. It features articles from the paper version, and content not previously published or translated. There is an interview section, and a distribution page (where you can get European and US insurrectionary anarchist/anti-capitalist pamphlets and also hoodies and T-shirts). As well as articles by Mark Barnsley and John

Bowden, there is an interview with Joelle Aubron from Action Directe, articles about 'Smart' CCTV/Digital surveillance, torture methods of the Spanish police, preparing for prison, and 'EasyLondon' and Italian neo-fascists. Although still in its early stages, as the website grows and is updated, it is hoped it can become a useful repository of information in the struggle against State and Capital. Forthcoming updates include an interview with Spanish anarchist prisoner Laudilino Iglesias, a report from the recent French uprising, and much more. See www.325collective.com

Rose Ann Scrocco arrested: Sentenced to 30 years in Italy's notorious Marini trial, Rose Ann has been arrested in Amsterdam, Holland. She went on the run after being sentenced in her absence. As yet, no correspondence address is available, but Rose Ann is yet another prisoner who is sure to need our support.

Supporters of Aiden Hulme call for repatriation: Supporters of 28-year old Aiden Hulme are calling for his repatriation to the North of Ireland. Aiden has been imprisoned for over two years, and is serving a 20 year jail sentence on the basis of circumstantial

evidence, such as a text message from a mobile phone received from an unknown party, which was ambiguous at best. Since his imprisonment he has been beaten, denied family visits, had medication refused, and been denied medical treatment. Aiden is currently being held in Full Sutton maximum security prison near York. Please send letters of support to: Aiden Hulme, HMP Full Sutton, York, YO41 1PS.

Peter Young transferred: American ALF prisoner Peter Young has recently been transferred to the following prison, where he is expected to serve out the remainder of his sentence: Peter Daniel Young, # 10269-111, FCI Vitorville Medium II, Federal Correctional Institution, PO Box 5700, Adelanto, CA 92301, USA.

Chelsea Gerlach website: A website has been set up for Chelsea Gerlach, one of the people arrested in America on 7th December last year (see Freedom, 14th January) at supportchelsea.org. You can also write to Chelsea, who like the others, is facing a lengthy prison sentence, at Chelsea Gerlach, #1308678, Lane County Jail, 101 W 5th Ave, Eugene, OR 97401, USA.

with his back wages, Rysdahl said, "I'm going to catch up on some debts. And, of course, I'm going to pay all of the back dues I owe to the IWW!"

ZIMBABWE: On 11th January armed police raided the offices of the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions (ZCTU), seizing documents as the government steps up a crackdown against civic society.

The raid came as government begun investigations into the Congress's operations, a probe that observers say could lead to its deregistration. ZCTU president Lovemore Matombo said that the real motive behind the probe, into allegations of financial impropriety, was to find a pretext to get rid of the labour movement after the government failed to impose puppet leaders on the ZCTU last year.

The ZCTU has proved to be a thorn in the flesh of government. Last year it successfully organised mass protests against worsening poverty fighting several battles with police. Police details, who rummaged through ZCTU offices seizing files and computer diskettes, said they wanted the material to prove that the union was illegally dealing in foreign currency. ZCTU leaders immediately dismissed the claim they were illegally dealing in foreign exchange as a mere ploy by the government to harass them and intimidate them from fighting for workers' rights and freedoms.

But sources at police headquarters in Harare said the raid was ordered from high office and that it was part of a plan to destabilise major union and civic society groups aligned to the opposition Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) party.

Prisoner releases: Italian Anarchist Marco Martorana has been released from prison, though he is still being held under house arrest. British animal rights activist Jan Lawrence has been released, but is fitted with an electronic tag. Finnish anti-conscription prisoner Antti Rautiainen is out. And Anarchist prisoner Jim Robbins has also been released. Good luck to all of them.

John Shelley ghosted: A protest by prisoners in the brutal Long Lartin segregation unit, in which the block was 'dismantled', has resulted in John Shelley being ghosted to Whitmoor and placed in the so-called 'Dangerous and Severe Personality Disorder' unit. It was inevitable that the establishment of such units over the past few years would simply be another weapon for the System to use against prison militants. The cod-science of the 'personality disorder' is something worthy of Stalinist Russia. John, an articulate and long-standing writer for papers such as Class War, remains on good form, but is sure to appreciate correspondence: John Shelley, DP9500, DSPD Unit, HMP Whitmoor, March, Cambs, PE15 0PR.

News

Third world on the Glasgow strip

An NHS health report has shown the Calton area of Glasgow to have a lower life expectancy than Gaza

A report by NHS Scotland has found that Glasgow is one of the most dangerous places on earth to live, with a life expectancy far below any other part of the country.

In the Gaza Strip, one of the most dangerous parts of the world, life expectancy averages 70.5 years. In Glasgow, it's 69.3 for the men, and in Calton, just minutes away from the city centre it's just 53.9.

The number makes Calton the sickest place in Europe, and gives it a lower life expectancy than Iraq.

The report says lifestyle is having a major impact on the population, citing that 52% of the local population smoke, while drug and alcohol related problems are widespread.

Major health problems regarding cancer, heart attacks, diabetes and suicide are also contributing to the number. However it is the incapacity benefit and unemployment numbers that are furthest above the norm.

Straight unemployment has been hovering around the 10% mark for most of the last decade, while those households living on disability benefits make up 44% of the total.

Calton is just the most deprived of several areas across Glasgow, which is in turn only one of several ex-industry cities which has seen massive inequality grow since de-industrialisation began.

In Hamiltonhill, 61% of households are not in work. This is true for 58% in Drumchapel. The average age of death for the bottom third of Scottish homes is under 65.

Nick, from Glasgow, said: "I hadn't read the reports but I'm not surprised. In some areas 60% unemployment is the norm. The government is banging

on about the number of people claiming disability, which in Glasgow is around 10%, which takes into account the less affluent pockets.

"It can be quite startling, like areas in the east end where people are living in communities where two-thirds of houses are boarded up, there are no community centres, no transport or amenities.

"Bilmarnock, where the G8 convergence centre was, is an area which used to be factories which are now covered in trees.

"Just next to me, near the west end, 40% of people are unemployed and that's near a very affluent area. Ice cream vans come round at midnight, and they aren't exactly selling ice creams."

As inequality becomes even more acute under continuing trade liberalisation, life for the poorest seems to be getting worse. The average life expectancy for people in areas like Calton fell by 16 days over the last decade while over the same period, it rose by two years for Scotland as a whole.

A governmental welfare reform green paper is due next month, but the problems of Glasgow's former industrial heartlands are far from unique.

Since the early 1980s, the rise in the number of 'economically inactive' men of working age in the coalfields, as in many de-industrialised areas, has been twice as large as the fall in recorded unemployment.

In affluent areas of the same city meanwhile, such as Bearsden, life expectancy exceeds 80 and is as high as 88.

A study has been set up to determine why the life expectancy figures are so low in the city, which will cost £250,000.



Royal Exchange Square in Glasgow's city centre

The pSoBid study will examine 700 volunteers to gain an understanding of how social conditions are causing serious illnesses.

The study will not include Calton, and

focuses on men and women between the ages of 35 and 64.

• EXTRA: A march through Glasgow to remember the Bloody Sunday massacre was met with abuse and thrown bottles

from BNP and Orange Order thugs.

As Freedom goes to press 11 people have been arrested, after groups arrived wearing paramilitary-style clothes and goaded the 1,000 marchers.

Proactive greens

A new not-for-profit co-op in Manchester has become the first such group in the country to provide a renewable fuel substitute for diesel motorcars as their sole product.

Green Gold Biodiesel is based at Fairfield Street, behind the Piccadilly railway station, and currently operates pumps offering a 5% biodiesel, 95% diesel mix which is available to all, and the group says it will soon be offering a 100% biodiesel mix to co-op members (£10 joining fee).

Currently the co-op has four paid staff and five directors who are volunteers. The co-op, which started four years ago, took 18 months to organise and set up the new station.

One member of the co-op said: "It was lots of hard work but worth it. We expected it to be slow to begin with and it is – as anyone who's set up anything from scratch will know.

"Our long-term plan is to keep going, keep selling biodiesel and help to educate

our users about sustainability and climate change."

No conversion is required to run on a biodiesel blend, which can reduce carbon dioxide emissions and is non-toxic, reducing engine wear, according to the group.

The co-op member said: "Biodiesel is cheaper than regular diesel. If you use the correct blend for your engine it can prolong the life of the vehicle as it has good lubricating qualities.

"Making biodiesel produces between 30% and 80% less CO₂ than mineral diesel. It reduces your dependence on the petrochemical industry."

The co-op's biodiesel comes from used cooking oil and virgin rape seed oil. Although some forms of biodiesel can be made from palm oil, the group opposes use of this as it is produced at the expense of tropical rain forest.

Biodiesel (mono alkyl esters) is a derivative of plant or animal oils. It has similar characteristics to fossil-oil based

diesel and can be used as a fuel for most (unmodified) diesel engines.

Biodiesel is made by reacting warm vegetable oil with methoxide (a solution of potassium hydroxide and methanol). The reaction causes the oil to split into esters and glycerine. The methanol combines with the esters to form methyl esters (biodiesel) and the glycerine drops out of solution.

In addition to the success of finally moving into their new premises, three large community groups (East Manchester Community Transport, Greater Manchester Accessible Transport Limited and Community Transport Manchester) are all planning to run their fleets on B5.

The spokesperson added that they would dearly love Jeremy Clarkson to come and fill up his car... and would love to know his phone number if anyone has it.

You can visit the Green Gold Biodiesel website at greengoldbiodiesel.co.uk

NHS inequalities

The 16th January 2006 saw the launch of Project London, a new healthcare initiative in the east end of London. Project London is organised by Médecins du Monde (UK), a charity that organises healthcare across the world but is increasingly becoming involved in projects in western Europe.

Project London will provide primary healthcare to refugees and other migrants, the homeless and female sex workers. Volunteers from the NHS and other agencies will provide healthcare, advice and advocacy to access other services such as counselling and dental care.

The research undertaken by Médecins du Monde clearly recognises the growing inequalities in healthcare in the UK that the NHS is unable to tackle. In Tower Hamlets 75% of children live in families with low incomes. There is also a shortage of GPs with over 65% of general practices no longer taking new patients. Although asylum seekers have a right to primary healthcare, a GP is under no obligation

to register them. Since April 2004 only migrants who are legally resident in the UK can have access to hospitals (secondary care). The only exceptions are for those with serious mental health problems, needing emergency treatment or having an infectious disease. Restrictions of this kind have caused suffering to women seeking maternity care and those with HIV/AIDS.

In August 2004 the government announced that it was considering further restrictions to healthcare for asylum seekers. Under these proposals failed asylum seekers and migrants who stayed beyond their visas will have no right to register with a GP. A recent editorial in the *BMJ* (14th January 2006) stated that "denying free basic healthcare to the most vulnerable groups in society, who are legally prevented from working and unable to pay charges, is ethically unsupportable and a breach of human rights."

Ellen Kemp

News

Rocking the docks

Determined action by dockers across Europe sees off a threatened EU casualisation plan for the second time reports Jack Ray

On 16th January 6,000 dockers from around the world descended on the EU Parliament in Strasbourg to fight plans to deregulate ship loading... and won. They held a lively demonstration that resulted in clashes with riot police and some damage to the parliament building. Elsewhere 50,000 workers struck in protest at the plans disrupting cargo loading in sixteen countries. Two days later MEPs heavily rejected the new directives.

Stevedores are opposed to 'Port Package 2', measures recommended by the EU Commission to deregulate port services, allowing for the tendering out of ship loading. Transport workers unions say that the plan is a recipe for chaos, with ships being unloaded by the lowest bidder with the worst-trained operatives, or that shipping companies will begin using unqualified seafarers to unload their own ships after long journeys. According to the UK's Transport and General Workers Union, even employers agreed that the plan would, "compromise safety, threaten jobs and undermine investment."

The European Transport Workers Federation called the demonstration in Strasbourg two days before a planned vote on the new directives, with marchers coming from Belgium, Holland, Denmark, France, Britain, Germany, Finland, Greece, Spain, Malta, Cyprus, Sweden, Poland, Portugal and Norway. The French riot police – the CRS – were sent to confront the protest, and clashes developed between police and dockers. Water

cannons and tear gas were met with a mixture of flares, glasses, logs and stones. Thirteen dockers were arrested and news reports mentioned injuries to a dozen police.

Elsewhere the march in Strasbourg was backed up by strike action at ports across the continent. Union officials in Belgium reported that "the strike is total. Nothing is happening in Belgian ports" and Marseille was also completely shut down. Other actions took place at Le Havre, Antwerp and Rotterdam, as well as in Portugal, Germany, Norway and Sweden. In addition to the stoppages there were information meetings about the plan to discuss the ramifications of the new directives.

Five days earlier, another strike by 40,000 workers had signaled the intent of dockers to wreck the EU legislation, with the largest strike at the German port of Hamburg. Other short actions took place across Finland's major ports and in Antwerp and Rotterdam, with actions across a total of 12 countries.

MEPs rejected the plan on 18th January, two days after the demonstrations and stoppages, by a majority of 532 to 120. The success of the bill was thought by trade associations to have been in the balance before the actions. Members of the European Parliament were left in no doubt as to the determination of dockers to fight the liberalisation of dock regulations, with the threat of future multi-national direct action in the offing if the EU pressed ahead with the plans.



Frank Leys, Secretary of the dockers section of the International Transport Workers Federation outlined opposition to the plan, saying "When I first heard what the European Commission was proposing – seafarers handling cargo and self-handlers (companies providing handling services) hiring people who aren't registered dockers to do dockers'

work – it felt like we were returning to the nineteenth century. Were we heading back to an age where the only thing needed to work in the docks was brute strength and the willingness to spend half of your hard earned wages in the foreman's wife's shop or pub if you wanted to work the next day?"

He added that "from the beginning,

workers across Europe have said that we do not want or need this directive. If we had been wrong to do so would we have been joined not just by national governments but by the major stakeholders in the industry, all united in disbelief that the corpse of this pointless and damaging legislation has been dragged as far as it has?"

Victory in Vietnam

The Communist government of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam has been forced to make massive concessions after a month long wildcat strike crippled the country's export sector.

42,000 workers making cheap manufacturing goods in Ho Chi Minh City took part in a spontaneous strike over wages and working conditions, returning to work after securing a massive 40% hike in the national minimum wage.

Vietnamese workers are forced by law to join the government controlled General Confederation of Labour (GCL), making official action extremely difficult. This latest action, which started a month ago and was concluded on January 17th, was spontaneous and illegal, avoiding the rigmarole of mediation and arbitration that usually accompanies official disputes. Workers, forced into a state-sponsored yellow union, organised directly on the shopfloor to elect representatives and

push demands.

The government capitulation raises the existing minimum wage to \$55 a month in the Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City, to \$50 in other large cities and to \$45 everywhere else. The national minimum wage had not previously been raised in 6 years, whilst inflation had pushed prices 28% higher.

The Communist dictatorship has been holding down wages to attract foreign direct investment to the country, with wages \$18 a month less than in China.

Minh, a factory worker making stuffed toys for Hallmark, Disney and Starbucks said, in everyday life all things go up in price. Everything that you use, food and drink become more expensive and we find that we're struggling to live. We're protesting to get a better quality of life. Observers have commented on a rising tide of grassroots militancy in the country, as workers bear the brunt of

Vietnam's economic 'liberalisation'

and the expansions of western exploitation.

Huong, who makes shoes for Nike and Adidas added that, "we're always on guard at work. The officials yell and swear at us and mistreat workers." The success of direct action may encourage similar determined walkouts in future.†

Vietnamese labour law is officially very strict, tightly controlling the conditions under which workers may operate. But as more foreign investment has been attracted, rules have been waived and rights ignored in the rush to promote economic expansion. Unions in foreign owned companies are particularly weak.

The government of Vietnam was anxious to solve the escalating dispute, after 18,000 workers for Freetrend, a factory making shoes for Nike and Adidas, joined the strike. After the strike and wage rises, some Taiwanese investors have subsequently threatened to withdraw investment from the country.

NYC transit workers

The transit workers who shut down New York City last month have defied state, city and their own union leadership to reject the Metropolitan Transport Authority's (MTA) new contract offer, threatening to send the city into more gridlock.

The ballot results, announced on 20th January showed a small majority of workers in favour of rejection. Union President Roger Toussaint and the rest of the leadership of Transport Workers Union Local 100 (TWU-100) had originally passed the new contract 37 to 4 and pushed for ratification when campaigning among the membership. However, in a move that stunned the executive, workers voted to reject by 11,234 votes to 11,227.

The determination and militancy of workers came as a surprise to most, as the rejection of union recommended contracts is rare in the public sector. Workers chiefly expressed concerns at being forced to contribute a percentage of their salary to their health insurance,

as well as doubting the good faith of Governor George Pataki, who had threatened to veto a promised refund for overpayments to the pension fund.

US Labour experts commented that ongoing resistance was a sign of the depth and organisation of grassroots militancy in the union, which continues to obstruct city plans to attack working conditions in the public sector. The transit dispute has been seen by many as a landmark battle between the state and workers in one of America's best unionised cities.

The previous deal, struck on 27th December, had been seen by most as a victory for the union, after it removed a threatened rise in retirement age, and a 200% raise in pensions contributions. Workers had initially walked for three days from 20th to 22nd December, citing the bad faith of the MTA negotiating team in last minute changes to the original offer. Transport workers were brought off picket lines when the executive voted

Feature

Cops and ravers

Adam talks candidly about his personal experiences of the low-level police campaign that began against ravers in Suffolk last year

I started going partying about a year ago. My first real party was in the Halloween of 2004 and I was heavily impressed by the unity between people at parties and the buzz I felt just going to one. For those of you who don't know the structure of a party, it works like this: usually you meet up with friends at around 9-10pm and hang out for a bit in some out-of-the-way place until the direction or general area of the party comes in on the 'party line', (usually consisting of an answer phone on a sim card). At about 11.30-12ish the meeting point will be put on the line – usually late because you want a lot of people all at once. People power is what makes and keeps any party going.

Excitement starts flowing as you head in, this was true even when I had just started going to parties when meeting points were pretty safe and there were hardly any cops.

These days though they are becoming so hot on any raving that you might have two or three cop cars blocking the end of the track trying to split up the convoy. Everything here travels by word of mouth, making talking pretty important. If you see anything that isn't right you tell people sharpish and make sure you get it correct.

When loads of us are there, everyone gets behind the rig ('rigs' being the extremely expensive sound systems which provide the music for partying) and we drive off in convoy to the venue.

The first thing many people do when they get to the final destination is chill out while the sound system is being set up. Finally the party goes on, people have fun, and if all goes well we leave at some point on the Sunday afternoon.

If all goes well – I wish! It used to ... at my first party cops came down to see what was happening but left within minutes. They had no power over us, but as time went on they seemed to start

making more regular and menacing visits.

The first example of this that I can think of is a party I went to in February last year. It was a multi-rigger (where more than one organising group or collective is involved and several rigs can be mustered to expand the potential size and experience of the party), with Slack Banta and Equality Cohesion playing in a deep ex-quarry.

Theoretically speaking this was a very considerate venue. It was at least a mile from anywhere (a must when venue-hunting) and the hole was deep enough to suppress most of the sound, but what we didn't know is that it was on the Queen's land. To the police this must have been like meat to dogs.

It started to go wrong when we were walking up the path out of the quarry, and there in front of us were about six squad cars, two dog unit vans and a couple of police land rovers too. I was pretty shocked, but carried on walking, until I realised that there was a cop standing directly in front of me, facing a video camera at me – recording everyone walking out.

My first reaction was 'What? Did I miss something, like their reasons for wasting police funding?' After a while, a troop of them come careering on foot into the quarry in true get-out-of-my-way cop fashion. As always in these situations, community spirit lifted and everyone ran to the stack (the deployed sound system) to protect it, and themselves.

This time we were lucky as the cops simply said we must move the rig and, because they had the Superintendent there, they could and would issue a Section 63 (meaning they can take the rig if you haven't hopped it after being told to). We left without a fight but they filmed every car leaving, and no doubt put it in a little illegal ravers notebook.

The second happening is a more recent one, a Brainskan party that happened in North Crete. From the off it was attacked from all angles by the police. The meeting place was the same one as on Halloween of 2004, somewhere in Kings Lynn (though the exact details get lost when you don't drive).

I heard word of cops at the end of the track, so people quickly got moving to see what was happening. At first it was just two squad cars. We walked up to get a better view, with cars still driving in past them, and it was calm for a while. But, in true police style, they decided that blocking the entrance might make the problem disappear. So there they were a few minutes later, maybe ten stood end to end over the drive, creating a tailback of about 30 cars. People reacted by just parking on the road (like they'd just drive on and forget about a party!).



Some stopped further down the road on a hard shoulder, while others parked up the way they came. The police had started filming by this point so every person was walking round covering as much skin as possible. The response was quick, and along came a few riot vans with some other squads. The road was by now pretty much fully blocked with ravers and cops – it was very hectic.

After a few more minutes of this fooling around they realised that they weren't gaining anything and were blocking a major route through the area. Everyone wanted to get out fast, so the idea was to get everyone into the meeting and then out the back way. Half of the convoy did this while half didn't – then we lost the system leading and had to mess about for an hour or so to get to the party.

At the party everything was fine. The rig was set up and running when we got there and there were no policemen to be seen.

It wasn't until the next day that they showed up. It was midday on the Sunday morning and I'd just woken up from an hour's sleep. I got out of the car, walked across a track and ... bang! A troop of riot-gearred policemen were marching towards me. They really like spending money I think.

I had to dive off to the stack to protect it, half running towards it to cries of 'pigs!', 'riot cops!', 'get round the stack!' and other warnings. As I was coming up to the stack they

stomped right through everyone to the front of it and created a barrier of riot shields, held up by police in between us and the speakers. But the music was still playing and a good few were still havin' it in the mud to the music, pushing the police a bit and trying to get them dancing.

Then after just a bit of this they cut the music and it was just a wall of cops, facing the ravers. I'm sure you can imagine this, it was like the way kids react when television is turned off. We moaned a lot and didn't move. Eventually we decided to sit-in. Everyone sat down but this didn't last very long, maybe only five minutes, because the cops were getting pushy on people at the front, so we all stood up on the attack (as though it would do us any good against their tank-like armoured bodies).

A few cops were standing at the top of the quarry and one walked up with a megaphone and handed it to another, who turned it on and started to talk, but everyone in the stack he was talking to were all shouting back things like 'what? I cant hear ya!', 'fuck off!', 'oi oi!', 'go back to the office!', 'leave us in peace!', that sort of thing.

No-one could hear what he was saying, but it didn't matter because we all knew he was issuing a Section 63. However, as far as I recall they must give a warning and give us time to leave before they come storming in. When asked, they said they had done it during the night, but no one saw or heard them and they couldn't have given it to

us at the meeting, because legally that's a different site.

We stayed almost surrounded by the police for a good hour or so. I found myself at the top of the quarry looking down on the stack, and I could see people moving out mixers and such to try and save what they could before the old bill apprehended it all. I was talking to an officer, and I looked down to see the cops every so slightly shuffling forward, pushing party people further away from the stack. I didn't stay still for long, and went down into the quarry, up in front of the cops. I leaned on their shields and tried to stop them pushing us back. We knew we weren't going to win but, well, it was worth putting spirit into.

Some of the police were fine, you could tell they didn't overly care about the situation, but some were on top hype and really loving the fact that they could show anger and get a little aggressive. I remember it seeming very primitive to me at the time. Eventually, of course, they pushed everyone so far from the stack that we had no chance saving it and they had already started to dismantle it when people started to give in.

I missed the night of this year's New Year party, and turned up in the daytime. The cops were using dogs and nudge sticks on ravers and some scallies were causing trouble, but I'm only going off other peoples' accounts. I've been told some interesting stories about that night, but they're for another time, from another mouth.

Adapted from easf.org.uk

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

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Elephant & Castle, London
Open Thurs, Fri and Sat afternoons.
www.safetycat.org/56a/

56@

Commentary

FREEDOM

Volume 67 Number 2

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

As expected, the readers meeting was a little under-attended, but fortunately there was lots to do around the office, and an entire archive of Freedom's more recent years to be sorted (work on this is ongoing as we try and clear out some of the build-up of junk filling every corner of the building).

We would really like to thank the extraordinarily generous donations of some of our readers during the mass January renewals, which were a really nice post-Christmas surprise and have really helped the paper's balance sheet (though not into the black as yet, Freedom still has a red terror of its own to contend with and any other donations are very much needed).

For those of you who know the building well, Freedom has now lost the use of an old room at the back of the storehouse, as building work begins on the yuppie flats next door.

Finally, as a continued campaign style thing, just to remind everyone that if they want to hold meetings here, or to get some online work done, or just to hang around and do some tidying up round the place (or, of course, to do any of the other myriad jobs that need doing), please don't hesitate to check into the bookshop – we desperately need people to give the building a bit of a boost.

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Next issue

The next issue will be dated 11th February 2006 and the last day to get copy to us (see contact details above) will be Friday 3rd February.

Freedom and equality?

In 1689 King William III and Queen Mary II assented to the Bill of Rights, one of the key documents of Britain's unwritten constitution. One of its purposes was to establish the supremacy of Parliament over the monarchy. The most defining part of our political history was in fact the English Parliament that rebelled against King Charles I. His fate with a sharp axe should have once and for all dissolved the monarchy.

The Levellers, a seventeenth century English political group who fought in the English Civil War, lay their beliefs on the equal and individual rights of all men. They advocated reforms based on the inalienability of individual rights, and called for changes in the structure of future parliaments. The Digger movement whose doctrines were social and economic, not political, was one of the influences leading to the development of nineteenth century radicalism and of modern socialism.

Chartism was an English working class radical movement that centred on the Peoples' Charter of six points in 1838, and was one of the major reformist movements of the Victorian era. Their demands brought about the repeal of the Poor Law with the total abolition of child labour, and total freedom of the press. Most important of all replacing the sham parliament of 'Old Corruption'.

The Chartist movement also demanded annual votes, but unfortunately this was the only Chartist demand that remains unfulfilled in today's politics.

In the present day, the United Kingdom is a parliament monarchy that is still based on an unwritten constitution. With the help of a number of hand-picked Law Lords of the aristocracy, it now appears that this elected government are starting to revile their new reforms by scrapping everything their predecessors believed in. To start with they have created the 'terror fits all' bandwagon, with exaggerated headlines causing a frenzy of fear throughout Britain.

Before Blunkett's first cowardly exit from Government, he was calling for the law to be changed to give jittery trigger-happy cops immunity from prosecution. Putting armed police beyond the law is the hallmark of dictatorship.

On 22nd March 2005, the government proposed a new Mental Health Bill, which allows for the internment, possibly for life, of innocent citizens. The new witch-finder general insists on secretive kangaroo courts; trial without jury with defendants not being able to question the allegations against them.

Now it appears the new powers sought in relation to the new Terrorism Bill intends to scrap the Human Rights Act, and ignore the European Convention on Human Rights by the re-introduction of internment with six month prison sentences. I am sure this will lead to false confessions. It is a betrayal for our legal system, and what comes next... witch burning under the metaphor they all wear pointed hats?

More controversial legislation that's intended is the Civil Contingencies Bill. This gives the government powers to prevent people leaving or entering any area, to deploy armed troops on the streets in great numbers, ban congregations of people, requisition property and to disregard all existing legislation. Indeed this is a blueprint for martial law.

This regime is adamant about re-writing their interpretation of democracy and 21st century politics. Blair says he is determined to preserve our democratic values, but at the same time he's to imprison us all in doing so. That is to say, if this government gets its own way, then free opinion, protesting, and even talk of historic revolutions or revolts, including the Gordon Riots could run the risk of imprisonment (so fucking what!).

As a result of Blair's pig-headed arrogance which permits no alternatives or talk of revolt to be considered, Labour remains the party of the ruling class.

I'm sure we would all like to see a challenging movement with guts that truly represents the people, rather than a betraying warmongering ruling class party with imperialist view which line the pockets of the filthy rich.

Therefore, regime change will not come with balloting fallacious politicians, it can only come when a movement can once again represent the people vociferously, and with direct action strive for a real egalitarian society.

But be warned... take the case of the lone heckler at the Labour Party Conference for instance, when an old age pensioner was charged under the

Terrorism Act. Obsequiously, this government intends to shackle political activists and will cause the deepest impact into civil liberties since the Defence of the Realm Act of 1914.

It's ironic, because in context such draconian law that's now proposed would have kept philosopher Karl Marx out of Britain, and consequently the formation of 1900s Labour Representation Committee would have never progressed into becoming the Labour Party. Moreover, they certainly would not have had their first prime minister in 1924 and their worst in 2005.

What this establishment now craves for is to extract the basic rights the Levellers fought and died for, the Diggers encouraged, as well as the basic demands of the Chartists.

If such new laws are permitted then this is the politics of a mad-house and is a return to 'Old Corruption'. Not only that, but New Labour will be responsible for destroying what the modern British society represents.

Stew

Editors' note: Thanks for writing in Stew, and sorry it took us a while to publish your letter. Space does not permit an adequate response, but briefly... While we would agree with your sentiments, particularly on the worrying new laws which have been brought in and will make it ever more difficult for dissenting voices to be heard, as anarchists we do not wish for another Labour Party, and certainly not for yearly elections!

The legislation of New Labour is based largely on the imperatives of the capitalist system, a reaction to the situation that system has brought about in recent years. Any attempted legislative reforms can only be temporary (though that doesn't mean they shouldn't be strived for), and any political party that takes power will be unable to make meaningful legislation, due to the threat of capital collapse, unless forced to by the even greater threat of mass dissent.

One example of this is the ANC in South Africa, which was elected as a Marxist group. Because to continue Marxist reforms would have seen capitalists withdraw their money from the economy, the newly elected government quickly transformed into a free-market teetering cabal, despite its strong roots in the persecuted classes. Labour is but another party which has been beaten under the same hammer.

We have not, as such, ever been 'given' rights in this country. We have such rights as we can take and hold for ourselves as an exploited class, such liberties as we can reasonably demonstrate without the secret services, police or army carting us away.

In order to truly undo the oppressions we face today, we must undo the systems that force them into being. The system of capital itself has to go.

This cannot be done through party politics, and it cannot, as has become apparent through the century of Marxist-Leninism just gone, be done via the use of vanguardist revolutions.

A movement with guts is certainly what is needed, but that movement's structures and aims, to emancipate ourselves by our own hand, to undo the damage of capital and to promote freedom and equality, must begin and continue to be outside those of the existing state.

NHS sickens

page 1

which was thought to be the source of a £1bn deficit announced late last year.

The 81 organisations are a combination of PCTs, NHS trusts and strategic health authorities.

KPMG looked into the finances of 81 NHS trusts, primary care trusts and strategic health authorities just the two weeks before Christmas by doing 'baseline assessments'.

East Anglia, The West Midlands and the North West are among those areas worst affected by shortages.

It is thought that Britain's biggest private hospital group, BMI Healthcare, is in discussions with the Department of Health over the future management of NHS hospitals that are struggling.

The Royal College of Nursing (RCN) has said that deficits are now hitting patient services and treatments.

Argentina

page 1

or injured in the fighting, with six other officers receiving sentences from one month to four years for their part in the violence.

The verdict was celebrated outside the courtroom by demonstrators from the piqueteros unemployed workers groups and the social movements, many of whom recounted their own stories of police violence.

NYC workers

page 4

36 to 5 to end the strike and resume negotiation.

Union leader Toussaint cursed the 'downright lies' of the opposition faction for the rejection of the plan, which will now have to be renegotiated, with the threat of further action to follow.

FREEDOM

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Quiz answers

1. They were in a play off against the Soviet Union, and drew 0-0 in Moscow. The return leg happened after the US-backed fascist coup, and the Soviets refused to play in a stadium that had so recently doubled as a prison and torture chamber. FIFA visited Chile and decided that it was safe (for well-connected football officials at least) and awarded Chile a walkover.
2. Abd el-Krim Khattabi was leader of the Rif tribes he fought the Spanish and French from 1921 to 1926, holding out against both Franco and Petain.
3. In all of them, council tenants have rejected privatisation.
4. The anarchist writer Juan Gomez Casas, who wrote, among several books on Spanish anarchist history and also translated Melville's classic into Spanish

HISTORY OF THE MAKHNOVIST MOVEMENT

1918-1921

by PETER ARSHINOV

The Russian Revolution was the time when the old order was totally swept away. Nestor Makhno stood for freedom, and his struggle to destroy both the old and the new oppressors is as powerful today as it was then. It was in prison in 1911 that Peter Arshinov established a close personal and political friendship with Makhno, which continued after their release, and Arshinov's history of the Makhnovists is undoubtedly the most important source work available.

Now available at £9.90 (post free inland) from Freedom Press

A Sideways Look

I'm not usually noted for standing up for slightly creepy members of far right authoritarian religious sects, and I'm not going to start now. But I (almost) feel a little bit of sympathy for Ruth Kelly as she's hounded by the moral guardians of the Fourth Estate for allowing a couple of sex offenders to work as teachers.

Firstly, it ought to be remembered that most child sex abuse takes place within the family, usually (though not always) by male relatives or step-fathers. However, the 'family' as an institution is deemed to be a good thing by both the government and the press, which is perhaps why it's so seldom mentioned.

Secondly, it's clear that the sex offenders' register covers a wide range of crimes, from a serial abuser who has raped dozens of children to a teenager whose had sex with someone the wrong side of sixteen. In some of the recent cases, clearly the wrong decision was made. Someone who's been cautioned for looking at child porn certainly shouldn't be employed as a PE teacher.

But where should the line be drawn? The case of William Gibson suggests it's not simple. He was convicted of sexual assault on a 15-year-old in 1981, when he was 33. The girl said it was consensual and he ended up marrying her and having three kids. While his actions then and since show he's far from a saint it's equally true that he's no Gary Glitter.

We have an arbitrary age of consent of sixteen - by when some kids have had babies and others have yet to have sex. While there is a point at which I don't think someone can give informed consent - without which anything could count as abuse - it varies. In all the hypocritical outrage from the tabloids, Gibson's long-term relationship with his 'victim' was played down, probably because it detracted from the story. When people hear stories of paedophiles they assume something different to an affair between a sexually-active teenager and someone older. Such relationships between pupils and teachers are now criminalised - which does rather patronisingly assume that a teenager can't consent. And for years the government were happy to employ arch-Tory Chris Woodhead, who had had such a relationship, as Chief Inspector of Schools.

I don't want paedophiles or child abusers working in schools, or anywhere else where there are kids about. But I don't like the mob mentality stirred up by the press on this. For sure, the government aren't to be trusted, but the press are in some ways even worse. The longer this panic goes on, the more paediatrician's clinics are at risk.*

If we ask, hypothetically, whether the government is serious about protecting children from abuse, we might look at groups who have turned a blind eye to

abuse in the past, particularly when practised by their own members. Last October a report into child sexual abuse in the Ferns diocese in Ireland was published. In it, the negligence over abusive priests was found to go all the way to the Vatican. In the Republic of Ireland 95% of primary schools remain under the control of the Catholic church, which prefers the concentration on individual cases to the neglect of institutional failure.

Any organisation that routinely protected such paedophiles ought to be excluded from involvement in schools. Of course, the government are doing the exact opposite, handing over more schools to religious bodies. Now, I wouldn't suggest they are only doing it because of their own personal affiliations, but I've yet to see any convincing reason why there should be more religious groups involved in education.

Svartfrosk

* The last time The News of the World, then edited by spouse-abuser Rebekah Wade, urged people to "have a go" against alleged paedophiles, a paediatrician's clinic was attacked in Newport.

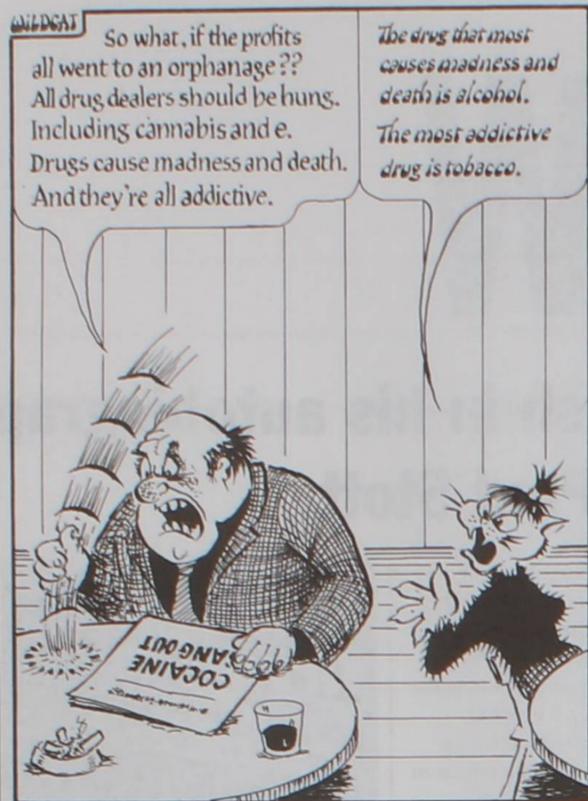
Blast from the Past

Taken from Freedom of 30th January 1971: Postal Workers are really up against the wall. Despite considerable sympathy from large sections of the public - that is, other workers - Union of Post Office Workers' members who have been on strike since Wednesday 20th January are fighting an extremely hard and increasingly bitter battle, not only against an intractable yet inefficient employer, but also an avowedly anti-working class government and a very slimy national press.

The UPW is claiming an across-the-board increase of 15% for postmen and postwomen, sorters, cleaners, counter clerks and others on waiting duties, telephonists and telegraphists, with maximum increase of £3 a week for those on the top grade. The union is also demanding a reduction in the incremental scale. The Post Office has offered an overall increase of 8%, but has not conceded the reductions.

Over the last ten years or so, the UPW has changed considerably. Gone is the old cap-in-hand subservience to their, then, civil service masters. Union members are not receiving strike pay, because there is insufficient money in the kitty. Indeed, until 1964, when postmen were offered an increase of 4/- [20p] a week (honestly!) by the former Tory government, the UPW had no strike fund whatsoever.

For over forty years of its existence, the UPW never contemplated actually going on strike in pursuance of higher wages and better working conditions.



Imagine if...

It was 1st February 2020. Sergeant Pepper finally got hold of the hooded teen he had been chasing through the grim, hushed streets. The boy, no more than 18, had breached his ASBO.

The policeman felt sort of sorry for the boy, who he knew well. Life had not been kind. The lad had grown up on streets which had seen the brunt of the Labour government's Respect agenda and their accompanying social reforms.

"Come on lad you know the law, you're a problem kid, I'm under orders to put you back in the residential centre* with the rest of your family."

"No!" The boy struggled.

"Leo, don't be difficult, you know I can lay an unlimited fine on you, remember PC Gonemad and your brother Euan last month."

Leo stopped and Pepper slapped the cuffs on. As they walked back to the double-decker roundup van, the sergeant asked kindly "How's your dad?"

Leo shrugged, "Same old story, banging on about how he wished he'd been more radical with his reforms, the market will sort everything etc."

Pepper nodded. "And your mum?"

"Still in jail for saying she disagreed with bombing Iran, but we're hoping she'll be released soon."

They reached the van. As Leo got in, Pepper remarked "Same time next week?"

* The 'residential centres' had been introduced as part of the 2005 plan to quarantine socially unacceptable families under one roof. Sadly, this had proven a mistake, as the numbers of guards needed had quickly become the largest single drain on the UK budget, and barely a third of families had escaped the purge of undesirables.

Listings

until 30th January Exhibition of photographs about detention by Isabel Merminod at Spitz Gallery, 105 Old Spitalfields Market, Commercial Street, London E1 from 12 noon to 5pm daily

until 27th February Past Tense presents an exhibition of radical maps at the vegan Pogo Café, 76 Clarence Road, London E5

24th January Discussion meeting on The Paris Riots: what they were and what we can learn from them? at 7pm, the Autonomy Club, upstairs at Freedom, 84b Whitechapel High Street, London E1, see wombles.org.uk/files

26th January JC001, Bob Boyton, Sir Gideon Vein, with MC Tony Allen, from 8pm at The Inn on the Green, 3 Thorpe Close, London W10, see newagenda.demon.co.uk/perclub.html

28th January Punk rock record fair at the Grosvenor Pub, 17 Sidney Road, London SW9 from 2pm to 6pm, followed by a gig, for info see jonactive.free-online.co.uk/activeads.html

28th January Prison Abolition Seminar on resisting prison construction, radical alternatives to prison and abolitionist theory past and present, at Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London, from 2pm to 5pm, for more details see alternatives2prison.ik.com

28th January South West Peace Conference: An End To Nuclear Fission? help to highlight the nuclear industry and its damaging effects, at Upper Guildhall in Plymouth from 9am to 7pm, for info contact 07904934142 or mark@scantlebury8205.freeserve.co.uk

29th January Day of film, discussion and great food at The Common Place social centre, 23-25 Wharf Street, Leeds, see thecommonplace.org.uk

31st January Discussion meeting on Anti-Social Behaviour Orders at 7pm, the Autonomy Club, upstairs at Freedom, 84b Whitechapel High Street,

London E1, see wombles.org.uk/files

2nd February Ken Campbell Impro Show from 8pm at The Inn on the Green, 3 Thorpe Close, London W10, see newagenda.demon.co.uk/perclub.html

8th February Save council housing, mass lobby and rally from 12 noon at Central Hall, Westminster, call 020 7987 9989 or see defendcouncilhousing.org.uk

9th February Ian Cognito, Whatsername, with MC Tony Allen, from 8pm at The Inn on the Green, 3 Thorpe Close, London W10, see newagenda.demon.co.uk/perclub.html

11th to 12th February Camp for Climate Action planning meeting at the Sumac Centre, 245 Gladstone Street, Nottingham, see climatecamp.org.uk/meetings.htm

12th February ZineFest, a festival of zines, anti-corporate artwork, and diy publications at Basement Bookshop, 24 Lever Street, Manchester, for info email manchesterzines@riseup.net

16th February Johnny Fluffypunk, Sir Gideon Vein, with MC Den Levett, from 8pm at The Inn on the Green, 3 Thorpe Close, London W10, see newagenda.demon.co.uk/perclub.html

23rd February The Radical History of Cycling, at 56a Infoshop, 56 Crampton Street, London SE17, for more info email mudlark@macunlimited.net

The quiz

- How did Chile get to the 1974 World Cup Finals?
- Which Moroccan resistance fighter held out against two future fascist heads of state?
- What campaigning victory links, among others, Birmingham, Camden, Stockport, Wrexham and Edinburgh?
- What links Moby Dick with a history of Spanish anarcho-syndicalism?

Answers on page 6

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