

# FREEDOM

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## 655,000 DEATHS IN IRAQ

Back in October 2004, the *Lancet* medical journal published research by the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health in Baltimore which estimated that around 100,000 Iraqis had died as a result of the war. This month, that journal has published a new study by the same researchers which, they say, reaffirms the accuracy of the previous survey and moves it on.

The figures are grim. Between 420,000 and 790,000 Iraqis have died as a result of war and political violence since the beginning of the US-UK invasion in March 2003, with 655,000 considered the most likely figure. Of the violent deaths that occurred after the invasion, 31% were caused by coalition forces (i.e. coalition forces have killed 186,000 Iraqis in the 39 months after the invasion – about 4,700 per month). Significantly, the people who reported deaths were asked for death certificates and these were provided in 92% of cases.

This means an additional 2.5% of Iraq's population have died above what would have occurred without the invasion. In other words, Bush and Blair are responsible for setting off a process which has killed as many civilians as they claimed Saddam did in 25 years.

We can expect this survey to be described as 'controversial' and similarly dismissed out of hand by many supporters of the US-UK invasion as the earlier one. In both cases, the methodology used is standard and valid

and, as such, Bush's dismissal of this report as not 'credible' shows that his ignorance extends to statistics.

Somewhat ironically, some may point to the Iraq Body Count (IBC) figure of between 44,000 to 49,000 civilian deaths. This is like comparing apples to kangaroos, as the IBC is based on English language media reports of deaths and so cannot be considered as anything but a (very low, i.e. extremely unlikely) minimum. But such attacks on methodology ring hollow as the Iraqi estimates are based on the same (standard) methods used to estimate deaths in Darfur and in eastern Congo, both of which were accepted without query. Why? Because it served imperial interests just as denying the Iraq surveys does now.

As it stands now, a strong majority of Iraqis want foreign forces to immediately withdraw from the country, arguing that this would make Iraq more secure and decrease sectarian violence. In Baghdad, nearly three-quarters of those polled said they would feel safer if the occupying forces left Iraq (65% percent of those asked wanted an immediate pullout, according to the *Washington Post*). The Program on International Policy Attitudes at the University of Maryland, found that 71% of Iraqis wanted the Iraqi government to ask foreign forces to leave within a year.

Significantly, a majority also believed that the US government would refuse the request (77% said the US to keep permanent military bases in the country,



Police make an arrest at the Sack Parliament action – see page 3 for report.

the immediate post-invasion construction of which is not reporting in the US and UK press). This shows that the Iraqis' understand more about US intentions and interests than many in this country and in America itself (including the pro-war left). As with the UK-US, the opinions of the Iraqi majority are being

ignored by their government, which refuses to ask the occupying forces for a timetable for withdrawal.

Immediately after these polls hit the headlines, the head of the British army, General Sir Richard Dannatt, called for UK troops to be withdrawn from Iraq 'soon'. His comments suggest that at

least someone in the state's hierarchy is paying attention. He noted that British soldiers' presence in the country was provoking violence and, rightly, said that "hardly anything I said during the interview constituted news". It is a sad day when stating obvious facts becomes 'political'.

## SILENCE ON BOMB HAUL

A fortnight ago, on the 27th of September, a man was apprehended in a police raid on his house in Colne. In the property police found large quantities of as yet anonymous chemical components which could be used to make explosives, a rocket launcher and a nuclear and biological protection suit. In a related inquiry police arrested another man on the 29th September. Both were charged under the Explosive Substances Act 1883 and remanded in custody until 23rd October.

This was without a doubt among the most successful police raids for several

years – which makes it all the more surprising that the story sank like a stone. Two local newspapers, the *Colne News* and the *Burnley Citizen*, ran the story, but the frenzied national coverage we have come to expect after such raids and arrests was completely absent. Not one of the national papers picked up the story, apart from a diminutive column inch in the *Sunday Times*; it went unreported on the television; and soon after the initial arrests the police were very keen to play down the arrest, insisting that "It [was] not a bomb factory".

One is tempted to think that this may have something to do with the fact that rather than being a representative of the Islamic 'enemy within', Robert Cottage (49) had stood for the BNP in last year's council elections. A BNP councillor promptly disowned him, saying "I am glad to hear that he is no longer a member of our party", and the press coverage thus far has followed this, calling Cottage an 'ex-member' of the BNP. However BNP membership

runs for the calendar year January to December – as he had to be a member when he stood in the elections in May, he must be a member now.

Responding to enquiries, the BBC said that their regional news team had examined the story, but police played down the significance of the raid and the team therefore failed to pass it up to the national office. Similarly, John Snow of Channel 4 News claimed that the national office had simply not heard of the story. Both organisations will be attending court on 23rd October, and re-launching the story then.

We will have to wait until then to begin to get a full picture of what was going on in Colne, but the question still hangs in the air: why, when raids such as Forest Gate are widely publicised as soon as they go through; as the dailies lead with nonsense like the *Evening Standard's* "Unclean' guide dog banned by Muslim cab driver"; as the momentum of the anti-veil bandwagon builds daily, this story sunk practically without a ripple.

## OIL WARS

In Peru this week around 700 people have occupied oil facilities, stopping production, in protest at the pollution of their environment. About 40 workers are trapped inside. In Nigeria armed militants stormed a Shell drilling station in the Niger Delta taking 60 hostages and shutting down production.

The Native Federation of the Corrientes River (FECONACO) blockaded Pluspetrol's Amazon oil facilities at Loreto, halting production in protest at water contamination. After 30 years of drilling, protesters are demanding that steps be taken to stop the Argentinian company Pluspetrol from continuing to dump one million barrels of untreated toxic waste each day.

Local people say that their health has been affected by pollutants, such as lead and cadmium, from the oil work. A survey carried out by Peru's Ministry of Health earlier this year found that cadmium levels in the blood of more than 98% of the local Achuar people exceeded safe levels and more than 66% of children had dangerous levels

of lead in their blood.

In Nigeria disputes between local communities and oil companies are a frequent and long-running occurrence in the delta, and are fuelled by poverty, pollution and the neglect of local communities by state governments. Many delta communities have no running water or electricity and look to oil companies to sign memoranda of understanding to provide some basic services in return for them pumping oil from their tribal lands.

In the current dispute local people accuse Shell of not providing the clean water, electricity and rice that they have promised. All hostages have now been released, although militants still occupy the platform and are denying the company access. Elsewhere in the country, seven foreign oil workers are still missing after last week's unprecedented attack on a residential compound for ExxonMobil contractors in Eket, in the eastern delta, in which two Nigerian security guards were killed.

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Photo: Indymedia

# Home and away

## Passport workers on strike

Passport workers across the country are striking over a pay dispute, with the workforce also engaged in an ongoing work to rule.

As we go to press, up to 2,500 members of PCS working for the Identity and Passports Service (IPS) across the UK are due to strike on 13th October, causing severe disruption to passport processing in a dispute over pay.

The one-day stoppage followed by a discontinuous work to rule will hit all seven IPS offices based in London, Peterborough, Newport, Durham, Belfast, Liverpool and Glasgow. Staff are angry at IPS management's failure to deliver on the union's pay claim despite giving an undertaking when it was submitted in June to deal the claim for 2006-2007 as quickly as possible. Staff are also angry that whilst the cost of a passport has gone up by 50% in the last twelve months many have seen their pay rise below the cost inflation by just 1%.

## Northern Ireland Peace Talks

Britain and Ireland have put forward a plan for reviving self rule in Northern Ireland that has been suspended since 2002. The province's two main parties, the protestant Democratic Unionist Party (DUP) and Catholic Sinn Fein, have been struggling to reach a compromise during three days of talks in Scotland. The DUP had been refusing to govern alongside Sinn Fein, while Sinn Fein was reluctant to recognise Northern Ireland's police force. Both sides have now said that they will consult their members and study the proposals in detail before making a final decision.

## Co Mayo – Shell to Sea

This morning's protest at the proposed gas refinery site at Bellanaboy, Co Mayo, saw another Shell to Sea campaigner injured by over enthusiastic police. Local schoolteacher Maura Harrington, an outspoken opponent of the Corrib project since the beginning was taken to Castlebar hospital by ambulance shortly after 8am.

## Estates say NO

In 1900 the Boundary Estate, just north of Brick Lane in the Whitechapel area of east London, became Britain's first council estate – and, following a vote last week, it will continue to be so for the foreseeable future.

Last week the tenants of the Boundary and three other East End estates voted to reject the intense campaigning and enticements offered by vested interests to transfer their homes to a private Housing Association landlord. Despite a lack of investment in their homes due to funding cuts by central government, they chose to stay with Tower Hamlets Council as their landlord.

Similarly Council tenants in Stirling have voted by a large majority to reject stock transfer to a not-for-profit company, Housing Stirling.

## Climate Change Bill Planned

The government will put curbing climate change in its new legislative programme but will stop short of setting itself annual carbon emission cut targets, government and environmental sources said on 13th October. Britain is set to meet its Kyoto target of cutting carbon emissions by 12 million tonnes by 2012, but is already falling short of its own target of cutting emissions by 20% by 2010.

"Targets can become shackles that actually prevent action rather than promote it," said an anonymous government source. "People want actions not targets."

# Around the world



**MEXICO:** There has been more violence in Oaxaca and four people have been wounded after police and hired thugs loyal to Governor Ruiz opened fire on peaceful 'mobile brigade' protestors occupying government premises. The attacks took place outside the Department of Civil Protection on 10th October. After the police opened fire they were attacked people with stones and catapults and forced back inside the building. The violence is being attributed to Ruiz attempts to re-open government offices closed by the social movement.

APPO activated the mobile brigade to paint slogans on public buildings, including: "The dead, the prisoners, the assassinated, isn't that ungovernability?" and "All power to the people. Remove the government's powers." The main highway to Mexico City was also blockaded with buses.

Section 22 of the teacher's union has now suspended talks on a return to classes until a decision is made on the removal of URO and other authorities, they are also likely to reject the 17 points issued by the Interior Ministry and inadequate.

**IRAQ:** Iraqi gunmen have attacked an Iraqi television station this week, killing 11 people. The men, some dressed in police uniforms, stormed the station in the early morning while staff were inside sleeping. Only two employees were left alive. The station, Shaabiya, is owned by the National Justice and Progress Party, a small non-religious organisation which failed to win any seats at recent elections. The leader of the party was also killed in the attack.

**KOREA:** North Korea exploded a small nuclear device this week causing some international concern. "The nuclear test is an expression of our intent to face

the United States across the negotiating table," a senior Pyongyang official told South Korea's Yonhap News Agency. "What we want is security of the [North] ... including guaranteeing our system." The UN Security Council has voted to impose tough sanctions in response to the test. Members agreed that the test presented a threat to international peace and security.

**JERUSALEM:** There were violent scenes at the West Bank separation barrier on 13th October as hundreds of Palestinians fought with Israeli troops after being banned from entering Jerusalem for Ramadan services at Islam's third holiest shrine. Many Palestinians tried to scale the barrier with makeshift ladders. Troops used tear gas, stun grenades, rubber bullets and water cannons in response. On the same day Israel killed four people as it expands its offensive in Gaza

**PALESTINE:** Israel has killed eight Palestinians in the Gaza Strip, at least three of them said to be Hamas fighters, pressing a nearly four-month long offensive launched after an Israeli soldier was captured. Israel's offensive on Thursday triggered the armed wing of Hamas to respond by firing six makeshift rockets into Israel. No one was wounded. The rockets were the first fired by Hamas in more than a month; but other armed groups have kept up such attacks. Later on Thursday, an Israeli missile fired from an

unmanned drone killed two Palestinians including a girl and wounded more than ten others in the Shijaia neighbourhood in Gaza City.

**SPAIN:** Another worker has been sacked by Mercadona as the CNT strike goes into its sixth month. This is the ninth dismissal since the start of the dispute, the third after the strike was reduced to a day a week two weeks ago. A member of the organising committee has been badly beaten by a gang of five men. The President of Mercadona, Joan Roig, has been awarded a medal by the Generalitat of Valencia for good treatment of his workers.

**FRANCE:** The French parliament has passed a bill making it a crime to deny that the early twentieth century ethnic cleansing that led to the deaths of 1.5 million Armenians in Turkey constituted genocide. The EU has condemned the bill calling it 'unhelpful' as Turkey is at a critical stage in EU entry talks. A monument to the 1915 massacres has been destroyed in Paris two days after the bill was passed.

**USA:** Wal-Mart has been ordered to pay \$78 million to its current and former Pennsylvania employees after a jury ruled on a class action law-suit brought against the company. The case concerns Wal-Mart practice of not paying workers who work through breaks and off the clock. Lawyers

expect a further \$62 million damages because the company was also found to have acted in bad faith.

**SUDAN:** Eastern Rebels and the Sudanese Government signed a peace deal on Thursday that could put an end to decades of violence in the region. The area has been in revolt due to neglect from the government despite its high levels of natural resources. The eastern rebels, like rebels in Darfur and former rebels in the south, complained that Khartoum exploited their natural resources without developing the region.

The agreement, which sparked singing and dancing after it was signed, is the third peace deal Khartoum has negotiated in less than two years. East Sudan is rich in gold and diamonds and



provides the countries only sea port, taking oil to the outside world. If fully implemented the agreement will stabilise one of Sudan's most important areas economically.

"Eastern Sudan is the most marginalised area in Sudan and by signing this agreement there is admission and recognition of this fact," said Yasir Arman (pictured above) of the former southern rebel Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM), which concluded a north-south peace deal with the government in January 2005.

**SRI LANKA:** On Thursday 12th October Sri Lanka's Tamil Tiger rebels handed over the bodies of 74 soldiers killed in a battle a day earlier to the Red Cross, taking the army's death toll in one of the worst clashes since a 2002 truce to at least 129.

Nearly 300 soldiers were wounded in the fighting on Wednesday around the besieged government-held enclave of Jaffna in the far north, and the violence is spurring fears that peace talks scheduled for the end of the month may be canceled.



# Prison news

## Protest Against Custody Deaths

Saturday 28th October sees the eighth annual remembrance procession to mark deaths in police and prison custody. The event, organised by the United Families and Friends Campaign, begins with a 12.30pm assembly at Trafalgar Square (nearest tube Charing Cross) and a silent procession along Whitehall, followed by a protest at Downing Street. All are welcome and asked to wear black. Please bring group banners, but no placards. For more information contact United Families and Friends Campaign on 07770 432439.

## Shropshire lads mutiny

A wing at Stoke Heath Young Offenders Institution (YOI) near Market Dreyton in Shropshire has been rendered uninhabitable in a mutiny by prisoners. After refusing to bang-up, 33 prisoners aged between 15 and 21, chased off the screws and trashed 'A' wing. Seven hours later riot squads were sent in to put down the uprising, something which took them more than two hours to accomplish. Four screws were reported injured, with one suffering a broken nose. A dozen prisoners were 'ghosted' to other nicks, with seven being placed in the Stoke Heath 'care

and separation unit' (Prison Service Newspeak for the Block.)

## Crap Arrest Of The Week

SchNews reported that, anxious to get kiddies back onto more profitable pastimes such as the new Xbox 360, Sussex cops are cracking down on



conkers! Seven year old Kiya Jayne and her 11 year old friend Charlie Richardson were stopped, searched and deprived of their conkers and handed the relevant paperwork to prove it! They'd been falsely told that the conkers were on private property, so hands off or else! A spokesperson for Sussex police confirmed that they had seized a large bag of conkers (estimated street value, two marbles and a copy of the Beano) and came out with this little chestnut: "Forms are a necessary form of bureaucracy to ensure parents are aware we have spoken to their children."

compiled by Mark Barnsley

# News

## Inflating a balloon of fear

Sacrifices are required to appease Capital and keep inflation down, says the Bank of England. Iain Mackay investigates

**M**ervyn King, the governor of the Bank of England, has warned Britain's pay bargainers to accept wage restraints or interest rates would increase.

King stated on 10th October that the current small increases in earnings were not "sufficiently restrained" to compensate for the inflation caused by higher energy costs and unfavourable changes in import and export prices. "Ultimately, both developments must result in lower real incomes," he said (though he said nothing on excessive bosses' pay).

In other words, the working class must pay for capitalism's problems. As a statement of class war, it is hard to be more succinct.

Since the 1970s, capitalist economic policy has been aimed towards 'fighting inflation'. This policy is based on the 'Non-Accelerating Inflation Rate of Unemployment' (or NAIRU) – itself rooted in the works of Milton Friedman.

The NAIRU theorises that there is a level unemployment below which inflation starts to rise. The problem is, there is no way of finding that rate beyond looking at what actually happens to inflation. So the economic policy of the UK is based on a group of technocrats trying to guess where an invisible value is and, to make matters worse, the rate changes over time.

This is because the rate is dependent on many factors, the key ones relating to working class power, i.e. their ability to demand and gain better pay and conditions.

As unemployment falls, workers feel more able to demand better pay and conditions. This raises the wage bill, which companies offset by raising prices. This, in turn, gets workers to demand higher wages and inflation

starts to accelerate. This was the process at work in the 1970s and was broken by Thatcher's and Reagan's 'Monetarism'. With the staggering levels of unemployment this theory produced, workers could no longer offset price increases and so costs required for 'recovery' were passed onto the working class.

Edmund Phelps, the economist who formulated the modern version of this theory, was given the Nobel prize for economics in October. Phelps, like Friedman, argued that the state has to keep the unemployment rate at or above the (unknown and unknowable) 'natural rate' in order to keep inflation from accelerating.

In other words, you have to make people unemployed or fear being made unemployed (by raising interest rates and slowing the economy) for capitalism to survive.

Neo-liberal capitalism is based on monetary policy which explicitly tries to weaken working class resistance through unemployment, by manipulating what Marx termed "the reserve army of labour". If 'inflation' (i.e. labour income) starts to increase, interest rates are raised so causing unemployment.

Of course, according to the eternal and sacred law of 'supply and demand', wage rises are to be expected when unemployment falls. The laws of the market are the justification for bosses' massive rises, after all. Yet even in the unreal world of capitalist economics, wage rises need not cause price increases. This is because wage increases can be offset by reductions in profits.

However, this is not an option in reality. As Mervyn King notes, while "wage pressures have so far been subdued, it is still not clear that earnings have been sufficiently



restrained to accommodate the past rises in energy prices and the fall over the past year in the prices of our exports relative to our imports without

a squeeze on profits. Ultimately, both developments must result in lower real incomes."

Sorry, but no. Why should the majority

accept 'lower real incomes' so that the few can see their incomes rise?

Blair declared that the class war was over – someone should tell King.

## Dalston Theatre eviction

**T**he Everything 4 Everyone (E4E) community project at Dalston Theatre is scheduled for eviction next week. The collective have been in occupation since February 2006, occupying the theatre to halt the planned demolition and raise awareness with their community about the impact of corporate 'regeneration', gentrification, and local government ineffectuality.

Hackney Council is in debt to the tune of £78 million, due to what many say is bad financial management and corruption. Their need to recover money may help to explain the increase in expensive development projects in the borough. As a partner in the Olympic Delivery Agency the council must put up the cash to pay for the games. £10 million of this is to come from Hackney taxpayers.

Freedom spoke to Liz from E4E about the eviction, the project and

plans for the future: "The council are responsible for the eviction, which could happen any day now, but we are well prepared to resist. Negotiations are still going on over the future of the building. A group called Open has put forward a proposal to keep the theatre intact and restore it to a community theatre, and to restore the town houses part to social housing. But its 'social housing' for people on salaries of £40k plus and most people can't afford that. The problem is no alternative proposal will generate as much money, and the council needs money.

"It's a slow process working with the community. What we didn't want to do here was a social centre that comes into a place and then when it gets evicted its gone. Of course we are anti-capitalist – but what we work on is how capitalism manifests locally, in gentrification and the olympics, for example. People round here have an instinctively anti-

authoritarian feeling, which is great, but getting used to horizontal organising is a big step and a long process. Its one of the hardest things for us to work on as well.

"When we get evicted we will stay in this local area. In the next building we want to put our ideas into practice more. We grow some vegetables on the roof now, but we want a bigger garden in the next building. We want to do more sustainability stuff, like compost toilets. We also want to increase community involvement and do more outreach – groups within the community here are very strong but sometimes there can be an insularity that goes with that. It's a challenge creating unity but we are working towards a common goal. All over Hackney what was public space is being privatised, this is why we want to create free community space."

## Sack Parliament!

**P**rotests at Parliament on Monday 9th October were marred by police violence and low turnout. Around 150 people gathered around Parliament Square in response to the call for an anti-war action to 'Sack Parliament' on their first day back after the summer recess. Around 800 police were present, including around 100 riot cops. Policing was extensive and heavy handed. Many people were assaulted by the police and/or arrested on spurious grounds. A journalist was taken to hospital after hitting his head when police pushed him to the ground. Around 40 people were arrested.

Commander Bob Broadhurst, of the Metropolitan police said in a statement to the press before the action: "We do not believe that they will ask for permission [to protest] so any protest and anything they do will be unlawful." He predicted that the police would be 'robust' in their response.

Susan, a participant in the demonstration, said, "Considering the amount of propaganda that was distributed, I was surprised at the low turnout. It felt like a lot of people had come to spectate or were waiting for a vanguard to lead them. I guess people had not really planned what they were going to do when they got there.

"I think the police really overreacted, especially considering that the situation was never really out of their control. This may play into our hands though. They were stupid, deliberately provoking a confrontation."

At least one person was carried into the pen by police in spite of the fact that he was repeating "I don't want to join the protest – it's illegal!" He was later arrested for illegal protest. Cops questioned outside parliament agreed that "democracy has been suspended for the day". Well, start as you mean to go on.

# Russian journalist murdered

## Matthew Duncan reports on the career and untimely death of Anna Politkovskaya

On Friday 13th October, a laying of flowers in memory of Russian journalist Anna Politkovskaya, murdered last Saturday (7th October) in Moscow by an unknown assassin, was scheduled at the Innocent Victims Memorial in Westminster Abbey.

Politkovskaya, who was 48, had become well known as a harsh critic of Russian President Vladimir Putin's regime, through her newspaper articles, and books. She had been especially critical of Russian involvement in Chechnya and had accused Putin of stifling democratic freedom in Russia.

At five minutes past four on Saturday afternoon, the journalist arrived at her block of flats, having just visited a local supermarket. She parked her car, took two bags of shopping out and took the lift up to her apartment. Then she went back down in the lift to get the remaining three bags, which she had left on the back seat of her car. The murderer was waiting for her at 4.10pm on the ground floor landing. When the doors to the lift opened, the assassin shot her three times at point blank range. According to police doctors, the first two shots hit her in the heart, ending her life; the third shot hit her shoulder, and the fourth was a 'confirmation shot' – a point blank bullet to the head of the already dead journalist.

Politkovskaya's work often caused her to come into conflict with those in positions of authority. During her career she had been threatened several times, jailed, and even forced to flee the country for safety.

In 2003, she was involved in negotiations with Chechen terrorists holding hostages in a Moscow theatre. The siege ended when Russian security forces pumped an unknown gas into the theatre, killing at least 120 of the hostages.

In September 2004, during the Beslan school siege in which 344 people died, Politkovskaya attempted to reach Beslan to negotiate, against the wishes of the Russian authorities, with Chechen terrorists for the release of 1200 schoolchildren and adults taken hostage. According to Politkovskaya's own account, on the flight to Rostov, in the south of Russia, the Russian security services (FSB) put a drug into her tea which caused her to lose consciousness. She had to be revived with medical aid later on.

In recent times Politkovskaya had written about the dubious special relationship between the Putin and Ramzan Kadyrov, the Chechen prime minister. Kadyrov, a former Chechen freedom fighter, is the son of Akhmat Kadyrov, the Kremlin-backed Chechen president who was assassinated in 2004. Kadyrov junior now hopes to become Putin's 'man in Chechnya'. Politkovskaya accused Kadyrov of kidnapping and murder, and claimed to have evidence of his involvement in the abduction and torture of Chechen people.

On the Monday after her death, Politkovskaya was due to file a story on human rights abuses committed by Chechen authorities. According to the editor of *Novaya Gazeta*, the piece was



to name two people responsible for acts of torture as belonging to security detachments directly responsible to the prime minister.

Various theories have been suggested as to who might be responsible for her death, the most popular being that she

was murdered either at the command of Kadyrov, or at the command of someone who wished to put Kadyrov in the frame.

Whilst the truth may never be known, the message that this killing sends out is clear: Russia is not safe for journalists who dig too deep. Politkovskaya is the

thirteenth journalist to be killed in a contract-style murder since Vladimir Putin took office. No one has been convicted for any of these killings.

Ms Politkovskaya was divorced. She leaves behind one son and one daughter.

## Conform or else

At the end of September new legislation (the 'Military Commissions Act') was passed to broaden the re-definition of 'enemy of the state' and make punishment for so being harsher than it is already. The act removes *habeas corpus* provisions for detainees, creates a new tribunal system to try a wide variety of people in discriminatory military commissions that lack fundamental due process protections and arbitrarily redefines fundamental areas of the law (for example it returns to an outdated definition of rape and sexual abuse increasing the difficulty of prosecuting individuals responsible for such acts). It also affords retroactive immunity for those who have been implicated in creating policies or participating in abusive, cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment and other acts of torture.

Clearly we're not at the jackboots stage – yet. But, under the fatuous guise of 'fighting terrorism' and despite the fact that the US is far and away the

world's most active terrorist state, citizens are being targeted left, right and centre for their beliefs.

Colorado resident and environmental consultant Steven Howards, for example, was arrested in June of this year in a Denver mall after he approached vice president Cheney and peacefully denounced the war in Iraq. Secret Service agents accused him of assault and harassment. Earlier this month Howards issued a federal lawsuit for violating his civil rights.

He was in Beaver Creek, Colorado, with his two children. By chance Cheney happened to be at a VIP gathering and was crossing an outdoor mall; although surrounded by guards, the vice president was greeting onlookers. Howards waited his turn and then approached Cheney to tell him that he "thought his policies in Iraq were absolutely reprehensible." He was approached by a Secret Service agent who accused him of assaulting the vice president. Howards told the agent that if freedom of speech was against

the law, he should arrest him. He did. The agent grabbed him, cuffed his hands behind his back and marched him across the mall. He was then taken to jail and kept there with his hands cuffed behind his back for three hours.

The assault charges were later reduced to harassment and a few weeks later dropped altogether.

Howards's is actually the third lawsuit of its kind against Secret Service agents or White House staff members who are alleged to have violated the law when trying to keep people with opposing views away from Bush or Cheney: there is a second suit pending in Colorado, where two people were ejected from a public event where Bush was speaking because of their anti-war car sticker. In West

Virginia the ACLU (the US equivalent of Liberty) has filed suit on behalf of two people who were arrested at an appearance by Bush whilst wearing anti-Bush t-shirts.

Louis Further

## Riots in Bangladesh

This week has seen renewed rioting in Bangladesh as the government fixed a new minimum wage at \$25 a month. Garment workers looted and burned factories in demonstrations that were repressed by police using teargas and rubber bullets. Two died and many were injured when security fired on crowds. Unrest in the sector began in May when workers torched 16 factories and looted hundreds of others.

At 9am on 10th October thousands of workers filled the streets, visiting factories and closing them down. The crowd later split into smaller groups, burning and looting factory owners' property. Due to the size of the crowds, police could often only look on and watch.

Garment exports in Bangladesh account for nearly three-quarters of the country's export earnings at around \$8 billion a year. The industry is notorious for its low wages, poor working conditions, and low safety standards. Workers are demanding a wage of \$44 a month. More strikes are scheduled.

SKOP union co-ordinator Wazedul Islam Khan justified the continued industrial action, saying, "Through our action programme, we will compel the government to implement the agreement it signed in 2004 and to make the necessary amendments to the labour law." He described the new proposed wage structure for the sector as a result of factory owners' influence over the government.

Factory owners themselves have argued that it is impossible to fix a minimum wage in a free market economy. One boss explains: "Fixed minimum wages mean I would need to pay inefficient workers Tk 1,1662 regardless of their productivity. Even if the minimum wage is fixed at Tk 2,600, then there would still be dissatisfaction as their [workers'] needs are endless."

Bangladesh joined South Asian Free Trade Area on 1st July 2006. The beneficial impact of this on the country is likely to be slight as all its major exports are on the protected lists of other SAFTA partner countries.

## Feature

# Lebanon, and on and on...

**John Shute looks back at the attitudes which were at work during the Israeli invasion earlier this year**

In a speech to the World Affairs Council in Los Angeles, Tony Blair offered his analysis of the cause of the bloodbath that was taking place in Lebanon: "The purpose of the provocation that began the conflict was clear. It was to create chaos, division and bloodshed, to provoke retaliation by Israel that would lead to Arab and Muslim opinion being inflamed, not against those who started the aggression but against those who responded to it."

The characterisation of Israel as being the party 'responding' to aggression treats the history of the region as a matter to be painted over in presenting the picture of the world Blair wishes us to see.

Israel invaded Lebanon in 1982 and held on to parts of South Lebanon for 18 years, until withdrawing in 2000 in the face of Hezbollah's continued resistance and harassment of Israeli forces.

In withdrawing, though, Israel retained occupation of the Sheba'a Farms area and refused to release Lebanese prisoners Samir Qantar, Nissim Nasser, Yehia Skaff and Ali Faratan.

On any rational view, the Israeli war on Lebanon has been conducted in flagrant breach of international law. The civilian population has been targeted deliberately – most blatantly in the bombing at Qana, which killed 60 civilians, the majority of them children.

Over a third of those killed in Lebanon since 12th July have been children. More than 700,000 have been displaced-turned into refugees by Israel's actions – which are pursued in direct pursuit of the ethnic cleansing of south Lebanon in the name of Israel's 'security'.

Civilian infrastructure and institutions have been deliberately targeted – airports, ports, roads, bridges, power stations, hospitals have all been hit. Over 900 Lebanese have been killed since 12th July. Forgotten of course in the media focus on Lebanon is the fact that, in its attacks on Hamas operations in the Gaza strip, Israel killed 160 Palestinians, and wounded at least 700 civilians. Palestinian ministries and educational institutions were destroyed, along with bridges, roads, power plants and dozens of homes. Twenty-seven elected Palestinian ministers have been detained without charge.

Hezbollah's leader Sheikh Nasrallah has in fact stated that "We cannot tolerate the Arab world's quiet acquiescence to the cold blooded extermination of the Palestinians." It would be reasonable to assume that one aim of the Hezbollah incursion and kidnapping of Israeli soldiers was solidarity with the Palestinians at a time

of increased targeting by Israeli forces.

In his speech, Blair declared: "There is an arc of extremism now stretching across the Middle East ... To defeat it we will need an alliance of moderation." That alliance of moderation refused to call for an immediate cease-fire to prevent further slaughter; such that Israel's war crimes went unhindered by any of the international institutions which Blair claims represent globalisation.

The United Nations Security Council failed not only to call for a ceasefire, but failed even to condemn Israel's atrocities. Its chief responsibility is "the maintenance of international peace and security".

Yet Blair would have it that the 'war on terror' is a war "at the level of values as much as force". The stakes, he tells his LA audience are as high as could be; "What are the values that govern the future of the world? Are they those of tolerance, freedom, respect for difference and diversity or those of reaction, division, and hatred?"

This war of 'values' has been conducted through rendition, torture and degrading treatment, 'coercive interrogation' and the suspension of the rule of law.

Blair would have it that those who condemn the US-UK trail of murder and human rights abuses across the globe are opposed to the 'universal' values of justice, democracy and human rights. But opposition is to the 'empty' universalism of a human rights rhetoric that says that the rights of detainees don't count, that US soldiers can kill civilians and never face trial; that the life of a child in Lebanon or Gaza is worth less than that of a child in Haifa.

The posturing about democracy comes from a Prime Minister who sees the democratic election of Hamas as an 'obstacle' to democracy in the Middle East. Democracy after all is only legitimate if it delivers up the results the 'alliance of moderation' desires.

In part his rhetoric is designed to gloss over the reality of what has resulted from 'regime change' in Iraq and Afghanistan, by selling the imposition of colonial rule as 'value change'. And a step-change in 'values' it is indeed – such that the principle of the right to self-determination recognised by the UN General Assembly in 1960 has been sacrificed in favour of 'value change' to suit the interests of the United States.

In his LA speech, Blair made clear that the "global fight about global values" has many fronts: he listed Lebanon, Gaza, Afghanistan, Kashmir, Chechnya, Iraq. The inclusion of Chechnya gives the game away somewhat – Chechnya's is a straightforward battle for independence from Russian oppression. It has never



Palestinian refugees murdered in Beirut, 1982.

been put forward as part of the battle for global jihad by most of those engaged in its struggle. Neither has the battle in Lebanon or for an independent Palestine been couched in jihadist terms by its major participants.

The idea that the 'global battle for global values' is anything to do with a struggle against 'reactionary Islam' is even demolished by Blair himself. In the same speech he admitted he had "widened the definition" of "reactionary Islam" to include any regime 'threatened' by the interventions in Afghanistan and Iraq.

Thus, 'reactionary Islam' need not have any Islamic content at all! Anyone who opposes the imposition of Blair's 'global values' across the globe is a 'reactionary Islamist'.

Elsewhere in his LA speech Blair sets out the reality of the values of this Crusade. "For me, a victory for the moderates means an Islam that is open; open to globalisation, open to working with others of different faiths, open to alliances with other nations." It is the 'open to globalisation' that is all that really matters.

In a speech to a conference of executives of Rupert Murdoch's News Corp prior to his LA speech Blair stated that there are "three isms that run through most political debates in Europe and the US today. They're not socialism or capitalism. They're

protectionism, isolationism, nativism." Thus the battle for 'global values' is really a battle against self-determination; the real issue is the writ of international capital – and the obstacles posed to it by economic autarchy in, amongst an ever-changing list, Iran, Syria, Venezuela, North Korea and Cuba.

The 'military might' of the US-UK in its battle for 'global values' has come to look somewhat flimsy – bogged down in Afghanistan and Iraq and unable to impose its will in Somalia, where political Islam has been adopted as a force for stability against warlords.

The situation in Iraq is cause for particular concern, because the resistance in Iraq is fragmented, sectarian, and frequently alienated, because of its own atrocities, from the wider population, and yet still able to tie the US-UK down. Thus, the situation in Lebanon is of greater consequence than its local nature might suggest.

Israel has been given free reign by the US and UK to carry out its bloodbaths because it is in effect their proxy in a 'Cold War' with Syria and Iran. When Condoleezza Rice says the US plans to use the conflict to define a 'new Middle East' she means by this precisely that the conflict will be used to deliver a Middle East where the Arab street has no voice and no dignity save when it

speaks the language of the 'alliance of moderation'. That this plan has come unstuck somewhat because of the ferocity of Hezbollah resistance means there is now a rush to cessation and a 'new focus' on a two-state solution to the issue of Palestine.

The world looks much less like Bush and Blair wanted it to than at the outset of their 'war on terror'. Blair, in his NewsCorp speech, says that it is a "delusion" that the "tide of change can be turned back."

The facts on the ground appear to suggest that this is not the case.

We need to be clear that when Blair talks of the end of the left/right division in favour of the issue of "open versus closed" it is our task to prove him wrong in his supposition that there is consensus "at home" about this – and part of our fight therefore to support the right of self-determination of nations in the face of 'global values' as well as the right to freedom of movement of people to catch up with the freedom of movement of capital.

The fundamental issue is that international capital wants an open world to roam and exploit, where immigration restrictions keep the workers where capital wants them, and with no social protection from the state to offset capital's determination to let the international market rip wage levels to shreds.

# Commentary

## FREEDOM

Volume 67 Number 20

### 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

Hello! I'd like to introduce myself – my name is Matt B. I've been involved with Freedom Press for about 18 months, mostly hanging around in the bookshop. I've been doing the 'Blast' column for the last few months and now I've taken on the editorial duties for every other issue. I must ask readers for patience as I am expecting it to take me a few issues to start getting the hang of things! I'm still in the process of assembling a team to work with me, so if you fancy lending a hand with writing and editing *Freedom*, then get in touch (see our contact details are below).

Do you find yourself flicking through TV listings even though there's nothing on? Spending too much time in the gym? Need to cut down on your drinking? Volunteers for the bookshop and the mailout are in short supply and just a few of hours a week helping us out might be just the tonic you need!

The bookshop is better stocked every time I go in it, and it's also looking particularly beautiful at the moment thanks to the addition of a selection of Guy Smallman's photographs featured on the walls – yet another good reason to visit.

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### Next issue

The next issue will be dated 4th November 2006 and the last day to get copy to us for that issue will be Thursday 26th October. You can send articles to us by email to [copy@freedompress.org.uk](mailto:copy@freedompress.org.uk) or by post addressed to The Editors, Freedom, 84b Whitechapel High Street, London E1 7QX.

### Manx continued

I was amused to see that someone purporting to be a 'Manx reporter' tried to question your earlier report on Manx justice ('Manx Justice' appeared in *Freedom* on 26th August, the response on 23rd September).

Readers should also know that a few years ago Hugh Davidson, an advertising guru whose *Offensive Marketing* textbook is still used on many marketing courses, retired to the island. He persuaded the Manx government that what was needed to counter bad publicity about the off-shore finance trade was a 'rebranding' exercise.

This is now in place under the slogan 'Freedom to Flourish'. Partners include the island's business organisations and Johnston Press, who have a monopoly over Manx newspapers. There is even an 'Isle of Man Branding' feed on the newspaper site.

One of Davidson's suggestions is classic 'astroturf'. He suggested that locals should write to UK newspapers to 'correct' negative stories about the Isle of Man. But astroturf, as originally developed by PR firms like Hill and Knowlton to produce fake alternatives to genuine 'grassroots' groups, doesn't actually do that.

In practice, PR hacks produce letters which can be attributed to 'local business people' or compliant employees writing as 'ordinary' people from their home addresses. Obviously, part of the success of the technique also depends on organisations able to subscribe to expensive press cuttings services, such as the Manx Government, which incidentally has full time press officers in at least two departments (Chief Minister's office and Home Affairs).

Incidentally, it was the white foreman who was deported and Van Rooyen got three months in the local nick. Van Rooyen's wife was spotted shaking hands with the former chief constable while coming out of an evangelical church which is supporting the family while her hubbie finished his sentence at the end of October.

Anon

### Danny leaves Doni

It is with much emotion and mixed feelings that I have finally decided my work in Doncaster is now done, and I am returning 'back up yem'.

The kids next door have inscribed me a 'tombstone' in concrete next to my house in Dunscroft (one of the villages based upon Hatfield Colliery) which says 'David D 1966-2006'.

Incredibly, I have been at this address for forty years. It also means I have had

forty two years as a member of the NUM in both Durham and Doncaster and currently, that includes some thirty years on the coal face and on 'face rips' and 'headings' (tunnelling).

The last ten years, before the closure of the Hatfield Branch and Mining Communities Advice Centre in August 2005, I worked part time and lived on donations from the branch and the community representing them with appeals and tribunals, inquests and industrial relations.

For ten years, I have lived on little more than £8,000 per year with some fruit and veg and homemade jars of beetroot or wine thrown in from folks who had no money but wanted to pay me something. It was much appreciated and enjoyed, but didn't leave me very flush by the time Christmas came around.

The pit work has been a long and often dangerous and thankless task, which has left me with Pneumoconiosis, bronchitis, white finger, carpal tunnel, partial deafness and knackered knees. The union side took me to court and to the brink of eviction, and bankruptcy, to police cells, thuggery, and virtual torture, not just during the strikes of 1984/85 but also before and after as Hatfield stood its ground.

It has also been deeply rewarding, the Doncaster miners in general and the Hatfield miners in particular are indeed the salt of the earth and they rate as some of the most militant and uncompromising of working class militants anywhere. I am proud to have been consistently elected their representative since 1980, despite never ever having hid my far left politics and support for struggles and organisations which the main stream political parties and newspapers classed as 'extremists'.

Truth is since the mass run down and slaughter of the industry, the spirit has all but left the industry such as it remains. Despite the imminent re-opening of Hatfield Colliery, with the prospect of saving coal mining in Britain from utter extinction and the chance of some modern clean coal burning techniques, the NUM is no more a social force for change (except perhaps as an inspiration) and the mining industry is all but finished.

I have had to face some sharp assessments of where I now stand and what contribution I can make to the living class struggle, which is taking place all around.

Millions of workers are unorganised and exploited, fat cat bosses get away with murder and super exploitation unfettered by unions, because the unions in the main, haven't taken the time and effort to start again at square one, and start bringing these non-union workers without union traditions into the movement.

I cannot remain hanging around the tombs of our dead industry and polishing the trophies of our once proud and unbeatable union, deep though my attachment to mining and the NUM is, while the living struggle of the class is taken place elsewhere.

So, leaving behind what I hope was a good record of achievement and commitment to these communities, it is time to move on into another set of battles, albeit simply new fronts in the same ongoing war.

I continue my work with the IWW to reach the physical and ideological parts of the working class conventional 'trade' unions cannot.

To mark all of this I am having a going away party on 26th November at The Woolpack, Market Place, Doncaster. It

starts from 3pm with a showing of the television documentary *Where Do I Stand*, which was made about me and our revolutionary miners tendency in 1970 and features the pit and the community and some of the local characters and political perspectives we thought were 'right on' at the time 36 years ago! Mind, political correctness was not in vogue then so I apologise for some of the ill-chosen phrases in advance.

All my friends and comrades and neighbours and anyone I have shared time with is welcome, but please leave all past grudges and disputes at the door, and no riding of horses up and down the stairs!

In the meantime, let me say it has been an honour and a privilege to have represented the Hatfield pit communities and the Doncaster coalfield.

David Douglass  
(aka Danny The Red)

### Bush's caliphate

In the run up to the fifth anniversary of 9/11 and upcoming US elections, Bush is trying to save his failed reputation by (as usual) trying to scare the American people. In September, he made a speech heavy with quotes from Osama bin Laden arguing that "Bin Laden and his terrorists' allies have made their intentions as clear as Lenin and Hitler before them ... The question is: Will we listen? Will we pay attention to what these evil men say?"

This is a significant change, given that Bush has opined on 13th March, 2002 that "I just don't spend that much time on him ... we haven't heard much from him. And I wouldn't necessarily say he's at the center of any command structure. And, again, I don't know where he is. I'll repeat what I said. I truly am not that concerned about him." What has changed since then? Has Bin Laden's influence and ability to act increased significantly since then?

If so, it means that Bush's war on terror is an abject failure, indeed counter-productive as American policies have ensured a steady flow of idiots willing to kill themselves and innocent others has increased. One thing is sure, Osama's threat level does seem to rise and fall in sync with the US election cycle.

According to Bush, al Qaeda wants to set up a violent, radical Islamic caliphate based in Iraq and vowed he would not let this happen on his 'watch'. Let us assume that this is true. Before Bush's invasion of Iraq, al Qaeda was in no position to achieve such a goal. In other words, Bush wants us to support his current policy because of the terrible consequences of his previous policies.

That is assuming his comments are true, which they are not. On the same day he made his speech the White House published a *National Strategy for Combating Terrorism* which stated "we have significantly degraded the al Qaeda network ... Terrorist networks today are more dispersed and less centralised. They are more reliant on smaller cells inspired by a common ideology and less directed by a central command structure." So who is right? Bush or his administration? Is al Qaeda weakened or not? It depends on what is required to drum up support or for the needs of argument. Such doublethink is truly Orwellian.

Looking at Iraq, the bulk of the insurgency are home grown nationalists, as Bush's government well knows. Foreign

fighters number less than 1,000 (excluding the 140,000 plus US and UK troops who strangely never seem to be counted in this category). It is utterly implausible that al Qaeda could take over Iraq, particularly given that the US could not. It is doubtful that the marriage of convenience between those who call themselves 'al Qaeda' in Iraq and the Sunni nationalists would last long once the US are gone and it is unlikely that the Shiites and Kurds would put up with such a regime which would have no popular base at all.

Ultimately, if Bush were not in Iraq then neither would al Qaeda be. Hence the need for Bush to create an 'Islamic Fascist' bogeyman, to draw attention away from his failed policies and their cost in human life and resources. As it stands, it took the US less time to crush the might of fascist Italy, Germany and Japan than it has to find Osama.

This suggests that US policy has little to do with finding the criminals behind 9/11 and more to do with exploiting that strategy to further US imperial interests.

In this regard, Bush's policies have worked to some degree. The main goals of the Iraq debacle were to create a client state to ensure US control of the natural resources of the Middle East and provide a base to deploy military might in the region and beyond (against China and Russia). That is progressing: bases are being constructed and the Iraqi Parliament has its hands tied by the occupying powers and is dependent on their troops. However, such progress is at a much higher cost than anticipated. Hence the need to scare the US population to make the necessary sacrifices for the American Empire – and the profit margins of US big business.

Iain Mackay

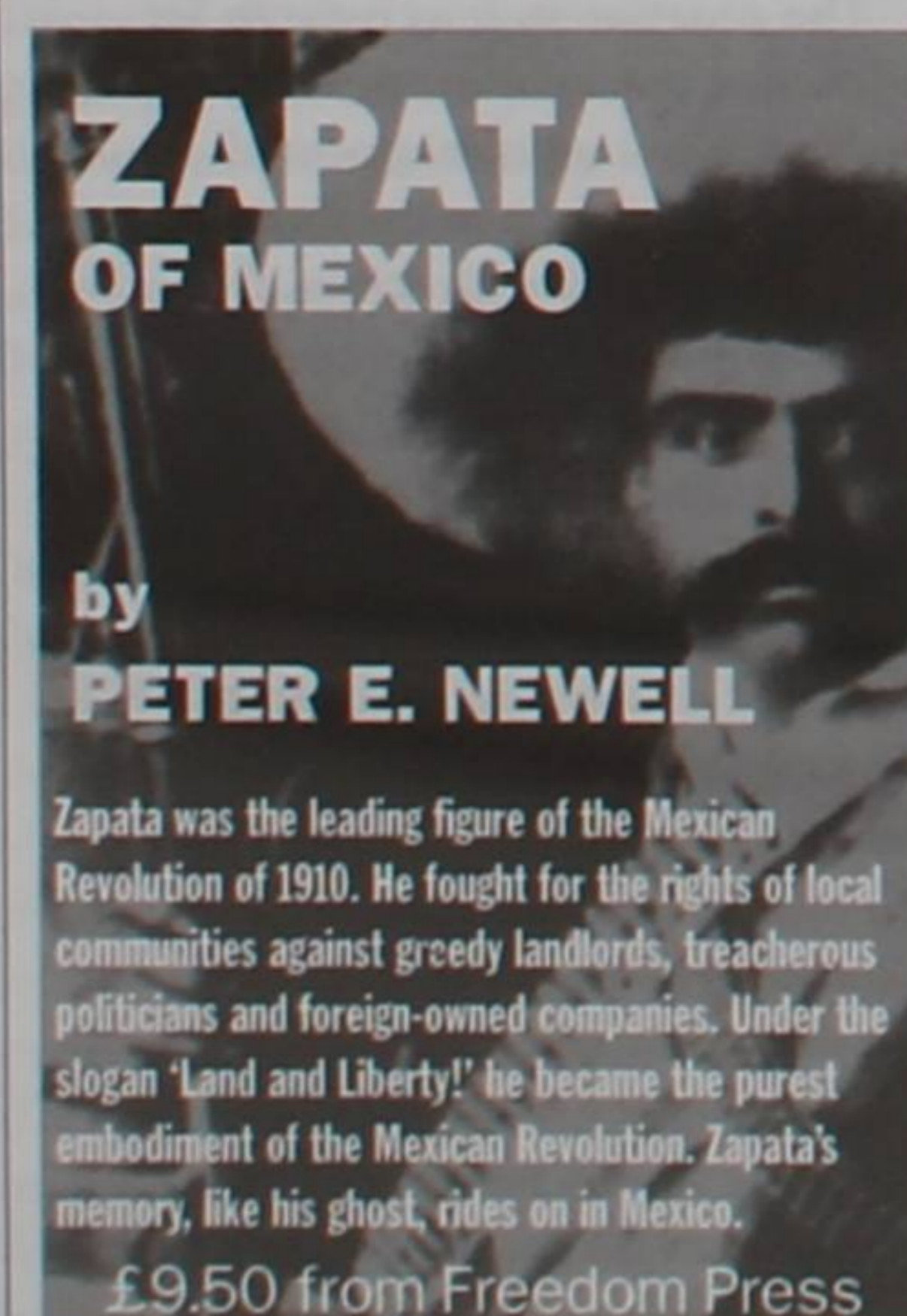
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### Quiz answers

1. Man Ray
2. David and Will Andrade set up the first anarchist bookshop in Australia in about 1886.
3. Brylcreem had used out of work anarchist Tony Gibson for a poster. Later, in the war, they retouched it so that he was in an RAF uniform. At the time he was in prison for his pacifist views.
4. That of interning nationals of enemy countries, regardless of their political allegiance. Fantin was killed in a concentration camp in South Australia that the Australian authorities had rigorously segregated – on national lines! Germans, Italians and Japanese were all kept separate, and the authorities put the fascist groups in charge of camp discipline. Fantin, who had organised strikes in Queensland, was killed by fascists a couple of days before the government realised he wasn't pro-Mussolini.

**ZAPATA OF MEXICO**



by  
**PETER E. NEWELL**

Zapata was the leading figure of the Mexican Revolution of 1910. He fought for the rights of local communities against greedy landlords, treacherous politicians and foreign-owned companies. Under the slogan 'Land and Liberty!' he became the purest embodiment of the Mexican Revolution. Zapata's memory, like his ghost, rides on in Mexico.

£9.50 from Freedom Press

# REVIEW

## The latest look at the life and anger of Ricardo Flores Magon lacks nothing in bite, finds Richard Alexander

**A**K Press have to be congratulated on bringing to a wider public the writings of Ricardo Flores Magon in this well-produced volume. Chaz Bufe and Mitchell Cowen Vertell's translations bring to life the rage at the heart of Magon, the anger at capitalism, the state and organised religion.

After some interesting preambles by way of an introduction and acknowledgements, the book proper opens with Mitchell Vertell's impressive biographical sketch, which provides the essential information regarding the historical background to Magon's writings. This is a substantial piece of work in its own right, some 80 pages, with relevant notes and maps.

For anyone not familiar with the history of Mexico in the nineteenth and early twentieth century this is vital reading if you're to understand what Magon writes. Mexico had 'won' its independence from Spain during the Napoleonic Wars, and thereafter had been governed by military dictatorships with more liberal democratic interludes.

The Magon brothers, had originally been partisans of a more reformist program but their experiences had led them to the understanding that only a thoroughgoing revolution could satisfy the basic means of Mexicans for food, liberty, peace and land.

Their initial vehicle for this assault on the ruling classes was the PLM (Partido Liberal Mexicano), which was instituted to co-ordinate their activities.

Although the Magons are known as anarchist activists, it's not certain when they first arrived at this position, though a date of 1908 is the latest possible, and for several years they operated as 'liberals' as they felt that the open espousal of the 'anarchist' label might put off potential supporters. A tactic that seems to have backfired later when many went over to the reformist camp, thinking there was common ground between the revolutionary PLM and the reformists.

This resulted in the issuing of the PLM's 1911 manifesto, which had a far more anarchist communist programme for the future society.

Sadly by the time the PLM had issued this Manifesto they had been defeated militarily by the forces of Madero, but the cause was taken up by the Zapatistas.

Well aware of the dangers that the PLM posed not just to US capitalists' interests in Mexico but as an example in the USA as well, the US state organised a series of trials to shut down the Magonist publication *Regeneracion*, which resulted in the editors, including Ricardo Flores Magon, being jailed until 1914.

Over the border, in Mexico, Madero had been deposed and replaced by another leader, Carranza, another reformist leader, who made radical sounding noises for a while, even letting the anarcho-syndicalists organise the urban Mexican working class – a favour which the anarcho-syndicalists duly returned by organising 'Red Battalions' to fight for Carranza against Zapata's peasant insurgency.

The honeymoon period did not last long and in 1916 he signed a law threatening striking workers with the death penalty. Needless to say Magon had already warned of the inevitable result of doing the reformist's dirty work for them and denounced the Carranza regime and those who collaborated with it.

Carranza in turn demanded the US government that the PLM were causing problems along the border and that he had been defamed by the writers in *Regeneracion*. A trial duly took place and Enrique, Ricardo's brother, was sent down for three years. Ricardo's health was so poor that he got let out on bail.

Not that Ricardo escaped the clutches of the US state for long. In 1917 the USA joined the war against the 'Central Powers'. As a staunch internationalist Magon denounced the war, and in 1918



Ricardo Flores Magon (left) and his brother Enrique

said working people everywhere should rise up, end the war and overthrow their own governments and take possession of the means of production and run things for themselves.

This proved too much for the US and after a perfunctory trial Ricardo and his co-defendant Librardo Rivera were sent down for the last time. Four years later, he passed away in his prison cell in Leavenworth prison in November 1922.

The writings of Magon in this volume are arranged thematically and cover topics such as 'The Revolution', 'Expropriation', 'Class War', 'Racism', 'Anarchism and Politics', 'War' and so forth and there's also a selection of stories.

The translations read very well and convey the flavour of Magon's writing. It should be emphasised that Magon was not writing for a 21st century educated English-speaking audience, the texts were aimed squarely at the working

people of Mexico (and Mexicans in the USA), and so the style can be a bit off-putting at times.

Given the violent times Magon was writing in it is not surprising that death and violence feature very heavily in the texts, the PLM was fighting, quite literally at times, a military as well as political war, but there is also an aspect of Mexican culture which is also centred around death, and that also plays art in the way the texts are written.

Equally he can be very hard-hearted at times, one of the pieces on the First World War saying that the proletariat should not weep over the death of so many proletarians in the war, as it removes from the working class those who are willing to fight for their bosses. One also wonders quite how the working people of Mexico felt at being constantly described as sheep and cattle, he uses the image of the herd and the flock many times.

On the other hand, the PLM's programme is class based, advocating that the peasants (*peons*) take over the land and that other workers should take over their places of work, and the products of their labour should be distributed on the basis of need.

What does shine through in Magon's writing is his implacable opposition to reformism of any stripe. As far as Magon was concerned any compromise or deal with the reformists inevitably ended with the working classes losing out.

The book is completed by a comprehensive chronology and a detailed bibliography of sources in both English and Spanish. It's a sturdy and well-produced paperback, reasonably priced and a necessary read for anyone interested in the Mexican Revolution.

*Dreams of Freedom: A Ricardo Flores Magon Reader*, edited by Chaz Bufe and Mitchell Cowen Verter, AK Press, £12.00

## PAMPHLETS

### War and Revolution: The Hungarian Anarchist Movement in World War I and the Budapest Commune (1919)

by Martyn Everett  
Kate Sharpley Library, £3

The role of anarchists in the Hungarian Revolution has been probably little known outside a small circle of East European specialists until recently, but thanks to some diligent research (details in the short but highly informative bibliography), Martyn Everett has managed to put together a brief overview of the main characters and events.

Two of the most influential figures in Hungarian anarchism in the pre-war period, Jenő Henrik Schmitt and Ervin Szabo were both librarians which may explain Martyn's interest. Szabo continued his revolutionary work throughout the war in anti-war agitation, but died in

October 1918, in the Spanish flu epidemic that killed so many others in this period, just before the Hungarian government collapsed and the First World War ended.

Ended everywhere except Hungary it appears, as the *Entente* (not very cordial) continued the war against the new governments which followed the collapse of the old Habsburg Empire, eventually succeeding on bringing about the failure of the revolutionary project with the installation of the reactionary regime under Admiral Horthy in July 1919.

Many anarchists had associated themselves with Bella Kun's socialist/communist regime or the attempted Budapest Commune, but unlike Kun and his closest followers they were not given safe passage out of the country and suffered considerably in

the ensuing repression.

A short but highly informative pamphlet – do check out the titles in the bibliography for writings by Ervin Szabo and the libertarian socialists in Hungary in this period.

### The Iron Column: Testament of a Revolutionary

by Manzanera, Elias  
Kate Sharpley Library, £3

Unlike Martyn's historical pamphlet, this second KSL title is very much a personal tale from a former activist with the Iron Column, a volunteer militia unit formed in August 1936 in response to the attempted fascist coup led by General Franco and others.

The Iron Column was, from the outset a unit with a predominantly anarchist character, which fought with great heroism, albeit deprived of essential materials,

for many months on the Teruel front.

The Iron Column wasn't just a military unit however, it also propagandised for the institution of libertarian communism wherever it was and Manzanera gives details of how this actually worked in practice in one village. The Iron Column, as such was disbanded due to the Republican governments enforced militarisation of the volunteer forces fighting fascism and many re-enlisted in the newly formed 83rd Brigade despite issuing a manifesto denouncing the militarisation.

The choice had been iniquitous – either cease fighting against the fascists or become part of the 'regular' armed forces complete with their forms of organisation. The men and women of the former Iron Column carried on their struggle against fascism despite the constant backstabbing from the Communists until the

war was lost in 1939.

Of those who stayed in the area where they had lived and fought many were rounded and shot by the Francoist forces in the years after the war had officially ended. Others, including Manzanera himself, managed to escape to France. The material about the Iron Column is sandwiched between an account of the author's return from exile in 1979, in which he shows his disgust with what has happened to the youth of the country, and generally the style in which the pamphlet is written is not one that many English authors would employ, for example way too theatrical in places for my liking and the text is rather disorganised.

That said it is an authentic, warts and all, account of one person's experience of fighting in the Iron Column, and is valuable for that.

## A Sideways Look

I had a knock on the door the other day, asking me to sign a petition. While I'm sceptical as to the value of such things, I usually do sign them. It was a protest about the council tearing down a leisure centre in order to relocate a Travellers' site.

As usual, this being Lewisham council, they only gave local people a week or so to voice any objections. The mention of Travellers alone immediately set my anti-racist alarm bells ringing, but the petition has three elements to it, two I can agree with and one reactionary. Firstly, the council has known about the relocation plans for ages – the Travellers' existing site in a different part of Lewisham is being redeveloped, so quite why residents were asked only a week before the deadline for comments on the planning application is anyone's guess. However, it wouldn't be the first time a council had tried to sneak something contentious under people's radar.

The second thing that Lewisham council need to account for is the loss of yet more leisure facilities. The proposal would involve demolishing the hall of a recreation centre, which is used for sports and disabled and elderly activities. As I write I'm having that *déjà-vu* feeling; Lewisham continues its war on leisure facilities in the borough. And once again, it's a decision driven by other bad decisions. The swimming pool is under threat because the council demolished a school without building a new one; spacious older housing is knocked down for new rabbit hutches; the Travellers' existing site is being redeveloped as ... a waiting area for bendy buses. So, ultimately, the leisure centre and the Travellers' current home are going to make way for a bus stop!

Unfortunately, Travellers are the last acceptable racism. Comments from some local residents would never have been published if they were about any other ethnic group. One, a Dr Pippa Dell said: "There will be a rise in anti-social behaviour, crime and flytipping. I'm not saying the Travellers will be doing this when they arrive but there will be a strong correlation."

Another resident, who unsurprisingly didn't want to be named, said "These people are not Travellers – they do not travel anywhere." Clearly the Travellers' won't meet welcoming or understanding new neighbours!

Given that most people round here get on and there's no obvious racial tension, it is rather depressing to find that there are more local bigots than the mad old guy who shouts at black motorists. But like most bigotry, it is based on ignorance. Anarchists in Ireland have noted that most people in Ireland do not recognise discrimination against Travellers as a form of racism, because they are Irish and white. Yet it is a long-standing and persistent problem. In England, the 'no blacks, no Irish' signs may have gone, but 'No Travellers' signs on pub doors are not uncommon. The council is, for once, doing something right in seeking to keep provision for the

Travellers – this might not be the right place, but everyone needs somewhere to live and the racist nimbyism that says otherwise needs to be opposed.

Svartfrosk

## Blast from the Past

Taken from Freedom of 19th October 1996, entitled Anarchy on the Waterfront. Dozens of Anarchists affiliated to mainstream anarchist groups across Britain took part in the dockers' and Reclaim the Streets actions in Liverpool on the weekend of 28th and 29th September. Hundreds, possibly more, of unaffiliated anarchists with small 'a' took part in some of the more militant actions over the weekend.

On the march, on the Saturday, there was only one Labour Party banner. The contrast between Liverpool that weekend and Blackpool and the Labour Party Conference of the following week could not have been greater. As one Labour party member remarked afterwards: "These young people are not interested in the Labour Party, they are more interested in the anarchists and that lot."

After the trouble and arrests on the Monday, a docker told us that Bill Morris of the Transport & General Workers' Union had threatened to withdraw his union's support for the dockers if they didn't stop associating with the anarchists. The dockers replied, as I understand, that the union hasn't been giving much support as it is.

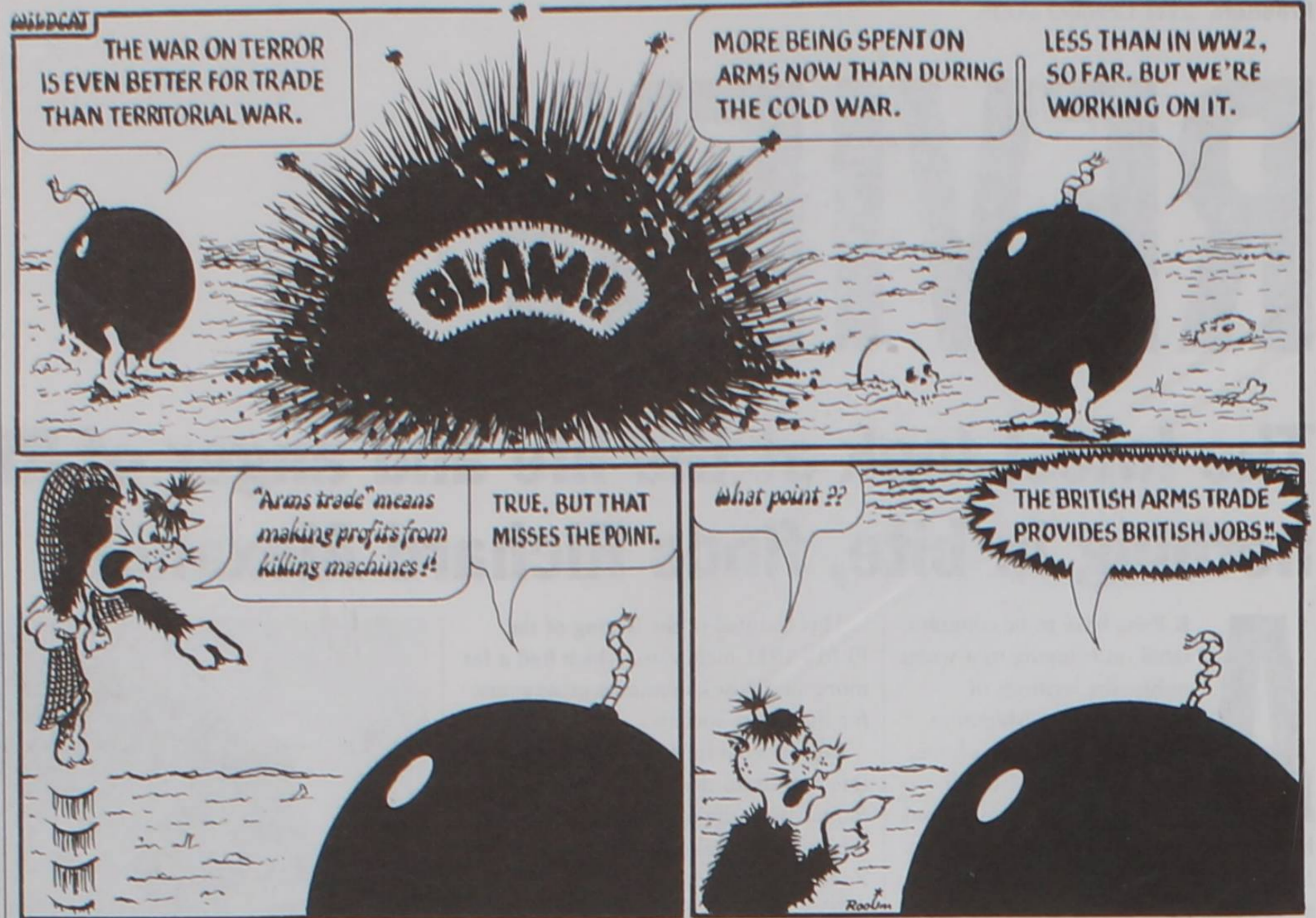
After the arrests on the Monday during the mass picket, the *Daily Telegraph* reported that: "Police blamed anarchists for the majority of the trouble". But as one correspondent said on television news: "The Reclaim the Streets demonstrators were welcomed, and indeed invited, by the dockers."

Since the weekend of action dockers have told us that everyone has been uplifted by the action. At Rochdale Labour Club two dockers told a support group meeting that they had nothing but praise for the anarchists' action. The result was a massive cost of £150,000 to the police, who failed to stop the Reclaim the Streets activists getting on top of the roof of the Mersey Docks & Harbour Co. headquarters and on the cranes, or the mainstream anarchists from breaking through the fences. Other actions included a tug-boat strike in the Port of Liverpool in solidarity with the dockers' action.

In Sweden there was a 24-hour strike at three ports involving a refusal to touch all ACL containers. ACL is an American company which uses the Mersey port and has suffered as a result.

In Denmark there was a one-day strike at one port and in Odense a three-hour stoppage. At the Australian ports there was a go-slow on ANL containers. Two containers were filled instead of twelve.

In Spain the Co-ordinadora unions plan a one-hour strike on 28th October, which will be backed by the anarcho-syndicalist CGT. The LAB, the Basque nationalist trade union, took action on the 30th September at Bilbao. In the



ports of Barcelona, Vigo and Valencia the CGT (anarcho-syndicalist) refused to move anything on 30th September.

## Imagine if...

Al Gore, liberal superman, leapt a tall building in a single bound. Using his laser-beam eyesight he chopped down an environmentally unfriendly plane and laughed as the environmentally unfriendly passengers toppled from the burning wreckage. "Ah hah hah hah!" he laughed; "That's an inch less that the sea will rise by 2050!"

He turned to his audience, a rapturous crowd awed by the pyrotechnic display. "You see, we can all do our bit."

Al had been given a huge dildo made out of hemp bark for his second demonstration. "This!" He shouted to the concerned mass, "can be used as a christian, non-disposable means of defeating overpopulation!"

Finally he turned to the big screen, where his measures were added to the list which would see capitalism bring emissions nearly all the way back down to 1970s levels.

"See how a liberal democracy can do the job??" He opined.

A voice piped up from the back. "Surely 1970s levels is a bit crap? Surely we should equalise levels across all countries rather than imposing the same old inequalities? You know, maybe use popular pressure to force industry to shape up rather than waiting for politicians to get their noses out of the trough?"

Al used his solar-powered vision to locate the offender, and burned out the man's brain.

"Liberal democracy. It defeated the commies, it defeated the hole in the ozone, and it defeated him. It will defeat you too if you don't switch to energy efficient peanuts and compost your own goats."

His killer gaze swept the room. They were with him.

## Listings

**21st October** The 25th Anarchist Bookfair, from 10am to 7pm at the Voluntary Sector Resource Centre, 356 Holloway Road, London N7, see [anarchistbookfair.org](http://anarchistbookfair.org) for more details.

**26th October** Performance Club presents free-style big fella Portobello a cappella poetry slam, with hosts Johnny Fluffypunk and Becky Fury from 7pm, plus regulars and guests, at the Inn On The Green, 3 Thorpe Close, London W10 (under the Westway by Portobello Green), see [newagenda.demon.co.uk/](http://newagenda.demon.co.uk/)

**28th October** The London Hacklabs Collective, a group of people interested in using technology to bring about social change, presents a Practical Anonymity Workshop, from 3.30pm at rampART Social Centre, 15-17 Rampart Street, London E1, email [Volodya@freenetproject.org](mailto:Volodya@freenetproject.org)

**28th and 29th October** No More Fallujahs, a weekend of nonviolent resistance to the occupation of Iraq, see [rememberfallujah.org](http://rememberfallujah.org) for more info

**2nd November** Performance Club presents Dave Russell (punk lyrics / virtuoso guitar), Whatsername (kitchen sink drama queen), with MC Tony Allen (mixed ability shaman), plus regulars and guests, at the Inn On The Green, 3 Thorpe Close, London W10, see [newagenda.demon.co.uk/](http://newagenda.demon.co.uk/)

**4th November** National Climate March as part of a day of international climate protest on the day before the Nairobi climate talks, demanding urgent action on climate all round the world, for more see [globalclimatecampaign.org](http://globalclimatecampaign.org)

**4th November** Blackout London, the largest example of people power ever seen – turn off all your lights and non-essential electrical equipment at sunset, see [workforce-limited.co.uk](http://workforce-limited.co.uk)

**9th November** Performance Club presents Chris Lynam and Kate McKenzie (post-mod clowning and eccentric music), with

MC Tony Allen (mixed ability shaman) plus regulars and guests, at the Inn On The Green, 3 Thorpe Close, London W10, see [newagenda.demon.co.uk/](http://newagenda.demon.co.uk/)

**13th November** The non-hierarchical peer-taught anti-militaristic self-defence/martial arts collective will have its very first open social event at 6pm, at rampART Social Centre, 15-17 Rampart Street, London E1, email [Volodya@WhenGendarmeSleeps.org](mailto:Volodya@WhenGendarmeSleeps.org)

**16th November** Performance Club presents Ronnie Rigsby (MC from Hell Central), with MC Tony Allen (mixed ability shaman) plus regulars and guests, Inn On The Green, 3 Thorpe Close, London W10, [newagenda.demon.co.uk/](http://newagenda.demon.co.uk/)

**18th November** End Occupation of Iraq, a meeting at Friends Meeting House, Euston, London from 11am to 5pm, contact [iraqfocus@riseup.net](mailto:iraqfocus@riseup.net)

**21st November** Preston SolFed public meeting, 'Why does the scum always rise to the top?', from 7.30pm at DISC, 103 Church Street, Preston, for info call 07707256682 or see [solfed.org.uk](http://solfed.org.uk)

**19th December** Preston SolFed public meeting, 'Why Santa is a bastard', from 7.30pm at DISC, 103 Church Street, Preston, for info call 07707256682 or see [solfed.org.uk/](http://solfed.org.uk/)

## The quiz

1. Which surrealist photographer contributed cover designs for Emma Goldman's *Mother Earth*?
2. What did the Andrade brothers set up in Melbourne and when?
3. Which patriotic World War Two poster unwittingly featured an anarchist who was imprisoned as a conscientious objector?
4. Which allied policy during World War Two cost the anarchist Francesco Fantin his life?

Answers on page 6

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