

# FREEDOM

80P ANARCHIST NEWS AND VIEWS

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INSIDE ▶▶

Fairford: freedom to protest page 3

The Iraq Study Group Report page 4

Win a prize with the crossword page 7

Svartfrosk column page 8

## DENTENTION CENTRE UPRISING

Asylum seekers, refugees and undocumented workers seeking to remain in Britain last week staged a protest in response to their treatment at Harmondsworth detention centre near Heathrow, London.

Riot police and dog handlers were brought in to quell disturbances, which spread to four wings of the centre. Detainees lit fires to draw attention to their plight and at one stage spelled out the message 'SOS Freedom' in the courtyard, using sheets from their dormitories. Although the centre was wrecked, no injuries to staff or detainees have been reported. Some 150 low-risk detainees have been released from other centres so that the inmates at Harmondsworth can be moved there.

One detainee, Diyako Rasul, an Iraqi asylum seeker, was put in detention seven months ago and is awaiting deportation after his asylum application was turned down. Rasul fled to the UK from Iraq in September 2003 after refusing to join an Islamic extremist group, of which his father is a member.

Rasul said people are regularly sworn at and verbally abused. "It's terrible, there is nothing to do," he added.

Rasul's girlfriend, Joanne Bean, said she is worried about him as he has tried to harm himself, adding, "I think the way we are treating these people is disgraceful. Many have fled oppression in their homeland and this is the welcome they get."

The Labour government and immigration agencies immediately sought

to blame the migrants for the trouble. Lin Holmer, director general of the Immigration and Nationality Directorate, said that the disturbances had been a "deliberate attempt" to prevent the deportation of foreign nationals.

Home Secretary John Reid said the unrest was an "attempt to sabotage" the UK's immigration policy, stating, "The perpetrators have been prepared to destroy property and to endanger their fellow detainees ... They have, themselves, harmed their own environment. We will not allow them to succeed in frustrating the enforcement of the law."

It is clear that the riot was not an attempt by undocumented workers to 'harm their own environment', but a response to the desperate conditions they face. A report in February this year published in the *British Medical Journal* by Mina Fazel, an Oxford academic, and her co-author Derrick Silove backed up this view.

It reported that doctors visiting the detention centres have noted that detainees, particularly those held for long periods, "suffer from profound hopelessness, despair, and suicidal urges". They add that "doctors face complex ethical challenges in balancing the responsibility to provide care without discrimination to a vulnerable group against the risk of becoming complicit in a system that by its very nature causes psychological harm. Questions remain whether it is possible to offer effective psychiatric treatment in a setting – the root cause of the



mental disturbance. Doctors also face the ethical dilemma of how to respond to requests by authorities to certify asylum seekers as fit to be detained or to be forcibly removed."

Reid's comments came as the Labour government stepped up its right-wing 'law and order' agenda, the dire consequences of which were recently

exposed in a report on Harmondsworth by the chief inspector of prisons, Anne Owers. A news item on the reports publication was cited as the catalyst for the riot – detainees at Harmondsworth interested in watching this item were prevented from doing so by a prison warden, who turned off the centre's television.

Owers heavily criticised Harmondsworth, saying, "We attributed these poor relations, which were worse than any we have seen elsewhere, at least in part to the centre management's overemphasis on physical security and control. Many of the rules and system would have been over-controlling in a prison, let alone a reformatory centre."

## RWANDA GENOCIDE

Rwandan government officials claim that new proof of France's role in the 1994 Rwanda genocide has emerged during the UN's Rwanda court hearings. Not only was France training the genocidal militias prior to the genocide, the French government was even today providing perpetrators of the genocide a refuge. France has earlier been criticised by a European court for not trying genocide suspects.

Aloys Mutabingwa, the Rwandan government's envoy to the UN-backed International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR), has made strong statements to the press in Arusha (Tanzania), where the ICTR is based. Mr Mutabingwa said the French government had part of

the responsibility for the 1994 genocide and for not letting the ICTR doing its job properly.

The Rwandan envoy was quoted by the French news agency AFP as saying that the ICTR's ten-year investigations had produced "sufficient and credible evidence" to try French government officials. Many witnesses had told the tribunal about French soldiers training the Interahamwe militia of Hutu extremists. It was only because the ICTR wanted to avoid "a diplomatic incident" that French officials had not been charged.

Mr Mutabingwa also repeated the more known allegations that France keeps interfering with justice by providing a shelter for suspected genocide perpetrators. Several main suspects are still said to be at large in France, allegedly under the protection of the Paris government.

These allegations against France are not new. In June last year, the European Court of Human Rights slammed the French judiciary for using unreasonable

long time in proceeding against a Rwandan clergyman, who had been charged with genocide complicity nine years before. The European court found that the French judiciary was not satisfying the 'reasonable time' requirement in the European Convention on Human Rights.

Also international human rights groups have criticised France for its seeming unwillingness to contribute to justice for Rwanda's genocide victims. The Paris-based International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH) claims that cases related to the Rwanda genocide had in general been met by "a certain coolness by French judiciary authorities."

France, which supported Rwanda's Hutu government in power when the genocide started, has kept a distance to Rwanda's new leadership. French government and judiciary sources continuously are trying to put Rwanda's current President Paul Kagame in connection with a 1994

## OIL AND PEACE

After years of essentially being ignored by the world's media, Uganda has suddenly come hurtling back into the public eye over the past few months. The reason is that one of the world's numerous forgotten conflicts seems finally to be drawing to an end.

In a landmark move both the rebel group, the Lord's Resistance Army, and President Museveni have been cautiously treading the road towards a peaceful resolution of the war that has claimed countless lives and displaced over one and a half million people.

Although peace talks have stalled continuously and the two leaders, Museveni and Joseph Kony, the leader of the LRA, yet to meet one another, the whispers of reconciliation are among the first heard in the country in years. Accusations have been flying from both sides with LRA members who met with Museveni alleging he verbally abused them and Museveni showing visible signs of frustration at the stalling of the peace talks, but hope remains.

The conflict

The Lord Resistance's Army have been terrorising the north of Uganda for almost forty years now, kidnapping children to serve as soldiers, mutilating, looting and pillaging where ever they go, with a self-proclaimed mission to rule Uganda according to the Ten Commandments. As the story goes, government forces sent in to quell the once popular rebellion have themselves committed horrendous human rights violations.

The conflict has been exacerbated by tensions with neighbouring countries, with both Uganda and Sudan; and Uganda and the Democratic Republic of Congo accusing each other of supporting the other's rebel groups. But now all that could be coming to an end. A partial explanation for this can be given with the agreement reached with Sudan who has long supported the LRA.

A new discovery

However, a fact that is little reported in international media casts a shadow over

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9 770016 050009

page 6, column 3

page 6, column 3

# Home and away

Brian Haw peace camp represents terror threat say cops

Peace protestor Brian Haw's vigil outside parliament could be exploited by terrorists and used to plot a deadly attack on Britain, according to police.

Bombs could be concealed within his peace placards and used to blow up the Palace of Westminster, according to Met Officers who have judged an attack in some form as "highly likely", it was claimed.

Haw, 57, has demonstrated outside Parliament since June 2001, protesting about government policies in Iraq and the wider world. Legal challenges to remove him have failed despite the introduction of a new law which prevents demonstrations within a kilometre of Parliament.

Although his protest is legal because it began before the new law was brought in, his vigil has been subjected to size limitations and other conditions which Mr Haw is accused of breaching.

On 11th December prosecutor Hugo Keith told Marylebone Magistrates Court and gallery packed full of supporters: "These conditions were justifiable in principle, necessary and proportionate."

"May I make it abundantly clear to Mr Haw and others listening, it's not suggesting Mr Haw poses a terrorist threat, nor could it be sensibly suggested."

"What concerns the Metropolitan Police, and has for a number of years, is the risk that his unique position in Parliament Square may be exploited by terrorists to strike a devastating blow at the heart of our democracy."

"They could do so by concealing a bomb in his demonstration which, if detonated, could devastate Parliament Square and kill Mr Haw."

Mr Keith added that the conditions imposed were "necessary to bring that risk down to an acceptable level".

He continued: "This case is not about suppressing Mr Haw's right to demonstrate."

Mr Haw does not dispute that his placards, canisters, tarpaulin and banners were outside the limits when scores of police officers stormed his camp on 16th May this year. However he will be fighting one charge of breaching the Serious Organised Crime and Police Act 2005 on two legal definitions.

The central London court heard Mr Haw's camp must be no more than three metres in width, three metres in height and one metre in depth. It is alleged he allowed it to spread beyond its boundaries despite two warnings from police earlier that month.

The prosecution also claim that within the camp were articles where items could be concealed and that he had failed to maintain the site where a person could immediately tell if suspicious items were present.

As the case began, Haw, wearing his iconic hat of badges, accused the police of assault and theft. He said it was farcical that he had been brought to trial whilst a judicial review was in process, which is looking at the legality of the conditions imposed on his camp.

He was made to stand behind the glass in the dock, a visibly irate Haw complained, "I'm a bit tired of being pushed about by tinpot bossy boots in uniform."

He continued: "I'm tired of the nonsense. After five and a half years being brought to court after court after court."

"I never did anything wrong other than saying 'Stop killing the children. Stop the genocide and torture' and I'm a criminal. The police assault me and make false

# Around the world

**CHINA:** Up to ten thousand Chinese villagers blockaded a warehouse in the village of Sanzhou in the southern province of Guangdong last week, claiming it had been built on land seized illegally by the Chinese government.

The villagers barricaded around 300 officials and foreign businessmen in the warehouse during its official opening, and were attacked by up to 1,000 riot police using batons, attack dogs and tear gas, holding the building overnight until they were dispersed in the morning.

Villagers stated that of around 9,000 total acres in the village, around half had been sold off by officials without any compensation. There have been protests throughout this year against the land grabs, part of an increasing level of social unrest across China – the Chinese government's own figures published in January identified 87,000 "public order disturbances, obstructions of justice, gathering of mobs and stirring up of trouble".

**USA:** Early in the morning of 25th November the infamous New York Police Department shot an unarmed man dead hours before his wedding. Five police fired over 50 shots at a car carrying the groom-to-be, 23-year old African-American Sean Bell, who had just left his bachelor's party with two friends. None of them was armed. Bullets hit Bell in the neck and arm and he died before reaching the hospital. A friend of his, Joseph Guzman, ended up in critical condition after being hit by 11 bullets. A third man, Trent Benefield, sustained wounds to his leg; both were handcuffed to their beds while receiving medial attention. Two transport workers were also injured by stray bullets fired by the police, who would have had to reload their

weapons to fire so many shots – time enough to become aware that no-one was firing back. What amounts to the operation of an arbitrary local firing squad by the state is being compared to the death in 1999 also in New York of Amadou Diallo, who was killed when police fired 41 shots at him. All those officers were acquitted.

**FJI:** The Fijian military say they have made a breakthrough in their talks with coup leader George Speight (pictured below) which could lead to the release of hostages including the country's prime minister.

Military spokesman Captain Eroni Volavola said Mr Speight or some of his supporters may be invited to play a role in a new civilian government. But he added that the coup leader would be unlikely to become prime minister.

Until now the military had only been prepared to allow the rebels membership of an advisory council to the government.

Mr Volavola said a full announcement on the deal would probably be made on Friday. "We have had a very major breakthrough," he added. "I think we can say that within the next 24 to 36 hours, you'll start seeing a lot of very positive things coming out from parliament."

Mr Speight has been holding Fiji's ethnic Indian Prime Minister Mahendra



Chaudhry hostage along with members of his government at the parliamentary complex since 19th May.

Mr Volavola said the breakthrough followed the first face-to-face meeting between military leader Commodore Frank Bainimarama and Mr Speight.

The rebel leader declared himself prime minister shortly after storming parliament and claiming power in the name of indigenous Fijians.

He has refused to recognise the legitimacy of the government of Commodore Bainimarama, who has been running Fiji since declaring martial law on Monday.

The two met for more than three hours at the Queen Elizabeth barracks, on a hilltop overlooking the Fijian capital, Suva.

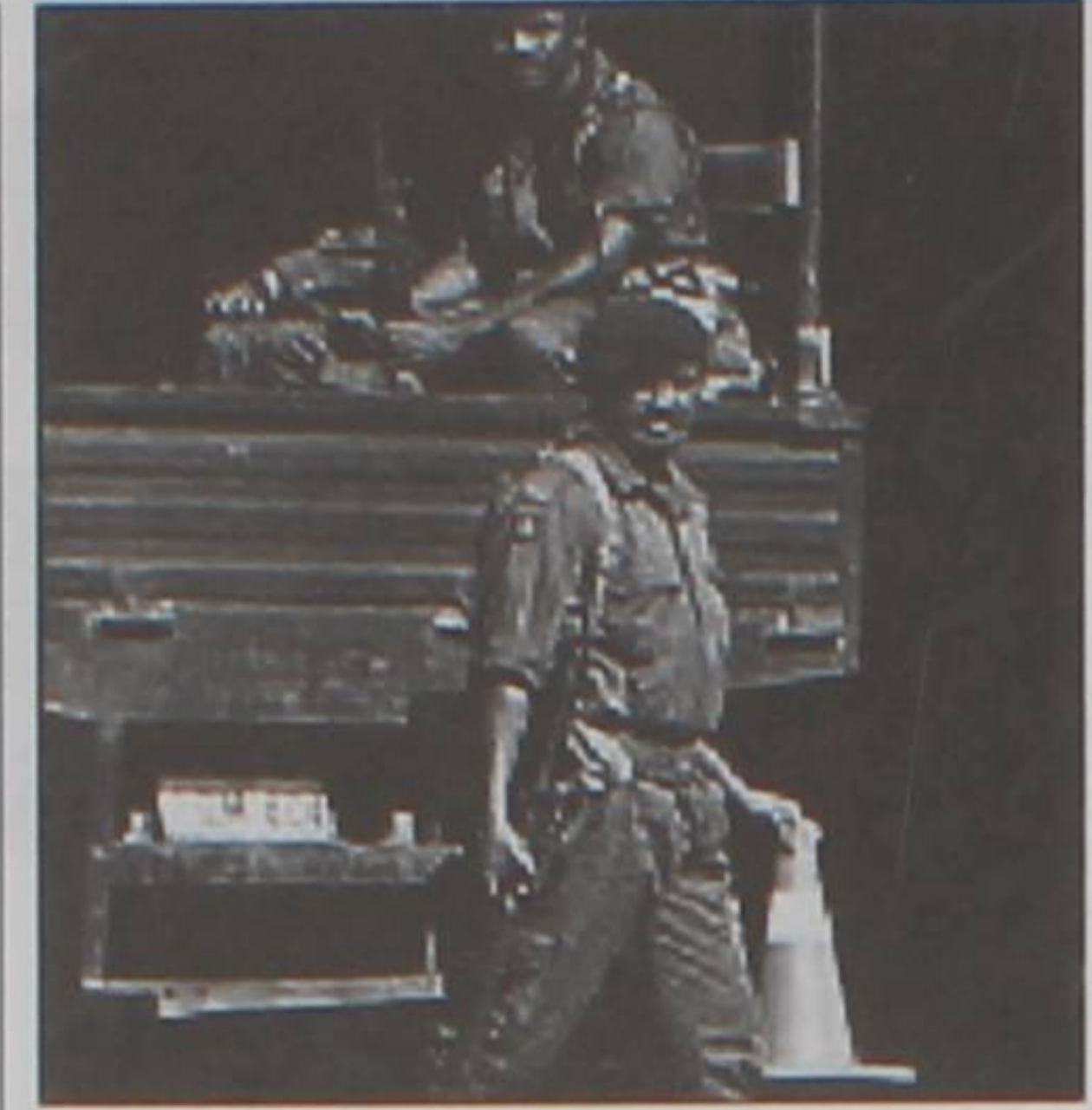
Asked if Mr Speight's rebels had agreed to give up their arms, Captain Volavola said: "That is one of the demands of the army, so that is something that will have to happen."

After the talks, Mr Speight went into a meeting with the allies that he has named to his own 'Cabinet' for running the country.

Earlier Mr Speight said he was willing to die to ensure what he described as a secure future for indigenous Fijians. He said "I will be whatever my people want me to be. If my people don't want me to play a role, I will step back and go back to my village and milk my cows."

Mr Speight has demanded a government which is committed to keeping ethnic Indians – who make up about 44% of Fiji's population – out of the country's top jobs. "The Indian Government over the last 12 months has embarked on a systematic programme of eroding the rights of Fijians," he said.

He has told the country's military rulers he will not release Mr Chaudhry and 30 other politicians until there is



agreement on the composition of an interim government.

Mr Speight said the military had performed "a coup within a coup" and demanded they "back off".

Commodore Bainimarama has said he will postpone the naming of an interim government until the situation stabilises.

Fiji's military rulers had nominated Ratu Epeli Nailatikau, the son-in-law of President Ratu Mara – who stepped down to make way for the military takeover – and the husband of one of the hostages.

But the nomination was withdrawn following objections from Mr Speight.

Mr Speight's spokesman said Ratu Nailatikau lacked commitment to the cause – a reference to the rebels' demands that ethnic Indians be barred from top jobs.

Commodore Bainimarama says Mr Speight now has the three things he said he wanted before releasing his hostages: the ousting of the president, an amnesty and the removal of the 1997 constitution.

But reports said earlier negotiations had appeared to stall over the rebels' demand that everyone involved in the uprising be granted an amnesty.

# Prison news

**Polish antifascist freed from jail**

Polish antifascist prisoner Igor Kisielewicz was released from prison on 28th November after spending three months behind bars. Igor was met outside the gates by supporters armed with copious amounts of vodka! He said he was very happy to be out, although he felt a bit shocked after three months of isolation from his friends. Igor also said he received tremendous support from other anti-fascists while incarcerated, with letters and postcards arriving every day.

**Cards to prisoners at Xmas**

While not all of us may celebrate Xmas, it is the time when prisoners traditionally mark the end of another year behind bars and count the years until their release, and when they miss their families and friends most of all. Please take the time to send a few cards to prisoners this year, adding some stamps or a SAE if possible. Addresses of political prisoners can be obtained from the Brighton ABC website at [brightonabc.org.uk](http://brightonabc.org.uk). Additionally the following miscarriage of justice prisoners would particularly welcome hearing from you:

- Kevin Lane, BV3290, HMP Whitemoor, Longhill Road, March, PE15 0PR.

- Paul Lyons, RP1464, HMP Frankland, Brasside, Durham, DH1 5YD.
- Innocent Eddie Gilfoyle, HMP Buckley Hall, Buckley Hall Road, Rochdale, Lancs, OL12 9DP.
- Jawad Botmeh, EP3888, HMP Rye Hill, Willoughby, Warwickshire, CV23 8SZ.
- Charles Hanson, VV 1638, HMP Blantyre House, Horden, Goudhurst, Kent, TN17 2NH.
- Sam Cole, HM3009, HMP Longlartin, Evesham, WR11 5TZ.
- Samar Alami, HMP Send, Ripley Road, Woking, GU23 7LJ.
- Roy John Burke, AH5865, HMP Frankland, Brasside, Durham, DH1 5YD.
- Clare Barstow, HMP Cookham Wood, Rochester, Kent, ME1 3LU.
- Kate Keaveney, MG3573, HMP Drakehall, Eccleshall, Staffordshire, ST21 6LQ.

**Jeff 'Free' Luers issues statement**

On 3rd December 2006 there was an International Day of Solidarity with Political Prisoners that involved people from countries around the world. In Palestine, the Philippines, Haiti, Brazil, Italy, Switzerland, England, India and the US, people marked 3rd December

with rallies, marches, and other forms of resistance. The following statement was issued by political prisoner Jeff 'Free' Luers, serving 22 years for setting fire to some 'Sports Utility Vehicles':

"Around the world millions of people are suffering from the abuses of power that have become all too common in our human societies. In dozens of countries, generations of people have chosen to fight injustice rather than submit to it. We honor those people today. We raise our voices and our fists to salute those who have fought to free their homelands, who have struggled for self-determination; those who have demanded human rights; those who have raided laboratories and liberated animals; and those who have fought to defend our earth.

"Today we shout our praises and offer our respect to those captured in the line of duty, serving their cause. We thank them for refusing to submit even behind bars. "On this day we bow our heads in reverence to those people who made the ultimate sacrifice and gave their lives for freedom. We remember the price they paid and the loss that their family and friends still feel.

"We offer more than our gratitude. We offer our solidarity. We make a promise

to remember and honor those who have come before. We make a vow that the struggle will continue until all are free.

"Too many people have had to fight for the freedom they should have been guaranteed at birth; too many have suffered the cruelty of capitalist exploitation.

"The most important thing we can do today is to make a solemn oath: that ours is the last generation that will have to struggle; that we will apply pressure from all angles until these systems of oppression crack; that we will settle for nothing less than victory.

"With the memory of those who have come before us; in solidarity with those still standing behind bars; while honouring those who gave their lives; we march forward to bring a new day with our heads high and our fists raised.

"And I say to you that if we stand united with one voice and we act on our desire for liberation we will carry the day! We will win!"

You can write to Jeff at the following address (as when writing to all US prisoners, please put your name and address on the outside of the envelope):

- Jeff Luers, #13797671, Oregon State Prison, 2605 State Street, Salem, Oregon 97310, USA.

# News

## He's off to Kazakhstan

The former chairman of Britain's biggest arms company, BAE Systems, has gone to work for the president of Kazakhstan

**S**ir Richard Evans, former chairman of Britain's biggest arms company, BAE Systems, has gone to work for the president of Kazakhstan, Nursultan Nazarbayev (pictured).

Sir Richard is to become chairman of Samruk, the oil and gas-rich central Asian country's state holding company. It was formed earlier this year to control a collection of state enterprises, many of which are said to be linked to the Nazarbayev family. They include KazMunaiGas; Kazakhstan Temir Zholy (railways); Kazakhtelekom; KEGOC (Kazakhstan Electricity Grid Operating Company), and Kazpost (postal services).

It is intended to float some, or all, of the companies in London. The potential flotation of KazMunaiGas was flagged in September when the oil and gas group said it wanted to raise more than £1bn by selling 40% of its exploration and production arm. It is chaired by Mr Nazarbayev's son-in-law, Timur Kulibayev, who was appointed six months ago. The Kazakh embassy in London says it is also planning to float the airline, Air Astana, which was launched as a joint venture with BAE Systems when Sir Richard was chairman.

A Kazakh official said: "The key reason behind the establishment of Samruk is to improve asset management, corporate governance and transparency of the national companies and their budgets."

Sir Richard is one of a string of leading British businessmen recruited in recent months to improve the prospects of a successful London stock market flotation for central Asian and Russian firms.

Many institutional investors, including CIS, Hermes and F&C Asset Management, are wary of the flood of companies from Russia, former Soviet states and eastern Europe joining the London Stock Exchange, believing that their corporate governance standards are inadequate. Less than three months ago, Kazakhmys, the FTSE-listed Kazakh copper mining group, announced the resignation of its chief executive, YK Cha, and broke governance guidelines by handing his duties to the chairman, Vladimir Kim. Kazakhmys was also unable to guarantee that Mr Cha would not dump his 16% stake in the group, which would hit the share price.

Sir Richard held talks with Mr Nazarbayev when he came to London on a three-day visit last month. Mr Nazarbayev also had lunch with Tony Blair and met the Queen. Sir Richard, who still works as a consultant to BAE, was the architect of the continuing Al-Yamamah arms deals with Saudi Arabia, and also signed off on confidential agency deals with other countries, which are being probed in the wide-ranging Serious Fraud Office inquiry into corruption allegations.

Shortly after he stepped aside as BAE chairman, Sir Richard was interviewed at length by the SFO at the end of 2005. Sir Richard and BAE deny any wrongdoing, and the current chairman, Mike Turner, made public threats last week that a £6bn Saudi contract to buy Typhoon aircraft could be derailed if SFO inquiries into Swiss bank accounts were not curtailed.

Mr Nazarbayev, too, has faced



problems with corruption inquiries. The trial in New York is scheduled to start in January of the oil broker James Giffen, who is accused by federal prosecutors of secretly channelling \$84m (£42m) in payments from Mobil Oil, as it was then called, and other companies, to accounts controlled by the president and former prime minister, Nurlan Balgimbaev. The payments were made

to Leichtenstein trusts with Swiss bank accounts, prosecutors say.

Mr Giffen's defence is that he was authorised by the CIA to make the payments. He told prosecutors that he followed the president's instructions and "arranged for the creation of a number of these accounts". He added that "the president wanted the accounts and the movement of money to them to

be kept secret".

The Kazakh government – which Transparency International ranked 122nd out of the 146 nations in its 2004 corruption perceptions index – denies the allegations. It claims that Mr Nazarbayev, who has not been charged, instructed his ministers in 1996 to route funds to Switzerland as a safeguard in case of an economic collapse.

## Fairford and freedom to protest

**O**n 13th December anti-war protesters celebrated a ruling by the House of Lords that police acted unlawfully in turning them away from a demonstration and detaining them on their coaches for 2½ hours without arrests, violating their right to freedom of speech and assembly and freedom from arbitrary detention.

The police had argued, at the hearing in October, that they were in fact protecting the protesters' right to life, by preventing 120 of them from reaching protests at RAF Fairford in Gloucestershire. The officer in charge of policing the protests stated that, since the US military had reserved the right to use "deadly force" in the event of an "intrusion into the base, "had a member of the public been killed or injured by one of the armed personnel guarding the B52 aircraft ... the political consequences would have been extremely damaging to the coalition partners".

Helen Wickham, a coach passenger, said: "I think it is deeply worrying that Gloucestershire police, confronting with the possibility of US troops shooting unarmed protestors, I chose to defend

the US use of lethal force over our right to protest. I wonder if there was pressure on them to do so."

The protestors have always maintained that the actions of the police were both unlawful and unreasonable. Many have doubts about the legality of searches which took nearly two hours and included the seizure of a frisbee and a bag of toy soldiers. It was only once the passengers had reboarded the coaches after being searched that they were told they would not be allowed to continue to the demonstrations. The forced return, a 2½ hour journey back to London, was made without toilet breaks and under a heavy police escort "to prevent a breach of the peace."

The ruling was welcomed as a clarification of a draconian power which Parliament has never debated or sanctioned and which many protestors feel is used inappropriately to stifle dissent.

Giving judgment, Lord Bingham said the case had "raised[d] important questions on the right of the private citizen to demonstrate against government policy and the powers of the police to

curtail exercise of that right."

They had done so wholly unlawfully in this case, their Lordships held, because the Human Rights Act had brought about "a constitutional shift" creating for the first time a right to protest which the common law had previously been "reluctant and hesitant" to acknowledge (para 34 of the ruling). Freedom of expression was "an essential foundation of democratic society" (para 36) and there had been no reason to restrict it in this case. Rejecting the police's argument that suspicions about some of the coach passengers entitled them to turn back everyone, Lord Bingham commented:

"There was no reason (other than her refusal to give her name, which however irritating to the police was entirely lawful) to view the claimant as other than a committed, peaceful demonstrator. It was wholly disproportionate to restrict her exercise of her rights under articles 10 and 11 because she was in the company of others some of whom might, at some time in the future, breach the peace."

This ruling will impact significantly on

## JJB steward sacked

**O**nly weeks after JJB workers scored a massive victory over anti-union boss Dave Whelan, their union (GMB) is under serious attack. One steward has been sacked and the convenor is facing disciplinary action as well.

JJB boss Whelan is notoriously anti-union and pro-poverty. His own personal fortune of £200m is creamed from the low wages of his own staff. In 1997 workers forced JJB to increase wages. In 2006, workers at the Wigan distribution depot took five days of strike action to secure improved and fair pay for all employees.

Now the bosses are trying to break the union. Workers are balloting for steward before Christmas. Sacked steward Chris Riley explains why he's under attack and what will happen next:

"On 30th November 2006 our full time official Sandra Blight and convenor Jon Stewart were in talks with management insisting that they reinstate me immediately and that they honour the back to work agreement signed pending a yes vote. My reinstatement was not granted and they were told I will have

to go through the appeals system. Also to this, the grievance against Jon will not be dropped, again contrary to the back to work agreement.

"As we thought and said at the time of my dismissal this is a direct attack against the union at JJB's to undermine us after our recent victory. Our industrial relations weren't the best before, now they are non-existent.

"We are now in the process of balloting our members for industrial action under failure to improve industrial relations, and have called an outside members meeting [6th December] to discuss our action for the coming weeks.

"From myself and on behalf of all at JJB would like to thank everyone for the support and offers of help in beating the Dickensian dictatorship that is 'Mr Wigan' and what is ultimately an attack on all trade unionists everywhere.

"The response has been overwhelming. We are now organising our campaigns and will be working with you all to set up coordinated demonstrations across the country to show our solidarity to Whelan. Send messages of support to [chrisfluffriley@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:chrisfluffriley@hotmail.co.uk)

# News

## Profit in Iraq

### Are the findings of the Iraq Study Group really a slap in the face for Blair and Bush, asks Mark Sealey

The Iraq Study Group Report was published the day before Blair and Bush met at the White House in the first week of December. It was widely portrayed by mainstream media in both countries as a slap in the face for their insistent warmongering.

There really can't be a clearer published roadmap attempting to justify the invasion of Iraq and the roles of the US and UK, whose relationship even a US State Department analyst recently described as 'totally one-sided.'

In the first place, The Iraq Study Group recommended that Iraq privatise its oil industry and open it up to international companies:

"Recommendation 63: The United States should encourage investment in Iraq's oil sector by the international community and by international energy companies... The United States should assist Iraqi leaders to reorganise the national oil industry as a commercial enterprise..."

The report calls for a US advisor to ensure that a new national oil law is passed in Iraq to make this possible and that the constitution of Iraq be amended to ensure that the central government control Iraq's oil revenues.

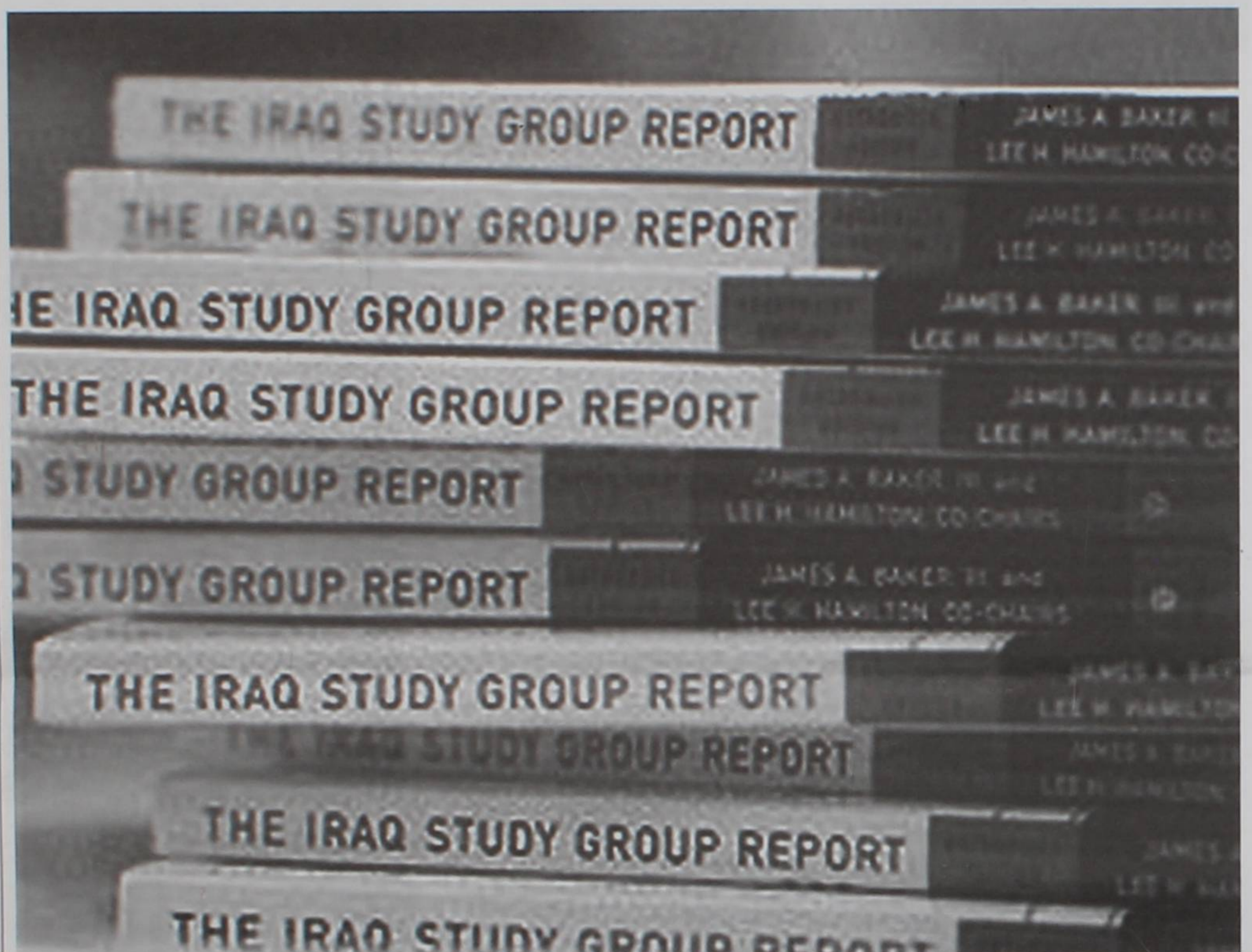
The report ignores the illegality of the invasion itself and the mass murder and other war crimes committed by the US and UK in Iraq. It also ignores the restructuring of the economy begun by Paul Bremmer, and goes on to endorse plunder of the major resource which once brought a decent standard of living to its people; Iraq has the world's second-largest known oil reserves – as

page 1 of the report's main text says. In other words: "Iraq is ... critical to US interests." Like most of the rhetoric we've had to put up with since 2003, the arrogance that the United States can and should direct the lives of millions of Iraqis now and in the future (the report orders the maintenance, for example, of US bases in Iraq indefinitely) is breathtaking.

Secondly, the report recommends that US and UK fighting forces as such remain in Iraq until at least 2008 [page 49] – but would withdraw only "subject to unexpected developments in the security situation on the ground".

Maybe Bush (and Blair) can pick and choose from the report? It's clear to most people that they need an 'out'. After all, at that Whitehouse meeting on 7th December they both rejected one requirement the report made of them – talks with Iran and Syria. But the report is very clear that recommendations can't be implemented selectively. What's more, the US government will not provide any support to the al-Maliki government unless it changes the Iraqi constitution and Iraqi national law that privatise Iraq's oil.

A look at the leading figures responsible for the report indicates its purpose. James Baker and Lawrence Eagleburger were former Secretaries of State with Bush senior and have various histories of wrongdoing under Reagan and Nixon. They've spent their careers in federal government and big business using their connections, privilege and power in



the former to benefit the latter.

In particular, each was instrumental throughout the '80s and early '90s in radically expanding US economic engagement with Saddam Hussein – with the clear objective of gaining greater access for US corporations to Iraq's oil. Baker's law firm represents –

amongst others – Halliburton, as well as the Saudi government (*against* the families who lost loved ones in the 11th September 2001 attacks in the United States); indeed oil companies across the United States and their activities in the Middle East. Eagleburger was president of Kissinger Associates – one of the

leading multinational firms for advising US companies trying to get contracts with Saddam Hussein and get work in Iraq. Two other members of the Iraq Study Group are representatives of the Heritage Foundation, which advocated full privatisation of Iraq's oil sector prior to the invasion of Iraq.

## Race is in the air

For some reason the commercial overkill that blights the UK virtually from October onwards is noticeably less vigorous in US shops. But there is overkill in other ways – indicative of the mood in the country: Lisa Jensen, a homeowner in Pagosa Springs in rural southwestern Colorado has been threatened by her homeowners' association with fines that could amount to \$1,000 (a little more than £500) for displaying a Christmas wreath with a peace sign.

Full of charity and goodwill, Robert Gates, the next Secretary of 'Defense' advocated bombing Nicaragua in 1984 according to recently-declassified government documents. At that time Gates was deputy director of the CIA; in a memo to director William Casey, Gates (who has been closely linked to the Iran-Contra scandal and the secret arming of Saddam Hussein, no less) wrote that the United States should do everything in its power short of invasion to bring down the Sandinista government.

The Department of Homeland Security

has acknowledged the existence of a system already in place which will assign travellers at the country's borders a computerised score rating their risk as, of course, terrorists or criminals. The Automated Targeting System (or ATS – originally a system developed to track cargo) will keep these scores for 40 years; nor is anyone so 'screened' allowed to see their score – or to correct it. The data will potentially be made available to federal, state, local, and foreign agencies as well as to contractors and consultants, etc. David Sobel of the Electronic Frontier Foundation said: "It's probably the most invasive system the government has yet deployed in terms of the number of people affected."

Meanwhile the same Department of Homeland Security defended the removal of six Muslim imams from a US Airways flight in November. The clerics were handcuffed and escorted away after passengers complained that they were praying in the terminal and on the plane. The DHS justified their action because some passen-

gers 'thought' the imams were making anti-US statements. US Airways said the imams raised suspicions by not sitting in their assigned seats, and, that sure sign of mischief – 'sitting in groups of two.'

The Supreme Court was concentrating on race too when it heard arguments at the beginning of December in two cases which may well decide whether local governments can promote schools desegregated by race or not. Parents of white pupils in Seattle and Louisville (Kentucky) sued their school 'Districts' (the North American equivalent of Local Education Authorities). They resent the fact that policies are in force that take race into consideration when determining which schools their children go to. It seems likely that the court will rule in favour of the parents. If this happens, the key *Brown vs. Board of Education* legal decision from 1954 outlawing segregation nationally is likely to be undermined, or worse, eventually overturned.

Louis Further

## Oaxaca arrests

Members of Mexico's Federal Investigation agency, AFI, have detained an employee of the Oaxaca state justice department in Oaxaca City, Mexico.

On Friday 8th December, over 250 federal police agents surrounded the offices of the Oaxaca state police force and seized its weapons to determine whether any were used in shootings during six months of demonstrations in Oaxaca City, federal authorities said.

At least nine people have been killed in a conflict that dates back to May. Most were protesters who were shot by gangs of armed men, and activists blame local police for many of those shootings.

On Friday, human rights groups and families of those detainees asked UN

officials to intervene, claiming some prisoners had been beaten, tortured and sexually abused. They also argue there is no evidence that most of the prisoners committed any crimes and asked for UN officials to visit the prisons and pressure the Mexican government to guarantee the detainees their rights.

Federal and state officials deny the prisoners have been mistreated and say they are just upholding the law.

Protesters have demanded the resignation of Oaxaca Governor Ulises Ruiz, whom they accuse of thuggery and corruption. Ruiz denies those accusations. In October, more than 4,000 federal police swept into Oaxaca and pushed the protesters out of the city.

During Friday's operation, federal agents also detained five employees of the Oaxaca state justice department who were using stolen automobiles, federal authorities said in a statement. In Mexico, members of police forces sometimes use recovered stolen cars until the owners are located.

# Feature

# When the clocks strike 13

James Horrox finds that Britain is the most watched nation on earth in this two-part look at our surveillance society

**N**ovember saw the publication of two separate reports which between them paint a deeply concerning picture of the state of individual liberty in Britain today. The first came

from the Surveillance Studies Network whose study, commissioned by the office of Information Commissioner Richard Thomas to assess the level of government intrusion into the lives of British citizens and forecast future developments, has produced the stark conclusion that within ten years surveillance in this country will be 'all-pervasive'. It suggests that the development and implementation of technologies for data-gathering and governmental snooping is being given extra momentum by the government's increasingly transparent claims of its necessity in the 'War on Terrorism'.

The authors of the 140-page report express concerns that the balance between individual privacy and the necessity of combating terrorism and crime has already been tipped too far against the individual, warning that the oft-bleated apologia for state-mandated meddling in the lives of its citizens 'if you have nothing to hide then you have nothing to fear' is "fallacious and dangerous".

According to the report, "the combination of CCTV, biometrics, databases and tracking technologies can be seen as part of a much broader exploration, often funded with support from the US/UK 'war on terror', of the use of interconnected 'smart' systems to track movements and behaviours of millions of people in both time and space." Mr Thomas himself concluded that the concerns he raised two years ago that "we are sleepwalking into a surveillance society" are rapidly becoming a reality, adding "today I fear that we are in fact waking up to a surveillance society that is already all around us".

The researchers highlight what they call 'dataveillance' for example, the prevalence of credit card, mobile phone and loyalty card information, and CCTV, as well as the rise in the monitoring of work rates, travel and telecommunications. According to the report, the kind of surveillance under which UK citizens go about their daily lives ranges "from US security agencies monitoring telecommunications traffic passing through Britain, to key-stroke information used to gauge work rates and GPS information tracking company vehicles".

These comments may well have slipped by relatively unnoticed had their emergence not coincided with the publication of a world-league table, compiled by the human rights group Privacy International, which puts Britain bottom of the Western democratic world for the protection of individual

privacy. According to this table, Britain is the worst-ranking country in the European Union, the only EU country in the black category denoting 'endemic surveillance' – only four other countries in the world fall into this bracket: Russia, China, Malaysia and Singapore.

It is well-documented that Britain has long had a world-beating number of CCTV cameras. With an estimated 4.2 million cameras across the country, that's one camera for every fourteen people, Britain is officially the most watched nation on planet earth. With 20% of the entire world's CCTV cameras located in the UK, if you live in a town or city in this country your face is likely to be caught on over 300 cameras each day.

During the 1990s the Home Office spent 78% of its entire crime prevention budget on installing these cameras – that's over £500 million. In spite of this, a recent Home Office study concluded that "CCTV schemes have had little overall effect on crime levels", and that "improved street lighting would have been a better investment".

But CCTV is positively medieval compared to some of the other surveillance technologies to which these reports are referring. For example, the UK's CCTV network can now be combined with biometrics in order to provide instant recognition; recent advances in technology, accelerated by a massive upsurge in research funding since 9/11, mean that nearly all ID systems now use some kind of biometric – fingerprints, iris scans, facial topography and hand scans are some of the various methods employed by different passport and ID card systems. The biometric identifier – your facial topography, fingerprint, etc. – becomes the 'access gateway' to the information held on you. After 9/11, biometric techniques then under development were fast-tracked by the government on the rather ironic basis that it was through the employment of such techniques that the 'Free World' would 'win' the 'war on terror'.

But what of 'the information held on you' itself? The state holds data about each and every one of its citizens on a variety of different databases, the process of data-collection beginning at day-one with the development of a national database containing details on every child in the United Kingdom, including records of school achievements, police and social services records and contact details. Similarly, a £12 billion scheme is currently under development by the NHS which will for the first time store all our health records on one centrally-controlled electronic database, whether patients consent to it or not, rather than on file at the surgeries of our family practitioners as has traditionally



been the case. According to the government this centralisation will 'revolutionise' management this centralisation will 'revolutionise' groups disagree, arguing that consent should be sought from patients before their personal details are uploaded onto a system which can be accessed by anybody other than their GP. Another database known as Dove (Digitalisation of Vital Events), is now reportedly chronicling births, marriages and deaths of British citizens.

These are databases which will automatically directly affect every single citizen of the country. But they are merely one or two in a plethora of similar data-collection mechanisms introduced by the government over recent years, and although alarming in themselves are supplemented by many much more sinister enterprises. For example, the Home Office now estimates that by 2008 DNA samples from over 4.2 million people will be held on a central criminal database which is growing by approximately half a million every year. Having contained around 700,000 samples when Labour took office in 1997 the database now contains over 3.5 million, including 140,000 from people never charged with any offence, of which 25,000 are children. Proportionally this is by far the largest DNA database in the world: storing details from 7% of the country's populace it is fifty times larger than its French counterpart.

Professor Alec Jefferies, one of the pioneers of DNA profiling, said recently that it had now "gone too far", calling for a public debate on the subject and questioning whether the state wanted to treat us as "citizens or as suspects". Speaking on Radio 4's *Today* programme recently, Professor Jefferies expressed his concern that "hundreds of thousands of entirely innocent people are [now] populating the database, people who have come to the police's attention, for example by being charged with a crime and subsequently released".

In fact, you don't even have to be charged for the police to legitimately coerce you into giving a DNA sample. Indeed, the exponential growth of the database during Blair's tenure in office can be attributed to changes in the law which allow DNA to be taken from people who are acquitted, arrested and questioned but never charged with an offence or even cautioned, to be retained indefinitely by the state.

It is now looking likely that these databases, which have so far been kept separate, will shortly be amalgamated into one monolithic, centrally-controlled system. From 2008 The National Identity Register (NIR) which will hold information about each and every one of us, including personal details and biometrics, therefore has the potential to act as a central information clearing-house for all the information collected

and stored on us elsewhere. When the databases mentioned above are merged, the state will effectually have access to every single detail of our lives at the touch of a button.

To talk about this in the future tense is a fundamental mistake; it is happening now. ID Cards legislation so vehemently opposed by every right-thinking citizen of the UK bludgeoned its way through Parliament earlier this year, and the UK IPS (Identity and Passport Service) now tells us that the first ID cards will be issued from 2008/09. These cards, through the mechanism of The NIR, will give the government both access to and control over every aspect of the lives of its citizens. If you are a British citizen, a photo of your face, your fingerprints and a scan of your iris will be recorded on this register, plus another 49 other separate pieces of information, including your residence and your religion. But the figure 50 is itself misleading – the fusion of extant databases means that the cards will in fact enable the state to access many more than that, with the NIR effectively acting as an index to all other official and quasi-official records.

By means of cross-references and an audit trail of all checks on the Register the NIR would be "the key to a total life history of every individual", to be retained by the apparatus of the state even after death.

(To be continued in our next issue)

# Commentary

## FREEDOM

Volume 67 Number 24

### 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

Festive season is upon us – saturnine or saturnalian but unmistakable in its fairy lit ubiquity. Consequently this edition is a bit of a patchwork – a quilt if you like, with which to warm yourself by the roaring fire of the mid-winter consumer frenzy...

As usual we need your help, primarily with the mailout of the paper and also with editing and writing the paper (without which it is unclear what there will be to mail), so feel free to pop in and chat about it or drop us a line at the address below.

Apart from that everything is going swimmingly.

Matt

Many of your subscriptions to *Freedom* are due at this time of year, and it really helps if you renew promptly. You can tell when your subscription is due for renewal as above your name on the address label there is a number which corresponds with the volume and issue number that your subscription runs out, i.e. if it runs out with this issue it will say 6724 above your name, if the first issue of 2007 it will read 6801, etc. Many thanks in advance.

Jayne

### Contact details

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

### Next issue

The next issue will be dated 13th January 2007 and the last day to get copy to us for that issue will be Thursday 4th January. 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.

### On strike? Hmm

Your 'I'm going on strike' article – which incidentally didn't tell us which fortnight you were going to write, and which not – suggested that none of us bothered to write anything. How likely is it that articles would have been published if we'd sent them?

At the Bookfair I saw John Rety who, along with Pete Turner, used to edit *Freedom* in the late '60s. He is no doubt looking frail, but in somewhat better health than he has been for some time. A year or so earlier he told me that he had long given up trying to get material published as "it was a brick wall".

In those far off days (the '60s) I used to have a weekly column in *Freedom*, 'Unfair Comment!' by 'Thought afore Malice', as well as writing other articles. I am perhaps more persistent than John, and am not surprised that I met the brick wall. But, herewith, one more try.

Ten years ago, Charles [Crute] came to a conference in Manchester bearing an offer from Vero [Vernon Richards] that a quarter of every issue of *Freedom* should be edited by Northern Anarcho-Syndicalists. In retrospect it can be seen that this was to prevent the launch of *The Syndicalist*, and it worked, but there has been no attempt to go back to that for volunteers.

Methinks the editor doth protest too much.

Laurens Otter

\* I used at least a dozen pen names besides Laurens Otter.

*Rob Ray replies: Actually Laurens, if you read carefully what was written, I specifically didn't attribute my request for help to a lack of writers, but a lack of people in an editorial role. You're right, I didn't give a specific date the strike would start from, largely because I thought it would be clear from the context that I would be starting it immediately. As it turned out, the strike was for a matter of days, as the other fortnight has now been taken on by someone else, so there has been no halt in production.*

*I have spoken to John [Rety] on one occasion, during which he suggested he could do a column, similar to the one he used to do. As I recall, I asked him to send in a sample of what he wanted to write. Whether through the copy getting lost or his not sending it, I never received any letter from him, and have not seen anything else in his name since, or spoken to him in person – this was two years ago now. I'm sorry if he feels this constitutes a brick wall.*

*Of your writing, I have seen very little and as far as I know will have published what I have seen, certainly I see no reason why I might have stopped it going through unless it was illegible or again, mail was lost (your two most recent pieces have been received and will hopefully be published in future issues).*

*Finally, there have been attempts in the recent past to do exactly what you are proposing and give pages to groups or individuals from other parts of the country. However, without going into details, this has led on numerous occasions to copy deadlines being missed and the pieces being picked up at short notice by the regular editors, which in itself is so disruptive as to severely damage our ability to put anything out at all.*

*If I know that a features page isn't going to be filled unless I do it, I'll work out ideas in advance. If I find out on the stroke of the deadline that actually the person responsible hasn't done so, I'm left up shit creek.*

*Despite this, when I asked for a replacement editor, I didn't specify any location, political creed or indeed experience requirements and the only direct reply I had was from someone in London who is already involved with the press, other than of course your own charming letter suggesting that I'm somehow deliberately censoring you and not giving anyone a chance at input.*

*Complaining too much? Given the near-complete lack of volunteers for my suggestion that someone else run one issue in two of the paper entirely without my input or influence, I'm wondering whether I complained enough.*

### Paul Lloyd

Our comrade Paul Lloyd died early on the morning of Thursday 7th December. A good friend of *Freedom* for thirty years or more, he visited us often, brought news items to our attention and helped with despatching the paper to the extent that his disability allowed. We shall miss him.

Donald Room

### Rwanda

➔ page 1

rocket attack on an aircraft in Kigali, killing the Presidents of Rwanda and Burundi and setting off the genocide.

Meanwhile, in Rwanda, the government and people at large are preparing for tomorrow's 11th anniversary of the 1994 genocide. During the commemoration week of mourning, many local communities focus on the exhumation of mass graves. Many of the estimated 800,000 bodies placed in mass graves during the genocide are exhumed and reburied in dignity during the annual commemoration week.

### Oil and peace

➔ page 1

the whole process and places serious doubt on the possibility that Uganda will ever see peace. In the north of the country, just around Lake Albert, on the border with DRC, oil has been discovered.

And suddenly Museveni's desire to make peace with this errant rebel group, whom in the past he had been content to leave to wreak havoc in northern Uganda whose people have historically been his foes, no longer seems inexplicable. For without peace, there will be no cash-rich oil companies falling over themselves to invest and no benefit for Uganda in this discovery of mineral wealth.

### Brian Haw

➔ page 2

allegations.

In a video shown to the court, when police officers confronted Haw, telling him he was a terror threat, he replied: "Your best security here is me."

He said any determined terrorist could access Parliament by using a London taxi or pretending to be a tourist taking photographs.

He said: "When you consider the situation, it's absurd because for the simple reason you can get over that side of the road, you can be beside an MP. Put yourself into the mind of a terrorist, you make yourself unremarkable.

"You would not be skulking around here when you are noticeable to CCTV. You are going to dash across that road. You can do it over there folks, you don't need to hide here."

The grandfather also accused District

Judge Quentin Purdy of "taking brown envelopes" and placing himself above the Law Lords.

He claimed that police had stolen his evidence and he as unable to get a fair trial. "I'm arrested for what, Your Honour? The police stole my evidence. How can I have a fair trial in these circumstances?"

Brian added: "Why are you daring to trial me? Three law lords and ladies are considering my petition and you put yourself above three law lords and ladies? This should have gone to trial in January. How dare you think you can try me."

After Judge Purdy rose for order to be resumed in the packed court, Mr Haw continued to rant, despite the protests of his barrister, Ian McDonald QC.

Haw added: "In the meantime Poncey Purdy wants to earn his Christmas box in a brown envelope."

The decision to impose the conditions on the demonstration was taken by Superintendent Peter Terry, an Operational Unit Commander at Charing Cross police station.

When asked about the security risk to the UK, he said: "The security level to the UK is classed as severe. That means a terrorist threat or terrorist attack is highly likely."

He said terrorists were "extremely resourceful in the devices that they used and Parliament Square was under close scrutiny."

The case continues.

### Fairford

➔ page 3

policing of future demonstrations and will have implications for the Austin/Saxby May Day 2001 cases against the Metropolitan Police to be heard early next year. On Mayday 2001, police detained thousands in Oxford Circus for seven hours to "prevent a breach of peace".

Jane Laporte, the claimant in the case, was determined that the police's actions should not go unchecked. She said: "The willingness of the police to bow to political pressure, by stifling dissent and arbitrarily detaining protestors in this way, brings the role of the police as facilitators of peaceful protest in to question. They should, as the judgement found, be the facilitators not suppressors of peaceful protest. I am delighted the House of Lords has said their actions were completely unlawful and a human rights breach."

Jesse Schust, a passenger and legal observer on the coaches, said: "It is particularly ironic that the police violated our human rights by detaining us, when we sought to demonstrate against an illegal war that has devastated Iraq and left over 100,000 dead."

John Halford, a public law and human rights specialist at Bindman and Partners, represented the campaigners. He said today [13th December]: "The House of Lords judgement is a wake up call for democracy. Under this government we have seen a sad and steady erosion of the rights that underpin democracy: those to express dissent and to do so collectively with others in public. The Lords have given a principled judgement on where the line should and must be drawn: peaceful protest can only be prevented in the most extreme circumstances which are very far from this. These campaigners wanted to protest lawfully against an unlawful war. The Lords have unhesitatingly said they had that right."

See [fairfordcoachaction.org.uk](http://fairfordcoachaction.org.uk) for more info

### Review

➔ page 7

#### High Street Art-Lite

Banksy presumably saw the writing on the wall (so to speak). His sole contribution is an old master-type portrait of some anonymous grandee just after being custard-pied – succinctly puncturing the pretensions of art institutions and patrons, even as he cashes in on the commodity status they sanction. More abject still is Barry McGee's giant 'Smash the State' daubed in red on the opposite wall as a reminder of the energy and anger that can animate autonomous public art when its makers (or curators, for that matter) neither prostitute themselves for government funding nor speculate on niche market cool. *Spank the Monkey* may bolster the Baltic's 'edgy', 'relevant', 'youf-friendly' credentials as the end of



Lottery support looms, but promoting Sony Playstation and selling rat stencil merchandise to a few skater kids scarcely scratches the surface of the significance of grassroots street-level creative endeavour.

So, domesticated urban graffiti, Mexican tattoos, Japanese polaroid porn, etc., are wrenched from their complex origins – which are ignored, along with the vast majority of producers shunning respectable careers for collective work, self-publishing, artist-led networks and other marginal, occasionally politicised and/or illegal activities. Proposing trendy 'guerilla marketing' (any cultural economics not corporate-controlled) as common denominator simply projects the gallery's own recuperative desire onto an infinitely more variegated and engaged field than the organisers can acknowledge in their haste to kowtow to capital. Ironically, rhetoric about global youth hawking their aesthetics to the highest bidder, while undoubtedly accurate for some, renders most of these exhibits more, not less, unintelligible. Naturally, the far more salient side-stepping of elitist and hierarchical disciplining is anathema to the British contemporary arts establishment (and other cultural industries). No prizes, then, for guessing whose Monkey is really being spanked.

[www.tomjennings.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk](http://www.tomjennings.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk)

*Spank the Monkey* and the Keith Haring exhibition are at the Baltic Centre, South Shore Road, Gateshead until 7th January. James Cauty is showing at Elektrik Sheep, Pink Lane, Newcastle through December.

### Quiz answers

1. Elisé Reclus, who was a friend of Verne's.
2. To facilitate the enslavement of other human beings.
3. A syllabary to write Cherokee.
4. It was from this year that Jesus' birth was associated with 25th December.

# REVIEW

## The Baltic's 'street art' exhibition bites off much more than it can chew, according to Tom Jennings

**A**t Gateshead's Baltic Centre, *Spank the Monkey* claims to straddle contemporary art and graphics, urban interventions and global youth culture, with work chosen by director Peter Doroshenko and independent curator Pedro Alonso. Three floors of the building and a handful of outdoor venues around Tyneside have since September hosted a bewildering confusion of commissioned graffiti, poster and billboard pieces, massive doodlings and small stylised sketches, multi-media and found-object sculptures and installations, slick manga-inspired dreamscapes, psychedelic fantasias on canvas and computer-generated cartoons, topped off with a garishly-painted skateboard ramp. To make sense of the apparently random juxtapositions, artists featured, from all around the world, earned their stripes outside the conventional gallery system. 'So what?' you might ask. Proximity to official approval may fascinate those who aspire to it, but affords no coherence whatsoever to this ramshackle mish-mash of a show.

*Spank the Monkey* was inspired by the success of the American travelling exhibition *Beautiful Losers: Contemporary Art and Street Culture* (2004) in exhaustively detailing the development of forms of visual expression associated with diverse US youth subcultures since the sixties. The often countercultural concerns of their exponents were mapped onto the local contexts in which their activities became differentiated as 'art', with varying levels of subsequent incorporation into the mainstream alongside cross-fertilisation with prevailing

styles fashionable in conceptualism, installation, film, photography and graphic design. Work by original graffiti art stars Jean-Michel Basquiat and Keith Haring was included (early Haring sketches are also currently showing at the Baltic) alongside hundreds of others (Shepard Fairey, Barry McGee and Ryan McGinness being represented in both shows), but its focus on the social scenes out of which the art emerged lent the project a depth and integrity entirely absent at the Baltic – where 'art-market versus supermarket' is the nearest we get to profundity.

So the way, desultory efforts permitted at Metro stations betray no sign of the tagger's lawless compulsion to mark alienated space. Inside the gallery, heart and guts are similarly at a premium. At least Faile's cut-and-paste posters deploying press headlines about the Israel-Hezbollah clash effectively parallel media bombardment when plastered up and down walls, while seeming innocuous when isolated in frames surrounded by white space. Better still, Brazilian duo Os Gemeos' shack with ski-masked accoutrements mixes shanty deprivation with outlaw soul, whereas Shepard Fairey's impressive billboards achieve the opposite with his 'Obey' range pastiche of Soviet modernism, spinning empty radical chic with the usual heroic suspects – Ché, Mao, Black Panthers, Castro, Subcommandante Marcos, whoever ... Whether he's drawing attention to or celebrating big business authoritarianism while pocketing paychecks from Nike, the pooking into mass commercial media is facile and tendentious, dismissing the imaginative and subversive potential



of independence, even when a decent living alongside self-determination is sought from design and thematic innovation.

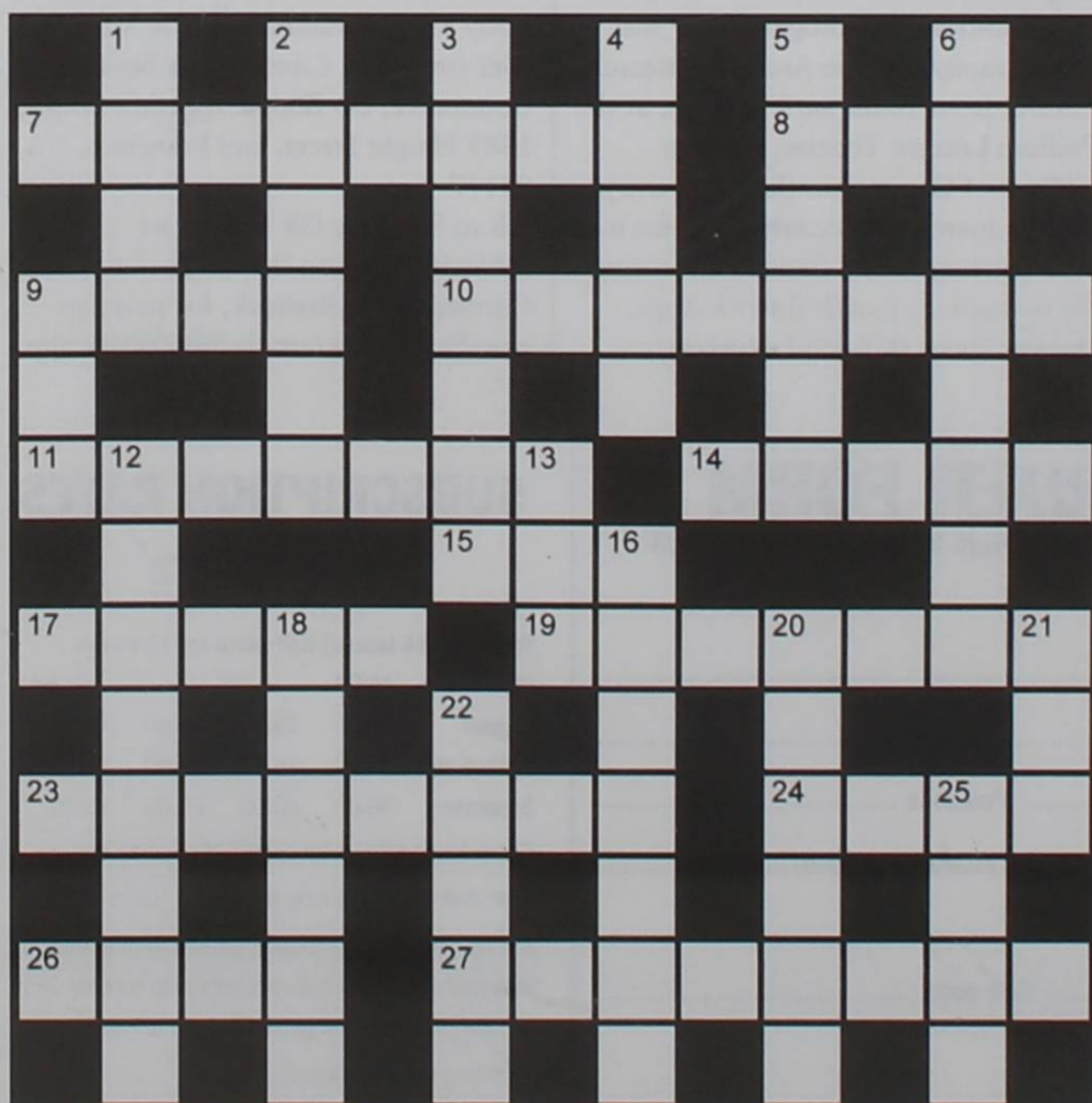
And it's not hard to find – for example, designs by James Cauty (ex-KLF, K-Foundation, anti-Turner Prize pop/art founder, based at the Aquarium, London) are also showing in Newcastle. Exploiting the decidedly low-brow tradition of stamp collecting, the CNPD

(Cautese National Postal Disservice) first day covers, prints and books – marketed as low-priced limited editions – comment pointedly on the absurdities of past provocation, art and iconography. Past provocations include images of the queen in a gas mask, and burning Houses of Parliament, with the legend '5/11'; now supplemented with the 'America Shut Up' series and the Angel of the North upside down with its head

in bedrock, ridiculing the 'we've never had it so good' cultural triumphalism of the Sage, Baltic *et al.* Unfortunately, irreverent title aside, *Spank the Monkey* risks barely a glimmer of such reflexive humility or humour – surely showing the insecurity beneath the arrogance of power which, moreover, so many contemporary urban stencilists and adbusters deliberately expose.

➔ page 6, column 5

## PRIZE CROSSWORD BY BJARNI



### ACROSS

- 7 Method used by capitalist industry to get rid of stropky workers – out a revolutionary colleague (8)  
 8 Not questioning anarchists do unquestioningly for nothing before old Turkish governor (4)  
 9 Norse God of mischievousness exchanging kilo (4)  
 10 Setting free, as the Levellers would have said, a result of fermenting Yukon gin? (8)  
 11 Poisonous element not often present in sushi though involved in present (7)  
 14 Avarice fostered by capitalism gets right in rough edge (5)  
 15 Neither Ron goes back for what sounds like a common activity of flushed away characters (3)  
 17 Hard, unruly mob takes on key anarchist weapon opposed by anarchist pacifists (1-4)  
 19 Spanish Civil War anarchist column – it returns following right in garbled Urdu (7)  
 23 Composition for solo instrument and orchestra, about, at one time, a pile of rods (8)

- 24 At the time finding connection to outlaw Henrik Ibsen (4)

- 26 Leg joint never bent by anarchists for supposed manager of Private Eye's Neasden-based football club! (4)

- 27 Socialist organisation initially holding dreadful purge in the east, leading to moral part of mind acting as conscience (5-3)

### DOWN

- 1 French poet, novelist, dramatist and freethinker Victor-Marie would have nothing after a cuddle (4)  
 2 Station on Paris métro named for 'Clémence', the 'Red Virgin' of Montmartre communards, so I lie with chum awkwardly the Spanish (6,6) (see also 18)  
 3 Russian anarchist Mikhail Aleksandrovich does bunk in a different way (7)  
 4 East African republic, scene of 1950s anticolonialist uprising, helping build token Yalta bridge (5)  
 5 See 16

- 6 Control volcano's blowhole – what we needn't do with wheel! (8)

- 9 East London river flowing through would-be Olympics site where ale gets drunk (3)

- 12 Massages and burns down pervertedly missing final point (3-5)

- 13 Cash on delivery for North Sea fish endangered by overfishing (3)

- 16 Finding her luck drop or otherwise with London-based anarchist photographer (7,6) (see also 5)

- 18 See 2

- 20 Payoff for bent warder (6)

- 21 Living Legend Bone founded Class War at tail end of anti-authoritarian constituents (3)

- 22 Stern, complicated, Dadaist artist Max (5)

- 25 What Trotsky broke to make a not very appetising omelette, according to Voline (4)

## A Sideways Look

A couple of years ago, some enterprising people in Deptford squatted an old disused bakery and set up the 'Use Your Loaf' Social Centre. It survived for about a year before the owner, a businessman and accountant, evicted it after numerous threats. It's still empty now, rotting, another testament to the waste of capitalism.

Like some adjacent buildings that the same character owned (and recently had demolished), it is being held empty in the hope of getting planning permission to turn it into flats. This is big business and there is enough money to be made to attract some real low lifes. If you live anywhere that house prices are outside the reach of most ordinary people (i.e. almost anywhere in the country) you will have noticed pubs being closed down and converted into flats, even when they were well used. I've lost count of the number of pubs locally that have suffered the fate of death by estate agent, but I know it's a lot.

At first the owner, in his dealings with the squatters, tried to make out that he was just the agent for the real owner who was somewhere abroad. The people around the social centre fought the eviction, though they knew it was inevitable in the end. I suppose they were just stubborn. Or perhaps they were outraged that a building they were using would be condemned to a slow death as the greedy owner let it rot, waiting for it to reach a level of disrepair that forced demolition, thus clearing a large site for his money making schemes.

But as well as stubborn and outraged, it helped that some of the people involved were tenacious as well. They went along to court and slowly put two and two together. The same businessman was running all sorts of dodgy deals with lots of other people, none of whom were aware of each other. He'd pissed off the courts and the local authorities as well. Something about not paying all the fees due, all the taxes he should have. Well, he didn't need to, after all, such things are for the little people, aren't they? The rich don't need to pay tax, that's what offshore accounts are for.

Unfortunately for him, let's call him Ebenezer, (it's not his real name, but 'tis the season after all), some of his avoidance came to light when a relative who he claimed owned some property came forward and said she didn't. In fact, she hadn't spoken to him for many years. He might lose a lot. Possibly everything, though I'm sure he's got all sorts of instruments to make sure that his children keep lots of it. The next time he has squatters in one of his speculative properties, he might think twice before threatening them. Though not everyone learns lessons.

Revenge. It's no substitute for mass action. But it's still good to see the bad guy get it in the end.

Svartfrosk

## Blast from the Past

Taken from Freedom of 2nd December 2000, entitled 'Cream and misdemeanours': On Saturday 18th November, Home Office Minister Barbara Roche was flanned by two 'bakers' of the Bogus Baking Brigade, who gave her a taste of the lemon meringue as she left her 'surgery' in Wood Green, north London. They wanted to draw attention to offensive government actions which Roche has been in charge of, in her role as minister for immigration issues, such as the voucher and dispersal systems for asylum seekers and the increasing use of arbitrary imprisonment of those whose only crime is to flee oppression at home. "We want a world where the movement of people is determined by human needs and desires rather than the profit motive" said one, as he headed back to the bakery.

Two weeks earlier, ex-head of the International Monetary Fund Michel Camdessus got a convivial welcome when he gave a lecture in Oxford about 'humanising globalisation'. Oxford Global Action held a demo outside, protesting against IMF policies, but they were denied entry to the hall itself. A few did manage to get in and even talked their way into a private reception afterwards. A couple of protestors engaged Camdessus in polite discussion, before two glasses of red wine fell on his Armani. As a result, one person has been charged with 'criminal damage'. She was due to appear before Oxford magistrates yesterday. Michel's suit, sadly, didn't make it.

## The quiz

1. In *The Survivors of the Jonathan*, who does Jules Verne base the anarchist character Kaw-Djer on?
2. According to Claude Levi-Strauss, what was the main function of ancient writing?
3. What was invented by the Cherokee blacksmith Sequoyah?
4. What date was pegged in 354AD?

Answers on page 6

Britain must retain its ability to use nuclear weapons, in case of future contingencies.



For instance, suppose a religious nut is elected President of the USA, and sets out to bring on the Rapture by nuclear annihilation of a few countries.



It will be Britain's duty, as a loyal ally, to contribute a bomb or two.



## Imagine if...

George Osborne was grinning all the way to the office.

The fresh-faced youngster, whose looks lent him more to the role of office junior than judge, was quite proud of the way he had attacked Gordon Brown over the pre-budget report.

The grizzled old Scot had failed to find a means to tackle green issues, and taxes had continued to rise, so George had (after checking his mittens were still in his pocket - mum wouldn't be pleased otherwise) taken advantage with a barrage of complaints on the NHS, pensions and schools.

"In a world where our competitors are simplifying and reducing their business taxes, we - almost alone - are increasing ours." He'd squeaked, getting a little overexcited and reverting to 'old tory' mode by attempting to mix in all the ills of the UK with high corporation taxes (which had actually fallen under Brown).

As he entered the office of David Cameron, his mentor looked up from checking out his 'rad' new snowboarding boots and broke into a smile. "Well done George that was excellent. Have a lolly."

"Thank you David, don't mind if I do." As he sucked on his sweet, George pondered why almost every newspaper had taken his childish rant against Gordon Brown's failings, which everyone knew would simply be repeated by a Tory government, to be a victory.

Perhaps they'd all been given lollies too.



## Listings

20th December Manchester IWW meeting at the Basement, Lever Street, Manchester, from 7pm, open to members and those wishing to join, see <http://iww-manchester.org.uk/>

29th December London Critical Mass meet at 6.30pm on the South Bank under Waterloo Bridge, by the National Film Theatre, for more details see [criticalmasslondon.org.uk](http://criticalmasslondon.org.uk)

29th December Manchester Critical Mass meet 6pm at Central Library, for more details see <http://velorution.x21.org.uk>

29th December Brighton Critical Mass meet 6pm at the Level in Brighton, bring bikes, lights and noise, see <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/criticalmassbrighton/>

29th December Nottingham Critical Mass, meet 5.30pm at the Savoy Cinema on Derby Road in Lenton, ride lasts no more than a couple of hours (depending on the weather), see [veggies.org.uk/arc/event.php?ref=213](http://veggies.org.uk/arc/event.php?ref=213)

29th December Oxford Critical Mass meet 5.45pm at the Cornmarket end of Broad Street outside The Oxford Story, leaving around 6ish, for more see [myspace.com/oxfordcriticalmass](http://myspace.com/oxfordcriticalmass) or email [oxfordcriticalmass@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:oxfordcriticalmass@hotmail.co.uk)

29th December Reading Critical Mass meet 5.30pm in front of Reading Town Hall, see [criticalmassreading.info](http://criticalmassreading.info)

29th December Cambridge Critical Mass meet 6.30pm at Market Square, see <http://criticalmass.cambridgeaction.net>

12th January Road: Artists and the Stop the M11 Link Road Campaign - an exhibition of photography by the Photography and the Archive Research Centre, from 10am until 4:30pm, at the Podium Lecture Theatre, London College of Communication, free entry, email [a.marchant@lcc.arts.ac.uk](mailto:a.marchant@lcc.arts.ac.uk) for info

28th January Social Centres Gathering for discussion, practical workshops, sharing ideas, skills and experience

followed by cabaret and cocktails at the 1in12 Club, Albion Street, off Fulton Street, Bradford, call 01274 734160, see [1in12.com](http://1in12.com) (accommodation available, contact 01274 745002 or [hive@riseup.net](mailto:hive@riseup.net))

29th January Phone In Sick Day, apparently this date is calculated as the most depressing day of the year, so aim to bring the country to a standstill by phoning in sick, for more info call 07737020496 or see [thesicknote.com](http://thesicknote.com)

7th February Campaign Against Depleted Uranium, put pressure on the government to abandon this indiscriminate, inhumane and illegal weapon, lobby from 2pm to 4pm, public meeting 7pm to 9pm, Parliament, London SW1, for more details call 0161 273 8293 or see [cadu.org.uk/action](http://cadu.org.uk/action)

10th March The Sixth International @lternative Bookfair in Gent at De Centrale, Kraankindersstraat 2, Gent, Belgium, from 10am-8pm - apart from books, etc., there will be a programme of conferences, workshops, video showings and performances, for info see [www.aboekenbeurs.be](http://www.aboekenbeurs.be) or contact [aboekenbeurs@yahoo.com](mailto:aboekenbeurs@yahoo.com)

17th and 18th March The Twelfth Bay Area Anarchist Bookfair at SF County Fair Building, Golden Gate Park, 9th Avenue & Lincoln Boulevard, San Francisco, USA, from 10am until 6pm (on 17th) and 11am to 5pm (on 18th) - this year back at the old location with all the space needed to walk around, to talk with other visitors, to look, to enjoy the programmes and the cafe, and over two days. Contact The Bookfair Committee, c/o Bound Together Books, 1369 Haight Street, San Francisco, CA 94117

6th to 8th June G8 Summit at Heiligendamm on the north coast of Germany near Rostock, for more see [wombles.org.uk/article200609109.php](http://wombles.org.uk/article200609109.php)

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