

# FREEDOM

80P ANARCHIST NEWS AND VIEWS

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## WHICH 'ANARCHISTS' LIE?

In an English-language exclusive, *Freedom* has uncovered a web of deceit, rivalry and suspicion lying at the heart of the libertarian resistance in Oaxaca, Mexico. One which has reached beyond the borders of a single city to encompass the movements of Europe, North America and Canada.

The story dates back to the turn of the millennium, when a stream of alliances of libertarian-minded organisations were coming together around the banner of fighting widespread government oppression in the state.

CIPO-RFM (Consejo Indigena Popular de Oaxaca – Ricardo Flores Magon), was foremost among those alliances, and built itself a reputation for militancy, with an estimated 500 of its members having been arrested by the year 2000.

Yet by 2003, over a dozen organisations, including the well-known AMZ (Alliance Magonista Zapatista) and CODECI (Committee of Citizen Defence) groups had gone so far as to sign a public severing of all ties to CIPO-RFM.

The group as it stood was denounced in a written statement, accused of having been taken over by an unscrupulous cadre led by Raul Gatica, and its good name misused to launch a fraudulent international fundraising drive while it also took federal funding for its activities.

These activities were said to include

using its ill-gotten gains to try and economically dominate its fellows, attempting to impose an authoritarian control even as repression became ever more savage in the region.

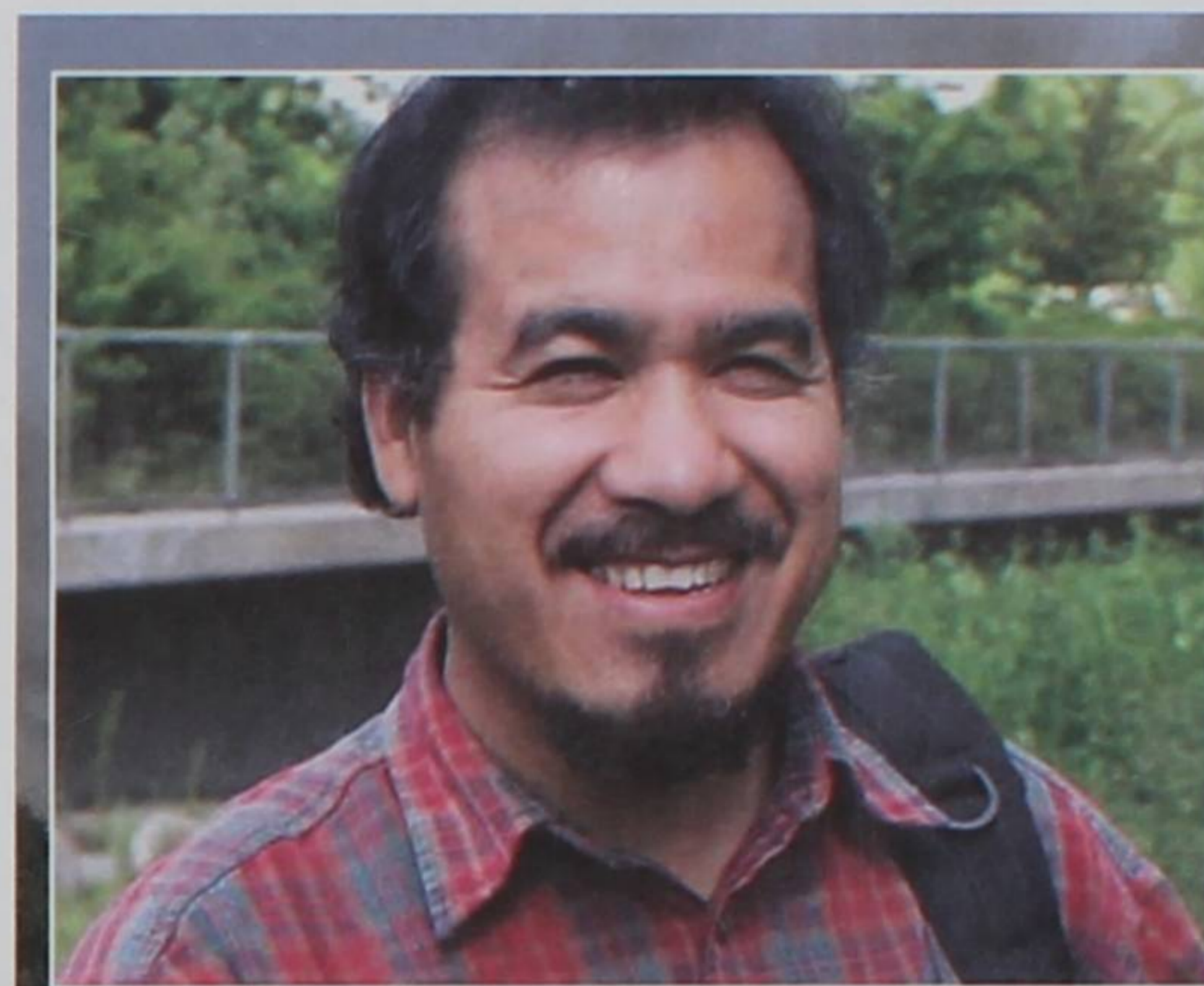
The public statement read: "The leaders of the CIPO-RFM literally tried to buy followers in the communities and organisations in our extended front, using national and foreign economic resources."

While it engaged with the 13 organisations which later rejected it, CIPO-RFM was said to have simply broken agreements it did not like, led by Gatica, who had become a mouthpiece for the organisation and a representative on its foreign fundraising tours.

Gatica, a teacher by trade, joined CIPO-RFM in 1997 and quickly became a major voice in the organisation, being arrested himself several times during this period.

Six years later, in August of 2003, CIPO-RFM was officially disowned by the 13 signatories of the Oaxaca declaration. That same year, Gatica attracted the attention of Amnesty International when his life was allegedly threatened by right-wing paramilitaries, but it wasn't until 2005 that he won asylum in Canada, from where he now operates as part of a Vancouver solidarity chapter.

A French anarchist who was visiting the region brought this story to more public attention when he wrote a warning letter about the organisation



ACCUSED: Raul Gatica and CIPO-RFM are have been accused of pushing their own agenda to the detriment of resistance as Oaxaca burned last year.

earlier this year to the secretariat of anarcho-syndicalist international the IWA.

Talking to *Freedom*, the source said: "I spoke to various anarchist groups in Mexico City (The AMZ, Biblioteca

Social Reconstruir, Hormiga libertarian, OIR from Oaxaca, and others). Frankly those people don't really like each other, but there was one thing on which they agree: CIPO-RFM and Raul Gatica are fake!

"I was in Mexico the very days that the central occupation in Oaxaca was evicted. I saw people coming back from Oaxaca wounded. The repression in Mexico is very hard. All the

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## UPDATE: PUBLIC SECTOR PAY

There was more upheaval in the public sector last month after prison officers walked out in a strike deemed illegal by the courts and Edinburgh council workers took part in a one-day strike, following Glasgow workers' efforts on 10th August.

Thousands of prison officers with the POA (Prison Officers Association) walked out complaining about wages and conditions in a move which surprised the government and forced justice minister Jack Straw to offer negotiations.

Meanwhile Edinburgh council workers shut down 60 nurseries, schools and community centres when they took part in a one-day strike in protest at threatened cuts and redundancies on

24th August. Glasgow workers had won concessions in a length strike earlier that month over pay and grading. But the government has so far avoided concerted cross-sector walkouts despite deeply unpopular pay awards and touted cuts for the year, with strikes and disputes taking place throughout its remit, but in isolated circumstances.

In the NHS, a revised pay offer of staged increases amounting to 2% in England and Wales, 2.5% in Scotland will be decided on by unionists this month, with the Royal College of Nursing expected to announce the result of consultation on 18th September, and Unison due to report soon.

The vote coincides with a new government forecast suggesting that by next spring the NHS will have made a surplus of £983m, which follows a surplus last financial year of £510m. The money will be handed back to the Treasury. Unions have argued that last year's job cuts and staging, this year, of the pay award for NHS staff in England was unnecessary. In 2006 the NHS 'overspent' by

£625m. This led, as *Freedom* extensively reported at the time, to the government forcing through stringent cuts resulting in wards being closed down, thousands of job losses and cuts in training budgets.

In the Royal Mail, CWU union chiefs and Alan Leighton's management team look set to make an announcement as *Freedom* goes to press, following solid strikes and wildcats earlier this year.

Education has been settled for schools and colleges in England, but a campaign of protest looks to be building after the government were accused of reneging on a promise to raise wages if inflation went high enough. In Northern Ireland educators, with the UCU further education union have rejected 2% with a one-off payment of £190. In the civil service, 280,000 Whitehall staff in the Public and Commercial Services Union are being consulted on further strike action after rejecting a 2% deal. And in local government, council workers have been offered 3.4% on the lowest hourly rate and 2.4% for all other workers, which is likely to be linked to job cuts.

## CRICHTON IS SAVED

Following eight months of campaigning, students, unionists and members of the IWW have succeeded in overturning a decision to close Crichton university campus in Dumfries and Galloway.

The decision to stop the closures, which was announced on 20th August, marks a victory for the one of the largest IWW campaigns to date in the UK, which was launched to aid both the community and two of its members who worked in the campus.

Around forty jobs have been saved along with the campus proper, which represents the only facility offering higher education in courses in Arts, Humanities, many of the Social Sciences, Health Studies and Community Learning in a solidly working-class area.

One IWW campaigner said: "Our sustained activity, and that of students and workers at the campus kept this issue in the national spotlight, while pressure was mounted on the Scottish Executive, with the result that

government intervention has now saved the jobs of around 40 staff and the future of the campus is now much more certain."

When the announcement came through in January that Crichton was to close, the economic argument made was that it was running at a deficit of £800,000 per year, and was unsustainable.

However, Glasgow University, who were had a surplus of £2 million this year and the principal, Sir Muir Russell, has awarded himself a large pay increase. Crichton was also not properly funded from the start and lacks some of the facilities that other campuses make money out of.

The campaign used a variety of means to try and pile pressure on the authorities to reverse the decision, including a campaign of concerted phone calls, comedy shows, demonstrations in the town centre, and a widespread campaign to promote solidarity from anarchists around the country.

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# Home and away

**ANTI-WAR:** The first person to be convicted of organising an 'unauthorised' demonstration within 1km of Parliament Square was sentenced to 14 days imprisonment yesterday for refusing to pay his fines. Author and editor Milan Rai was taken to Wandsworth prison, following a Horseferry Magistrates court appearance at court on 21st August.

**CHILD SUPPORT:** The announcement of 450 job cuts at the Child Support Agency (CSA) risks undermining the agency's role in ensuring children are properly looked after, the Public and Commercial Services union (PCS) has warned. The job losses include more than 340 admin posts from offices across the country, including staff working in frontline support, mailing and general administration. About 100 jobs in CSA central directorates, non-frontline staff, also face the axe. Most jobs are to go before the end of the year.

**FIRE BRIGADES:** Following a fire in Newquay over the weekend, the FBU Union has once again highlighted the dangers of cutting back on specialist equipment such as aerial appliances and on staffing, as well as reductions in night-time cover.

FBU general secretary Matt Wrack, said: "We have been concerned this summer about cuts in staffing in Cornwall. It's just over two months since Cornish fire crews came to Truro for a protest march against the cuts."

**POLICE POWERS:** New powers have been given to police to ban people from public areas such as town centres and village greens if they are deemed to be causing a nuisance.

The powers go further than previous measures, allowing police to move people on without recourse to court orders. While the measure is aimed at moving on 'anti-social behaviour' from commercial areas, it could also potentially be used on a more widespread basis.

**WORKPLACE SAFETY:** Statistics for 2006/07 show fatalities are up by 11% on previous year. At the same time, inspections by statutory body the Health and Safety Executive have dropped off dramatically, and fewer than one in five major injuries now result in an investigation.

Internal HSE statistics show hundreds of major injuries each year are not resulting in an investigation as result of 'inadequate resources'. In 2004/05, HSE inspectors gave this reason for failing to investigate a qualifying major injury on 188 occasions. By 2005/06 this happened on 255 occasions. And in 2006/07, HSE inspectors said inadequate resources was the reason they failed to investigate some of the most serious workplace injuries on 307 occasions.

**LONDON UNDERGROUND:** Following a 95% total vote in favour of a strike over health and safety, tube workers on the London underground are set to down tools on 10th September. The workers were until recently employed by Metronet, which went into administration following years of mismanagement by bosses. Chiefs at administrators Ernst & Young have told rail unions the RMT, Unite and the TSSA that all previous agreements between workers and management are now void.

The workers could find themselves back under public control if plans by Ken Livingstone to re-nationalise the company through a buy-out by Transport For London go ahead.

# Around the world

**BANGLADESH:** A nationwide student revolt has ended with the lifting of curfews after over a week of rioting left one dead and over 300 injured.

The clash began on Monday 20th August on Dhaka University campus, when the anger expressed when students at a football game were man-handled by soldiers escalated into a nationwide student revolt.

Despite apologies for the assault from the government, their withdrawal of troops from Dhaka campus and the promise of an official enquiry, unrest spread and became a more general protest against the caretaker government and its long-running State of Emergency.

During clashes demonstrators used bricks, sticks, barricades, fire and petrol and blocked roads and rail tracks – while the cops used teargas shells, batons, water cannon and rubber bullets that resulted in injuries of several hundred people.

**BRUSSELS:** Ryanair has suspended bookings for flights to and from Brussels' Charleroi airport from 12th November.

Ryanair is demanding £1 million compensation from the christian CNE union for a wildcat strike by security staff in June. In addition they are demanding that workers agree to maintain a minimum service during strike action. The union has reacted angrily to these attacks on the right to strike.

A law governing minimum service was recently introduced in neighbour-

ing France and the Belgian CSC union has tried to pre-empt the introduction of a similar law by offering to make pacts with employers, whereby unions would agree to give agreed warnings before strikes and prevent wildcats.

**CANADA:** Quebec provincial police have admitted that three of their officers joined demonstrators undercover during a protest at the North American leaders summit in Montebello, Que.

However, the police force denied allegations its officers were there as agent provocateurs, despite a rock clearly being visible in the hand of one of the agents in a filmed video of the incident.

**CHINA:** At least one villager was killed and dozens injured yesterday in a village in Harbin, Heilongjiang province, after residents clashed with armed police and thugs sent by developers to take over their land, witnesses said.

Clashes broke out in the morning in Yutian village between farmers and more than 100 armed officers after days of a stand-off between the residents and people the witnesses said were hired by the developers, who have been working on a redevelopment plan.

Armed with basic farming tools, residents set up roadblocks at the edge of the village to defend their land.

When it became evident that the men they had hired could not scare away the farmers, the developers – allegedly led by village party boss Li

Peizeng – called in armed police to disperse the crowd.

**GREECE:** On the evening of Saturday 18th August, undercover policemen were after the 25-year-old Tony Onouha, an immigrant from Nigeria, who had been selling CDs in a café in Kalamaria, Thessaloniki.

Onouha recognised those policemen as the ones who had beaten him up, one year ago. He tried to run away and finally fell five metres from the first floor of the café to the street, where he died instantly.

Up to 500 hundred people participated in a protest demonstration, including the anti-racist initiative of Thessaloniki, left and anarchist/antiauthoritarian groups. When the march was in front of the Police Department, demonstrators threw stones at the guarding riot police.

**WEST PAPUA:** Following reports that a notorious alleged war-criminal had been appointed to a senior military role in the country, alongside the rebirth of violent paramilitary groups (*Freedom*, 11th August), Two West Papuan men have been murdered.

Church workers investigating the murders of the two Papuan men in Nabire believe that these killings were examples of 'mysterious killings' and were committed by the Indonesian security forces. The mutilated bodies of both men were dumped on a street in Nabire.

The dead men were Matius Bunai (29 years old), a youth leader of the Maranatha Kingmi Church and civil

servant with the Police department, and Ones Keiya (31 years old), a farmer. Both men were residents of Siriwini neighbourhood in Nabire, were from the Mee tribal group and were members of the Kingmi church.

A Church worker in Nabire accused the police of refusing to investigate the killings of the two men.

**ZIMBABWE:** On 24th August, police in Zimbabwe began going door-to-door arresting members of Women of Zimbabwe Arise (WOZA). Rosemary Siziba, Margaret Ndllovu, Idah Ndebele and Maria Moyo are confirmed to have been taken. At 4.45am they arrived at the gate of Magodonga Mahlangu, broke her gate padlock and proceeded to try to break down the front and back doors. They did not succeed and left taking 'Snowy' the dog with them. They were heard insulting both Mahlangu and Williams who are both leaders.

In Masvingo, Police also searched the homes of two members and on finding nothing promised to return to arrest the members who were not at home.

WOZA and MOZA conducted their annual assembly in rural Matabeleland this past weekend and it is assumed that these arrests and searches are an attempt to obtain information about the congress resolutions.

WOZA, the acronym of Women of Zimbabwe Arise, is an Ndebele word meaning 'come forward'. Now with a countrywide membership of over 35,000 women and men, WOZA was formed in 2003 as a women's civic movement.

# Prison news

John Bowden writes ...

In April of this year, following an allegation by a right-wing American social worker at Castle Huntly open prison that I was in contact with a 'terrorist group', I was returned to a high-security prison and my chances of release on parole after 25 years in jail effectively sabotaged.

So apparently grave were the allegations made by the social worker, Matt Stillman, that the Scottish Prison Service decided to instigate a 'psychological risk assessment' of me in order, they claimed, to ascertain the extent of my sudden and dramatically increased danger to the public.

In fact, a simple two-minute review of the 'terrorist' group's website would have revealed it to be Anarchist Black Cross, a perfectly legitimate and legal prisoners' support group.

Instead a senior forensic psychologist based at Perth Prison, Dawn Harris, was commissioned to write a report on me for the Parole Board and to assess my suitability for a return to an open prison.

The expectation on the part of those who asked Dawn Harris to prepare her report was that, like all compliant prison psychologists and social workers, she would focus her attention on what was considered the pathology of my character and personality, and add some intellectual muscle to Stillman's

ridiculous claims regarding my politics.

Unfortunately for them, Dawn Harris began her assessment of me by investigating Stillman's claim that ABC was a 'terrorist group'. A quick search of the internet, as well as the elicited views of senior police officers, established Stillman's claim to be a complete falsehood.

She then wrote of my relationship with ABC in the following way: "As such, Mr Bowden's connection with the ABC group could be viewed as a legitimate way of him trying to express his frustration about his situation in prison. Although he still has the same political views that he once expressed through violent means within the prison system, he now seems to try and raise awareness of these issues using non-violent strategies, including writing for the organisation ABC."

Harris concluded her report by recommending my immediate return to an open prison. In fact, Harris's report caused embarrassment and discomfort, and I remain in a high-security prison because the governor of Castle Huntly has now decided that a 'risk management group meeting' should take place in order to formulate a strategy of control over me. No date for the meeting has been given.

Of course what really galls the Scottish Prison Service is that the protests and complaints organised on

my behalf by ABC and others, and their claim that Stillman had lied about the nature of ABC's politics have now been validated by someone working at the very heart of the system, supposedly one of their own.

In relation to this matter, Stillman is now the subject of two separate investigations, one by the Social Services Care Commission, and the other by the Scottish Prisons Ombudsman.

**Guantanamo censorship**

A jail manager at HMP Glenochil in Stirlingshire has decreed that any material, written or musical, that is critical of the US detention/torture center on Guantanamo Bay is banned from being circulated within the jail.

Kate Middleton, a senior manager at Glenochil, in a written reply to a prisoner's complaint that a music CD handed in for him by a visitor was being withheld from him on the grounds that it was 'sectarian', said: "Apart from the issue of the disk being a copy, it contains several very political tracks, e.g. a track regarding Guantanamo Bay, which may cause offence to certain people living and working in this establishment." Apart from the obvious question of how many of the Scottish working class prisoners at Glenochil would feel outraged and offended by criticism of the torture regime operating

at Guantanamo, an equally obvious question is why Kate Middleton is being allowed to censor information and criticism, in whatever form, concerning Guantanamo Bay, or indeed any major world issue, within the prison?

When Kate Middleton was challenged by the prisoner to define 'sectarianism' in relation to criticism of Guantanamo Bay, she wrote: "I did use the term sectarian instead of political – wrong word." Obviously wrong politics as well as far as Middleton is concerned, especially when the politics concerned are informed by a concern for human rights.

Criticism of the treatment of prisoners at Guantanamo Bay is now world-wide, and yet within a state institution staffed by people supposedly answerable to the public, an individual such as Kate Middleton has a free, unrestrained hand to ban and suppress any material remotely critical of Guantanamo Bay.

The human right to express and share information and ideas critical of established systems of power, and the abuse of that power, is established in international and UK law, but unfortunately, not here within an institution where a senior manager feels some affinity with her colleagues running Guantanamo Bay.

John Bowden

\*Edited for length from Leeds ABC releases



# News

## Thatcherism accelerates

Richard Griffin and Rob Ray report on the tearing apart of welfare for a new, more unequal state

A new report has found that Britain is a more unequal society now than it was before the welfare state was created.

The welfare state is having to work much harder merely to keep inequality standing still than it did in 1949 when it was established because of the rising gap between rich and poor, according to a report by the London School of Economics (LSE).

A sharp growth in income for the very rich under New Labour, along with a real-terms fall in income for less affluent households has helped pile pressure on the welfare state.

While inequality fell during the 1950s and 1960s, mainly due to full employment rather than benefit payments, the gains that the working classes made started to make during this period were rolled back once Thatcher took power in the '70s.

This trend has actually gathered pace in the last decade. One of the main reasons is the shift from direct taxes such as income tax to indirect ones like VAT. Indirect taxes mean that the rich and poor pay the same.

Labour's policy of targeting certain groups for benefits such as pensioners, while helping these people, means that others have missed out. Targeting is also a return to the notion of a 'deserving poor'. In contrast universal benefits ensure that everyone who needs help gets it.

Professor Glennerster of the LSE, who led the survey, said that the welfare state "has not led to a more equal society than in 1948. Tax and benefits policy is having to work much harder merely to stand still in terms of redistribution".

Put simply inequality has continued to increase under Labour – and evidence shows that societies with large gaps between rich and poor experience more crime and other social problems than more equalitarian countries.

The LSE survey was published at the same time as the National Audit Office revealed that one third of the biggest companies in the UK, like Sainsburys, paid no corporation tax last year, while a further 30% paid less than £10 million each.

Government-sanctioned loopholes such as allowing companies to move cash out of the UK to branches in other countries means that many of the richest corporations are legally able to get away with paying no tax at all. Concerns have already been raised about the lax tax regime for private equity firms.

Boardroom pay and bonuses have continued to massively outstrip inflation, with full-time directors pulling in an average of 37% more than last year – which was itself a 28% improvement on the year before, adding up to a massive 225% in total compared to 2003 figures.

This runaway pay now places the average for a chief executive at £2,875,000, which is more than 11 times the increase in average earnings, and values bosses at 100 times the worth of employees.

Less than 1,400 top directors took home over £1bn between them, with 527 top directors taking the lion's share.

City bonuses too have risen by an average 30% to a record £14bn, up from 10.9bn in 2006.



**CENTRE LOST:** Camberwell Squatted Centre was evicted unexpectedly on 30th August by a van load of High Court bailiffs and two van loads of police, who climbed in to the building at 4.30am and surprised the occupants. They were helped by the Southwark Council scaffolding which gave them a leg up into the place. Residents were given a few hours to move out. One evictee said: "Although we were caught on the hop, we managed to respond practically and calmly, not breaking down or losing it ... Despite our attachment to the building, our investment of hard work and emotion, the feelings that have grown up through the events we have put on and the collective experience we have had keeping the Squat Centre going."

Yet wages across the labour market are growing at the lowest rate in four years, with the public sector being offered below-inflation pay-rises along with much of the private sector this year – just 3.3%

on average according to the ONS.

The figures make a mockery of Gordon Brown's recent assertion that the labour markets should 'show discipline' their in wage demands, as it is not them who

has been pushing inflation up.

After three Labour governments it seems that things keep getting better for the rich, at the cost of the working classes.

## Preview: the bookfair

Ahead of the London Anarchist Bookfair in October, *Freedom* interviewed the organisers to see what can be expected for 2007.

The venue has changed yet again for the UK's biggest anarchist event, moving to a larger building, Queen Mary and Westfield College in the heart of the city's East End.

The price for the venue has also expanded, rising from the £3,000 paid last year to £4,000, but the group are confident that a combination of stallholder payments, advertising and donations will clear the substantial extra cost.

Members of the organising collective said: "The 'problem', and it's a nice one, is that the bookfair is growing every year. At Conway Hall there were 50 stalls, it was 79 at Holloway and will be 85 here. The venue is bigger and better than Holloway, there's more space and it's less claustrophobic. Holloway was too small and the space wasn't there to hang out."

The stalls at the bookfair look set to be mostly the usual suspects, with Freedom Press, AK Press, and various publishing collectives, federations and others – though the reappearance of *Black Flag* magazine may cause some comment – but the organisers have some surprises up their sleeves, as they are aiming to bring a variety of different talks to the event.

They explained: "We should be having Stuart Christie doing a talk on the Spanish Revolution, but this is dependent on personal circumstances. We have just been around to measure up for the stalls now. We are hoping as well to get Bill Fishman, who wrote a book about Jewish East End radicals, top do a talk, but that's still to be confirmed.

"We are trying to get some stuff on the history of the East End struggles, and on the current ones with the Olympics.

"Some of the talks include militant research and radical theory – a libertarian approach to learning, there

will be meetings from the UK Zapatista solidarity group, an organising meeting for Bash The Rich, an anarchist quiz, meetings from the AF, SolFed, the IWW, Haringey Solidarity Group, on radical history, animal rights ... the meetings are coming along slowly, people always wait until the last minute to book them. The London Anarchist Forum will be doing another three talks the last two or three years we have been trying to get discussions going as it's the one time of the year when we're all together."

Alongside the talks, meetings and stalls will be a number of other attractions, including film showings, a cabaret and the launch of the long-awaited print version of the Anarchist FAQ.

The London Anarchist Bookfair will take place on Saturday 27th October from 10am until 7pm at Queen Mary & Westfield College, Mile End Road, London E1. For more information go to [anarchistbookfair.co.uk](http://anarchistbookfair.co.uk)

## Climate camp

After ten days of protest in the middle of the August silly season, the Climate Camp has been packed up. While the mainstream media has made much of the event, comparing it to the anti-roads movement of the '90s – even more, saying it is a better organised version – the organisers have repeatedly made it clear the event was not aimed at disruption, but publicity.

This role was partly thrust upon them. A massive police presence, a court injunction criminalising blockages of their main target and an influx of 'non-combatants' combined, leaving activists with only one realistic course – stay fluffy and push their point of view.

This has had some success. In the press, talk did turn to the expansion of air travel, with columnists in the *Guardian*, *Independent* and even *The Times* reflecting a general groundswell of mainstream support for their anti-airline message.

The political fallout from the camp has seen the conservatives pledge heavy taxes against airline companies and passengers to 'drive consumers to

the trains'.

The Liberals have mooted similar plans while New Labour's claim that economics dictate further expansion has come under fire from journalists now seemingly under orders to investigate.

There have been no moves to curb expansion of Heathrow however, and proposals have remained limited within a framework of regressive taxation – pricing only the less wealthy off the airways.

Climate camp politics emphasised the responsibility of the individual not to travel by air while attacking particularly pollutant companies and government organisations, including BAA, BP, the department of Transport and Sizewell nuclear power station, adding to last year's target of Drax.

The site also used 'grey water' systems and localised renewable power generation to help demonstrate more renewable ways of living, while hosting dozens of workshops designed to improve knowledge about alternatives to fossil fuel overuse.



# News

## A Peruvian disaster

### Freedom contacted Franz Garci'a Uceda of Peruvian anarchist group Qhispikey Llaqta, about the fallout from the earthquake

Everyone knows of the magnitude of the disaster in the south of Peru, from the Ica region and Cañete to the south of Lima, to the mountain range of Huancavelica and Ayacucho's border with Ica.

The earthquake's epicentre was in Pisco. A movement like this had not been felt in Lima since the October earthquake of 1974. The first news came from the bourgeois districts. Of course we don't think this was pre-meditated, but it should be noted that at critical moments it is the people of greater resources who are helped first, not those most in need.

Many of the population had to take refuge in parks and places near open terrain for safety. Towards dawn, the press related the full scale of the catastrophe. Hundreds of houses now just rubbish, numerous dead, wounded, lost.

The morning after the catastrophe, the government appeared, only to walk in arrogance and with contemptuous glances by the corpses, which lay in enormous rows. Hour after hour the number of bodies increased, and the executive authority did nothing unless it hindered.

Such hospitals as still operate in the devastated city cannot house the wounded, as they run the risk of falling in residual quakes, which have happened in their hundreds. In Ica there is no equipment, nor laboratories, nor doctors or sufficient beds.

There are many victims in the countryside who have lost everything, but remain forgotten. Desperation is

driving them to points of support, or left them standing by the side of the road with cardboard signs. The poor are being left to fend for themselves after the disaster.

"We are hungry and cold, we have no ceilings above our heads", reads a sign by inhabitants of the populated centre Juan Velasco Alvarado. Similar signs are everywhere but at least these people have the 'luck' to be near the highway. Others, less lucky, are invisible.

When relatives who were in Lima wanted to travel to their native towns to see their relatives by means of the Soyuz company (which has the monopoly on trips to these zones), they were surprised by the massive costs of passage – hiked by the company. The government have condemned this attitude, but do nothing. In contrast, where starving people have been accused by the press of taking food from the relief trucks without permission, they have cracked down hard.

The population have been asking why the government had not come up with programs to prevent such damage or at least for evacuation. The Ica region is on a major tectonic rift and scientists had already talked to the government about the possible hazards, which was ignored.

To the Peruvian state, it makes more sense to face a catastrophe like this and then call for the 'solidarity of all Peruvians' than it is to take expensive preventative measures. Indeed, once the



misfortune happens, the government can make a plea for lucrative donations and support to rebuild the devastated zones.

Qhispikey Llaqta has called for a united campaign of aid from libertarians for the towns of Lima and Ica. As opposed to the bourgeois policies of

the government who once again do nothing, we propose the construction of a federalist policy assuring the egalitarian distribution of economic resources and as a means of securing social progress that benefits all corners of the towns.

The application of direct democracy,

self-management, the assembly and the coordinated cooperation of all that would compose a collective space can take us to a better life. Nature has shown up the weakness of the capitalist system.

Franz Garci'a Uceda  
fgaruce@yahoo.es

## Notes from the US

Jose Padilla is the Brooklyn-born man whose illegal and essentially inexplicable detention (even the *Miami Herald* has said that the overall case against Padilla is riddled with circumstantial evidence) in a navy brig off the coast of South Carolina in amazingly inhumane conditions for nearly four years without trial has become emblematic of the viciousness of the state in pursuing its 'war on terror'.

Accused of planning to set off a 'dirty bomb' inside the USA with almost the only evidence to support this a form that Padilla filled in to attend an al-Qaeda training camp, he was kept in extreme isolation, tortured, forced to ingest LSD and PCP drugs, brutally interrogated, deliberately disoriented, allowed no bedding and deprived of sleep.

In the words of forensic psychiatrist and assistant professor of clinical psychiatry at Columbia University Dr Angela Hegarty, who witnessed the effective personal destruction of

Padilla: "he has ... paid a tremendous price for his trip to the Middle East ... [His family reported that] here was something not right. He was a different man. [He was in an] absolute state of terror, terror alternating with numbness, largely. It was as though the interrogators were in the room with us.

"He was like – perhaps like a trauma victim who knew that they were going to be sent back to the person who hurt them and that he would ... subsequently pay a price if he revealed what happened. Neuropsychological testing ... was consistent with brain damage. What happened at the brig was essentially the destruction of a human being's mind."

• Meanwhile resistance continues in the army – in the third week of August Iraq Veterans Against the War (IVAW) voted at their annual members' meeting to launch a campaign encouraging troops to refuse to fight. Symbolically, IVAW elected Camilo Mejia, who, in

2003 was the first soldier to refuse to return to the war, chair of its board of directors. Mejia told the meeting that 10,000 soldiers have deserted since the Iraq war began four years ago. Army suicides, according to a current Pentagon report, are at 26-year high. More than 25% of those who took their own lives were in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Iraq Veterans Against the War is also now organising among soldiers on their bases, where they regularly hold resistance meetings.

Iraq Veterans Against the War also plans to increase its work in undermining military recruiting efforts: in September they will launch a 'truth in recruiting' campaign including anti-war outreach in high schools and community colleges, protests at recruiting offices and efforts to 'make friends with a recruiter, where people contact people on duty in order to waste their time and prevent them from signing up others.

Louis Further

## Cajo Brendel dies

David Douglass writes on his fraught political relationship with the writer and communist militant Cajo Brendel, who died in July.

I am deeply saddened that Cajo is dead. We had concluded our debate with the publication of my little pamphlet *All Power To The Imagination*, in which I reprint his ideas and my polemic against his conclusions. Following this we agreed to disagree.

Most anarchists in Europe are aware of only the opening shots of this debate and not the subsequent in-depth riposte and counters.

Other than our public polemic we had a fair bit of private correspondence, and in that Cajo made the sharpest criticism of me of the whole encounter. This was for responding to his ideas as though he was the foe and not simply as a comrade with whom I disagreed. He was right, and afterwards I altered the tone of my

responses and we exchanged some friendly correspondence.

Cajo was most comradely and supportive during the 'last stand' of the miners in 1992/93. Other than the political significance of that attack there was the deep personal traumas it had thrown me and a great many other miners into. I found Cajo's words at this time most helpful.

Cajo was a great thinker and writer and humanitarian. His motivation was unquestionably respect for and love of the working class and its struggle to be free of economic and social oppression, and all that stood in the way of that. That union leaders and through them frequently union structures obstruct our progress to that goal is undoubtedly correct. The extent that this is true and the conclusions which follow from that was the basis of our much publicised polemic.

I shall miss you old comrade, but your words will be rattling my head for the rest of my life.



## Feature

# Abolish capitalism!

Iain McKay explains the strange thinking of economists as the credit crunch scares markets around the world

Starting with problems in the US housing market, the credit crunch has spread across the world. A mere six months ago the chairman of the US Federal Reserve asserted that “the impact on the broader economy and financial markets of the problems in the sub-prime market seems likely to be contained.” The investors in the stock markets have confirmed that he was wrong. Fears of panic are in the air.

The bubble so many denied has burst. In America, for example, the *Washington Post's* main source on the housing market in its bubble years was David Lereah, the chief economist with the National Association of Realtors and the author of the 2005 bestseller, *Why the Housing Boom Will Not Bust and How You Can Profit From It*. Realtors make their money selling, you guessed it, houses and land. But, then again, during the 1990s stock market bubble, the press reported uncritically similar economists who claimed that there was no bubble and stocks would rise forever. Critics were ignored – even after events proved them right.

The reason why economists deny the possibility of bubbles lies in the neo-classical model of the economy, which assumes perfect knowledge and perfect foresight. For stock markets, this ideology goes by the name ‘Efficient Market Hypothesis’ (EMH). There can be no bubbles because, by definition, they cannot exist! Of course, the awkward fact that bubbles have always existed is glossed over, supplemented by claims that *this* boom (unlike the previous ones) is *not* a bubble because of some wonderful new invention (the more ‘experts’ go on about a never-ending boom, the more worried you should get – a crash is on its way!).

According to EMH, information is disseminated equally among all market participants, who hold similar interpretations of that information and can get access to all the credit they need at any time at the same rate. That is, everyone is considered to be identical in terms of what they know, what they can get and what they do with that knowledge and cash. This results in a theory which argues that stock markets accurately price stocks on the basis of their unknown future earnings, i.e. that these identical expectations by identical investors are correct, and so investors are able to correctly predict the future. Yet if everyone held identical opinions then there would be no trading of shares as trading obviously implies *different* opinions on how a stock will perform. Similarly, in reality investors are credit rationed, the rate of borrowing tends to rise as the amount borrowed increases and the borrowing rate normally exceeds the leading rate.

The developer of the theory was honest enough to state that the “consequence of accommodating such aspects of reality are likely to be disastrous in terms of the usefulness of the resulting theory ... The theory is in a shambles.”

In spite of these slight problems, the theory was accepted in the mainstream as an accurate reflection of finance markets. Why? Well, the implications of this theory are deeply political as it suggests that finance markets will never experience bubbles and deep slumps. That this contradicts the well-known history of the stock market was considered unimportant. Unsurprisingly, “as time went on, more and more data turned up which was not consistent with” the theory as the model’s world “is clearly not our world”. It “cannot apply in a world in which investors differ in their expectations, in which the future is uncertain, and in which borrowing is rationed.” It “should never have been given any credibility ... yet instead it became an article of faith for academics in finance, and a common belief in the commercial world of finance.” (Steve Keen, *Debunking Economics*, pages 246 and 234.)

This theory is at the root of the argument that finance markets should be deregulated and as many funds as possible invested in them. While the theory may benefit the minority of share holders who own the bulk of shares and help them pressurise government policy, it is hard to see how it benefits the rest of society.

Alternative, more realistic theories argue that finance markets show systemic instability, result in bad investment as well as reducing the overall level of investment as investors will not fund investments which are not predicted to have a sufficiently high rate of return. All of which has a large and negative impact on the real economy.

Unsurprising, when the going gets tough the capitalists get going – to the state, asking for help. There is a bitter irony hearing calls for welfare for hedge funds from the very same people who usually urge the state get out of the way and let market forces determine everything. Just as ironic, we have the millionaires of the City, who habitually threaten to move offshore unless they can be left alone to maximise profits, now seeking the British taxpayer to help them out.

And the central banks will intervene, under the rhetoric of saving millions of ‘ordinary’ investors and savings. Apparently the institutions of finance capital are too important to fall – unlike, say, coal mining, ship building, and the host of other industries Thatcherism destroyed in its attempt to break working class resistance.

While supporters of capitalism claim



that stock exchanges mobilise funds for business, in fact between 1952 and 1997 about 92% of investment was paid for by firms’ own internal funds and so “the stock market contributes virtually nothing to the financing of outside investment.” Even new stock offerings only accounted for 4% of non-financial corporations capital expenditures.

Worse, “the signals emitted by the stock market are either irrelevant or harmful to real economic activity, and that the stock market itself counts little or nothing as a source of finance. Shareholders ... have no useful role.” (Doug Henwood, *Wall Street*, pages 72 and 292.) Ultimately, investors are not in a position to assess the quality of the assets on a financial institution’s balance sheet. In fact, most people don’t even know what those assets are and this produces serious negative effects on the real economy.

As Henwood notes, there “are serious communication problems between managers and shareholders.” This is because “[e]ven if participants are aware of an upward bias to earnings estimates [of companies], and even if they correct for it, managers would still have an incentive to try to fool the market. If you tell the truth, your accurate estimate will be marked down by a sceptical market. So, it’s

entirely rational for managers to boost profits in the short term, either through accounting gimmickry or by making only investments with quick paybacks.” (page 171)

What now? Will the panic result in a crash? Will there be a depression? That is always likely, particularly if the governments of the world take the rhetoric of the free-market capitalists seriously. Yet the role of the state is much larger than in the 1920s, stabilising aggregate demand. It is more than willing to solve financial woes by throwing (our!) money at them.

But the market is unpredictable and the future is unknown. The current panic may spread and burst the UK housing bubble, impacting badly on consumer spending. Since the end of social Keynesianism in the 1980s, capitalism has been dependent on bubbles, military spending and personal debt to give the appearance of dynamism. Profits have been high and the working class does not seem to be threatening profit margins by obvious resistance at the point of production.

While trying to predict the future is a sure way to make a fool of yourself, particularly as it would amount to the banality of saying there will be a recession or not. The welfare state for

the rich could fail as lots of easy credit has resulted in a level of debts which may become unserviceable while productivity growth has become sluggish.

Another possibility is that capitalism will stagger on, with the panic receding (for the time being) on the back of our money the state hands out to those who like to belittle the welfare state for the many. Either way, as long as the rich are getting richer the ‘experts’ will repeat their usual mantras on how wonderful the economy is doing (this being the standard – but unspoken – definition of what constitutes a good economy) and the folly of ‘socialism’ (for anyone but the ruling class).

Two things are sure. First, the current spate of panic shows how irrational capitalism is. State aid and regulation will not solve the problems it habitually causes, only its abolition will.

Secondly, anarchism will not come about via an economic crisis but only by the direct action of those exploited and oppressed by it. Only by taking investment decisions away from ‘experts’ and placing it in the hands of ordinary people will current generations be able to invest according to their, and future generations’, self-interest.



# Commentary

## FREEDOM

Volume 68 Number 17

### Anarchism

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

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

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

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

Freedom's editors wish to present a broad range of anarchist thought, and as such the views expressed in the paper are those of the individual contributors and not necessarily those of the editorial collective.

### Angel Alley

Having piqued your interest over a possible feature on immigrant detention in the last issue, we've actually run with something entirely different (but no less interesting – thanks Iain!) on the 'credit crunch' which is terrifying markets around the world. Apologies for that, it was due to circumstances beyond our control. Hopefully the feature will appear in a future Freedom.

We will try and be a bit more reliable when it comes to getting Raúl Gatica's reply into the next issue which will simply require translating and shortening (it's a bit long).

Anyway, not a great deal to report from the press, which is still rolling along with the titanic growl of a kitten in a bathtub, as always, we are looking for anyone who fancies helping us out with the mail out for the paper (admittedly not the most exciting job in the world, but it has to be done), helping to raise our profile, to write for the paper, to help out in the bookshop ... so if you've a bit of spare time and you want to help, get in touch at the address below.

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### Next issue

The next issue will be dated 22nd September 2007 and the last day to get copy to us for that issue will be Thursday 13th September. 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.

### Mark Barnsley resigns

As readers may already be aware, I shall no longer be compiling the 'Prison News' section of Freedom. I do not wish to write for or be associated with a publication which would publish an attack on a serving prisoner who is currently already under attack by the state.

I refer to a letter, signed by 'John', which was published some issues back (Freedom, 16th June), but was only recently brought to my attention by a comrade. While a brief response to the letter was given by the editor, I was not given the opportunity to respond myself, and more importantly neither was John Bowden, the prisoner concerned. Nor was Leeds Anarchist Black Cross (ABC), who were accused of spreading misleading information about John Bowden.

While I have not subscribed to Freedom for some time now, I would have expected the opportunity to respond to comment on coverage supplied by me (and not after the issue eventually found its way to my letter-box some weeks after publication – which is how it worked when I *did* subscribe.)

The letter is just the latest salvo in what has been a veritable stalking campaign against John Bowden, possibly state-initiated, but eagerly taken up by a couple of reactionaries with more internet time on their hands than reason in their empty heads.

This campaign began with anonymous e-mails sent to organisations supporting John Bowden, reached its lowest point with the outrageous 'debate' that took place on the forums of the anarcho cyber-toilet 'Libcom', and now finds an outlet on the letters page of Freedom.

These cowardly attacks have had the explicit motive of undermining support for John Bowden, a prisoner who has been at the forefront of the British prison struggle for more than a quarter of a century, at a time when his very release is threatened simply because he refuses to disavow his links to the ABC, which the prison authorities have labelled a 'terrorist' and 'paramilitary' organisation.

In the letter to Freedom, an inflammatory and malicious hatchet-job from *The Dundee Courier* is contrived as source material for once again smearing John Bowden and maligning the ABC. The writer then goes on to say that John Bowden "now seems to be getting a raw deal"! A 'raw deal'?! The man has spent nearly 30 years in jail, including four consecutive years (and many more years besides) in solitary confinement; he has been subject to treatment which certainly amounts to torture. Significantly, John has often been punished for showing solidarity with others. Until recently John Bowden was in open conditions, getting out every other weekend, being prepared at last for release. And if he had renounced his links to the ABC and allowed them to be vilified as 'terrorists', he would still be in that position.

That he chose not to, and as a direct consequence has been ghosted back to a high security jail, is a mark of his courage and integrity, as well as yet another example of the viciousness

of the prison system. In these circumstances, I find it staggering that this shoddy and threadbare attempt to damage support for John Bowden should have been published in Freedom (which has otherwise been very supportive of him.) It is not 'censorship' to refuse to print every effectively anonymous piece of crap received in the post.

The anarchist movement may like to pretend today that when I was inside myself I received universal and enduring support, but I too was subject to similar cowardly smears from the ignorant and the reactionary; people whose instincts are to side with the state against what they perceive as an 'easy target', rather than to show solidarity. The attempts to undermine support for John Bowden have a depressingly familiar smell to them.

John Bowden is a personal friend and comrade of mine, someone I know well, and someone I have fought side by side with in real struggle. His track record as a prison militant is unassailable, and well recognised by his fellow prisoners, by other ex-cons, and by all those who take a genuine interest in prisoner solidarity. He deserves our fullest possible support.

Always in struggle,

Mark Barnsley

Editor's reply: This would be fair enough, except that the way it was phrased was not, in the main, an attack, it was a request for disclosure of information he thought important to the case and criticism of something he thought was a problem.

When the letter went in, my note made it clear why that information was irrelevant to the subject, and we got no further letters of enquiry – in fact, when I sent him my acknowledgement and the text of my covering note, his response was "Thanks. Fair enough."

If on the other hand we had not published it, we would have been (rightly) laid open to accusations of censorship, and as has happened online with the ABC, some people could have taken this as an opportunity to accuse the group of deliberate misinformation.

Which do you think is better, publication followed by a quick dismissal and no further action, or censorship followed by – should the writer choose to pursue it – an acrimonious public debate on our position as an open and honest publication, potentially undermining further prison support work we engage in? I stand by the former. I think it is more effective in heading off these kinds of questions than ignoring them or simply throwing insults around should they be brought up.

The argument has been made that the author of the piece is a stalker/nutter, and thus, like the other occasionally eccentric pieces we receive, should have been binned. This is a bogus argument. The author has been concise and clear as to his position. And like it or not, it has proven to be something which many anarchists, some of them otherwise good comrades, are divided over and saying they're all mad, evil or somehow intrinsically un-anarchist for being so and thus unworthy of reply is pointless and unhelpful.

I have repeatedly made my own position clear. I fully support John

Bowden's release and, while I am an editor of the paper, I will continue to publicise and support his case to the best of my ability. But I will not avoid tackling issues when they are raised, because I do not believe this is the best way to win an argument or stop bad ideas from spreading.

Finally on the right to reply. I have already apologised both directly and now in print for not contacting Mark, John or the ABC direct, and will as a result of this debacle do my best to pass such letters on in future.

However, it should be pointed out that I had no idea that Mark was no longer a subscriber despite writing for the paper. The letter was open for reply at any time once the issue was out, as is every letter we publish. I assumed, having already added a brief cover note which Mark admits was a reasonably accurate assessment, that if there was anything to add then people could do so whenever they wished. As my cover note was evidently not sufficient, I again apologise, but there was no intent to deny anyone the right to talk back.

It should be clear from Freedom's recent past that publishing John's letter was not a decision taken in order to damage Bowden or the campaign supporting him, and I hope this note goes some distance to explaining that I chose to put it in with the intention of heading off problems, not exacerbating them.

I am sad to see Mark go, because his reports on prisons were well-informed and a valuable addition to the paper. If Leeds ABC ever again wish to lend their expertise (which will always be superior to that of the editors, due to their specialisation) to prisoner support writing in Freedom, they will be welcome.

Rob Ray

### Vegetarianism

I appreciated the sentiments expressed by AKW – whoever he or she might be (Freedom, 21st April). Whether Hitler was a vegetarian or not is an irrelevance.

But to equate vegetarianism with anarchism is quite obfuscating, for there are vegetarians (and ecologists) of every political hue.

There are certainly plenty of vegetarians in India, particularly among Hindu fundamentalists, who are ardent Hindutva nationalists/fascists, supporting both neo-liberal capitalism and a nuclear state. And who, of course, deride and denigrate the 'lower' castes and tribal people, as well as Muslims, for their meat-eating (anarcho-primitivists are thus, I assume, not advocates of a Brahmanic lifestyle?)

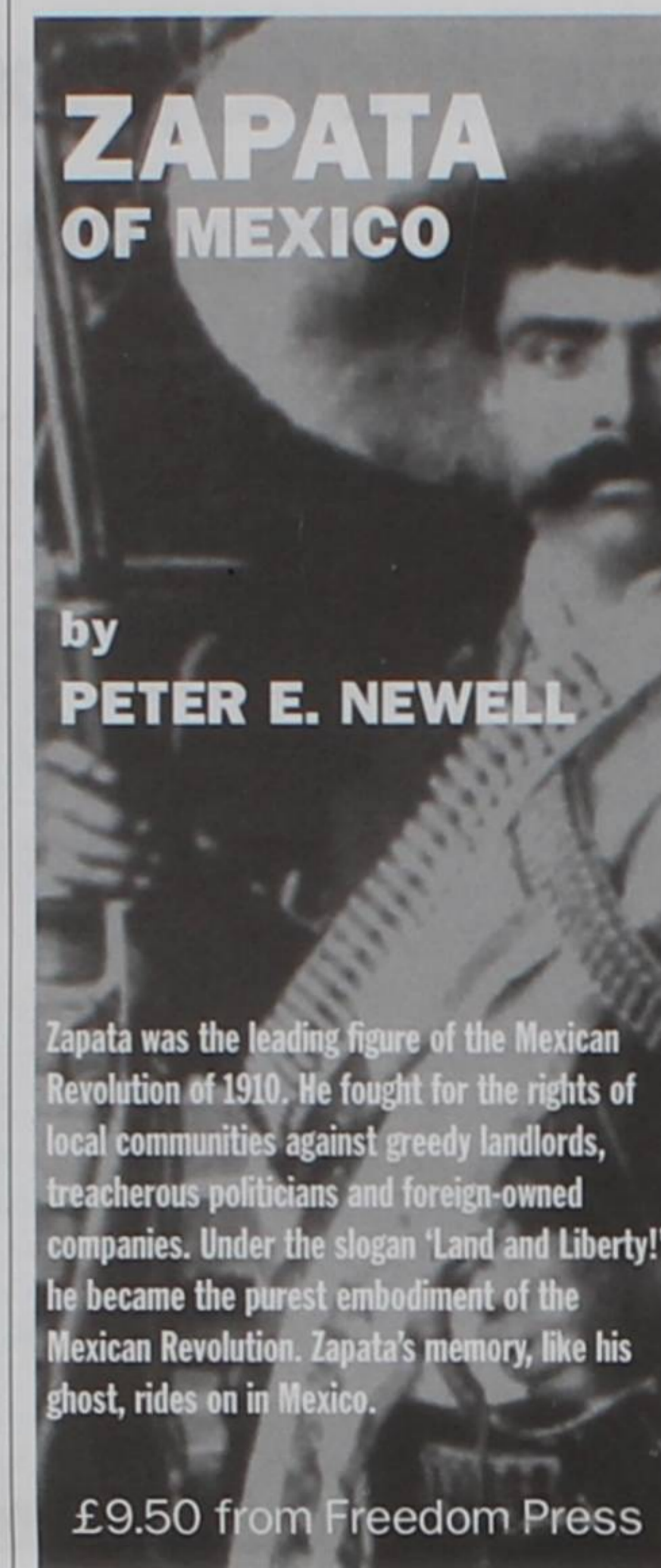
Setting up a dichotomy between 'leftists' (now seemingly a term of abuse among some anarchists) and vegetarians is also quite misleading, for the early advocates of vegetarianism, such as Henry Salt, Edward Carpenter and Elisé Reclus were all 'leftists', their socialist politics being akin to their friend Peter Kropotkin.

Plants, of course, are also sentient beings, so the only true anarchists are perhaps those who, like the medieval sect the Andura, renounce eating – the taking of life – altogether, and strive to become purely spiritual.

The Buddhist ideal of an end to worldly suffering is in fact a denial of organic life as we know it, human life in particular.

Surely as anarchists we should strive to reduce suffering as much as possible, and to do all we can to sustain the earth's life support systems, rather than going round dictating to others, in fundamentalist fashion, what they should or should not eat in order to sustain their own lives.

Brian Morris



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

### WHICH 'ANARCHISTS' LIE?

➡ page 1

members of the above groups told me that they were disgusted by CIPO-RFM and Gatica because he made a putsch inside CIPO-RFM, then he participated with the state, even receiving money from the Federal institutions.

"For the people I met, Gatica is someone clever, he saw that EZLN was a good cash machine in Europe, especially in the libertarian scene. So he quickly understood how the name of Magon would be even more profitable than that of Zapata."

Freedom has contacted Gatica in Vancouver, but his reply arrived as the newspaper went to press and requires translating from the original Spanish. His explanation and defence of CIPO-RFM will feature in our next issue.

Rob Ray

### Quiz answers

1. Because the prefix for Edinburgh, SN, matched with the year, 07, could have been read as 'snot', they were changed to TN07. 'SN07' might have offended some people, apparently.
2. A board game invented by Lizzie J. Magie, a Virginia quaker, which was based on the philosophy that the renting of land and real estate produced an unearned increase in land values that profited a few individuals (landlords) rather than the majority of the people (tenants). It was strikingly similar to 'Monopoly', shown to Parker Brothers by Charles Darrow in 1934.
3. Stephen King. His son, Joseph Hillstrom King, is a writer himself under the pen name Joe Hill.
4. Lina Wertmüller, who directed *Love and Anarchy* among others.



# REVIEW

## Richard Alexander lauds a clear mapping of the classic anarchist thinker Peter Kropotkin in this new book by Brian Morris

**T**he Russian geographer and anarchist theoretician, Peter Kropotkin, is probably one of the best-known anarchists – at least among anarchists that is. During his lifetime he became well-known both for his involvement in radical politics and as a writer on historical and scientific matters. Yet, since his death, he has become practically forgotten amongst both practitioners and the historians of science and geography being, at best, a footnote in the discussions on evolution or ecology.

Brian Morris's text is a straightforward account of Kropotkin's life, taken from existing accounts, and assembled in a chronological manner. He covers every aspect equally, from his aristocratic childhood, his years in Moscow as a military page and his subsequent journeys in the east through Siberia and Manchuria having graduated from the Corps of Pages.

Kropotkin's experiences in the east, combined with his time spent with the peasants on the family estates convinced him that some form of social change was necessary. Following his meetings with revolutionaries and French exiled former Communards in Switzerland he returned to Russia and joined the Chaikovsky Circle, which resulted a couple of years later with his first term of imprisonment in 1874.

Following his escape from the prison he fled westwards and ended up in Switzerland where he became active in revolutionary anarchist circles, which soon got him expelled in 1882. Moving to France secured him a brief respite but he was tried and imprisoned for anarchist activities a year later in Lyons.

On his release he moved to England, helping to found and run Freedom Press, and took part in the general political and intellectual life of the country, earning his living from his (non-political) writings, and undertaking lecture tours overseas.

His association with Freedom ended during the First World War when Kropotkin, much to the disgust and dismay of other anarchists, (not to mention in direct contradiction to everything he had advocated before) whole-heartedly sided with the allies in their war with Germany. Events in Russia in 1917 gave him the chance to return to his homeland, where he once again advocated the continuation of the war – despite what the soldiers and peasants were actually doing.

He opposed the statist, centralist and oppressive nature of the Bolshevik regime when it was instituted but still managed to find time to have a chat with Lenin.

In his final years he was visited by those anarchists who were still at liberty in Russia. His funeral in 1921 was the last major gathering of anarchists – with many attendees being allowed out of prison for a day to attend.

The book is very much an introductory text and whilst it covers Kropotkin's ideas, it is primarily about his life. Being such an eventful life the book whizzes along and makes for an easy but entertaining and informative read. The only annoying feature are the citations. For some reason the author (or publisher) has chosen to refer to some texts by a two letter code, others by author and some by title.

If the book is ever re-printed one



Peter Kropotkin at his desk

hopes that a more consistent and orthodox method is employed. The bibliography covers the most obvious texts (but I notice that Kropotkin's *The Terror in Russia* issued by the Parliamentary Russian Committee in 1909, whilst mentioned in the text, is missing from the bibliography, and *Modern Science and Anarchism* published by Freedom Press in 1912 is

also missing.

Perhaps it is one of the collections of essays mentioned in the bibliography?

Apart from that minor point the book does exactly what one would expect and anyone who needs a brief guide to Kropotkin's life will find this book more than adequate for the job. The price is on a par with similar publications from small presses and

we can thank Genge Press for making the text available to the public in an attractive volume and perhaps hope they will make enough sales to consider publishing similar texts in future.

Brian Morris, *The Anarchist Geographer: An Introduction to the life of Peter Kropotkin*, published by Genge Press, ISBN 978-0-9549043-3-3, £8.00 / 12.00 Euros.

## MAGAZINES

### Aufheben

No. 15, £3.50

Only three lengthy articles in this issue of the Brighton based autonomist influenced magazine. The first, a lengthy analysis of the situation in the Middle East, which makes many sage comments and whose only drawback is that it was written nearly a year ago and so is in need of updating. The second is a rumination by the *Aufheben* crew on their involvement in various struggles in the neck of the woods, with some characterisation of the various relationships 'activists' have with wider struggles. The final piece is not, thankfully, another debate with 'Theorie Communiste', but a review of Moishe Postone's book *Time, Labour and Social Domination*, which was first published in 1996 to almost universal disdain.

Ten years later and after 21 pages of Marxology, *Aufheben* can thoroughly recommend continuing with leaving this one well alone.

### Notes from the Borderland

No. 8, £3.50

More digging around in places most other publications would rather stay

clear of. This one kicks off with an article on the Tony Lecomber 'murder plot', and other items on the far-right include an analysis of the 'Redwatch' website and an update on the Soho nail-bomber. Smaller items include a Special Branch contract, Eliza Bulling-Manner, the 'War on Terror', some political blogs, an obituary of Chris Tame, and a NftB's retrospective.

There's also some book reviews covering Latin America, USA and Hugo Chavez, Joe Owens autobiography, a look at some conspiracy cult DVDs, plus other bits and pieces.

### Organise

No. 68, Summer 2007, £1.50

The regular magazine of the Anarchist Federation has made its appearance. Interesting collection of articles including ones on: Albert Camus, the Magon brothers, uniforms, anarchism in Armenia, community surveillance and conformity, recent events indicative of a possible upturn in the class struggle, and a round up of what the AF did in 2006.

There's some reviews of local history pamphlets and a couple of books, a

'letter to the editors' about slavery, a biographical piece about Georg Elser, who attempted to assassinate Adolf Hitler, and a few other bits and pieces.

### Principia Dialectica

No. 2, Autumn/ Winter 2006, £4.50

Sub-titled 'Enemies of Utopia for the sake of its realisation'. The bastard off-spring off pro-situationists, eco-activists and libertarian marxists makes for a well-produced assemblage of articles and art-works.

Main features include a lengthy analysis of the theory of contemporary capitalism by Moishe Postone (a revisioning of marxism); more revisionism regarding 'the class struggle'; an analysis of recent crisis and struggles in France; some thoughts on science; a critique of nuclear power; a very lengthy appreciation of some artist trying to combine William Morris wallpaper designs with Russian constructivism; a couple of pieces on contemporary Russia and China; an item on the legal murder of two young gay Iranians; other items on libraries, US foreign policy, book reviews and

Steve Ash on totalisation and the Situationists.

Throughout there are pithy cartoons and 'Critical fragments'. Plenty to stimulate the intellect, if only the critical faculties.

### Turbulence

Free (also available on-line and in journal format)

Although this has a newspaper format it is rather a selection of essays by participants in the 'Movement of Movements', around the theme of 'What would it mean to win?' with each essay taking up a double page spread.

Among the items are two about workers organising (one of which is from IWW members); we get one on fantasy and collective spectacles; another on the situation in Oaxaca, Mexico; one on 'common spaces' and another on cellular forms and the commons; one on climate change; one on guaranteed incomes and another on local economic forms; one on 'directional demands'; one on feminism; one on the politics of sadness and one on recognising 'real'

victories; and the final one is on using complexity theory as a way of understanding capitalism.) An interesting melange of articles, directed more at 'the multitude' than 'the class'.

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## A Sideways Look

In late August, a survey for the *Guardian* found that directors' pay had increased by 37% over the previous year. This was accompanied by much hand wringing about how unequal Britain is becoming as a society. Very few of the liberal commentariat thought of anything other than regulation to cap bosses pay as a solution. There is perhaps a more obvious way for the inequalities to be ironed out, and one that there's no shortage of at the moment, namely workers putting in pay claims and fighting for them.

This summer has seen strikes over pay at Royal Mail, an unlawful strike by prison officers, and stalled negotiations across the public sector in health, education and local government. While the unions appear hell-bent on sabotaging many of these, there have also been local walkouts such as the one by Glasgow social care workers, who succeeded in getting regarded and thus winning more pay. There were even some strikes in the private sector, at Coca Cola, Grampian Foods, Heinz and Highland airports. Most of the disputes were about pay offers below the inflation rate.

The headline inflation rates are part of the problem, though. The government use two, the consumer price index and the retail price index. For July this year, they were running at 1.9% and 3.8% respectively. Neither of them feel right to me. My bills have mainly gone up this year, by a lot more than 3.8%. Council tax went up by 4.2% on average; train and bus fares have gone up much more. Petrol's cheaper than last year, but still pushing a pound a litre. A drinkable bottle of wine seems to cost a fortune. Postage rates have shot up. Clothes are allegedly cheaper, but there's no quality control on the RPI. Mortgages have gone up, and for those few of us left renting from a 'social' landlord, the rent is pegged to go up by an above-inflation rate until at least 2010.

Every time we get a sub-inflation pay rise, we get a pay cut. Those at the top play by different rules, of course. In many private companies, this is the norm. For the five years I worked for my last employer, some of my colleagues never got a pay rise. They relied each year on a variable bonus, which the employer didn't have to pay any pension contributions on, and of course, could be reduced or withdrawn entirely if the employer wanted to. At my current employer, some of us have it in our terms and conditions that we get a pay rise. The others will suffer a real term pay cut. (Though it remains to be seen whether the sum I get will just be a slightly smaller real term pay cut.)

As skilled jobs leave this country to be replaced by low paid retail and service jobs, workers' pay is falling behind. That gap can be narrowed – time for a pay rise!

Svartfrosk

## OBITUARIES

### Brian Richardson

Brian Richardson, who died on 26th August 2007 at the age of 80, discovered the anarchist press in the late 1940s and was an occasional contributor to *Freedom* over many years, especially on topics relating to travelling people and their victimisation by the authorities. He was active in their support and built up considerable expertise on their civil rights. In particular, he was aware of the way in which many travellers sought to acquire a patch of land in the anticipation that they could eventually get planning consent, but were usually frustrated.

He was one of those who found inspiration from the efforts of another architect, Walter Segal, to devise simple and economical self-build techniques within the capacity of amateur carpenters. First in Kent, and then in Hertfordshire, Brian and Maureen inspired others to follow the self-build ideology, and continually supported the right of travelling people to build on their own land. He will be missed greatly.

Colin Ward

### Bob Green

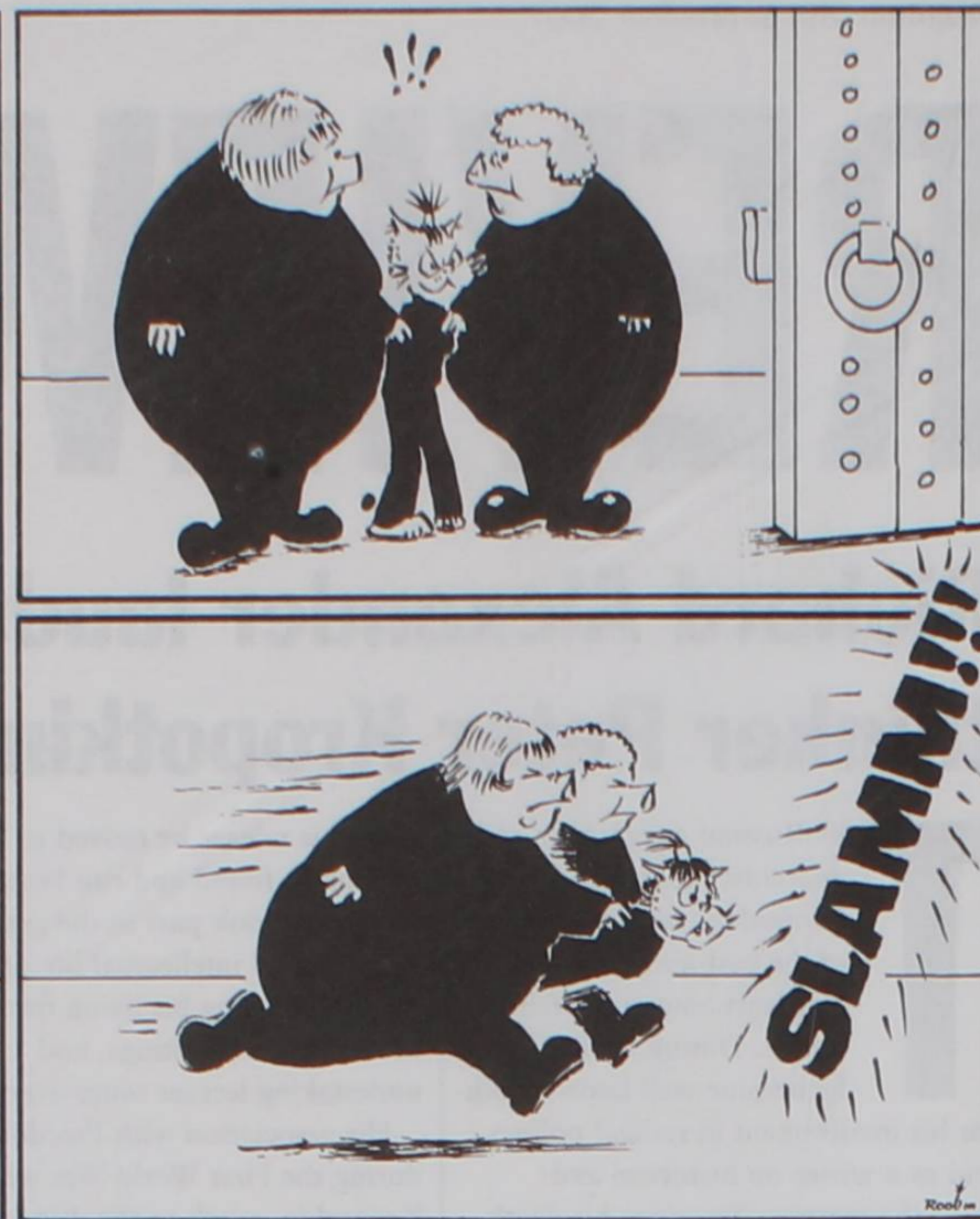
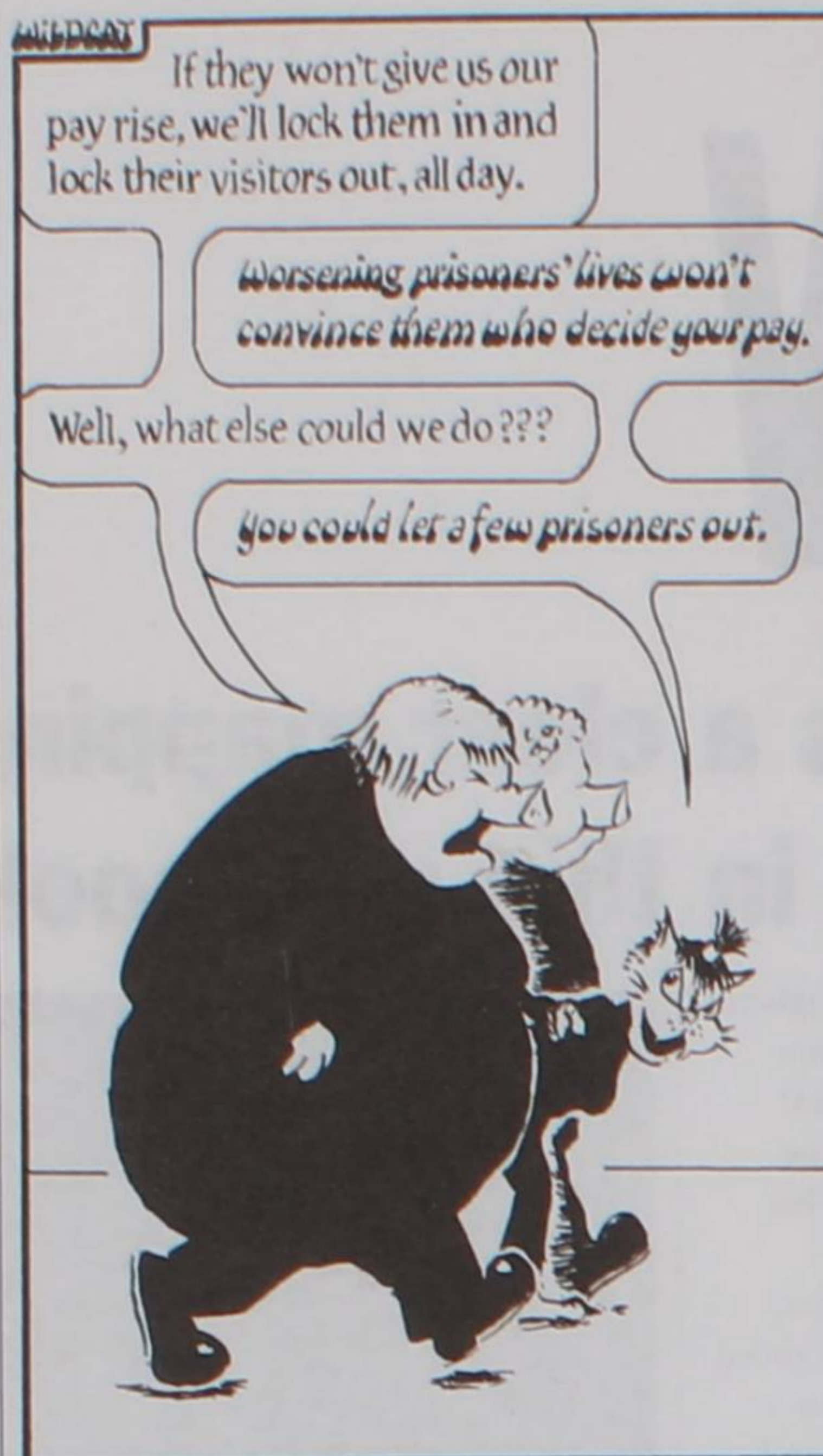
Older readers will remember Bob Green, who was active in the Malatesta Club – the anarchist social club which flourished in London in the 1950s, and gave occasional lectures to the London Anarchist Group. An anarchist, he preferred to use his energies for single-issue libertarian causes, for instance STOPP, the Society of Teachers Opposed to Physical Punishment, campaigning against the custom of beating children, which was practised in British schools, sometimes with great enthusiasm, until 1990.

After his release from conscription, Bob studied psychology at Hull University with the aid of an army resettlement grant, then circulated American Universities with a letter requesting a free scholarship for further study, and was awarded one by the University of Indiana. A lecturer at University College London, he was appointed Professor of Psychology at the Open University when it was founded in 1971. At the same time he started a market research business, which became very lucrative. We had not heard from him for some time, but evidently he did not forget us. *Freedom Press* is grateful to be among the voluntary libertarian causes remembered in his will.

Donald Room

### Imagine if...

David Cameron sneered, while remaining careful not to let the cucumbers fall



from his eyes. He didn't want to look puffy.

"Gordon's just a publicity hound. Oh look everyone, I'm nice to Nelson Mandela!" He turned his hand over so his manicurist could do his nails. "Style and no substance that man, I mean have you heard his justifications for Heathrow expansion? Rubbish. What we need is an air-miles tax."

He felt the manicurist stop and stare at him. He grinned, careful not to crack his facial mask "Good isn't it, gets the poor people off the planes and still makes us seem like liberal environmentalists. I thought I'd follow it up with a tirade against immigrants, you know, something long the lines of them putting too much pressure on the welfare system. That'll put Brown on the defensive."

The manicurist started up again. Cameron pondered a little more. "That might not explain all the inflation and necessity for low wage rises away though ..."

The manicurist stopped again, clearly panicking slightly. David clicked his fingers, gently because the polish was drying. "I know, we can blame the breakdown of the family! Something along the lines of saying we're falling into anarchy and it's all Labour's fault for not forcing black dads to stay with their partners." The manicurist sighed in relief, this sounded more like Tory territory.

David Davis, who was in the next seat having his perma-tan shined, grunted in appreciation. "Once a Tory always a Tory, eh David. I knew you were one of the good guys, whatever the party faithful might have said about the rebranding."

"Thanks David Davis" said David, "Gordon Brown's Labour may be the same feet in new shoes, but it still takes a Tory to really understand the meaning of the word 'bastard'."

## Listings

**11th September** Disarm Desi, a day of actions against the Defence Systems and Equipment International (DSEI), the arms sales expo held every other year at East London's ExCel Centre, see dsei.org for more.

**13th September** Books for Amnesty, all books £1 at Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, Holborn, London WC1, contact books@amnesty.org.uk or call 07771888825

**15th September** Trees for Cities Tree-Athlon at Battersea Park, London, see tree-athlon.org

**19th to 24th September** Gatwick area No Borders Camp, a space to share information, skills, knowledge and experiences, and to plan actions together against the system of border controls, see <http://noborders.org.uk>

**23rd September** Car Free Day in Amsterdam, see iamsterdam.com

**23rd September** Benefit comedy gig to raise money to help pay court costs to get the Serious Fraud Office to re-open the investigation into bribery by BAE Systems – with Mark Thomas, Russell Brand, Omid Djalili, Simon Amstell and others, at Hammersmith Apollo, London, see markthomas.info

**1st October** Faslane 365 Big Blockade, starts at 6.30pm at the north and south gates of Faslane naval base, for details see faslane365.org or call 0845 4588365

**2nd October** SPES Book sale from 11am to 5pm at Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, Holborn, London WC1, email spesupdate@yahoo.co.uk

**7th October** South Place Ethical Society talk on Shelley and Freethought by James Herrick at 11am, Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, Holborn, London WC1, see ethicalsoc.org.uk, or contact 020 7242 8034 or spesupdate@yahoo.co.uk for full programme

**13th October** Keep Space for Peace protest at Menwith Hill, near Harrogate, North Yorkshire from 12 noon until around 4pm, see caab.org.uk or call 01423 884076

**27th October** Anarchist Bookfair 2007 at Queen Mary & Westfield College, Mile End Road, London E1, from 10am to 7pm, with books, speakers, workshops, meetings, films, creche, exhibitions, food, and so much more, see anarchistbookfair.org

**3rd November** 'Bash the Rich!' march on David Cameron's house in Notting Hill, London, see londonclasswar.org for details.

### Anarchist Bookfair 2007

Saturday 27 October 10-7  
Queen Mary & Westfield College  
Mile End Road, London E1

Books, speakers, meetings, workshops, films, exhibitions, food, creche and much more...

[www.anarchistbookfair.org](http://www.anarchistbookfair.org)



### The quiz

- Why did Edinburgh car number-plates change in 2007?
- What was 'The Landlord's Game' and what happened to it?
- Which bestselling author named his son after IWW martyr Joe Hill?
- Which Oscar-nominated Italian film director has made several films with anarchist characters and themes of socio-economic or political conflict?

Answers on page 6

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