

## IS RENDITION REALLY DEAD?

### Registration links raise fears in Scotland

Campaigners have voiced concerns after it emerged that rendition-linked aircraft are still landing in a Scottish airport as a refuelling point from the US.

Members of the Scotland Against Criminalising Communities group (SACC), were tipped off that a plane with the registration number N478GS was due to arrive in Glasgow in late February.

The plane has been marked by Amnesty International as one of the aircraft most heavily involved with the process of 'extraordinary rendition' – where terror suspects are transported out of the US to other countries for torture to avoid the Geneva conventions.

While N478GS was not photographed by the group on that occasion, the plane has been photographed recently, landing at Glasgow airport in December last year (see picture). Research by the Institute for Applied Autonomy also confirms the plane did fly from the US to Glasgow on 25th February, where it then disappeared from flight records for four days until showing up again leaving the airport, heading to Bangor International in the US.

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Photograph: Charlie Sargent

RENDITION? N478GS lands at Glasgow airport on 12th December 2007. The plane is now registered to L-3 Flight International, an aviation services company owned by L-3 Communications. L-3 is one of the largest military contraction groups in the world – and holder of a \$426.5 million contract for private intelligence gathering in Iraq.

## GRIFFIN IS GAGGED

Former SAS member and anti-war activist Ben Griffin has been banned from revealing further details about the British government's involvement in 'extraordinary rendition'.

In his last public address before the gagging order came into force, Griffin told an anti-war rally, "I will be continuing to collect evidence and opinion on British involvement in extraordinary rendition, torture and secret detentions. I am carrying on regardless."

At the Stop the War Coalition press conference in London, Griffin said UK special forces had operated within a joint US-UK taskforce that had been responsible for the detention of "hundreds if not thousands of individuals in Afghanistan and Iraq". He said "I have no doubt in my mind

that non-combatants I personally detained were handed over to the Americans and subsequently tortured."

"We were under no illusion as to what awaited the individuals handed over by us," he said in a statement issued by the group.

Griffin quit the elite Special Air Service (SAS) in protest at what he said were US abuses in Iraq.

Griffin has become a major spokesperson or Stop The War as one of the most high-profile people to have quit the army in protest against its handling.

Foreign Minister David Miliband has recently confirmed that at least two US ghost prisoners have been rendered through the British territory Diego Garcia, contradicting earlier denials.

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## NEWS

## IN BRIEF

**ACAS:** Staff at government strike-middleman group Acas have voted to go on strike in a row over pay. Members of the Public and Commercial Services union (PCS) voted by almost two to one for a rolling programme of one-hour strikes.

Union members say the service failed to make a pay offer last year.

Unions warn that failure to resolve its own workplace dispute could embarrass the government.

**COMMUNITY:** Social landlords are being asked to take a direct hand in enforcing the law by Communities Secretary Hazel Blears. Housing Associations will be told to share information on anti-social behaviour and any other criminal activity taking place in areas they maintain. Some ideas for the new role have included associations monitoring estates with CCTV and informing on undesirables to the police and working with police to disperse young people if they congregate in public spaces.

**ENERGY:** The Government has given its tacit backing to a substantial increase in the share of UK electricity generated from nuclear power to 30% or more.

Senior officials in the power industry have told *The Times* newspaper that John Hutton, the Secretary of State for Business, Enterprise and Regulatory Reform, has expressed support privately for an increase in electricity generation through nuclear power from 18% of the present mix to 30 or 35% in the long term.

**HEALTH:** The Chief Executive at the centre of the C Diff outbreak at Stoke Mandeville Hospital in 2006, in which 33 people died, is back working in the NHS as a management consultant on a short term contract worth £52,000 to draw up plans to close the maternity and children's services at Epsom Hospital in Surrey.

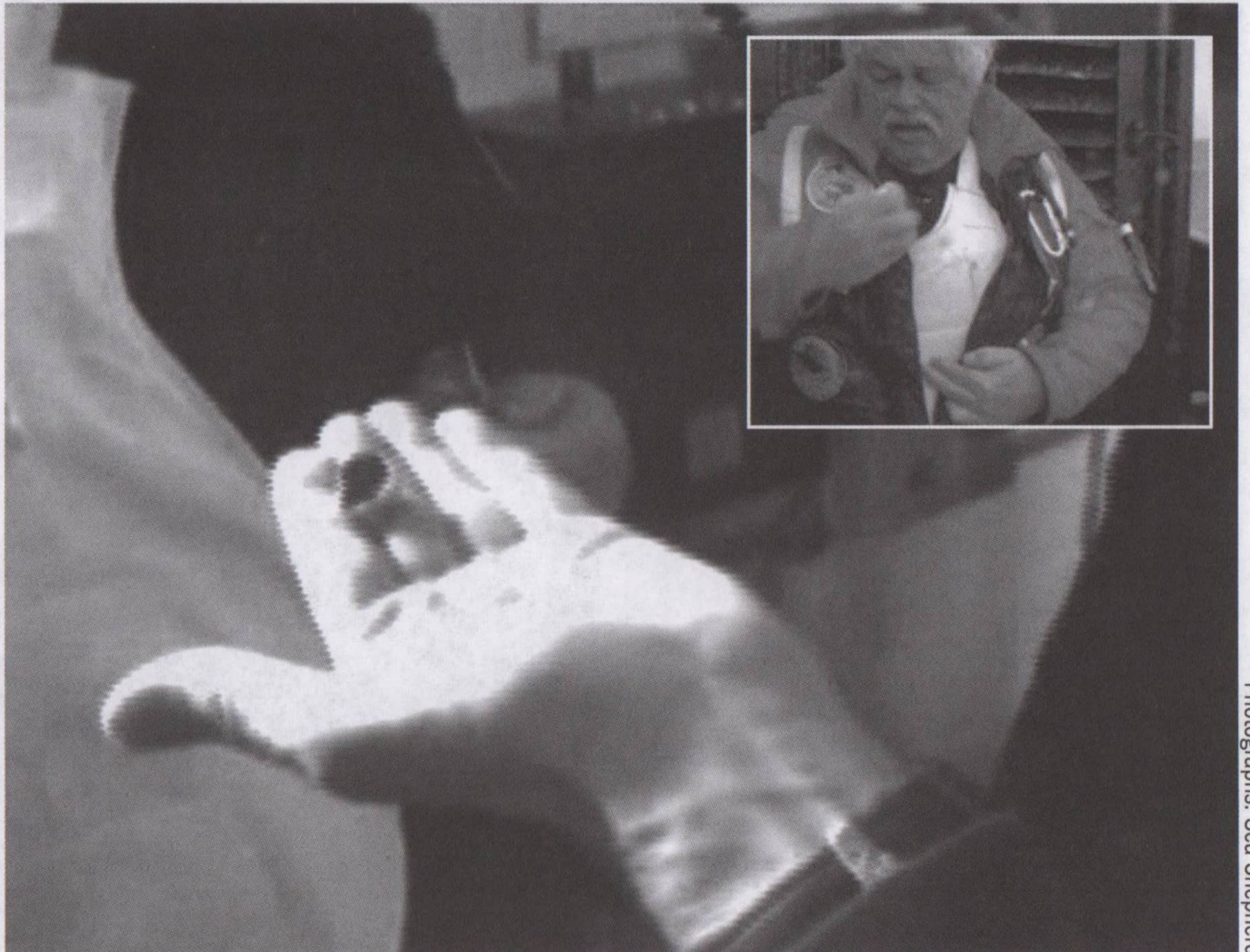
Ruth Harrison was the senior manager at Stoke Mandeville at the time of the C Diff scandal. She left her £130,000 post in 2006 with a £140,000 payoff just before the publication of a damning Healthcare Commission report.

**IMMIGRATION:** Major changes to the nature of immigration are now underway, as a new points-based visa system comes into force, based on the controversial Australian model.

The government is also launching a new UK Border Agency. Further measures will include the introduction of a system to count people in and out of the UK, and ID cards for foreign nationals.

**REGULATION:** Philip Davies, director of markets at Ofgem, the energy industry watchdog and described as a "thorn in the side" of the big six power supply companies, has jumped ship to the private sector after Centrica reportedly offered to nearly double his salary.

## LENS CAP CREW ON ANTI-WHALING SHIP ATTACKED



Photographs: Sea Shepherd

A clash between the crew of the Sea Shepherd vessel *Steve Irwin*, which is in the Southern Ocean to fight the ongoing Japanese whaling slaughter near the Antarctic, turned violent when the Japanese Coast Guard began to throw flash grenades at its crew. Captain Paul Watson of the Sea Shepherd ship was struck by a bullet in the chest. Fortunately, the bullet was stopped by his Kevlar vest (inset, when he was shot, and main picture, just after it had been dug out of his vest).

## Shelter staff on strike

Staff at homeless charity Shelter took strike action on 5th and 10th March in response to the attacks on terms and conditions that have been organised by senior management.

The industrial action, voted for by 72% of those union members balloted, was well supported by union and non-union members alike with picket lines outside offices in London, Birmingham, Glasgow, Manchester, Sheffield and Leeds.

The strike was called in protest at senior management's plans to increase the working week by 2.5 hours without any corresponding increase in pay; this would amount to Shelter staff working around three unpaid weeks a year.

Management has also taken the decision to abolish incremental pay increases while attacking salary protection for redeployed staff. The cuts could have the effect in many cases of Shelter staff being unable to meet the demands of juggling increasing housing costs with inflation in fuel and general food stuffs. This is in contrast with the pay of senior management, who refuse to answer allegations that they awarded themselves a pay rise before announcing the planned cuts.

The dispute, which has simmered since the summer of 2007, has been fuelled by the way Shelter's management have dealt with

staff, offering workers a choice of signing the new contracts or facing the sack and re-employment on lesser contracts. Despite the threat of redundancy many staff have refused to be intimidated, with as many as 100% of staff at some offices refusing to bow to management's demands.

The attacks have come under the pretext of winning funding from the government's Legal Services Commission (LSC). However even if Shelter were to cut wages across the service there would be no guarantee of LSC funding.

Chief Executive of Shelter, Adam Sampson, appears to have underestimated the hostility his plans have stirred up amongst employees. Shelter has already lost some of its most committed and experienced staff and insiders say more could follow if management doesn't reconsider.

Reports from one picket line also suggested that management contacted local police to complain of a picket line 'blocking the pavement'. These attempts to undermine the determination of Shelter workers is in stark contrast to the ideals and principles of those who took to the picket lines, who can see the detrimental effect that the actions of Shelter's senior management will have on both staff and the clients they serve.



# Conferences shock in Sussex

## War and privatisation conferences gear up

Crushing freedom fighters and privatising the world's health services are just two of the startling items on the agenda at a high-level conference centre in Sussex over the next few weeks. The venue is Wilton Park (pictured above) at Wiston, near Steyning, which describes itself as "one of the world's leading centres for the discussion of international issues" and is run by the Foreign Office.

Its 904th conference, scheduled for Thursday 13th March to Sunday 16th March, goes under the title of 'Meeting the Challenges of Counter-Insurgency and Stabilisation Operations: Strategic Issues and Options'.

Among the top-rank line-up of speakers is Juan Carlos Pinzon, Vice Minister of Defence for Strategy and Planning in the right-wing Colombian government, well known for its

use of death squads to crush opposition groups. He will be giving a talk on 'Colombia and Counter-Insurgency: Strategy, Accomplishments and Way Forward'.

There is also a section on National Security Interests and 'Irregular Operations', to be addressed by Thomas Mahnken, the USA's Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defence for Policy Planning and Major General Robert Ranquet, the French Deputy Director of Strategic Affairs at the Ministry of Defence in Paris.

A few weeks later, from Wednesday 9th to Friday 11th April, the 909th Wilton Park Conference is being. It goes under the title of 'Public-Private Investment Partnerships in Health Systems Strengthening'. The agenda preview explains: "The conference will develop the concept of what we are calling public-private investment partnerships (PPIPs) that go beyond private investment in hospital buildings and maintenance, such as that characterised by Private Finance Initiatives (PFIs), or the contracting out of

selected services to the private sector, which is common in many countries."

Dave Phillips of *The Porkbolter*, a campaigning newsletter and website based in nearby Worthing, commented: "Wilton Park is clearly promoting a hard-core and extreme agenda of global privatisation backed with ruthless military repression.

"I think local people will be shocked to hear that a member of a notorious right-wing Latin American government is coming to Sussex to boast about the use of death squads against his regime's opponents. And the conference on privatising healthcare is simply sickening. It is particularly insulting for a county which has recently demonstrated in such numbers for the preservation of its vital NHS services. Public pressure must be brought to bear to ensure that Wilton Park is closed down."

Details of the two conferences are available on request from [porkbolter@eco-action.org](mailto:porkbolter@eco-action.org) or from [porkbolter@hushmail.com](mailto:porkbolter@hushmail.com).

## Is rendition really dead?

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The Gulfstream IV jet first came to international attention in 2006 when researchers for the EU's "temporary committee on the alleged use of European countries by the CIA for the transport and illegal detention of prisoners" found it was owned by a CIA shell company.

According to the European Parliament report, "aircraft N478GS and N475LC belong to the company Centurion Aviation Services. This company is relevant, within the framework of CIA flights, as a beneficiary of the so-called 'landing permits' in the US military bases all over the world. The Civil Aircraft Landing Permit (CALP) authorises aircraft to land on US military bases worldwide. These companies are generally private.

"According to flight logs, aircraft N475LC and N478GS made the most frequent stopovers in Shannon airport, Ireland (76 stopovers in total)."

Richard, from SACC, said: "What we know is that aircraft which have been previously flagged by Amnesty and are still registered to known CIA front companies are showing up at Scottish airports.

"We were notified of an aircraft coming in to Glasgow airport, which we couldn't quite get to for photographing, and on other occasions they go to Shannon airport (in Ireland) or an English airport and then they disappear, showing up later in Glasgow to refuel. We don't know where they have gone, or what they have been doing. There is a

wider question here, as to whether they are still involved in rendition, whether it's still going on. Various groups had been telling us that rendition was being run down because of all the scrutiny, but we don't know.

"We have seen three plane registrations, fingered for rendition by Amnesty and other groups, show up in the last six months in Glasgow alone, but we don't know how many are coming in elsewhere.

"We are setting up a wider alert so next time we can get people down quickly if we find out a rendition-linked plane is on its way."

The observation group, provisionally called the CIAwatch Network, can be contacted by email at [richard@sacc.org.uk](mailto:richard@sacc.org.uk).

## PUBLIC SECTOR

# Public sector tensions boil over

## Environment, Transport, Civil Service workers in dispute

Workforces across the public sector have been taking part in an upsurge of industrial action across the UK.

The PCS have condemned the announcement of another round of job cuts in the civil service, after the government announced that a further 12,000 jobs are to go.

The closure of 200 offices is part of the government's drive to privatise more state functions, and adds to 30,000 jobs already cut away in the Department for Work and Pensions.

Access and waiting times for benefits have suffered as a result of the cuts implemented so far, with some parts of the UK now seeing food parcels being handed out to avoid starvation.

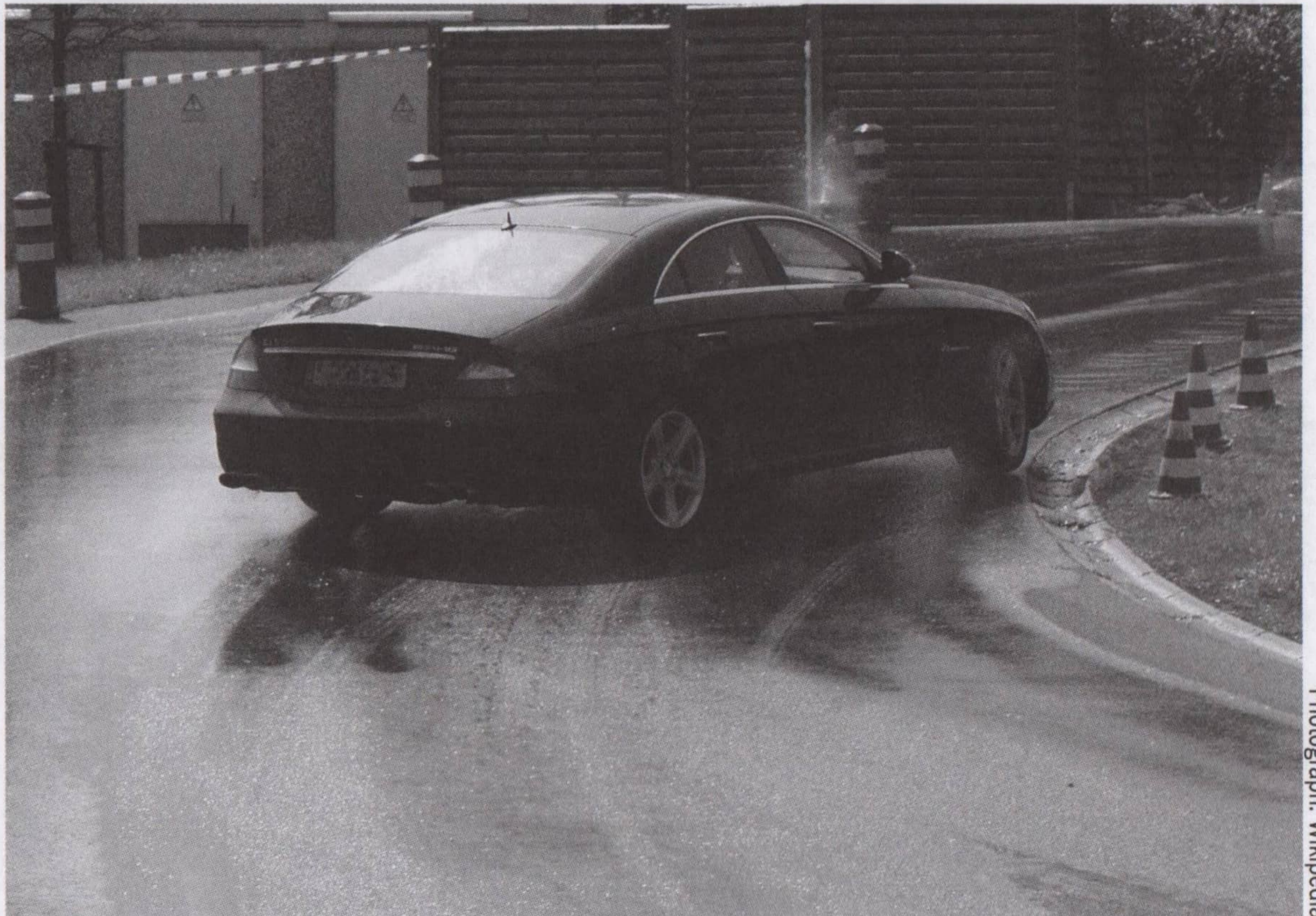
Alongside the losses, remaining staff are continuing a long-running dispute over pay – 40% of staff will not get any form of pay rise this year.

In the Department for Transport, efforts to equalise pay across the service and improve a poor wage offer saw workers go on a one-day strike on 28th February.

It covered staff in DVLA, DSA, VOSA, VCA, and Highways Agency and the Department for Transport Headquarters.

The one-day strike hit driving tests, vehicle testing centres, regional centres controlling the flow of motorway traffic as well as the half yearly introduction of new number plates for new cars.

Coastguards also took part in a successful one-day strike action on 6th March over pay. About a half of the UK's nineteen coastguard rescue co-ordination centres were



Photograph: Wikipedia

**DRIVEN ROUND THE BEND:** Department of Transport personnel, including staff at the DVLA, went on strike on February 28th.

closed with the remainder operating with a handful of staff as up to 700 members of the PCS working for the Maritime and Coastguard Agency took part in their first ever one-day strike.

The same day, PCS members in the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) staged a two hour walkout following DCMS management's decision to impose a below inflation pay offer.

A strike may also be on the cards at Aberdeen city council over poor terms, after council staff gave a resounding 'No' vote to this year's pay offer.

Meanwhile almost half of the Scottish

environment Agency's staff have been sacked after the refused to sign away their working rights and accept a pay freeze.

Unison is challenging the mass dismissals, which will see 572 staff at the Scottish Environmental Protection Agency out of a job.

Staff are now meeting across Scotland to discuss whether to strike.

The workers have received formal notice that their contracts will be terminated at the end of May. The letter includes an offer to reinstate their jobs under the new contract, provided they sign up to it within the next three months.

## UCU votes no

Unionists at UCU have rejected a controversial plan for the future of national pay bargaining in further education. In a ballot 60.8% of voters rejected the proposals, which would have seen a single bargaining bloc instituted and negotiations timed in such a way as to effectively rule out term-time industrial action. The bargaining agreement, JNCHES, would have also blocked separate negotiations over special circumstances, a factor which helped split the union executive and force the ballot.

Militants in UCU have voiced dissatisfaction over the way in which other unions in the bargaining bloc, including Unison, Unite and the GMB, passed the proposals with little comment.

Following a meeting of UCU's higher education committee, general secretary, Sally Hunt, said: "We will contact the Universities

and Colleges Employers' Association (UCEA) to seek discussions as a matter of urgency. I have alerted the other unions in the sector as well in the hope that through mutual respect for each other's positions we can agree to sit back down and work through these proposals, which I think everyone recognises as less than perfect."

But these conciliatory words did little to placate Unison chiefs, who ahead of the ballot result had threatened to go forward and ratify the proposals regardless, effectively leaving UCU to do its own negotiating.

In a statement, Unison's Higher Education Service Group Executive said that a UCU no vote would force them to "immediately open discussions with other sister unions with a view to moving to signing the agreement on offer".

## Royal Mail pensions facing ballot

Unions have rejected Royal Mail's plan to overhaul its pensions scheme and are poised to ballot nearly 150,000 members over whether they back the plan or not.

Royal Mail said a year ago that it intended to close its final-salary scheme to new employees and to raise the retirement age from 60 to 65. It then proposed ending the final-salary scheme for all employees and creating a career average plan, which would be linked to the retail prices index. When last year's dispute over pay was settled, Royal Mail agreed to continue talks with the unions over pensions, but they have failed to make progress after nearly four months.

If, as officials believe, the pension plans are rejected in the ballots, a strike vote would be virtually certain.

Ed (libcom.org)

## IN BRIEF

**BOOTS:** Staff at Boots Logistics in Nottingham have voted to go out on strike. The Usdaw members at the site voted nearly 2:1 in favour of taking industrial action after 18 months of discussions between Boots and the union. Workers are not happy with the changes in terms and conditions resulting from the centralisation of the Boots warehouse and distribution operation. The recommended offer was rejected, but Boots said they were unable to make any further changes to the offer. As a result, Usdaw carried out a consultative industrial action ballot of its members, who voted overwhelmingly in favour of a formal industrial action ballot.

**PRIVATE EQUITY:** A private member's bill has been launched to extend TUPE regulations to private equity takeovers, in a move which would force companies to tell workers what is going to happen to their wages and pensions and explain any plans for job cuts.

Three million UK workers – one in every five private sector workers – have been denied basic information about what their private equity owners have in store for them as the law does not require them to share their plans with workers. The move would close a loophole in the Transfer of Undertakings regulations requiring public companies to consult with the workforce on future plans.

**ROLLS ROYCE:** Unions involved in planned cuts at Derby are set to undermine their members' interests by meekly following the company to an eventual closure of UK operations, said an ex-worker for the company on Manchester Indymedia.

In a statement, they said: "Unite reacted to Rolls-Royce's announcement by solidarising itself with the company. The union has striven to divert the workforce's opposition to closure into a nationalist campaign to 'save British industry' and futile appeals to shareholders, MPs and the government."

At the beginning of this year, aircraft engine manufacturer Rolls-Royce announced plans to axe 2,300 highly skilled jobs, about 6% of its 39,500 global workforce.

The latest announcement follows hot on the heels of the company's decision last year to close the Netherton oil and gas turbine plant in Bootle, with the loss of 206 jobs.

**CONSTRUCTION:** On 4th March, a protest by Manchester No Borders was staged outside the offices of Carillion National Building, to draw attention to a planned expansion of Manchester Airport's immigration detention facility and of Carillion's involvement. The centre is a short-term holding facility functioning as a staging post for detainees being transferred between long-term centres. Its holding capacity is set to increase from 16 to 32, in line with government plans to increase capacity nationwide from 2,500 to 4,000.

Carillion National Building focus on designing, constructing, financing and operating prisons and law courts across the UK.

# Fairtrade – but not at home

## Pratt's management accused of exploitation

A company which specialises in importing fair trade bananas has been criticised by the GMB union for exploiting migrant workers in the UK.

Pratt's Bananas, in Luton, has been in dispute with the GMB over plans to set up a branch for its 250 members in the firm's distribution section.

The company, which supplies Tesco, Marks & Spencer and Waitrose, is accused of forcing people to work excessive hours and six or seven day weeks under threat of sackings.

Breaks were allegedly refused if production targets were not met, and even toilet breaks were allegedly barred during the sometimes 10–12 hour shifts.

The firm is set to be taken to an industrial tribunal by a woman who accuses them of giving her duties which contributed to her miscarriage.

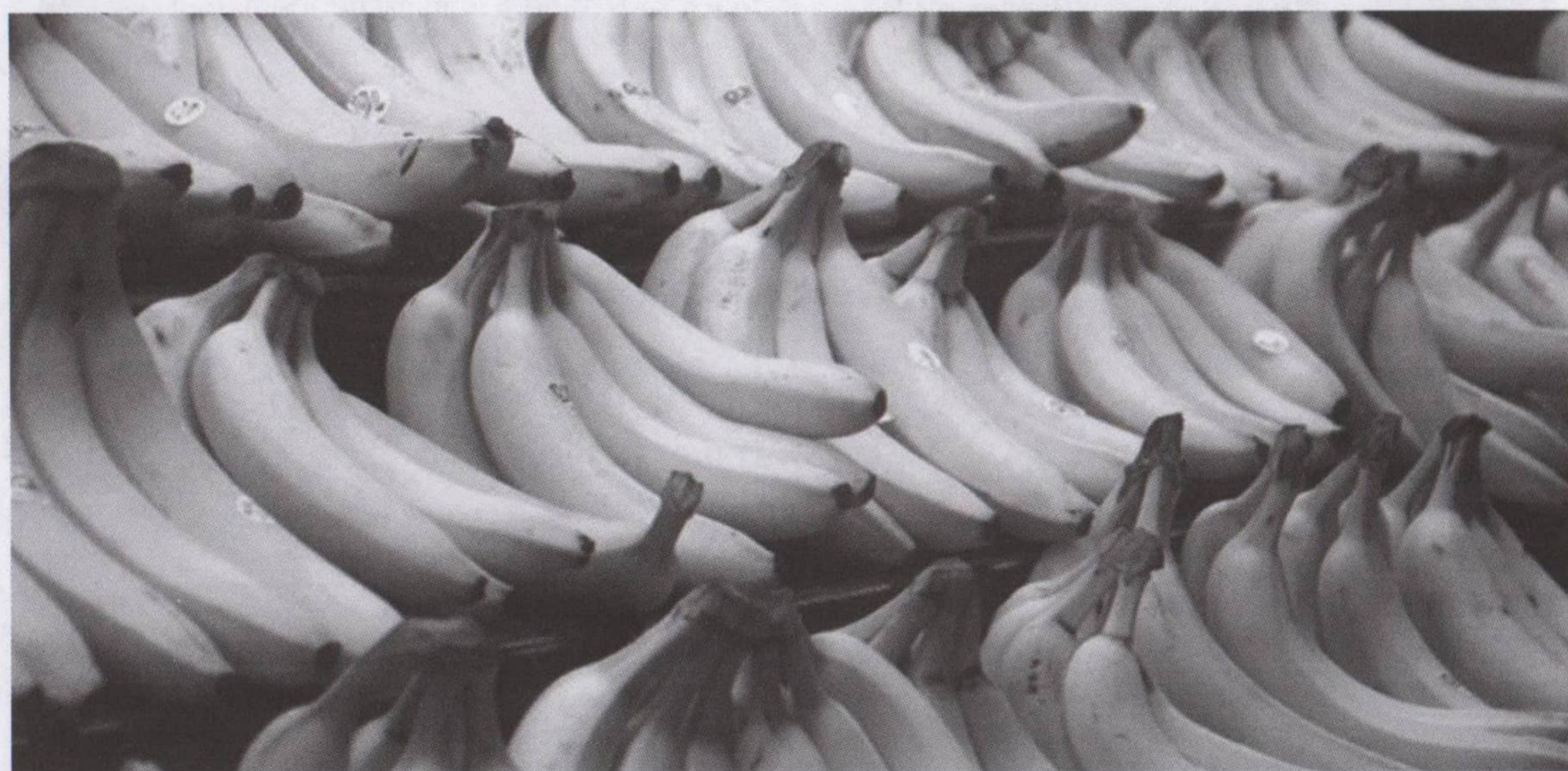
The Polish woman, known only as Magdalena, said: "We don't have a break because it was something like punishment. When you [were] finished you [had] a break – if you don't finish, you don't have a break."

Pratt's Bananas said the welfare and safety of their workers was of paramount importance and that they had started a detailed investigation.

The Fairtrade Foundation has expressed "shock and dismay about conditions experienced by migrant workers employed by Pratt's bananas in Luton" and suggests it signs up to the Ethical Trading Initiative.

According to the GMB, Pratt's Managing Director, Robert Wells promised to negotiate a voluntary recognition agreement and to give full negotiating rights to GMB members if the Union could demonstrate that it has the support of the workforce. Pratt's Bananas is now dragging its feet on implementing this agreement.

Martin Smith, national organiser of the GMB union, says that worker abuse is "endemic" amongst certain industries.



Photograph: Wikipedia

NO FAIR: Banana distributor Pratt's has come under fire for its treatment of workers.

## Ruck on the railways

Tensions have risen across the rail industry after a series of major incidents which have endangered lives and angered workforces.

A serious blunder late last month by a Network Rail manager who worked a signal box during a Lincoln area signallers' strike could have had catastrophic consequences.

The incident, at West Holmes box, saw workers and passengers put at serious risk by an error that could have sent a passenger train on the Newark-Lincoln line through an engineering site at up to 70mph.

A document seen by the RMT rail union indicates an incorrect authorisation filled out by a scabbing manager could have seen the line re-opened before work was completed.

If the mistake had not been spotted by the experienced signaller who re-opened the box

the following morning, and had the engineering work overrun, the consequences could have been fatal.

Network Rail have recently been fined £14m for a maintenance overrun which disrupted services at Christmas, in a move by regulators which was slammed as "pointless and counterproductive". The record fine will not solve problems of fragmentation and reliance on private contractors, the RMT says.

Meanwhile, talks between London Underground, the RMT and TSSA union broke down when the company said it intended to continue using agency and security staff and 'mobile station supervisors', despite earlier promises. Ballots have been called.

## INTERNATIONAL

### IN BRIEF

**CANADA:** The Friends of the Lubicon Aboriginal society in Alberta report that TransCanada is moving ahead with plans for a jumbo 42-inch gas pipeline to cut right through unceded Lubicon land, despite Lubicon's objections.

TransCanada has the support of Shell, Suncor, Imperial Oil, Exxon Mobile, Cargill and Nexen. The pipeline will transport natural gas to the Tar Sands, allowing for expanded Tar Sands processing capacity.

Lubicon legal counsel F.M. Lennarson said the "response of the Lubicon people is that they are the Aboriginal owners of the land that TransCanada wishes to violate with this huge new pipeline".

**GERMANY:** German website Labournet's characterisation of Ixion engineering as "capitalist and extortionist" does not constitute slander, a Hamburg court found last Friday. Further, it stressed there was nothing wrong with Labournet's editor, Mag Womper, calling on employees to report abuses at Ixion.

**GREECE:** The Greek electricity utility Public Power Corp's (PPC) workers union, GENOP, has called a strike, resulting in the shutdown of six of PPC's production facilities and a reduced capacity of 1,300 MW.

GENOP, the General Federation of Employees of Public Power Corporation and Sector of Electric Energy, was on strike until 6th March to protest the state's intentions to merge its pension program with the larger state pension fund IKA.

**MEXICO:** A tense strike and occupation at the Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana (UAM) in the southeast of Mexico City has held for over a month despite the picket line being attacked by hostile students.

The strike by the Sindicato Independiente de Trabajadores de la UAM (SITUAM) began on 1st February, with workers listing eleven demands, the most important of which being a 35% payrise.

The most recent round of negotiations was abandoned on 28th February, when there were clashes following the forced entrance of a group of students into the meeting room.

**ZIMBABWE:** A strike has been held by public officers, including employees from the government, health personnel in government and council hospitals and clinics, who are all calling for an immediate review of salaries and benefits.

In Harare, the strike has been compounded by the ongoing strike by council workers who downed tools last month, demanding a rise in their salaries.

Meanwhile, a strike by teachers has paralysed operations in schools across the whole country.

### LENS CAP MADRID



Photograph: theplatform.nuevaradio.org

With just days to go before the Spanish general election, anti-racist campaigners fought running battles with riot police in Central Madrid on 29th February, building huge burning barricades and entirely gutting several banks, after the local PP (rightist) council allowed 'Combat Espana' and other fascist groups to gather in Tirso de Molina square, traditionally Madrid's most leftist area and now home to much of Madrid's immigrant population.

## G8 activist turned over

A German co-ordinator for anti-G8 activists trying to get to Japan for this summer's summit has been beaten and his documents, computer and personal items confiscated by Russian police.

Martin Kramer was picked up in Vanino in the Habarovsk region of Russia and attacked by state police, as he was waiting to take a boat to the island of Sakhalin, just north of Japan. He was accused of carrying secret 'extremist' documentation.

According to Martin, he was beaten with fists and feet, then he was taken to fourth floor of the police station and was told he would be thrown out from the window.

Police found pre-war archive documents stamped 'secret' among his possessions, and he was accused of possession of secret

documents. Martin attempted to explain that these documents have been made public a long time ago, and he was working with them due to his research work, but was ignored. FSB agents ignored his explanations, and also claimed that his possession of the Ukrainian paper *Liva-Sprava* and the paper of Autonomous Action of Vladivostok *Udar* amounted to extremist propaganda.

After few hours Martin was released from the police station, taken to a car and thrown out to one of the streets of the city. Martin was late for the ship, and he demanded a new ticket, but was refused, leaving him stranded in Vanino.

As *Freedom* goes to press the whereabouts of Kramer are unknown.

## Notes from the United States

In 2006 the Secure Fence Act became law. It was planned to keep out 'illegal immigrants' by building a physical barrier – a double steel and concrete fence eighteen feet high, whose 'operation' is overseen by the Department of Homeland Security. The same initiative saw the addition of 3,000 more border patrol agents and an increase in spending (to nearly 15 million pounds sterling a day) of nearly 200%.

But there are a series of 'exceptions' to the fence. Wealthy homeowners, land owners,

ranchers and country clubs over whose property the wall would run have been refusing to allow its construction to go ahead.

As things stand now – and all three leading contenders for the next president, McCain, Clinton and Obama have supported the project – there will be about 20 unconnected segments of fence in Texas around which those intent on the good life can easily drive or walk.

Boeing won an indefinite contract in 2006 without a published maximum dollar limit.

# Health worker gap catastrophic

## Brain drain to West is crippling healthcare

It has been revealed that the global shortfall in healthcare professionals has reached four million people – with one million needed in Africa alone. The figures were voiced at the Global Forum on Human Resources for Health, which opened in the Ugandan capital of Kampala on 3rd March.

Poor working conditions in Africa, along with heavy incentives from the West, are drawing a heavy proportion of newly-trained health professionals out of the continent.

Some 57 countries, especially in Africa and Asia, are particularly affected and unable to effectively provide health services for the population, which also hampers prevention and information campaigns, drug distribution and other life-saving interventions.

Africa has been particularly badly hit as measures from wealthy countries to encourage skilled workers to emigrate have stripped African countries, particularly in sub-saharan regions, of up to 75% of their physicians (Mozambique) and up to 82% of nurses.

“They seek better employment and quality of life. Income is an important motivation for migration [as well as] better working conditions, career opportunities and more job satisfaction,” said Sigrun Mogedal, one of the conference organisers.

Across the continent, Africa has 11% of the world population and 24% of the global burden of disease, but only 3% of the world's health workers. Nine countries, including Britain, the US, France, South Africa, Belgium, Spain, Canada, Australia and Portugal, received the vast majority of all migration



Photograph: Lymbapisticchurch.com

**MIGRATION:** Newly-qualified nurses from the Haydom Lutheran Hospital in Tanzania. Migration and poor employment prospects in the region have led to a nurse-to-patient ratio of 0.37 per 1,000, according to the World Health Organisation. In the UK the number is closer to 12.12.

from Africa – 92.4%, amounting to over 65,000 people in the year 2000 (the most recent figures available). Britain has been particularly active in Kenya, recruiting the vast majority of the 51% of healthcare workers which have left the country, leaving many of those injured in recent fighting around the elections unable to find medical help.

At the conference, Ugandan health minister Stephen Malinga said that wealthier African countries, particularly South Africa, had been poaching healthcare workers as their own emigrate – around 5% of South African health professionals leave the country.

The effect created is of a feeder chain, with the wealthiest countries buying in doctors and nurses from African countries, wealthier African countries copying the tactic to draw people away from weaker neighbours, and the poorest and most vulnerable populations left with the least protection.

Uganda is facing an acute shortage as there is only one doctor for every 15,000 patients, far below the recommended 1.5 per ten patients.

Last October, the Ugandan Ministry of Health reported a staggering shortfall of 2,290 nurses out of the required 5,568 in government funded hospitals alone.

While money is often sent back to the country by healthcare workers abroad, the absence of proper healthcare is contributing to a catastrophic fatality rate. The Global Health Workforce Alliance said one in four doctors trained in Africa was working in western industrialised countries.

The conference aims to produce a ten-year global action plan to deal with the problem, which would require £1.6bn per year to train 1.8 million health workers in Africa for the next eight years. Another £13bn would be required to pay them to stay.

## Notes from the Unites States

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It's called SBInet. This involves 'securing the northern and southern borders' with whatever it takes ... fences, surveillance, persons.

Despite a number of inquiries from lawmakers, Boeing's work remains highly secret.

Although the DHS has begun a series of lawsuits against those resisting the wall, Bush's government itself is sanctioning large gaps so as to avoid building on the land of contributors to the Republican party and other vocal supporters of the government and those with ties to Bush in his home state.

Melissa del Bosque, a reporter in Austin, Texas, explains the apparent criteria employed by the DHS and describes the case of Texas resident Eloisa Tamez: “Her family was given that land by the King of Spain. So for them to give up their remaining acreage to build a mile-long fence that's going to stop at the edge of a golf course and resort is a pretty hard thing for them to take.” She seems

likely to lose that land.

On the other hand there is Ray L. Hunt, a Dallas billionaire. From a very well-known Texas oil family, he's a good friend of Bush; he recently donated \$35 million to build the Bush library at Southern Methodist University. He recently pulled off a large oil deal with the Kurds. The wall is avoiding Hunt's 6,000 acres. Hunt is also developing a huge business complex on the border to take advantages of commercial opportunities actually with Mexico. The wall stops there.

- According to a recent paper from the ACLU, American Civil Liberties Union, the equivalent of Liberty, the FBI now regards almost a million people in the country as worthy of inclusion on its terrorist watchlist. For the first time – Pew Center on the States reports – 1% of all Americans (or 2,319,258 – the highest rate in the world) are now in jail.

## Bolon Ajaw threat

Bolon Ajaw, a village in the Chiapas region of Mexico, has been heavily harassed by Mexican troopers and police in recent weeks, as the state steps up pressure against zones affiliated to the Zapatistas. Over-flights by helicopters, increased police patrols, physical and verbal attacks by neighbours from Agua Azul and assaults on known Zapatistas have taken place throughout January and February.

The Tseltal community of Bolon Ajaw, mostly monolingual, are on constant alert. The women and children no less than the men. No-one walks the paths alone, the men stick to the community and its immediate vicinity. A few adult women are the only ones with machetes, which they carry when fetching water in plastic containers weighing more than a child.

“We are always worried. We get death threats, stones thrown at us and bullets fired at us”, an older man says on the edge of the village.

# Democratic Russia has little cause for optimism

Rob Ray interviews Vadim, a Russian anarchist

*Rob Ray: What is the economic situation in Russia at the moment?*

**Vadim:** The economic situation is very different now compared with the crash of the 1990s, when industrial production declined drastically. Of course, growth hasn't come as a result of neoliberal shock therapy but rather follows from rising international oil prices.

The industries which are developing now are in oil and gas production, building (many of the workers in the sector are from the other republics of the ex-'Soviet Union', who often have no rights or even legal status) and in metal production (mainly for export).

Some traditional industries (such as textiles and machine-building) are in decline. But it is necessary to take into account that most existing productive capacity and the whole infrastructure is very old and can be left to ruin in the near future.

The other big problem is the very uneven situation in different regions. In such cities as Moscow, St Petersburg or Nizhni Novgorod there is major development of services, in the banking industry, etc. But many regions are in decline.

According to the state the general sum of backpay owed was 4.435 billion roubles (about \$171m) in May last year. Unofficially, it is higher, in particular for migrant workers (often they simply aren't paid at all).

Generally, wages in Russia remain very low. Officially, it is \$400 a month on average (in Moscow it's around \$1,000), but the real situation is very different. In 2005, only 18% of population obtained more than \$430 (12,000 roubles), 24% from \$250 (7,000 roubles) to \$430 (12,000 roubles) and 18% \$180–250 (5–7,000 roubles). In many regions and industries the situation is much worse. While workers in private services obtain good wages, in agriculture, textiles and in public service the wages are rarely greater than 5,000 roubles.

*What is unemployment like?*

It is not easy. For market reforms like those in Russia, an unemployment level of 20% or 30% was expected. Actually it is (according to Western data) 7–8%. Growth is restrained due to low wages and non-payment of wages.

But the situation is not uniform here either. Unemployment in the south of Russia is on average three times more than in regions such as Moscow, St Petersburg or Wolga, and twice much as in Siberia and the Far East. Youth unemployment is very high and people with further education also have difficulty finding work: 28% (14% in Moscow) and 11% (32% in Moscow) respectively.

But only a minority of unemployed register



Russian company Gazprom is the biggest extractor of natural gas in the world

themselves with the state service when looking for work because it is ineffective. In the first three months, the unemployed obtain 75% of their monthly wage, in the next four months 60% and in another five months 45%. After one year, the dole is very low: from \$27 to \$111 a month in 2006 (it depends on the region). This is of course insufficient for life. So there are many migrations to big cities as Moscow by people independently looking for work (mainly non-skilled).

Furthermore, a lot of employment is only part-time or casual, in particular in the Far East and Wolga regions (here and there about 20% of workers); in Moscow between 10% and 20%. This sector represents around 5-6 million people.

*What is the situation in education, health-care and utility (water, power) provision?*

All these sectors are in a deep crisis. In spite of a good financial situation for the country (\$406.6 billion in gold reserves, of which the government's found \$117 billion for stabilisation, and foreign debt amounts to \$113 billion), the ruling clique continues to destroy free public services (such as education and healthcare) and to increase the prices for provision of water, power and other housing and communal services.

At the same time, active privatisation occurs. So the possibilities for finding free places in education, the quality of public healthcare service, drugs at reduced prices, etc., are falling. In education, the principles and mechanics of selection are being intro-

duced, the number of paid student places are growing. There are many private schools and universities.

The house-and-communal-services-reform bill has brought through the privatisation of utility provision. Unfortunately, there is very little resistance against these moves. The student movement as such is absent. The main target of protests for people in the city is rather the problem of commercial re-planning and the building of elite housing.

*What is trade unionism like?*

All trade unions in the modern Russia are bureaucratic and anti-worker structures. The biggest organisation is the Federation of Independent Trade Unions of Russia (in Russian: FNPR) which is a new name for the old 'Soviet' official trade unions. The leaders of FNPR claim they have 28 million members in their unions but the majority don't do anything and only pay dues.

It's important that FNPR privatised the big property of old 'Soviet' unions, such as sanatoriums, rest homes, tourist bases, hotels,



The St Petersburg branch of McDonalds; below left, Russian Monopoly

sports establishments, stadiums, homes of culture, etc., for its own benefit. So the FNPR is on the one hand a giant bureaucratic apparatus of paid functionaries, and on the other it's a social infrastructure with less expensive rest and health possibilities in sanatoriums, presents for children, for people in difficult situations, etc.

It is often the case that there are also leading managers or members of the administration of businesses in the unions of FNPR. So it is no possible to say that the FNPR is a normal trade union in Western sense!

The unions of FNPR try normally to agree with business leaders peacefully and regard the strike as an extreme action. At the end of the 1990s, teachers and health workers (most public sector workers are in the FNPR unions) and the miners of FNPR struck, but the leadership took control: they prevented the generalisation of struggle and suppressed all initiatives from below.

The FNPR supported the Labour Law in 2001 which helped give business more powers to dismiss their workers and promoted precarisation.

Apart from the FNPR, there are many different trade unions and federations which name themselves 'free' and stress their 'independency' from a 'Soviet' heritage. They don't have leading managers in top positions. But they are also vertical, bureaucratic structures, mostly with paid functionaries and they declare their fidelity to social partnership between the workers, bosses and authorities.

There are examples of self-organised

workers' resisting too – from individual sabotage action to little spontaneous strikes or 'Italian' strikes. But self-organised collective actions are still rare.

*What are the most powerful political strands at the moment?*

The ruling political current around Putin is nationalist, strongly centralist and authoritarian in internal politics and neoliberal in economic politics. The general political objective is to re-establish Russia as a great power. The regime rests on the support of some parts of big business and on structures in the secret service and military.

The Putin group utilised aggressive Russian nationalism and spread anti-Caucasian hysteria (including the recommencement of the colonial war in Chechnya) to increase their power.

Of course, the spreading of these spirits stimulated very much the growth of pure fascist political tendencies. Gangs of bone-heads terrorise migrant workers, foreign students and even children of parents coming from different republics of the ex-'Soviet Union'. There are violent attacks and murders. Moreover, there were cases of big spontaneous pogroms in some cities (Kondopoga, Stavropol) against non-Russian populations.

The ruling group is too nationalistic, of course. But they are afraid of a split in Russia and try to show themselves as more 'moderate' nationalism. They want to strengthen the centralisation of power by limiting State federalism, by seizing regional

administration from above and revising their relationship with regional elites on more favourable terms.

As the state's economical and social politics, it is oligarchic and neoliberal. The ruling group reallocates property, taking control of some companies and driving back economic competitors.

This isn't a real broadening of state control but the strengthening of existing economic forces coupled with the state power.

The social measures of government are openly in favour of the rich. So Russia is one of very few countries where income tax isn't progressive: all must pay a flat rate of 13% of income – both multi-millionaires and ordinary workers!

*Are there any causes for optimism?*

Optimism? I don't think that the actual situation generates much optimism because the level of self-organised resistance is very low now. But we are pessimists in our understanding of situation, optimists in our actions. Resistance is for us not only a question of survival but also one of human dignity.

The younger generations don't have so many illusions about private market capitalism as existed at the beginning of the 1990s. They are mainly passive now, but we hope they will overcome the social shock of that decade and will begin to react and resist. Especially when we take into consideration that economic growth in Russia, linked with the oil prices, isn't stable and the majority of people don't have chances in this system.



## COMMENT

## ABOUT FREEDOM

## ANGEL ALLEY

Well, it's been a little too long since we had our last crisis, so for your delectation, we're going to announce one now.

Basically, after a good long time doing some great and much appreciated work, Matt, who took over as the editor of one of our two issues in every month, needs to scale back his contribution.

This means that we may, after all, have to go monthly – so if you don't get your eagerly-awaited seventh edition of the year, that's why.

However, on the bright side, we have a few pots in a few fires, have had some interest from new people, and may well be able to put together a replacement team to take over his role by the time it gets to that, so with any luck this warning will be a needless one.

In the meantime though, I'd better ask – is there an editor in the house? This patient needs urgent attention! I'm still committed to only doing one issue a month in full (I help out on the other one), so without writers and editors, this new look piece of genius that is *Freedom* ain't going to come out more often than that without good folk like yourself contributing.

If you aren't into the whole news gathering thing, other roles are available, including a reviews editor (this is an easy one as we have a couple of very reliable, talented and well-organised regulars in Richard Alexander and Tom Jennings), a columnist (specifically, we're looking for a fortnightly or monthly anti-fascism piece), a commissioning editor for features, and an expert on prisons.

Get in touch at the usual address.

Rob Ray

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## NEXT ISSUE

The next issue will be dated 29th March 2008 and the last day to get copy to us for that issue will be Thursday 20th March. You can send your 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.

## A sideways look

by SVARTFROSK

Last year, I got a long-awaited pay rise of about 2.4%. While it's better than nothing, which is precisely what many people I know got, it's still not enough. After years of enough prices coming down to even out those going up, inflation is back.

The government use two different definitions of inflation, the Retail Price Index and the Consumer Price Index. In January, they were 4.1% and 2.2% respectively. The RPI is used for index-linked things, like pensions and benefits. The CPI is what gets reported as the headline rate and what the Bank of England has to keep below 2%. Oops.

According to the Office of National Statistics, the upward push on inflation comes from fuel, food and drink, and furniture. These are supposedly offset by clothing prices coming down, and some reduction in restaurant costs and leisure items like flat screen TVs. Hmm, so the things I buy (okay, I don't actually buy a lot of furniture) are going up, quite a lot. Still, if I could afford a flat screen telly it would be cheaper than the one I couldn't afford last year...

Average council tax is going up by nearly 4%. Water rates have gone up by more than 6%. Gas and electric is going up by 15%. Petrol is more than a pound a litre and price falls for it are nowhere on the horizon. Loads of basic foodstuffs, especially things like milk, seem an awful lot more expensive.

Obviously, all this is anecdotal, but there comes a point when the money left at the end of the month proves the anecdote.

It is against this background that the government are seeking to impose a 2% pay limit on workers employed by the public sector. In an echo of the late '70s, unions representing workers in this sector have been putting in claims that take into account how far their lowest-paid members have fallen behind. In further education, six unions have jointly submitted a claim for 6%, or £1,500, whichever is the greater. The unions involved are balloting for industrial action and have described their claim as being a 'catch-up' one, to make up for several years of below-inflation increases. The flat rate element is also important, as it goes some way to dealing with the fact that 6% of a starting salary is bugger all – and the people who most need a decent pay increase are those who earn the least.

Local government union Unison are also claiming 6%, with a 50 pence increase in the minimum hourly rate included as well. Unison, and before that Nalگو, traditionally included a flat rate element in their pay claim, but the employers were always particularly hostile to this. Last year, Unison balloted in favour of industrial action on pay, but the union's executive called it off because of the small majority in favour of striking.

In other sectors like the civil service and schools, the same processes are at play. Even if you don't work in one of these sectors, it is still important that workers win pay rises, especially in a time of rising inflation. After all, inflation is only a problem if your income doesn't rise at the same rate as prices do.

## Blog Bites

([aaron.resist.ca](http://aaron.resist.ca))

So folks back home (in Canada) ask me "how is merry old England?" Well, it may be old, but it is not merry. It is quite frightening how people live here actually.

I have been wandering around London for about a week. My impression is that everyone in this city seems so goddam wealthy, or at least you would have to be wealthy to live here because of the crazy cost of living.

But as my friend who works with the newly formed London Coalition Against Poverty soberly reminded me the other night, it's not that poverty doesn't exist; it's just conveniently swept under the rug.

The city has got me thinking again a lot about gentrification, because there's lots of talk of it here. I have been spending most of my time in east London with my good friend who has lived here all her life. She gets really passionate when she starts talking about her area. Her recounting of working-class Jewish resistance in the area inspired me to pick up the book *The London Years* by Rudolf Rocker at Freedom Books.

Rocker's first-hand accounts of life in London are fascinating, and I highly recommend this book. In the pages, he talks about places like

Brick Lane, once the area of sweatshop factories and underground trade union meetings, and now over-run by hipsters shopping at Rough Trade records and the fancy Vespa scooter store across the way. Change is happening fast here, and a new generation of displacement is beginning with rich yuppies that are moving into the East End.

My friend is absolutely devastated because she can no longer afford to live in Bethnal Green, the area where she was born and lived her whole life. She was evicted from her last apartment there – sold off to private developers.

I thought that an interesting and sad parallel could be drawn between war and gentrification in this area. While war clearly has much more devastating effects, the end sum of 'urban renewal' is still displacement and the uprooting of communities – effectively killing them. Instead of B52's, we see construction sites and cranes as the weapons of choice.

The city is now bracing itself for the 2012 summer Olympics. Resistance to the 2012 Olympics has already begun in London, and I hope people here can draw some inspiration from the anti-2010 organising in Vancouver, and vice-versa.

## Freedom's future

Re: your request for opinions on the future direction of *Freedom*, I would say that the main reason I value the paper is because it covers stories which are normally ignored by the media or at best get coverage in local papers or the sort of specialist interest websites that not everyone has access to (e.g. the environmental protests in Iceland or Papua New Guinea).

Going monthly might mean that new coverage on these is less up-to-date, but as most of the stories are fairly long-running anyway this may not matter too much. I don't think *Freedom* is ever going to be the paper that scoops the pack on fast-moving news stories like strikes, riots, etc., many of which do get covered in the mainstream media (albeit not from an anarchist perspective).

A lot of the print press is under pressure these days from falling circulation and the way they have responded, apart from going online, has been by increasing the ratio of comment to news because the opinions of the writers are a unique selling point.

If by going monthly *Freedom* could include more comment/analysis, this might also be a positive thing, especially if this is combined with detailed coverage of the stories that aren't much reported elsewhere for ideological reasons, as discussed above.

I don't think the size or format is as important as the content, and certainly the tendency is for smaller formats.

James Mobbs

## Schizophrenia

A schizophrenic has an existential duty towards the community in communicating by word, organisation or art his or her particular spiritual richness. As a chronic schizophrenic I want to make a few comments about the nature, politics and treatment of schizophrenia and schizophrenics.

### Nature

I argue that schizophrenia is not merely a mental illness, it is also a mystical interpretation of the universe. Vicariousness is the emotional half of civilised life. Sometimes it seems that schizophrenia is one long inner and often inaccessible essay in vicariousness, of vicarious suffering. The selfishness of the schizophrenic is an outward reflection of the passivity of this otherness, this inaccessible suffering.

Schizophrenia is a diabetes of the mind due to a failure of expression of a mind-body cohering hormone during adolescence. This may be caused by prolonged lack of intimacy and/or personal invalidation during childhood, as in double-bind theory, in the genetically pre-disposed individual. Onset usually coincides with emotional and/or physical trauma.

Ronald Fairbairn writes about the child taking upon her/himself the burden of badness which appears to reside in her or his objects – unconditional (libidinal) and conditional (moral) badness. As a result of this, she/he

“can have no sense of security and no hope of redemption. The only prospect is one of death and destruction”.

In this analysis, Fairbairn sees only the negative side of the problem, for the sufferer seeks redemption in the spiritualising of their ego, of their inner life. Stack Sullivan quotes Ferenczi in this respect: the sufferer is seen to “permit anything to happen to his body, which has become to him as immaterial as the outer world. His whole narcissism retreats into the spiritual ego which is, so to speak, a citadel which still holds out, though outer and inner forts are lost”.

But there is a need to get beyond the dimensions and characterisations of post-Freudian western psychoanalysis. As Christopher Caudwell put it in his study of Freud (*Studies in a Dying Culture*): “The censor, the ego, the super-ego, the id, the Oedipus complex, and the inhibition are mind deities, like the weather deities who inhabited Greek Olympus. Freud's picture of a struggle between eternal eros and eternal thanatos, between life and death instincts, between the reality principle and the pleasure principle, is only the eternal dualism of reflective barbarians, carried over by Christianity from Zoroastrianism, and now introjected by Freud into the human mind. It represents a real struggle but in terms of a western bourgeois myth.”

Schizophrenia is dissociated sexuality, the inner war between the unconscious and the conscious. Splits between hate and love, action and dreams, force and tenderness, anger and consideration, fragment the sexuality, draining the body of libidinal association and the mind of carnal coherence – whence the characteristic masturbatory fantasy life or impotence of the sufferer.

I believe this dissociation occurs because of an addiction to a memory taking place at a time of personal crisis. This causes a cybernetic short-cut. This addiction may be the result of a long period or acute episode of thalamic disintegrity and insecurity consequent on the invasion by introjection of a powerful alien will, perhaps that of a parent in an impressionable child, or that of a dead pal at war. This introjection occurs together with the values and experiences of the immediate environment; so that a post-1945 experience in a soldier's child may include the introjection of the experience of the extermination camps as well as battles and the prevalent army bullshit.

### Politics

At its best, the inner struggle of the schizophrenic to regain his or her individuality approaches the condition of civil war. For the alien will and the compensatory addiction have grained lives and biological forces of their own. But, using the cathexis of good inner intimate objects, the subject may make headway. This is an issue I will return to under treatment.

There is a vast amount I do not understand about the relationship of schizophrenia with time. However, together with the future block which Lidz writes about, there is a general speeding up of time which may be connected

## LETTERS AND COMMENT

with the impatience of suppressed hunger.

The inner struggle of the schizophrenic helps to explain why he or she has the existential duty towards the community to communicating that I have spoken of, but, politically, such is the extent and depth of people's fear of the unknown world of the psyche and madness, that schizophrenics are – or could become – the modern Jews! Not only are we invalidated and demonised; often both at the same time, but we are subject to irrational and perhaps deliberate prejudice by the media. If someone with angina or, more commonly, alcoholism, murders somebody, their illness/disability is not mentioned; whereas if the murderer is schizophrenic it makes the headlines. This may or may not be deliberate. This prejudice is, perhaps, as much due to the projections of psychopathic, schizoid, ‘normal’ people as it is to ignorance.

I think it likely, especially given the fact that no one believes what we say, that various experiments are carried out on schizophrenics by MI5 – pharmacological, short wave radiation experiments and mind-policing and suiciding experiments.

### Treatment

After the closure of the big asylums many schizophrenics ‘resettled’ in the community’ died within their first year – of cold, neglect, and dislocation the inadequate, friendly simple schizophrenics; the emotional, devastated hebephrenics; the intense and wordy paranoids ... we are not told about them!

Any meaningful care has to fundamentally meet the chronic invalidation and sense of futility which mark this condition.

For this reason, the ‘Therapeutic Community’ as pioneered by Sullivan, Maxwell Jones and others is essential. The Claybury psychiatrist Dennis Martin has written a very interesting account of such an experiment in the 1960s, adventure in psychiatry, an experiment which survived for several years despite opposition from other doctors and managers.

Finally, I would like to say that the writings of radicals, such as R.D. Laing and David Cooper, whilst truly great philosophically, are downright dangerous, in most cases, therapeutically. Appropriate minimal medication, and even, on occasions, ECT are an essential ingredient of modern treatment, as much as existential, non-Freudian therapy. Forward to the insulin of the mind.

David Kessel

Schizophrenic Salvation Network

## 56a Infoshop

Was opened in 1991 by a small group of local people in the back room of Fareshares Food Co-op in Walworth. Since that time we have maintained our radical presence locally through bookselling, publishing, actions and socialising.

★  
We come from that old tradition that inspires people to do things for themselves without waiting or expecting those above us to do it for them. So here we are - independent, free thinking and open to ideas and collaboration.

★  
It's not just our space, it's a place open to anyone who wants to change things for the better. Read this as your invitation to 56a Infoshop and beyond!! Another world is desirable!!

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## GETTING ACTIVE

### PRISON NEWS

#### Hunger striker transferred

After seven days on hunger strike, anarchist prisoner Nikos Kountardas has been beaten and transferred to the Chios island prison in north-east Greece. He has subsequently ended his hunger strike.

Kountardas began his hunger strike on 21st February, while he was being held in isolation at Cassandra's Prison in Halkidiki, northern Greece. He was beaten by prison guards who tried to make him stand out in the yard and provoked other prisoners to spit on him. No one did so.

He was demanding that he be released from prison and that the current case against him (for raising an anti-repression banner in a soccer stadium) is dropped, along with accusations that he was involved in an arson attack at the ETE bank in Ksanthi.

He wants his personal items back, and all limitative clauses for an older case concerning the beating of former government party-allied union president dropped. He also wants the stopping of torture in Cassandra's prison.

*Freedom* was unable to get a public contact address for support letters, but should be able to pass on any letters of support.

To protest against Kouantardas's treatment, you can write to: The Greek Ambassador to the UK, Embassy of Greece, 1A Holland Park, London, W11 3TP, or email: [political@greekembassy.org.uk](mailto:political@greekembassy.org.uk)

You can find regular updates, in Greek, at [kratoumenoi.ath.cx](http://kratoumenoi.ath.cx)

#### Solidarity march for Vaggelis Botzatzis

A Solidarity March was organised in Thessaloniki in Greece over the case of Vaggelis Botzatzis last month.

Vaggelis has been detained in Komotini juridical prison accused of burning two power company cars in protest at the pillaging of nature and against workplace deaths that had been occurring at the site.

He is also accused of burning a bank, being against capitalism and in favour of anarchists detained for a bank robbery, and also an arson at a French brand car yard that is said to be in solidarity with the recent youth revolts, although no communiqué was sent.

On the day after the last arson, Vaggelis was arrested in his house under the anti-terrorist law because a security guard claims he recognised his car. Vaggelis doesn't accept the accusations and says that he has been framed. He denies all the allegations against him and maintains his innocence.

In spite of some police attention, no one was arrested at the march.

You can send letters of support to: Vaggelis Botzatzis, Komotini Juridical Prison ('Dikastikes Fylakes Komotinis'), T.K. 69100, Greece.

Vaggelis can receive short messages of support written in English.



Photograph: Indymedia

**RENEWED EFFORTS:** The Square Social Centre, a radical squatted venture opened and evicted in 2006, was based in Camden. The area is now to host one of the first of 32 borough 'nodes' across the city.

● A London Anarchist Movement meeting was held in London on 28th February, which is aiming to build a class-based framework for action in the capital.

The invite-only event, which saw 60-70 people attend, is looking to bring in groups involved in anarchist or sympathetic activities in London to present strategy proposals.

Among those being asked in the initial stages are Haringey Solidarity group, London IWW and the London Coalition Against Poverty. Local 'nodes' are being proposed to try and branch out a linked-up movement into specific areas of the city, with a group of around a dozen people in Camden likely to form a starting node in the near future.

Eventually it is hoped there will be linked groups in each of London's 32 boroughs.

● The IWW's international general meeting is taking place in London this August. It will be the first time ever that the general assembly has taken place outside the USA.

The event, which is the highest decision-making gathering in the IWW, is aimed at kick-starting greater organisation in the capital.

At a recent talk in East Anglia, an organiser for Norwich IWW estimated a current total membership of the IWW of around 350-400 people, with the largest single branch at

Leicester holding around 40, and other larger branches in Glasgow, London, Edinburgh, Leeds and York.

The IWW, a syndicalist union, uses direct democracy in its organising structure, and was officially recognised as a union in the UK in 2006. Go to [iww.org.uk](http://iww.org.uk) for more information or email [rocsec@iww.org.uk](mailto:rocsec@iww.org.uk).

● The full provisional lineup for this year's Projectile film festival has been announced. The film festival will take place over four days, starting on the 23rd of May. Highlights include a live web link to famed libertarian socialist, Noam Chomsky, including a Question and Answer session on anarchism.

On day two Projectile opens with the documentary *Ethel MacDonald: an anarchist's story*, with an opportunity to question the film-maker, Mark Littlewood.

Highlights of day three include a round-table discussion on class and community struggle. The session will try to learn some lessons and consider what class politics might look like in a local setting.

Finally on the bank holiday Monday, a day of films will include *Porto Marghera: the last firebrands*, an account of the struggle for workers autonomy (*operaismo*) in Italy during the 1970s.

The full programme will be available at [projectile.org.uk](http://projectile.org.uk).

# The Russian Revolution: 1905

## A short history of the first unsuccessful Russian Revolution

The 1905 revolution was an empire-wide struggle of violence, both anti-government and undirected, that swept through vast areas of the Russian Empire. It was not controlled or managed, and it had no single cause or aim, but was the culmination of decades of unrest and dissatisfaction stemming from the autocratic rule of the Romanov dynasty and the slow pace of reform in Russian society, as well as calls for national liberation by non-Russians within the Empire.

The revolt started on 22nd January when a peaceful, mildly reformist protest march in St Petersburg was shoot at by troops with more than 1,000 killed or injured. This day became known as 'Bloody Sunday'.

All across Russia, different sections of the people moved into active protest. The peasants and workers joined with the middle classes, intelligentsia and (minority) national groups (i.e. Georgians, Ukrainians, etc.) against the absolutism and oppression of the Tsarist monarchy. Each group had different aims, however, and the two forces which played the leading part in the revolution were the workers and peasants, who raised economic and political demands while the better-off middle-classes sought mostly the latter.

Unrest was spread as the year progressed, reaching peaks in early summer and autumn before climaxing in October. There were naval mutinies at Sevastopol, Vladivostok and Kronstadt, peaking in June with the mutiny aboard the Battleship Potemkin, in which Afanasy Matiushenko played a key role. Strikes took place all over the country and the universities closed down when the whole student body complained about the lack of civil liberties by staging a walkout. Lawyers, doctor, engineers, and other middle-class workers established the Union of Unions and demanded a constituent assembly.

In the countryside, there were land-seizures by the peasantry (including the looting the larger estates) and a nation-wide Peasant Union was created. In the towns, the workers' act of resistance was the strike. Immediately after Bloody Sunday there was a general strike in St Petersburg which, by the end of January, involved over 400,000 workers. The strikes subsequently spread across the country, and in the process new forms of working class self-organisation were created. These were councils made up of workers delegates, the famous 'soviets'.

While the soviets were initially brought



OCCUPIED: Demonstrators in Pietarsaari, Finland, in autumn 1905.

into being by workers to solve their immediate problems (for example winning the strike, the eight-hour day, working conditions), their role changed and they quickly evolved into an organ of the general and political representation of workers, raising political demands. The first soviet was established in Ivanovna-Voznesensk during the 1905 Textile Strike. It began as a strike committee but developed into an elected body of the town's workers. Over the next few months Soviets of Workers Deputies were established in around 60 different towns. On October 13th, the more famous St Petersburg Soviet of Workers' Deputies was created out of the 'Great October Strike' on the initiative of the printers' strike committee in order to better co-ordinate the strike.

This was Russia's first political general strike, lasting from September to 30th October. Although strikes had been common in Russia in the years leading up to 1905, this powerful weapon of direct action effectively paralysed the whole country.

The October strike started in St Petersburg and quickly spread to Moscow, and soon the railwaymen strike paralysed the whole Russian railway network. "A new weapon, more terrible than street warfare, had thus been tested and proved to work admirably", observed Kropotkin.

As Kropotkin put it, the general strike was the key development, as "the working

men again threw the weight of their will into the contest and gave quite a new turn to the movement. A strike of bakers broke out at Moscow in October, and they were joined in their strike by the printers. This was not the work of any revolutionary organisation. It was entirely a working men's affair, but suddenly what was meant to be a simple manifestation of economical discontent grew up, invaded all trades, spread to St Petersburg, then all over Russia, and took the character of such an imposing revolutionary manifestation that autocracy had to capitulate before it."

The soviets had challenged the power of Nicholas II and the general strike forced him to issue the October Manifesto, with its parliament, freedom of the press, assembly and association. They failed to remove him from power, however, and he quickly reneged on his promises. By December, communist Leon Trotsky and the rest of the executive committee of the St Petersburg Soviet had been arrested.

Although put down with a blend of accommodation and savagery, the Revolution did increase the pace of reform in Russia, but not enough to prevent the second revolution which overturned the Romanovs in 1917. The revolution of 1905 was often looked back on by the Bolsheviks as an initial popular antecedent to their own revolution.

From libcom.org (edited by James Horrox)

## REVIEWS

## WHAT'S ON

## MARCH

15th Dublin Anarchist Bookfair at the Teachers Club, Parnell Square, see [www.wsm.ie/bookfair](http://www.wsm.ie/bookfair) for details.

16th Sunday picnic to campaign against the anti-protest exclusion zone around Parliament, meet at 1.30pm on the green at Parliament Square, Westminster, London and bring food to share, games to play and good ideas.

22nd Tongues on Fire!! at the Hackney Social Centre, 231 Lower Clapton Road, London E5, with café and open mike, bring poetry, instruments and friends, from 7.30pm till midnight, call 07958 283 676.

22nd Enforcing your rights at work, an LCAP training day from 2pm until 5pm at LARC, 62 Fieldgate Street, London E1, see [lcap.org.uk](http://lcap.org.uk) for more information.

24th Aldermaston 2008 'The Bomb Stops Here' – celebrate 50 years of protest since the first Aldermaston march in 1958, see [cnduk.org/aldermaston](http://cnduk.org/aldermaston) for details.

24th Film showing of *Riff-Raff* by Ken Loach, at The Pogo Café, 76 Clarence Road, London E5 8HB, film starts at 7.30pm, for details phone 0208533 1214 or see [pogocafe.co.uk](http://pogocafe.co.uk)

28th Critical Mass London, meet at 6pm on the South Bank under Waterloo Bridge by the National Film Theatre, see [criticalmasslondon.org.uk](http://criticalmasslondon.org.uk)

29th Second trade union and community conference against immigration controls, from 10.30am onwards at SOAS, Gower Street, London WC1, for details see [29thmarch.org.uk](http://29thmarch.org.uk)

31st Film showing of *Animal Farm* at The Pogo Café, 76 Clarence Road, London E5, film starts at 7.30pm, for details phone 0208533 1214 or see [pogocafe.co.uk](http://pogocafe.co.uk)

31st Nick Heath presents an evening of French chanson (lyrical songs) and the contribution of anarchism to chanson, at Housmans Bookshop, 5 Caledonian Road, London N1 8DX, see [housmans.com](http://housmans.com) for details

## APRIL

1st Fossil Fuels Day, a day of action against the fossil fuel industry called by Rising Tide International, for more see [fossilfuelsday.org](http://fossilfuelsday.org) or [risingtide.org.uk](http://risingtide.org.uk)

7th Film showing of *That Obscure Object of Desire* by Luis Buñuel, at The Pogo Café, 76 Clarence Road, London E5 8HB, film starts at 7.30pm, for details phone 0208533 1214 or see [pogocafe.co.uk](http://pogocafe.co.uk)

17th Private view of exhibition of cartoons by Donald Rooum at Conway Hall, 25 Red Lion Square, London WC1 (Holborn tube) from 4pm until 8pm (for invitation call 020 7791 2246). Exhibition continues from 18th April, see [conwayhall.org.uk](http://conwayhall.org.uk) for details.

19th Colin Ward's *Anarchy in Action* has now been reprinted and there will be a special launch event at Housmans Bookshop, 5 Caledonian Road, London N1 8DX, see [housmans.com](http://housmans.com) for details.

## TELEVISION

## The Street

by Jimmy McGovern  
BBC 1, November-December 2007

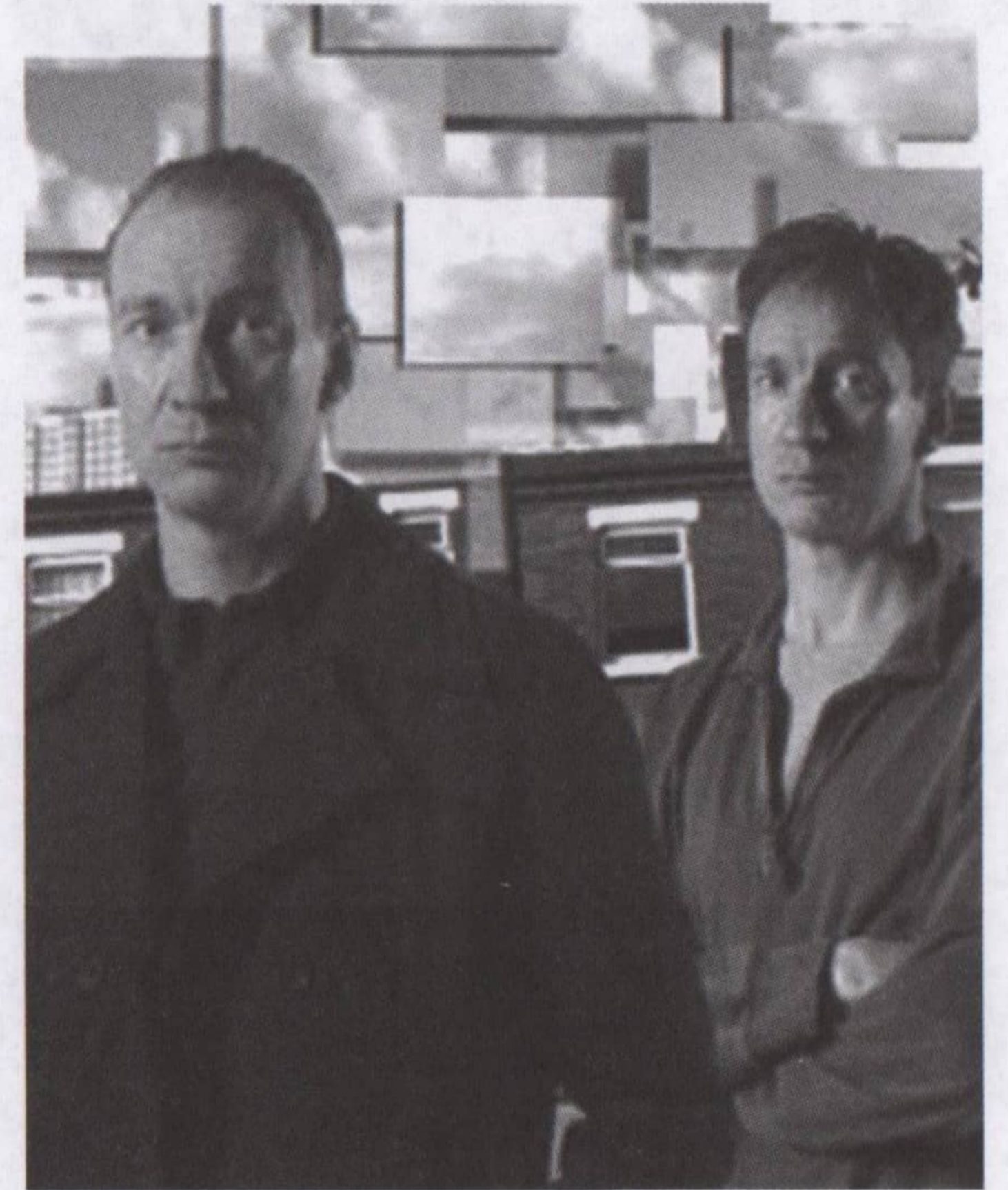
Jimmy McGovern (writer of early *Brookside*, *Cracker*, *Priest*, *The Lakes*, *Hillsborough*, [Bloody] *Sunday*, etc.) shuns primetime television drama as lazy cliché: "I'd never tune in to it because I know it's going to be crap".

*The Street*, made for BBC 1's 9pm slot, was instead inspired by 1950s US serial *The Naked City* – "behind every door, there's a story to be told". 2006's first run featured A-list actors and new writers, scripts duly polished and tweaked by McGovern, tackling themes of love and its hazards. Series two continues the gritty Northern melodrama, focusing on individual redemption in six powerfully characterised narratives – benefits clerk impersonating dead twin (pictured); cabbie rekindling old flame; sisters divided by son's violence; building worker's awakening bisexuality; postie stealing middle-class mail (written by ex-Chumbawumba Alice Nutter); and a young man emerging from incarceration after a Jamie Bulger-style murder. So many tragedies on one terrace? It's enough to give you that kitchen sinking feeling...

Sure enough, a depressive pall suffuses variously unlikely or unbelievable plot contrivances, reinforced by hopeless, hapless white working-class responses. The dodgy decisions, minor lies and evasions, and blustering over-reactions invariably make things worse – like soap opera with the ebb and flow of drudgery removed and mundane pleasures compromised.

That the characters somehow find strength in themselves and their loved ones to envision a future is testament to *The Street*'s barbed humour, undeniably sharp scripts, and wonderful acting – such that empathy is possible at all for its fatally flawed fools. And despite favouring male perspectives, these emphasise the repercussions of botched efforts to sustain a traditional respectability otherwise abandoned on the scrapheap of cultural history.

Likewise, the bitter economics of everyday life in precarious postmodern society always



dominate proceedings and psyches – as in most people's real lives – and that's rare indeed in popular media.

However, there are no connections between the stand-alone stories and their characters – beyond neighbours passing in the background – and, other than pulling together in times of adversity, scarcely a hint of collective strength.

Seeing "ordinary people in extraordinary circumstances" surely illuminates our own dramas – viewers from working-class backgrounds doubtless repeatedly glimpsing their own reflections here – but extraordinary ways of coping with ordinary hardship, in imaginative, collective ways that ring true, might transcend the backward-looking, objectifying, guilt-tripping, breast-beating that UK social realism is regrettably renowned for. McGovern himself always stresses "there's no problem with working-class communities that money wouldn't solve", but here the protagonists are undoubtedly their own worst enemies.

Nonetheless, from conception in solidarity and humility to execution with such immense warmth and storytelling craft, *The Street* triumphantly bucks trivial television trends – just as its creator intended.

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

## QUIZ ANSWERS

1. Woodrow Wilson. He said this in January 1917. In April, the US entered the war on the side of the Allies.
2. The Star Spangled Banner, anthem of the USA. It originates in a poem called 'The Defence of Fort McHenry', which was written by Francis Scott Key after the bombardment of Baltimore in 1814. It was later set to the tune of 'The Anacreontic Song', an eighteenth century drinking song.
3. Beginning in 1866, Irish-Americans

- organised in the Fenian Brotherhood raided parts of Canada in the hope of altering British policy in Ireland. While they had some successes in battle, the raids were unsuccessful in their aims.
4. Both consider it a victory. Canada because it was the defeat of the last serious US attempt to annex Canada. The US because the major battles at the war's end were fought on US soil and were American victories.

# From Dusk 'til Dawn

**Steve finds in Keith Mann's biography a story of unremitting courage in the cause of animal liberation**

**C**haucer gave us 'The Wife of Bath's Tale', 'The Reeve's Tale', 'The Knight's Tale' and many others, but we have had to wait for another six hundred years for Keith Mann to give us the animal liberationist's tale. *From Dusk 'til Dawn* tells the history of the direct-action wing of the animal liberation movement from the perspective of one of that movement's most prominent figures.

The book was begun as far back as Mann's first spell in HMP Liverpool in 1992 and – like its author – was to have a chequered history before its eventual publication in 2007. The manuscript was left when Mann liberated himself during his celebrated escape from Stretford custody office in 1993.

Fortunately it was to be later returned among other personal possessions following his subsequent recapture the next year. Mann was unable to escape a second time because he was forced to wear yellow-banded prison clothes, due to his reputation for being flighty (page 427). During Mann's two further lengthy spells in prison and intermittent periods of liberty, however, *From Dusk 'til Dawn* was completed.

Rochdale-born Keith Mann has been committed to animal liberation since the early 1980s. The *Daily Mail* once honoured him with the title a "very ordinary monster" given his notoriety for direct action and sabotage as an unrepentant Animal Liberation Front activist.

The present book is written from the experience of twenty-five years in the front-line against animal abuse. *From Dusk 'til Dawn* has a wealth of first-hand accounts of audacious raids that probably only an 'insider' such as Mann could pull together.

It is a tale that takes us panting through the countryside to the reeking cages and hidden agonies of animal abuse from the comfort of our cosy armchairs. Nevertheless, the book is a heavy device, spring-loaded to catapult us out of such comfortable armchair complacency.

Revelations of suffering are balanced against the exhilaration of liberation. The optimism of the act was a key feature in the emergence of the Animal Liberation Front with its watchword of: "Where there's a will there's no wall!" (page 67).

Accounts such as the safe relocation of a colony of experimental baboons during 'Operation Greystoke' in France during the 1980s make compelling reading (page 102). This would be a textbook example of an animal liberation raid in the unlikely event that such a textbook should ever exist.



Photograph: ALF

CARING: Keith Mann, author of *From Dusk 'til Dawn*

Weighing in at more than 600 pages, Mann's book is an extremely comprehensive account of the UK scene (with references to the broader international movement) that no academic could have collated. It has celebrity endorsement in the form of a forward by Benjamin Zephaniah. *From Dusk 'til Dawn* is as long as a winter night – useful for letting in moonlight upon what "our government does not want told".

However, due to its length not all readers will read every page – some editing down could have been an improvement as long as its comprehensive coverage wasn't lost. The early historical chapter might have been cut because there is fuller treatment elsewhere (such as Hilda Kean, *Animal Rights...*, 1998) but provide context for what follows.

Mann is an uncompromising apologist for the spikey end of the animal liberation movement, taking a sledgehammer, paint stripper and bolt croppers and to some of the double standards that society has towards other species: "Cats in particular have occupied the deepest, darkest minds for decades and despite the determination and complexity of this 'research', have revealed very little about the workings of the cat or the human, aside from the disturbed mentality of the individuals inflicting this damage. That some people find cats weird or threatening is for them to deal

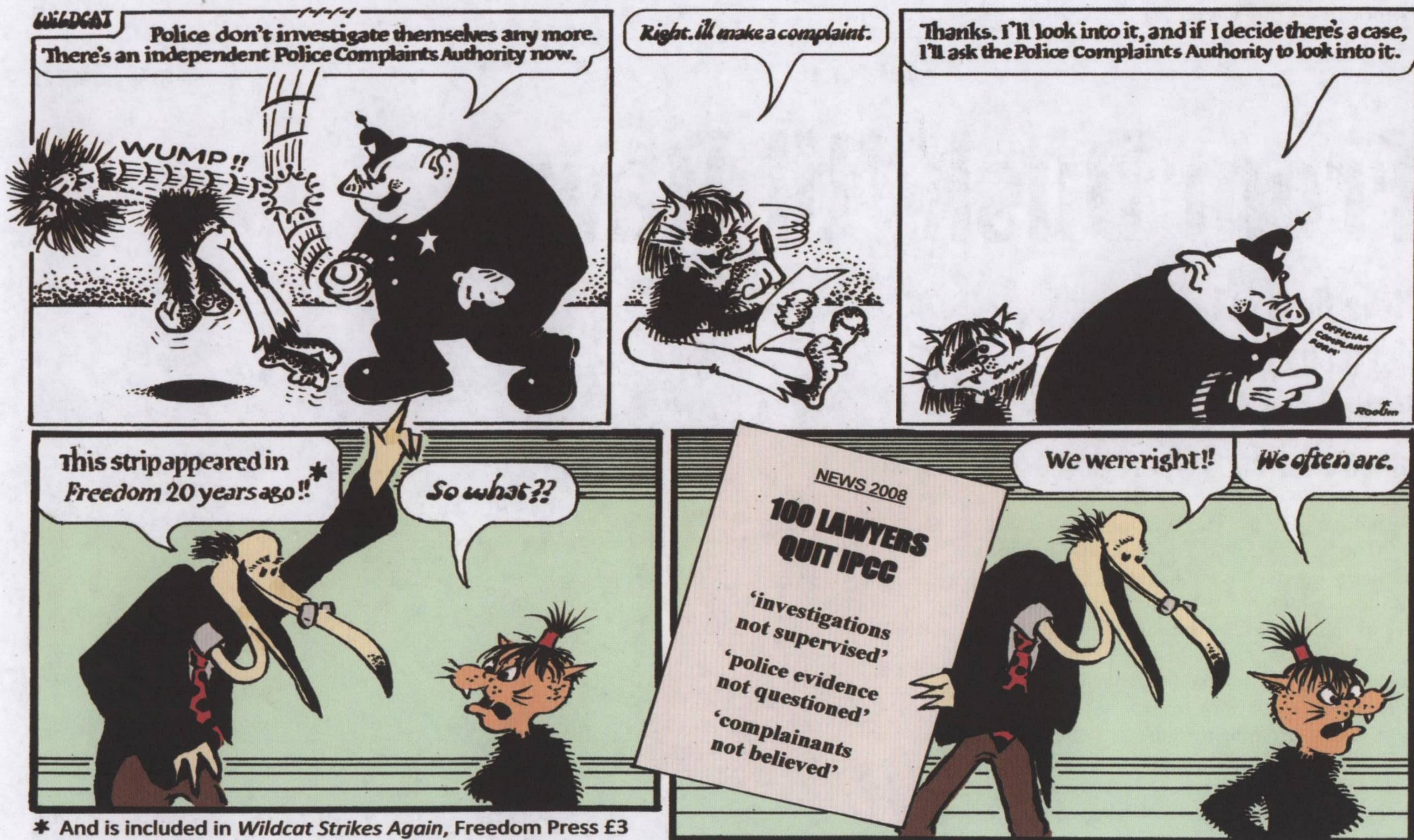
with, but using it as an excuse to inflict torture is something for the rest of us to deal with. And deal with it we must" (page 301).

He is keen to challenge the sloppy label that demonises animal liberationists as 'terrorists', reminding us that no animal abusers have been killed in forty years of the movement while four animal liberationists have died in the struggle in the UK – Tim Worby, Mike Hill and Jill Phipps killed during actions and hunger striker Barry Horne.

A further theme is the role of mainstream animal welfare organisations, especially the RSPCA, who in effect provide the impetus for the radical animal liberation movement through their corruption.

Quoting Jasper Carrot's comic description of the Animal Liberation Front as "the provisional wing of the RSPCA", its respectable royal forerunner is found to be desperately compromised – investing in vivisection, infiltrated by animal abusers, hoarding enormous capital reserves while animals die needlessly or actively promoting their slaughter.

The Hillside Animal Sanctuary provided ITV's *Tonight with Trevor McDonald* with footage to broadcast an exposé of abuses carried out on farms that the RSPCA audited as part of its so-called Freedom Food



## Reviews

➔ page 15

accreditation in March 2007.

Examples of cruelty, injustice and resistance frequently raise the question as to why some people will respond to similar stimuli with such passion and commitment that they are willing to devote every waking moment and their own freedom to a cause while others pass by with total indifference.

Anarchist perspectives on the animal liberation movement have been broadly sympathetic but divided. Some have regarded the movement as reformist single issue for all its apparent militancy. Pamphlets such as *Animal Liberation: A Case of Moral Indignation?* and *Animal Liberation: Devastate to Liberate? Or Devastatingly Liberal?* argued that animal liberationists were avoiding the revolutionary reconstruction of social hierarchical relation-

ships necessary to achieve real liberation for humans and non-humans alike.

Mann explicitly rejects the accusation of a single-issue approach arguing that to fight for animal liberation is to have far-reaching social and environmental consequences, making inevitable links to earlier oppositional movements such as slave emancipation and the suffragette movement.

Animal liberation is a practical assault upon the commodification of living beings (including humanity) upon which capitalism depends. Certainly any challenge to the vivisection or meat industries will rapidly bring about confrontation with the financial and physical might of big business and the state apparatus. Present-day activists that continue to fight Huntington Life Sciences (shac.net) or the Oxford University's primate lab (speakcampaigns.org) will understand this clearly from bitter experience. *From*

*Dusk 'til Dawn* continues the debate.

Keith Mann, *From Dusk 'til Dawn: An Insider's View of the Growth of the Animal Liberation Movement*, published by Puppy Pincher Press, £14.99.

## THE QUIZ

1. Who argued that the US should stay out of the First World War to "keep the white race strong against the yellow – Japan for instance"?
2. Which national anthem is set to the music of an old English drinking song and was written after an unsuccessful British attack?
3. By whom and when was the last invasion of Canada?
4. How is the War of 1812 considered by Americans and Canadians?

Answers on page 14

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