

## WOMEN'S PRISON REFORMS

### Labour drags heels over inadequate conditions

Despite two separate reports urging significant changes both nationally and internationally to the way women are being treated in prison, the government is continuing to drag its feet, say prison activists.

The government are in the midst of responding to The Cornston Report, which looked at how women in prison are treated and found 'radical changes' needed to be made. In an announcement on its progress, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State, Ministry of Justice Maria Eagle said that strip searches could be replaced with less invasive measures, particularly when it involved women who had been the victims of domestic or sexual abuse.

She also said a pilot system would be trying an integrated approach providing community and residential facilities, specifically for vulnerable women, alongside a possible expansion of the 'turnaround' system, where several agencies combine to try and integrate offenders back into society.

The measures have come under fire however both for their timidity and for the slow speed at which they've been implemented.

Proposals to shut down larger facilities and replace them with smaller community jails

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### LENS CAP SHEFFIELD GREEN FAIR



**SQUEEZE:** Children have fun on a giant inflatable earth at the Sheffield Green Fair. In the wake of a series of warnings over climate change, both regional and national green gatherings have seen an upsurge in attendance, though a proliferation of the fairs themselves have diluted numbers.

## IMMIGRATION CRACKDOWN ... AGAIN

A slate of new policies are aiming to make life more difficult for immigrants and long-term visitors to the UK. Alongside a new 'name and shame' policy against companies found to be flouting new rules banning the employment of 'illegal' immigrants, around 7,500 UK Border Agency officers and staff are being reorganised into local immigration teams, designed to hunt down immigrant workers. Alongside this re-organisation, another 1,000 enforcement staff are to be hired, and automatic deportation will be authorised for those caught working. Local authorities will also be expected to throw their weight behind the plan.

The new local immigration teams will gather intelligence, track and detain immigrants, and investigate working operations. Alongside the new force, a policy of 'naming and shaming' employers

who give work to unauthorised immigrants, alongside fines of up to £10,000, is also being implemented. Anyone who wants to sponsor a family member to visit from abroad meanwhile will have to apply for a license, facing fines of £5,000, or even a jail sentence if the people they sponsor don't leave on time.

Meanwhile, in Europe, French Premier Nicolas Sarkozy has said he is making a priority of France's six-month presidency of the EU to significantly toughen European policy towards immigrants. Hot on the heels of the investiture of an EU-wide rapid reaction force against immigrants, he plans to harmonise EU legislation, use high technology on the borders of the EU and increase funding to the border countries, and a ban on blanket amnesties – more than two million people got working papers in Spain and Italy between 2003 and 2007.

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## NEWS

## IN BRIEF

**SPORT:** The government has offered to bail out the Olympic Village project, after its private backers found they were unable to find money to invest in it. The project was handed over to Australian property group Lend Lease as part of a PFI deal, which would have seen the company take over responsibility for building the site, in exchange for profiting from selling it off again after 2012. However, a lack of available finance has meant they cannot keep their part of the bargain. The government is likely to step in and help using part of the Olympic Development Authority's contingency funding, despite originally saying the whole point of the move was to take initial startup costs off the public books.

**SUPERMARKETS:** Workers making clothes at a factory in India for the top British retailer Tesco are toiling long hours for as little as 16p an hour – only half a living wage.

The announcement, by charity War on Want, follows an investigation by *Panorama* on 23rd June which showed some of India's poorest people, including children, working long, gruelling hours for poverty pay on Primark clothes in slum workshops and refugee camps.

According to the research, employees at a large Tesco supplier factory in Bangalore are struggling to survive on less than £1.50 a day for a 60-hour week, with a 20% hike in rice prices making life even harder.

**HOUSING:** A massive six million families are suffering stress or depression due to today's sky-high housing costs, a new report by Shelter shows. *The Breaking Point* report also highlights the desperate sacrifices people are making to keep a roof over their heads, including spending less on food, selling possessions, borrowing from friends and family, and depriving their children of treats.

The report, based on a YouGov survey of 6,799 adults in Great Britain, set out to discover what affect Britain's chronic shortage of affordable homes to buy and rent is having on ordinary people. It found:

- Six million (almost one in four) households are suffering stress or depression because of their housing costs
- Two million say meeting housing costs is a constant struggle, with 400,000 falling behind with rent or mortgage payments
- 6.3 million (one in four) are spending less on food
- Three million (one in nine) have sold possessions
- 2.8 million (11%) have been forced to borrow money to meet their housing costs in the last 12 months
- 4.1 million households (16%) have used a credit card to help meet their housing costs in the last 12 months

The report says the Government must take immediate action to build more homes, protect people at risk of losing their property and end the widening housing divide between the housing haves and have nots.

## LENS CAP ZIMBABWEAN TRADE UNIONISTS



A photo mosaic made up of more than 2,000 photographs, sent in by individual trade unionists from around the world in support of Lovemore Matombo and Wellington Chibebe. The pair face charges of "spreading falsehoods prejudicial to the state".

## Iron fist: antifascist news

## Red White and Banned?

Following the revoking of their music and drink license by the local Nottingham council, the BNP have vowed to go ahead with their annual knees-up the 'Red, White and Blue Festival' which habitually ends in a fascist on fascist punch-up.

At a local meeting following the ban, and then later at the ill-attended anti-BNP march in London a couple of weeks ago, it became clear that mainstream antifascist group UAF were not telling their members about RWB and certainly not mobilising.

In light of this the unaffiliated militant group Antifa have added to their website and online news forums a call out to 'shut down' the event.

"We will be descending upon their farm and wish to encourage as many people as possible to join us. For details of where you

need to be, at what time and any available transport from your area please call Antifa on 07522 034032."

## BPP talking nonce sense

When the neo-nazi British People's Party heard that their regional organiser Martyn Gilleard had been arrested in Goole, East Yorkshire, after nail bombs were found under his bed, they hailed (heiled?) him as a hero in the footsteps of David Copeland who killed three, including a pregnant woman, and injured 129, four of whom lost limbs, in nail bomb attacks in 1999. But cops also seized nearly FORTY THOUSAND pictures of children and babies being sexually abused and tortured.

So that's what they mean by a safe future for Aryan children!

Bill Stickers

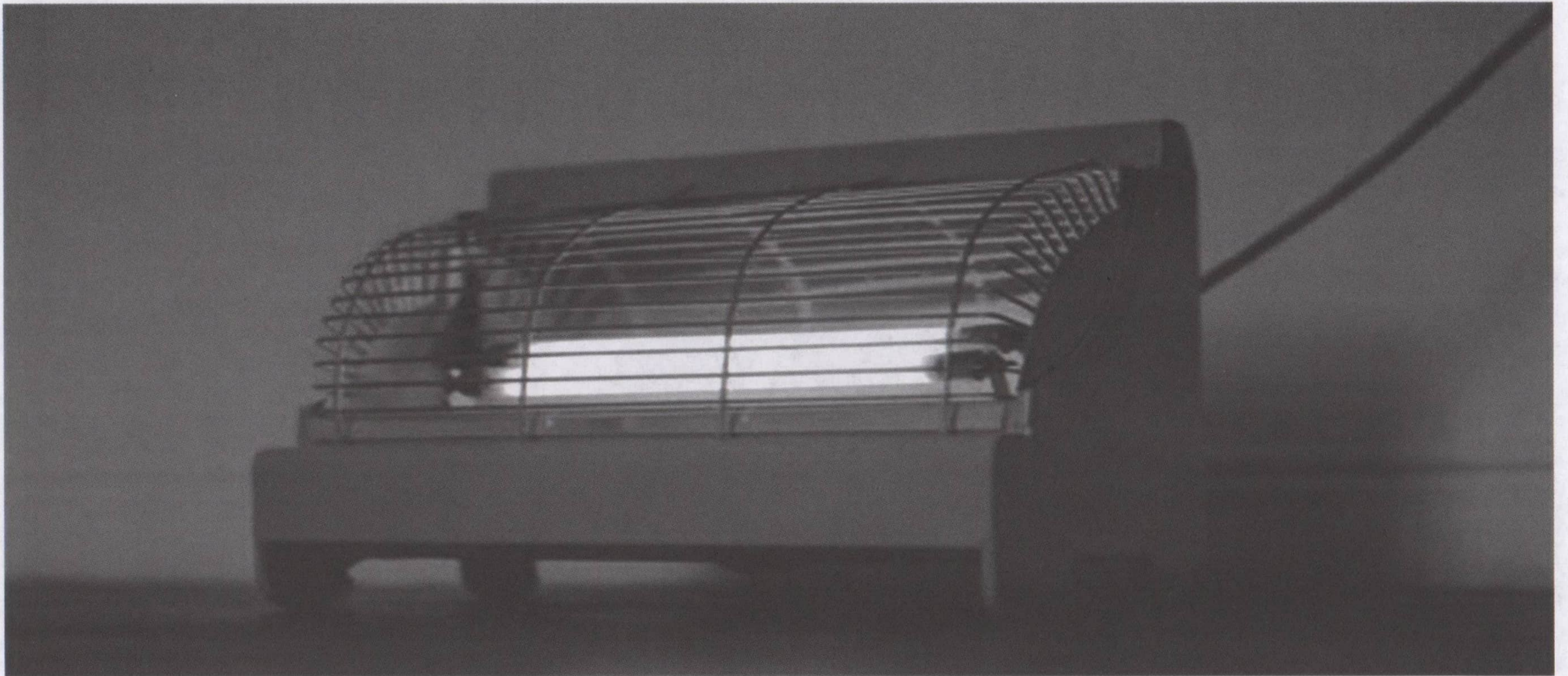
# The Anarchist Quiz Book

Who said "I shit on all the revolutionary vanguards of this planet"? Find out in the new Anarchist Quiz Book from Freedom Press, compiled by Martin Howard and illustrated by Paul Petard.

Some say that it should not be the highest priority of a revolutionary movement to ask itself obscure questions, but it's good fun and if it encourages an enquiring mind to find out more, than all the better. So agitate, educate and organise, all in this very handy question and answer format!

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# Fuel poverty will explode by 2020

## Prices rises and tariffs to hit poor

As the number of people in fuel poverty rises, the government is turning over billions in subsidies to help major electricity companies implement mandatory green energy improvements.

A new Renewable Energy Strategy, announced late last month, has suggested that customers will be told to shell out more for their energy bills to pay for an expansion in renewable energy from private companies, while the companies maintain their profit margins and management pay levels.

As a result, the shift towards green energy is likely to be paid for by those who can least afford it, with electricity bills rising by 13% and gas going up by as much as 37% by 2020.

Petrol could go up by 4% over normal market prices.

The hikes coincide with new reports on fuel poverty which suggest that by Christmas some six million people could be living in fuel poverty – defined as a household spending 10% or more of their budget on electricity and gas.

Following a 15% rise in gas prices earlier this year, the number of people in fuel poverty has already hit 4.5 million, and a further proposed hike of 40% would potentially put another 1.5 million on the list as this winter rolls around.

If the measure goes through, it would mean one in four households falling into the category, three times the levels seen in 2004, before the green tariff had even hit people's pockets.

In its 1997 manifesto, Labour said one of its key priorities was to eradicate fuel poverty for vulnerable households.

As the saga goes on, the government is facing a High Court challenge over their actions on fuel poverty. Friends of the Earth and Help the Aged are accusing the government of “refusing to meet its legal duty” to help those who battle to keep warm and cannot cope with fuel bills.

A recent study by the Centre for Sustainable Energy and the Association for the Conservation of Energy found that it would cost £9.2 billion to eliminate fuel poverty for all but the poorest households, even if price rises and green tariffs were not implemented.

Ian Preston, from the Centre for Sustainable Energy, said: “This study clearly demonstrates that, on current levels of resources, neither the Government’s own fuel poverty programme or the energy suppliers’ own Carbon Emissions Reduction Target (CERT) schemes support the measures needed in sufficient volumes.”

## Women’s prison reforms

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has been rejected out of hand, while funding and direct wide-scale support for the measures the government agrees with has not been secured.

Corston pointed to a number of factors which needed to change within prison, including the need for specific funding streams to deal with differences such as the increased probability that women will be primary carers for children, may have a history of domestic or sexual abuse, could find that prison conditions designed for men are difficult to cope with (e.g. excessive security levels being used for low-risk offenders) and a substantially higher level of suicide and mental health problems.

Her report comes alongside a report by the International Centre for Prison studies, which

concludes that worldwide, women inmates of prisons come from the most deprived backgrounds – significantly below the levels of the male population – and that most imprisonment was drug related and non-violent.

In most cases, women were being held in far higher security facilities than they warranted, suggesting possible human rights breaches in some cases, and were being treated as ‘an afterthought’ to the male population.

In the best-case scenario, in Germany, women were allowed to live with their children until the age of six in self-contained flats with balconies, and staff did not wear prison uniforms.

In most cases the study found that health care was the single most pressing need, with

most facilities being male-dominated and unable to deal with a woman-centred approach.

Out of 20 countries listed, the UK had one of the lowest percentages of women in the prison population, at 5.4%. The US was highest at 9%.

Calls for major change have been growing as prison numbers have gone up alongside a significant number of suicides, deaths and self-harm. Around 4,500 women are currently in prison, hovering around record levels.

In particular a number of deaths at Styal prison, including the death of campaigner Pauline Campbell’s daughter, Sarah, in 2003 sparked a sustained direct action campaign led by Pauline, who sadly died earlier this year.

## PUBLIC SECTOR

# Affordable housing in crisis

Negotiations are taking place over a potential £1 billion buying spree by the government on behalf of social landlords, as funding continues to be drawn out of council housing.

A proposal from the National Housing Federation (NHF), the umbrella body representing Registered Social Landlords (RSLs), would divert money currently being held over by the government as the collapse of the housing market has meant there are no new homes for them to buy.

At present, housing associations take control of affordable housing built as part of larger private estates, which is sold off-plan. But as this dries up, so has the available stock. The credit crunch has seen reservations on new homes fall by up to 50% compared to last year, the lowest levels since 1945, wiping between 20,000 to 45,000 homes off the building docket.

The cash held up in this way would instead be poured into unsold housing – mostly inner-city flats and family homes – which has already been built and is on the open market, with the aim of boosting the prices of private homes and taking advantage of the downturn to buy at a discount. The NHF hopes to buy 10,000 units of housing for the money, including those taken from people in severe mortgage arrears.

Advocates from Defend Council Housing have condemned the government's advocacy of RSLs, saying the latest crisis, and continuing failure to keep up with the demand for social housing, has shown that the private sector can't be relied on to provide homes.

In an open letter to Gordon Brown, they said: "Meeting housing need now depends on government dropping its dogmatic opposition to investing in first class council housing.

"Since council housing is cheaper to build,



manage and maintain than the alternatives, it makes both political and economic sense to use public land and public investment."

Registered Social Landlords are independent bodies which have taken control of millions of homes around Britain as a non-profit private sector alternative to council housing, diverting funds away from existing council housing and new build programmes.

The sector has been boosted by policies which critics believe amount to blackmail, with only RSLs able to qualify for major funding grants to bring homes up to a

decent living standard. In council housing, in 2008/09 each tenant will pay £3,120 per home in rent (£6.1 billion nationally) but only receive £2,391 per home (£4.7 billion national total) back in services.

Tenant housing co-operatives have also been put forward as a potential solution by more radical groups. Even remaining nominally in state hands, or as arms-length organisations, the removal of layers of management structure and a high level of direct control from tenants can mean better services and cheaper running costs.

## Public sector set to ignite

Local government workers have voted 55% in favour of industrial action over a major new wage dispute, making strikes by over 600,000 workers a near certainty over this summer.

Unison balloted for strike action after rejecting a 2.45% pay offer from the government. Labour's 2% pay increase target for public sector pay has become increasingly stark against inflation – with sharp increases in the cost of fuel and basic necessities internationally.

Strikes are also looking likely elsewhere in the public sector, including from civil servants, further education lecturers, teachers and postal workers. Fire and maintenance workers at government owned airports in Scotland have already been on strike over similar sub-inflationary pay increases, as have workers in Scottish local government.

GMB union leaders have said that members are 'mutinous', and there are rumblings from Unison's NHS section that if inflation continues

to rise, a clause in their recent pay deal could be triggered which would see pay negotiations re-open for 500,000 workers.

Dave Prentis, general secretary of Unison said: "If inflation continues to spiral we will re-open negotiations. If the government refuses to renegotiate the agreement we would have no alternative but to ballot our members."

The government has acknowledged that the second and third years of the deal could be re-opened.

In the PCS, a similar clause for civil servants in the Department of Work and Pensions could see their own deal re-opened.

The TUC's Brendan Barber added: "It's not pay that's been driving inflation. It's been commodity prices. It ought to be possible to prioritise the living standards of lower earners."

Soaring food, fuel, gas and electricity prices sent the official inflation rate surging last month, with RPI inflation hitting 4.3%.

## Birmingham court threat

Birmingham Council's treatment of its staff when it imposed new employment contracts on them could see it footing a multi-million pound bill in compensation.

The council is being taken to court by several major unions after it forced 40,000 staff to sign controversial contracts which saw 5,000 people suffer a pay cut.

Unionists are being asked to register claims for unlawful deductions of wages or unfair dismissals, with the Unison union already handling over 4,000 cases, and the GMB urging 9,000 more to follow suit.

Three days of strikes were called earlier this year in protest at the changes, but had little impact on the council's plans. New contracts were imposed on all staff working outside of the education sector on 1st April.

While many people signed their new contracts, thus losing any chance of compensation, those who haven't could claim up to a month's wages.

# Unite responds to hunger strikers

Unite has responded to the hunger strike three ex-members carried out on the roof of the union's Belfast HQ in April and May of this year.

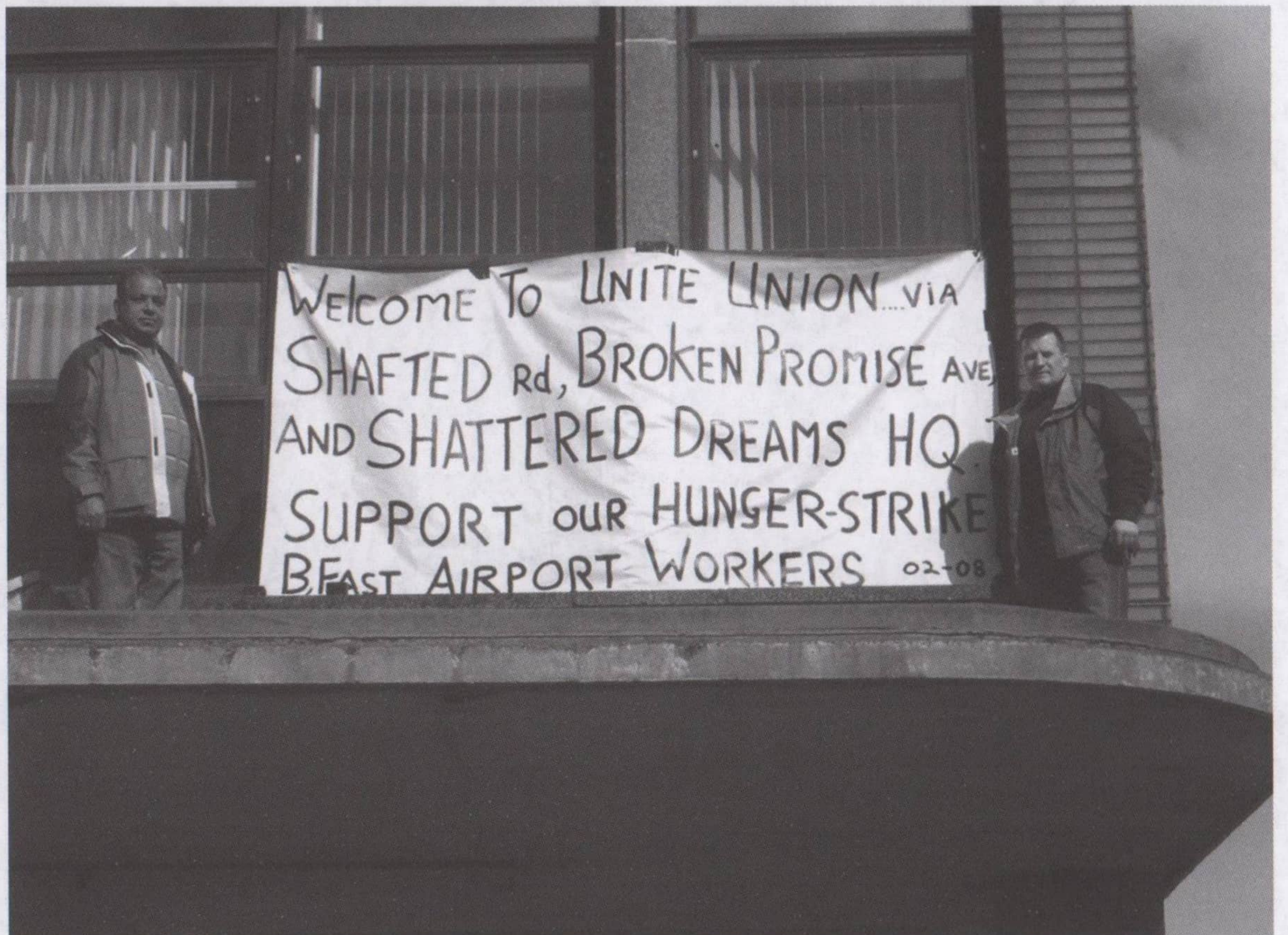
Gordon McNeill, Madan Gupta and Chris Bowyer were shop stewards for the union, then the T&G, when they were sacked along with 18 others from their jobs as Belfast Airport security workers in 2002 by their employer ICTS. Unite said it did not handle the dispute 'correctly' at the beginning and there was "justification for the original feelings of anger at the union by the sacked shop stewards".

With the election of Tony Woodley to the position of General Secretary the dispute was re-opened, eventually winning everyone except the three shop stewards either their jobs (with back pay) or compensation.

The union accuses the three of boycotting a meeting where the rest of those sacked voted to accept the deal, then later organise their own meeting at which they convinced the others to reject the offer in favor of much high compensation, which the union says "has proved to be nonsense".

In the press release there are dark murmurings of an "unknown number of outsiders" at this separate meeting, Unite previously mentioning "their supporters in the Socialist Party" – the Trotskyist group formerly called Militant.

In the face of what Unite cannot deny, they are appealing to the centre or right-wing of their membership and the unions in general, by isolating the dispute as creation of the far left. The sacked workers then used their own lawyers to represent them, and after their



HUNGER STRIKE: The three with banner at Transport House in Belfast

victory over ICTS charged their £200,000 legal costs to their former union, having left the T&G in 2004. Unite only paid £106,000 after carrying out an investigation of the claim.

After fighting the case at appeal, again with their own lawyers, Unite refused to pay further costs of what Unite claim was "one million pounds each" but the three say was only £40,000.

The dispute culminated in an intermittent 13-day hunger strike, during which Unite first took out an injunction against the protestors, called in the police, then finally agreed to pay the costs. However on 18th June, Gordon McNeill rejected the offer due to the inclusion of confidentiality clauses which would prevent him from discussing the affair.

## Norwich union celebrates sackings and outsourcing

Aviva is the world's fifth-largest insurance group worldwide, trailing behind AXA, Allianz, ING and Fortis with a presence in 25 countries worldwide. It is the second-largest insurance group in Canada and the biggest insurance group in the UK where it operates under the reassuringly local name Norwich Union.

It has retained the moniker of the medium sized East Anglian city throughout its outsourcing programme which has sent 8,988 of its jobs to not-so-local India (it predicted in 2005 that it would have 7,607 employed in business process outsourcing and 1,381 in IT outsourcing in India by this year).

Three years ago Sean Egan, Aviva CEO of Offshore Services argued this would leave the UK workforce in a more "data rational and analytical space" than they were previously.

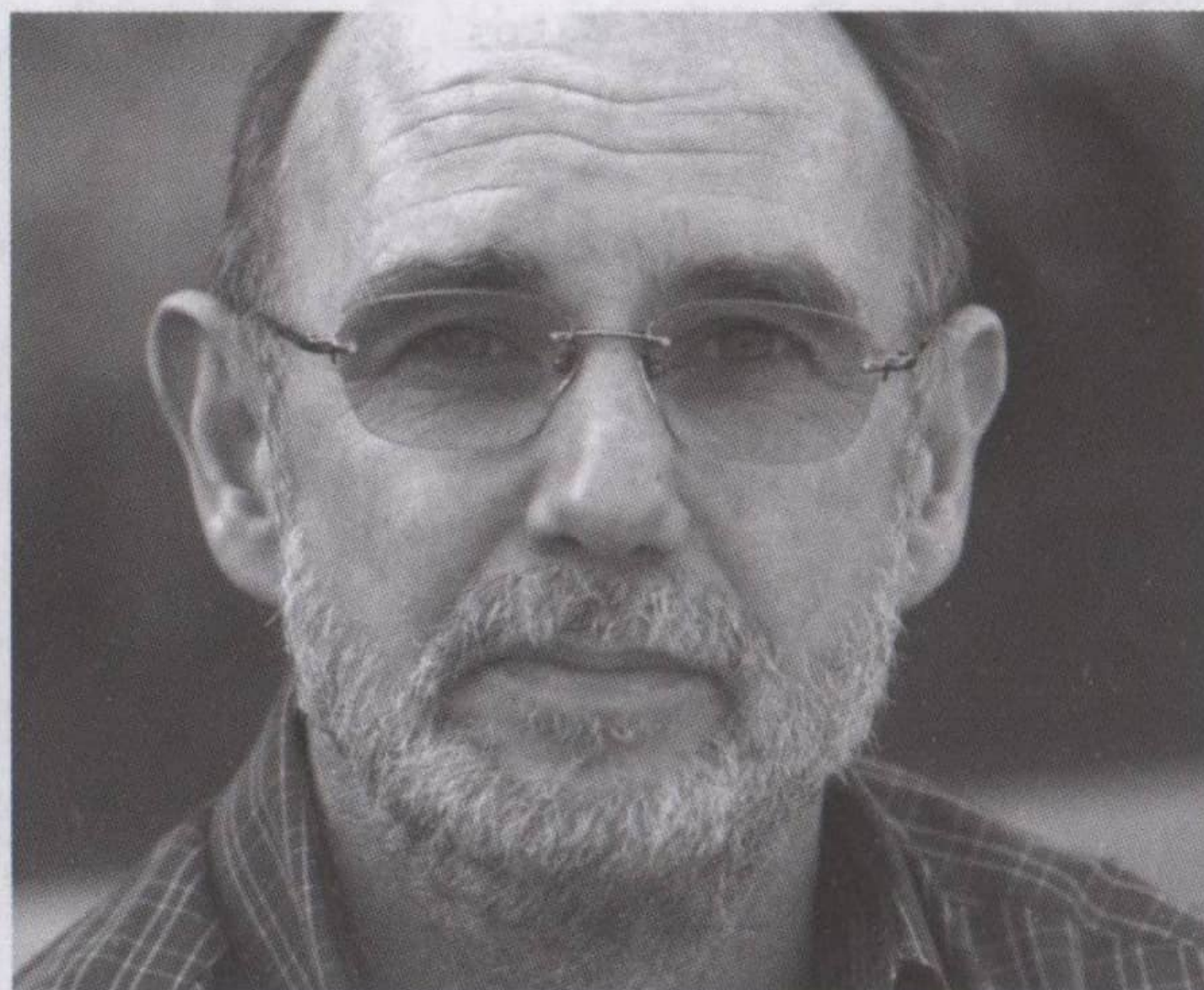
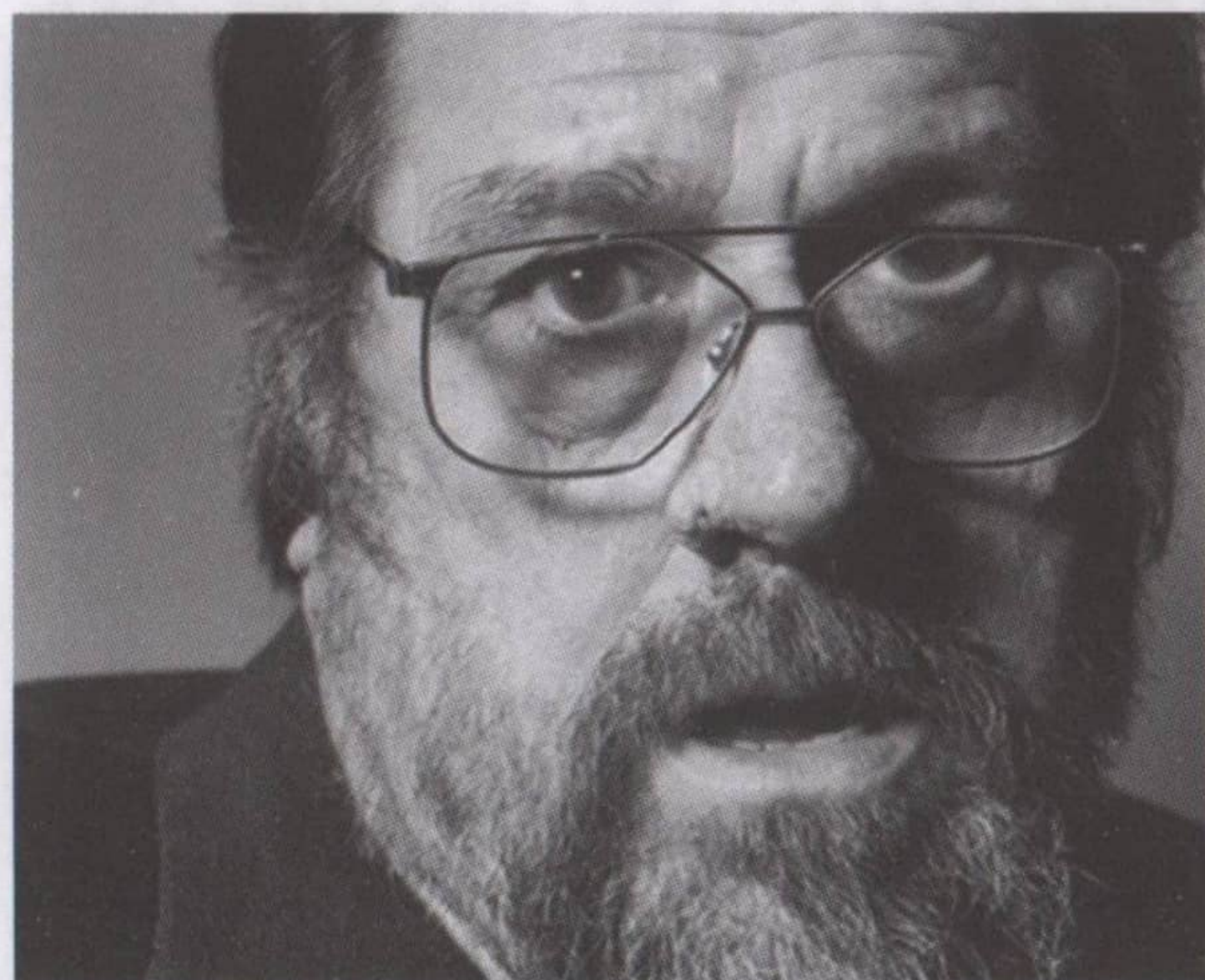
Presumably what he meant was 1,800 sackings as the company's profits fell to £1 billion this year following major outlays for last year's floods.

The job losses were concentrated in 22 towns and cities including Dundee, Glasgow, Leeds, Sheffield, Liverpool, Cheadle, Birmingham, Bolton, Southampton, Basildon, Ipswich, Exeter and Worthing and went through in early June.

Time for sombre reflection and thrifty thinking? Maybe for some.

A week after the jobs went in early June Norwich Union threw a freebie party for insurance journalists, shooting clay pigeons from a barge on the Thames.

"The juxtaposition is unfortunate," Norwich admitted. "We didn't know the timing when we scheduled the event."



CELEBRITY SUPPORTERS: Playwright Jimmy McGovern (right) and actor Ricky Tomlinson (left) have thrown their weight behind the stewards

## INTERNATIONAL

### IN BRIEF

**EGYPT:** Workers at the Mansoura-Espana Garments Company in Talkha have gone on strike. Central security forces and trucks surrounded the factory, and water cannons were used on the strikers. State security have threatened strikers with arrest

The strike started after Adel Hassaballah, deputy head of the Factory Union Committee, was barred from entering the factory compound. Hassaballa had been fired earlier for allowing journalists into the factory to speak to the workers.

The strike came after a week of unrest at the company. On Sunday 15th June the 250 workers staged a sit in following the sacking of trade unionist Mohssen el-Shae'r and the company's refusal to heed an agreement brokered in 2007.

El-Sha'er was sacked on charges of "talking to the press". El-Sha'er had talked to various journalists about the hardships at the factory.

**FRANCE:** Detained immigrants started a fire on at one of France's biggest deportation centres outside Paris. Two buildings burned down. Around 20 detainees were hospitalised for smoke inhalation and 50 people escaped.

There has been sustained agitation inside the two detention centers in Vincennes in the suburbs of Paris, where 273 people are held, since a detainee died late last month. The detainees started a protest, the cops answered with gas.

The blaze began when a number of detainees set mattresses on fire after the death of a Tunisian immigrant detained in the centre. Police said he died from a heart attack while alone in his bedroom. "This one too many death is to be blamed on the obsessive, cruel, brutal and inhuman policy that criminalises immigration," the MRAP said in a statement.

**GERMANY:** An old potash mine in north Germany containing nuclear waste is flooding at a rate of 12 cubic metres a day. The design for nuclear waste storage in the now flooding Asse II potash mine near Wolfenbüttel, about 80 kms southeast of Hannover, is the same as for a specially dug salt mine at Gorleben, seen as the likely permanent repository.

People have been protesting since Asse II began operating as a trial repository in 1967.

**GREECE:** Bangladeshi workers in clothing sweatshop in Athens, Greece, were attacked by company thugs for refusing to work on 23rd June. When their co-workers walked out in solidarity, the company fired 120 out of 180 of the working force. In response the workers sealed the factory off, forcing the company to withdraw the lay-offs and negotiate.

Foremen and thugs in the pay of the Lady Fashion clothing sweatshop in Votanikos, Athens, attacked Bangladeshi immigrant workers who had refused to work in the previous day (Sunday being an official day off in Greece), using iron bars and wooden clubs.

### LENS CAP REMEMBERING



People gather for the sixth anniversary of the Massacre of Avellaneda on 26th June. Amid violent repression by the government of Eduardo Duhalde against social protests, Dar'o Santillán and Maximiliano Kosteki were killed and more than 30 demonstrators shot – and none of those responsible were ever brought to justice. Among other actions, subvertising was carried out, such as replacing a Google logo with the faces of the two men killed.

## OCAP take on shelter losses

The Ontario Coalition Against Poverty (OCAP) in Canada are taking on City Hall to demand that Mayor David Miller immediately restore shelter beds in the downtown east side. The city has lost over 350 shelter beds in the downtown core, and tens of thousands of meals over the past year.

"They closed University Settlement for renovations today, so where am I supposed to sleep now?" asks Chris. "I'm sleeping in parks, under bridges. They got empty rooms here in City Hall though, maybe we should stay here?"

Activists with the group went to City Hall to directly confront bosses about their lack of action. On the way, security and 52 Division police arrested Gaetan Heroux, but they continued on while Gaetan was held for two

hours and released.

Miller however was absent so OCAP members went to Council Chambers to confront Miller and the Council directly. By the time they got there, Miller had already left council.

"Last February when a man died on the streets, you told us you would address this crisis," Danielle Koyama told the remaining councillors. "You patted yourselves on the back for replacing 60 of the 350 shelter beds lost. Well now we've lost another 65, so thanks for nothing!"

The action was the culmination of a weekend of protest at Allan Gardens by OCAP and allies, despite the city's attempts to clear them out. Over the weekend meals were served to hundreds of people from the streets.

## Notes from the United States

The level and extent of state spying ('domestic surveillance') by the US state are again being increased. It emerged about three years ago that the Bush government had been secretly – and illegally – intercepting huge numbers of telephone conversations between callers both inside and outside the country; the programme appeared to target 'dissidents', environmentalists and even churchgoers.

Subsequently it became clear that mass email screening had been taking place too. From the way the operation was described, it was also clear that it has become much

larger both than admitted and than it had been at the start. And that the start was probably much earlier than publicly acknowledged.

The media has not talked on the ethics, or even the illegality, of the plan, let alone on the economics of gathering so much data for so little returns. Instead it has concentrated on the immunity granted retrospectively to telephone companies (telcos) who connived – and are still conniving – in the project. On 20th June the Democrat-controlled House of Representatives passed a new measure which

# Hunger strikers win at Dubrava

## State promises early releases and better conditions

Prisoners in Kosovo have won a mass hunger strike aimed at forcing the government to abide by its newly-minted constitution.

Over 560 prisoners took part in the three-day hunger strike, which demanded that a promise of better living conditions and that an early release scheme be implemented, as promised by the government as it swept into de facto power last year.

The strikers have complained about poor and 'antiquated' facilities at the prison, and demanded that all prisoners who have served more than two-thirds of their sentences be freed.

After initially refusing to meet the Justice Minister, the strikers accepted a pledge from the Kosovan government would pass an amnesty law within weeks. The decision was passed by a council of prison strikers from the jail population.

The protest involved nearly two-thirds of the inmates at the 800-capacity Dubrava Prison, sited 90 km west of the Kosovan capital of Pristina, which is one of the most notorious jails in Eastern Europe.

Kosovo's President Fatmir Sejdiu promised last year that the law would pass upon the ratification of Kosovan independence – the EU did so earlier this year along with a domestic clearance of the document, although Serbia has refused to acknowledge independence for the breakaway state.

Kosovo's new constitution went into effect on June 15 after the Assembly of Kosovo adopted it in April despite a declaration by Serbian President Boris Tadic that the charter



REBUILDING: Workshop 2 at Dubrava prison

of the breakaway Serbian province was legally void.

Last year, some 500 prisoners held a one-week hunger strike during the long-running dispute, but this stopped when Kosovan independence was declared, as prisoners believed they would be released once this was achieved.

Serb forces withdrew from the region following the 1999 bombing campaign against Yugoslav forces under the political direction of President Slobodan Milosevic. It was subsequently put under UN administration.

Dubrava is one of the most hated sites in Kosovo, known throughout the reign of Slobodan Milosovic as a place where political prisoners were sent, and tortured.

As the Kosovan war neared its end in 1999, Serbia transferred Albanian prisoners *en masse* to the facility. It was to become the site of a massacre, with around 150 people, mostly

jailed for minor crimes or political reasons, reportedly shot and many more injured.

The incident was sparked off by NATO bombing of Dubrava, which prompted a prison battle where heavily armed Serb guards, who ex-prisoners say were already looking for reasons to kill, gunned down prisoners who attempted to barricade themselves out of harm's way.

Though the building was bombed during the NATO intervention, it remains a prison site today, and has retained both a political significance and a prison population, which has repeatedly had to resort to mass hunger strikes to secure reasonable treatment.

Three have taken place since the turning over of control from Serbian authority, first to the UN and then directly to Kosovan state hands. Alongside the two recent strikes, another was held in 2002.

## Notes from the Unites States

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would consolidate and extend both the extent and nature of the spying and the immunity granted to the telcos involved – a new FISA (Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act).

President Bush noted: "[the new bill] ensures that those companies whose assistance is necessary to protect the country will themselves be protected from liability for past or future co-operation with the government."

An analysis published by MAPLight at the time of the bill's passage through Congress shows that Democratic legislators who changed their vote to support immunity have – on average – received thousands of dollars more from the telcos than those who voted against.

Ninety-four Democrats who have received an average \$8,000 (£4,000) in contributions from the telcos over the last three years switched vote. The 116 Democrats who opposed immunity received on average only \$5,000 (£2,500).

So the Senate is now preparing to vote on what amounts to a major rewrite of the country's surveillance laws. In the words of Wisconsin senator Russ Feingold (who opposes the measure and plans to filibuster), "[the bill] ... will make it very easy for the government to essentially suck up the communications, all communications of Americans that go overseas, whether it's an email or a text message or a phone call... This is one of the greatest intrusions, potentially, on the rights of Americans protected under the Fourth Amendment of the US Constitution in the history of our country."

As for the immunity, Feingold points out that: "...there is an additional benefit to the [telcos] ... if this immunity goes through. It may block our ability to directly challenge in court the violation of the Constitution that the illegal wiretapping programme represents.'

## Ungdomshuset continues

After 69 weeks, a symbolic demonstration was held in Copenhagen marking the street number of the youth house and the successful continuation of weekly protests ever since the violent eviction of Denmark's famed social centre Ungdomshuset. Organisers had announced it was going to last 24 hours, with an open air cinema, pirate party, blocking traffic, speeches, concerts and happenings.

The demonstration moved around Copenhagen, stopping in different locations to give speeches or show political films. At many points there were disagreements with the police following them, but the demonstrators always got their way in the end, often stopping for long stretches in main roads.

After 21 hours the police finally moved in and confined the demo to a square in Vesterbro. This resulted in a big public manifestation on the square with both bands and DJs coming from other parts of the city to play.

## FEATURE

# Ecology and its recuperation by Capitalists

## Brian Morris rings the changes

Long ago the biologist Paul Sears described ecology as the “subversive science”, and there is no doubt that when I first became involved in environmental issues in the 1960s, ecology was seen very much as a radical movement. The writings of Barry Commoner and Murray Bookchin emphasised that we were confronting an impending ecological crisis, and that the roots of this crisis lay firmly with an economic system – capitalism – that was geared not to human well-being but to the generation of profit, that saw no limit to growth or technology, even celebrating the achievements of the “megamachine”.

Ultimately it was felt, by both Commoner and Bookchin, that capitalism was destructive not only to ourselves but to the whole fabric of life on the planet. For the underlying ethic of capitalism was indeed the technological domination of Nature, an ethic that viewed the biosphere as having no intrinsic value; it was simply a resource to be exploited – by capital.

Over thirty years ago Bookchin was thus describing capitalism as “plundering the earth” in search of profits, and was highlighting with some prescience – long before Al Gore and George Monbiot – the problems of global warming – that the growing blanket of carbon dioxide would lead to destructive storm patterns, and eventually to the melting of the ice caps and rising sea levels (in *Post Scarcity Anarchism* 1971, page 60).

This was in addition to the many other ecological problems that Bookchin identified as constituting the “modern crisis” – deforestation, urbanisation, the impact of industrial farming, pollution of the oceans, toxic chemicals and food additives, and the wanton destruction of wildlife and the subsequent loss of species diversity.

Bookchin’s pioneering ecological critique of industrial capitalism has more recently been re-affirmed (with little acknowledgement to Bookchin!) in Joel Kovel’s excellent *The Enemy of Nature* (2002) – the enemy, of course, being global capitalism.

How things have changed! ‘Global warming’ is now firmly on the political agenda, acknowledged by almost everyone apart from some die-hard right-wing neo-liberals, and everyone is being cajoled into finding ways to ‘save’ the planet. Such hubris is quite mind-boggling! Humans are quite unable to destroy the planet; what they are doing through an economic system based on greed and exploitation, is making many parts of the earth virtually uninhabitable for humans and other life-forms.

‘Ecology’ or ‘green’ issues have therefore now been embraced by individuals and groups right across the political spectrum. Even neo-Nazis claim to be anti-capitalist and to embrace the green perspective. So you will not be surprised to learn that the majority of major transnational corporations – including Shell, Nestlé and Coca Cola – have leapt aboard the green bandwagon and are enthusiastically demanding that we all cut our carbon emissions.

So what is going on? Four tendencies, I think, are worth noting.

One is that capitalist corporations are now in the process of ‘greening’ their public image. Something that the Shell corporation has been engaged in for several decades, given its awful record in terms of environmental destruction. It would be difficult to find any major transnational corporation these days that does not proudly acclaim and advertise its ecological sensibility and its ‘green’ credentials.

Secondly, although most people now acknowledge that there is an environmental crisis, efforts are continually being made to convince us that this crisis has nothing to do with the capitalist economy *per se*. Deep ecologists have long been informing us that it is all due to a lack of spirituality, or that there are too many people, or even that humans are by nature either ‘aliens’ or unwanted ‘parasites’ on earth. Such misanthropic sentiments were long ago critiqued by Bookchin. So according to Jonathan Porritt (an adviser to New Labour on environmental issues) what we need is a suitable marriage between capitalism and spiritualism! Heaven forbid!

Development experts, in contrast, blame



STRIP MINING: In 1977 Montana passed a law allowing the strip mining of 33,000 acres of forest, with the proviso that it would all have to be put back exactly as it was. Today, barely 216 acres have been reclaimed.

ecological problems, like deforestation, on the victims, the poor peasants, who because of their poverty and lack of modern agricultural techniques, are destroying – we

are told – the forests. Whereas, of course, the main culprits are the logging companies, the mining corporations such as Vedanta and Rio Tinto, and the expanding ranching

enterprises that cater for the increasing demand for meat.

Development experts long ago coined the concept ‘sustainable development’. This has

nothing to do with the conservation of Nature; it is all about sustaining ‘development’, that is capitalist growth.

What also clouds the issue is the suggestion that global warming and other environmental issues, have nothing to do with an economic system geared to growth and private profit: it is solely due to the actions of individual ‘consumers’. So we are all being urged to do what we can to ‘save’ the planet.

Thirdly, this laudable concern for the environment by transnational corporations is clearly a front to enable such corporations to seek further opportunities for capitalist expansion, and for generating even more profit. Thus industrial wind farms covering large tracts of the countryside, the increasing production of bio-fuels (at the expense of food production), and the expansion and export of the nuclear industry to all parts of the world, all three initiatives are heralded as great ways of cutting ‘carbon emissions’ and thus helping to save the planet! But at what social and ecological cost? It is noteworthy that each of these initiatives is in the hands of big business, amply subsidised by western governments.

Finally, what we have also experienced in the last decades, as an accompaniment to the advocacy of green capitalism, is the emergence of the concept of ‘global management’. To safeguard the planet what we therefore need (we are told) is a plethora of conservation experts and eco technocrats to monitor the planet, and to offer advice to governments and transnational corporations on how we can best ‘save’ the planet. But ‘saving’ the planet, as Wolfgang Sachs argued (in *Planet Dialectics*, 1999) is in fact little more than a justification for a new wave of state interventions into the lives of ordinary people.

Anarchists need to be wary and critical of each of these four tendencies. We need, therefore, to develop a project that combines socialism (not the radical individualism of Nietzschean aesthetes) and an ecological sensibility (not neo-primitivism) as the likes of Peter Kropotkin, Edward Carpenter and Eliséé Reclus suggested long ago.

## Factfile: Social Ecology

Social ecology developed by Eliséé Reclus and revived by Murray Bookchin in the 1960s.

It holds that present ecological problems are rooted in deep-seated social problems, particularly in dominatory hierarchical political and social systems. These have resulted in an uncritical acceptance of an overly competitive grow-or-die philosophy. It suggests that this cannot be resisted by individual action such as ethical consumerism but must be addressed by more

nuanced ethical thinking and collective activity grounded in radical democratic ideals. The complexity of relationships between people and with nature is emphasised, along with the importance of establishing social structures that take account of this.

Social ecology is, in the words of its leading exponents, “a coherent profound critique of current social, political, and anti-ecological trends” as well as “a reconstructive, ecological,

communitarian, and ethical approach to society”.

What literally defines social ecology as ‘social’ is its recognition of the often overlooked fact that nearly all our present ecological problems arise from deep-seated social problems.

Conversely, present ecological problems cannot be clearly understood, much less resolved, without resolutely dealing with problems within society. To make this point more concrete:

economic, ethnic, cultural, and gender conflicts, among many others, lie at the core of the most serious ecological dislocations we face today – apart, to be sure, from those that are produced by natural catastrophes.

Undoubtedly social ecology is one of the most influential currents in the eco-anarchist thread within anarchism. Social ecology is associated with the ideas and works of Murray Bookchin, who had written on such matters

from the 1950s until his death, and, from the 1960s, had combined these issues with revolutionary social anarchism. His works include *Post-Scarcity Anarchism*, *Toward an Ecological Society*, *The Ecology of Freedom* and a host of others.

Social ecology locates the roots of the ecological crisis firmly in relations of domination between people. The domination of nature is seen as a product of domination within society,

but this domination only reaches crisis proportions under capitalism. In the words of Murray Bookchin: “The notion that man must dominate nature emerges directly from the domination of man by man ... But it was not until organic community relations ... dissolved into market relationships that the planet itself was reduced to a resource for exploitation. This centuries-long tendency finds its most exacerbating development in

modern capitalism. Owing to its inherently competitive nature, bourgeois society not only pits humans against each other, it also pits the mass of humanity against the natural world. Just as men are converted into commodities, so every aspect of nature is converted into a commodity, a resource to be manufactured and merchandised wantonly.” (*Post Scarcity Anarchism*, page 85)

from Wikipedia



## COMMENT

## ABOUT FREEDOM

## ANGEL ALLEY

Those of you who've had the chance to visit the Freedom Press building recently will know the Hacklab has wound to a standstill, so we have decided to use the space to give an office to the London Coalition Against Poverty (LCAP).

If anyone who has donated stuff to the Hacklab would like it back or knows where it could be of greater use, please come and collect it before the end of July when we will be clearing everything out.

In the meantime, preparations to move the bookshop downstairs continue with much stock already moved to Central Books, who are acting as our distributor to trade bookshops. We hope to have the new bookshop space cleared for a pre/post bookfair party in October even if finishing touches to the shop take a little longer.

If anyone is interested in helping out, particularly those with DIY skills please contact Mo or Andy at the shop or on 020 7249 9249.

On a related note, as usual the newspaper is short-staffed, and we're looking for a reviews editor, features editor, writers and the like. If you fancy getting involved (and training is offered if you're not sure where to start), then get in touch by emailing us at [copy@freedompress.org.uk](mailto:copy@freedompress.org.uk) or write to 'Editors' at the address below.

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## NEXT ISSUE

The next issue will be dated 19th July 2008 and the last day to get copy to us for that issue will be Thursday 10th July. 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

A couple of issues back I wrote about bullying management at an ALMO, which was set up to manage council housing. This is a different story; about how and why the various estates were carved up for different housing associations and private managers.

People can readily acknowledge the exploitation that happens in the private sector. You work for a boss, he sells the product of your labour, whether goods or services, and pays you a proportion of the sale price and other suppliers their costs. The remainder is profit, which historically would have gone to the boss, but is now as likely to be going to a pension fund or other institution. This relationship is fairly clearly defined where there is a commercial relationship. My employer is paid money for providing services. For some of the work I do, I am billed at a daily rate, which allows all sort of speculation as to why I don't see the sort of money I'm charged out at; other work is part of a basic contract, but either way I can see I am paid a lot less than the company pockets for my work, and my manager is rewarded by the company's owners for cutting costs and increasing profit.

In the public sector, such relationships are less clear. Even if people are providing services, such as paying benefits or caretaking a block of flats, no one is obviously 'profiting' from their work. While some areas of local government and the civil service have introduced performance related pay, it is usually only for top managers and they get it regardless of performance.

## Blog Bites

There are plans for a so called 'eco-town' of 8,000–11,000 houses (a town the size of Ely) which will be planned, designed, built and financed 100% by Tesco to be built just south of Cambridge on a greenfield site.

'Eco-towns' are New Labour spin at its most cynical. Labour have abandoned their commitment to important sustainability criteria in order to build three million new houses by 2020. Legislation passed on 'eco-towns' allows the government to bypass local planning procedures, whereby councils and local residents can vet the feasibility of a proposed development.

This process can take years, which is why the government wants to bypass them. By making these towns 'eco-towns' Gordon Brown can increase house numbers without taking local concerns into account. An almost identical proposal called Hinxtion Grange for the same site was rejected a number of years ago and is only now being considered following the re-branding as an 'eco-town'.

The houses provided are in excess of government figures on the need for housing in the area, so really only Tesco stands to benefit. There is limited local employment, and

Take a wider view, and we can see that the individuals at the top do benefit from others work. When I used to work for a council, many of the managers had been there for decades and had some sort of grounding in what they were doing. The people I talk to who still work there tell tales of many high-fliers moving on after only a year or two to a much better paid job. It is the experience and work of their underlings that allows them to get that much better paid job.

A decade or so ago, a former union convenor took over managing caretaking in Lewisham. He made big changes and got rid of a lot of the workforce, particularly the senior caretakers. He was innovative and good at picking talent and a few years later was made a director. He got where he was because of the changes in the service he managed – his CV improved as did his political connections.

Another manager masterminded the housing re-organisation. The remnants of it are certainly problematic, with several estates in limbo over their future and the ALMO struggling. But she'd already moved on, never mind that some estates are split between two different management companies. Her CV must have looked great – and she's now pocketing a six-figure salary.

If you work in or receive services from the public sector, you may wonder why there is a re-organisation every year. Partly, of course, it's because of cuts. But it's also to garnish the new service manager's CV.

(from [jimjay.blogspot.com](http://jimjay.blogspot.com))

the biotech firms based in the area, when questioned have actually stated that the development would hinder their work and in some cases may cause them to leave the area or even the country.

The site is a greenfield site, and located on an aquifer which supplies 5% of the water used by the surrounding areas (in, of course, one of the driest areas of the UK). When asked if they can guarantee whether the water supply will be polluted or damaged in any way, the developers reply 'we are looking into it'.

Hanley Grange is close to a number of major roads and the M11. This would encourage car dependency. In addition the A505 and the M11 is already severely congested at rush hours. There are also concerns about the impact of at least 8,000 more cars on the already crowded A1301 and A1307 and concerns about the quiet streets of surrounding villages being turned into rat-runs. Bus and car travel to and from Cambridge from the villages in and around the Hanley Grange site already suffers from severe peak time delays through bottlenecks. Hanley Grange would only compound the problem. Website: [stophanleygrange.org.uk](http://stophanleygrange.org.uk)

## Thinking forwards

Developing a constantly evolving theory which provides a living critique of every aspect of our lives, a practical inclusive strategy, and a tentative vision of the future is not beyond our capabilities. By demonstrating that we are able to use our collective nous and resources in a creative, galvanised and populist way, we may at last achieve some success in convincing others that anarchism has something to offer them.

At the moment, some advocate non-violent civil disobedience. Others opt for a more confrontational approach. Both traditions rely on a critical mass of the population mobilising against the forces of oppression. Syndicalists propose a militant rank and file strategy of industrial direct action. Others, regarding unions as essentially capitalist structures, favour an approach which circumvents them.

Tellingly and predictably, the state has outmanoeuvred us at every stage by effectively outlawing all these methodologies. The dark forces of capitalism and government inexorably retain their chokehold on us all, however hard the alternative lifestyle brigade try to argue that we should, and can, ignore them.

Therein lies the crux of the problem. Most ordinary working class people, saddled with commitments believe they aren't in the privileged position of being able to jeopardise the modest incomes on which they, and their dependents, rely so heavily. Years of targeted union-bashing, precarity and legislation bent on destroying our fundamental liberties and freedom to protest have taken their toll.

For this very reason, it is easy to see why people overlook anarchism/direct action and succumb either to the murky world of party politics or, more likely, the path of total apathy. There are undoubtedly plenty of decent people in leftist or green parties because for them, direct action is simply not an option; however much the martyrs of anarchism advocate otherwise. Additionally, past 'revolutionary' change has hardly served as the greatest advertisement for insurrectionary class war.

Whilst there may be a degree of truth in the adage that a single act of resistance is worth a thousand words, some 'direct action', such as the ritualistic fence-shoving witnessed at G8 forums, is of dubious value anyway; merely providing just another spectacular diversion.

Whilst sustained and popular collective direct action remains our trump card (particularly that not carried out at times and on battlegrounds preordained by the state), it is very difficult to envisage any single approach yielding the desired outcome at this stage. What we can say with utmost certainty however, is that without the tacit support of the majority, any social/economic system cannot function indefinitely. We need to reverse the tide of apathy and powerlessness, and provide a positive channel for the simmering discontent. We need to make anarchism popular, mainstream and capable of effecting revolutionary social change.

The springboard to achieve this would be

a strong development body, which would serve to articulate, propagate and, combined with other forms of prefigurative organisation, implement libertarian communist ideas.

Acting within the bounds of the law (to avoid unnecessary prosecution), but at the same time uncompromisingly hostile to capitalism and statist 'solutions', the development organisation could offer comment on pertinent issues and promote community and workplace-based projects and struggles. Using means such as the internet, literature, free news sheets, t-shirts, the arts, music and other forms of multimedia (to saturate the world with messages of rebellion), this body would be funded by, and founded upon, a membership of interested individuals.

Those who share the aforementioned vision but did not wish to incur the wrath of the authorities would be actively encouraged to join to provide a broad popular support base. In turn this would enable activists to be given a stronger voice, plus practical help (in much the same way as the ALF Supporters Group and Anarchist Black Cross provide support to activists). Over time and with renewed confidence, the distinction between the two elements would blur. Some European syndicalist unions, social centres, radical community networks, and the cooperative movement also show how building a new society within the shell of the old can be achieved to a limited degree without having to risk unnecessary arrest.

Subscriptions for the development organisation would be levied voluntarily according to an individual's capacity to pay. Key positions would be subject to a strictly limited tenure, delegate status and the rigours of instant recall: Ostensibly, demonstrating anarchy in action.

This would in turn promote self-assurance, solidarity and enable anarchism's influence to spread exponentially. A growing membership would also mean that new blood would bring in the required fresh ideas, expertise and analysis on a range of political, social, economic and environmental issues. When the inevitable backlash hits, we will be in a stronger position to resist and have the credibility and building blocks in place to realise far-reaching social changes.

In isolation however, a developmental body will only have limited scope, as will the prefigurative organisational forms alluded to. A realisable strategy which puts the building blocks of the new society in place, whilst ensuring that the transition to the same can be expedited in such a way that we don't starve or freeze to death is of paramount importance.

Anarchism has traditionally been left notoriously wanting in this area, with only syndicalism offering such a process. Syndicalism itself is not without weaknesses: It's focus on those engaged in productive labour may unconsciously devalue and exclude those who are not, and the preoccupation with workplace struggle and the General Strike must not negate the need for libertarian modes of organising, agitating and interacting in the wider community.

Syndicalism therefore needs to modernise

## LETTERS AND COMMENT

by embracing a strategy which is more comprehensive and inclusive. Additionally, unions themselves were originally formed as bargaining bodies within the operational paradigm of industrial capitalism, and only permanent vigilance, accountability and robust organisational safeguards can prevent delegates from succumbing to compromises and ultimately sell-outs.

The revolutionary transformation of society must be permanent, holistic, unremitting and international. Collectivising the means of production, whilst a practical necessity, must not involve workers being press-ganged into willingly participating in their own bondage as wage earners in the long term. Further, patriarchy, as the feminists correctly point out, predated capitalism and, as with other forms of oppression, will not be automatically eradicated with its demise.

Whilst recognising the shortcomings of Syndicalism, it does nevertheless provide an effective means for promoting consciousness and confidence through the course of practical class struggle. Its emphasis on solidarity and international organisation provides a meaningful strategy to achieve a better society, even if some modernisation wouldn't go amiss. Rendering workplace-based syndicates ultimately accountable to localised community federations could potentially provide an organisational middle ground upon which both anarcho-syndicalist purists and union-shy communists alike could agree.

Jock McGrory

(extracted/adapted from a longer article due to space considerations)

## Too trusting

Regarding Wildcat's chattee queries as to whether anarchism is 'feasible'.

Let us look at the record of government. It is not long since a computer disc full of personal information was lost in the post. Last week a senior security official was apparently reading sensitive files on a train and managed to leave them behind. A week later, there was a repeat. Then, the Tory party managed to lose a spokesperson on Home Affairs. Now, we have the Big Brother Bin Bungle.

These people ask us to trust them to run a national database and identity card scheme.

David Peers

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## GETTING ACTIVE

### PRISON NEWS

#### Poindexter parole denied

The Nebraska Supreme Court has denied a *pro se* parole bid by Ed Poindexter. In denying a request for parole eligibility, the state high court has signalled the difficulty Poindexter faces later this year when his request for a new trial is argued by Lincoln attorney Robert Bartle.

Poindexter was convicted in 1971 for the bombing murder of an Omaha policeman, Larry Minard, in a controversial trial marred by conflicting police testimony, withheld evidence and tainted assistance by the FBI.

Poindexter and co-defendant Mondo we Langa (formerly David Rice) both deny any involvement in the crime and were both targets of FBI director J. Edgar Hoover under the infamous Operation COINTELPRO which targeted the Black Panthers for 'no holds barred' treatment.

Poindexter's request for a new trial comes after sophisticated vocal analysis by voice analyst Tom Owen in 2006 revealed that the confessed bomber, 15 year old Duane Peak, did not make the emergency call that lured Minard to his death. Peak implicated Poindexter and Mondo we Langa, which makes his credibility crucial.

• Ed Poindexter #27767, PO Box 2500, Lincoln, NE 68542

#### Briana sentenced

Briana Waters was sentenced to six years in prison and three years probation. She did receive the terrorism enhancement. The judge recommended her to Dublin. Judge denied appeal bond and also the ability to self surrender. Judge Burgess commented on over 250 letters he'd received on Briana's behalf. Neil Fox, Ms Waters' attorney, argued that the average of both Washington and Oregon cases was one and a half years per arson. Mr Fox argued for five years with serving one and half suspending three and a half. The prosecution argued for ten years.

#### Munich squat prisoners

On 27th June last year, Steffi, Sven and Lukas (all at that time between 17 and 19 years old) were standing in an empty building in Munich, in the midst of a largely uninhabited street with a large squatter presence. They were arrested after Bavarian police stormed the building without warning and, having tried to defend themselves against the armed and armoured police force by throwing stones, they were prosecuted for attempted murder.

At the end of January this year they were sentenced to five years in prison for their actions. ABC activists in the area believe that the harsh sentencing was a direct result of calls from the media after the G8 meeting in Germany of that year, and that it could have wider implications in future.

• Lukas Winkler, Sudetenlandstrasse 200, 86633 Neuburg, Germany  
 • Stephanie Truger, Am Neudeck 10, 81541 Munchen, Germany  
 • Sven Maurer, Stadelheimerstrasse 12, 81549 Munchen, Germany



● Voices UK organised a 24-hour unauthorised 'Tent City' in Parliament Square (pictured above) which started shortly after midday on 21st June. It aimed to highlight the increasing number of Iraqi and Kurdish refugees being deported from the UK to a war zone the British state helped create.

Amnesty international have stated that Iraq and the Kurdish territories are unsafe places for the purpose of deportation. Despite this, in one week this month 60 Iraqis were rounded up and deported. Amnesty international have documented cases of deportees meeting their deaths on return to Iraq.

Voices UK did not seek authorisation from the police for this protest, and protesters were accosted by local authority wardens and a policeman telling them to leave.

● A farmhouse on a prospective open cast coal site which was squatted earlier this month has received its papers, and is facing eviction from the building.

Campaigners on site are putting a call out for people to come and stay on the site and help out.

On 18th June, climate campaigners from 'Leave it in the Ground' occupied the UK Coal's Lodge House site in Derbyshire by barricading themselves in a disused farm building and taken to the trees on the site of the open cast mine. They are secured in the Prospect Farm building

● Support is being called for to join a 'leave it in the ground' noise demo on 14th July, against UK coal. Meet at Doncaster train

station at 3.30pm for a demo starting at 4pm. UK-Coal, formerly the coal board, are involved in seven of the 10 new open cast coal sites, including Lodge House in Derbyshire.

● Four immigration detainees who are currently being hunted by police were part of a "planned escape", a senior police officer has said.

Seven detainees were found to be missing from the Campsfield detention centre in Oxfordshire in the early hours. Three of the men were later recaptured. Two have been returned to the centre and a third, who injured his ankles during the escape is being treated in hospital.

But four men are still on the loose and police are combing the Oxfordshire countryside surrounding the centre.

Inspector Graham Sutherland, of Thames Valley Police, said that police and GPO knew how the men had escaped but could not release details.

● Carmel Agrexco's UK depot was shut down last month in another action against the Israeli company, who import produce grown on occupied Palestinian land. Early in the morning activists d-locked onto the gate, vehicle barrier and a lorry, while others climbed on the lorry. The Israeli flag which normally flies over the building was replaced with a black flag, representing the Palestinian deaths in Gaza.

The depot was blockaded for six hours, and the protesters were forcibly removed at 12 noon – but again, with no arrests.

# Harold Sculthorpe

When Vernon Richards died in 2001, Harold Sculthorpe told me that obituaries needn't simply eulogise but could also criticise. It would be hard to do otherwise than eulogise Harold Sculthorpe, who died recently at the age of 85 following a short illness.

Born in Normandy, France, in 1923, he didn't live in England until the age of seven, when he came to lodge with an aunt in Liverpool while attending a Council School there. He remained a French speaker with a good accent.

Following the Second World War, it was in Liverpool that he was later to become an anarchist after serving in the army. He had been conscripted into the army and served as a lab technician in the medical corps, only later to be seconded to Oxford to work on an anti-malarial project. His professor offered him a place at medical school, but he turned it down. It was then Harold had to return to the army to complete his period of conscription serving in Eritrea, again in a medical lab. Later he would cheerfully recall that after his initial military training he never wore a cap nor saluted an officer, and managed somehow never to be sent to the glass house!

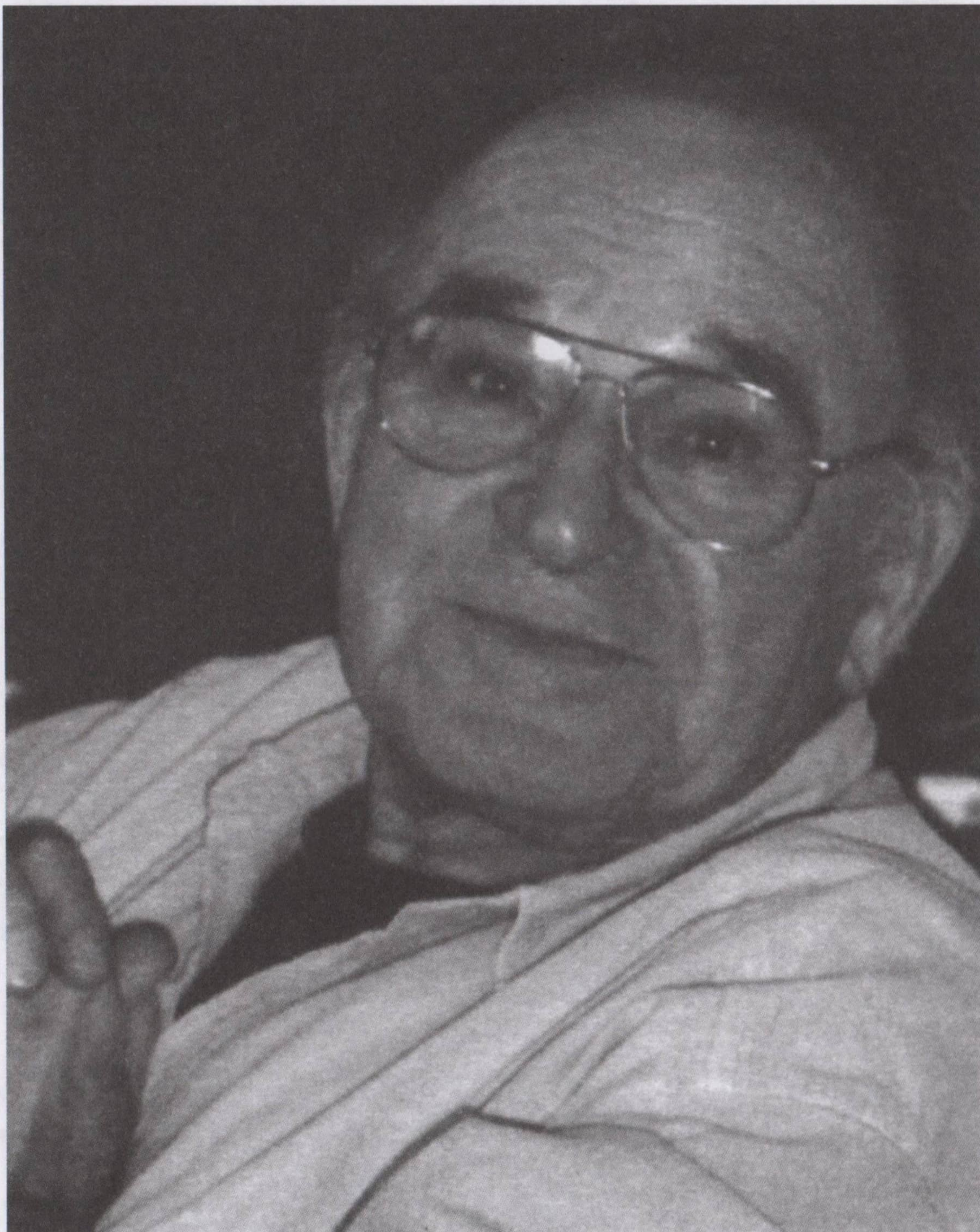
When he left Liverpool he went on to study part-time with the Open University's first cohort of students and got a first class degree in biochemistry and later did an MSc in environmental science. Meanwhile he rose to be director of the pathology laboratory at Saint George's Hospital at Hyde Park.

Close to death Harold declared: "I have a strong belief system that has stood the test of time". These 'beliefs' were a commitment to the morality and integrity of anarchism and civil liberty in this country.

His life stretched from living in a commune in Liverpool just after the Second World War, to being one of the Friends of Freedom Press in London, an editor of *The Raven* (we both worked together on the 'Class Struggle and Social Protest' issue), writing the regular 'Land Notes' column in *Freedom*, a founder supporter of the Northern Anarchist Network (NAN), a member of *Northern Voices*' editorial panel, an active participant on Aldermaston marches and in the CND and later on the right to roam campaigns. He was a keen rambler and wrote a book entitled *Freedom to Roam*, published by Freedom Press, and when his partner, Gwen, retired in 1993, they moved up North into the hills of Hebden Bridge where they both enjoyed the delights of the Pennines in Yorkshire.

He also had a passion for jazz and perhaps the last thing he wrote was an obituary on his anarchist comrade of the 1940s and '50s, the jazz singer George Melly, in *Northern Voices* no. 8.

It was up in the North, in 1993, that I



came to know Harold and Gwen well as loyal and trustworthy friends. When I was arrested and detained in 1997 on the way to a demonstration of unemployed workers, Harold came to my rescue after I had spent a night in the Crown Square Court cells. There he was, sitting in the Manchester Magistrates' Court with the bail money in his pocket as I appeared before Their Worships to be bailed next morning – he'd rushed down on the train from West Yorkshire to see that I was alright.

He supported us in a dispute with the famous Professor Noam Chomsky and Freedom Press over the publication of some critiques of Chomsky's linguistics entitled 'Chomsky and his critics'. It must have been a tough call but he managed to do right by both sides in that dispute. With his natural science background his judgement in the social sciences was less reliable, and I now

think our initial admiration for the sociologist and 'green anarchist' Rupert Read may have been ill-placed. I attended many sociological and anthropological lectures in ethnographic studies with Harold in Manchester at its two universities, and he showed great stamina in grappling with topics that must have been foreign to him.

Harold was one of those very few people that, now that he's gone, I feel guilty that I didn't appreciate him enough when he was with us. He will be remembered for his great integrity and essential decency – extremely rare qualities.

Brian Bamford

We'd love to hear from any readers wishing to share their memories of Harold Sculthorpe.

*Freedom To Roam* by Harold Sculthorpe is available from Freedom Press at £4.50 (post free inland).

## REVIEWS

## WHAT'S ON

## JULY

**4th** Independence from America, come and demonstrate at the US spy base, Menwith Hill, near Harrogate, North Yorkshire from 5pm until 10pm, telephone 01423 884076 or mobile 07949897906 or email percy@starbecj.eclipse.co.uk or see caab.org.uk for more details

**5th** Day of action focusing on the UK Border Agency (Home Office) offices in Croydon, part of the International Day of Action Against the G8, see noborderslondon.blogspot.com

**5th** Closing down sale of Porcupine Books in the basement of Housmans Bookshop at 5 Caledonian Road, Kings Cross, London N1 9DX.

**7th to 9th** G8 Summit at Toya Lake, Hokkaido in northern Japan, for details see <http://linux7.sanpal.co.jp/no-g8>

## AUGUST

**4th to 11th** Climate Camp at e.on's proposed new Kingsnorth coal fired power station near Rochester, Kent, with day of action against agrofuels on Wednesday 6th and a day of mass action on Saturday 9th August, see [climatecamp.org.uk](http://climatecamp.org.uk)

**7th to 10th** Northern Green Gathering, somewhere in North Yorkshire, for more see [nggonline.org.uk](http://nggonline.org.uk)

**13th to 18th** Earth First! Summer Gathering, those involved (or who want to be) in radical ecological direct action get together for five days to talk, walk, share skills, learn, play, rant, find out what's going on, what's next, live outside, strategise, hang out, incite, laugh and conspire, see [earthfirstgathering.org.uk](http://earthfirstgathering.org.uk)

**16th** Anti-fascist mobilisation, Shut Down the BNP's 'Red White & Blue' Festival in Derbyshire, see [antifa.org.uk](http://antifa.org.uk) for more.

**21st to 24th** International Animal Rights Gathering, a time to get together and talk, to socialise and build up networks, to be held south of Vienna, Austria, at the foot of the massive Schneeberg mountain, see [ar2008.info](http://ar2008.info)

**27th to 1st September** Earth First! Summer Gathering, 'Ecological Direct Action without Compromise' in Norfolk, see [www.earthfirst.org.uk](http://www.earthfirst.org.uk)

## SEPTEMBER

**6th** Belfast Anarchist Bookfair at Belfast Unemployed Resource Centre from 12 noon until 6pm, see <http://belfastanarchistbookfair.blogspot.com>

**7th** London Vegan Festival from 10am to 8pm at Kensington Town Hall, Hornton Street, London W8, see [vegancampaigns.org/festival](http://vegancampaigns.org/festival) for more.

**13th** Bristol Anarchist Bookfair from 10am to 5pm at St Werburghs Centre, Horley Road, Bristol BS2 9TJ, see [bristol.indymedia.org/article/688486](http://bristol.indymedia.org/article/688486)

## OCTOBER

**18th** London Anarchist Bookfair from 10am to 7pm at Queen Mary & Westfield College, Mile End Road, London E1 4ND

## FILM

## Street Art

featuring Blu, Faile, JR, Nunca, Os Gêmeos, Sixeart, 3TTMan, Spok, Nano 4814, El Tono and Nuria  
at Tate Modern, Bankside, London SE1 9TG until 25th August 2008

The Tate Modern's current Street Art exhibition is an important milestone in the transformation of graffiti into a viable part of the art industry. Though not the first exhibition of its kind, it the the first major exhibition of 'Street Art' in London, complete with corporate sponsorship from Nissan.

The façade of the Tate Modern has been put to good use by the artists, and is the focus of the exhibition. The dirty brown northern wall of the old Bankside power station is alight with colour, provided by artists and groups from Italy, Brazil, the US, France and Spain.

One thing that is striking is the distance between the massive works. Sections of wall, separated by banks of windows, have been reserved for the artists' commissions. There is none of the anonymous blurring, overlap and layering of graffiti, where the old is constantly consumed by the new. Instead, we have the discrete, individually authored works required by high art.

The curators want to keep it real though, and so the exhibition also includes walking tours around 'site-specific' works by street artists from Madrid (a map is available from the exhibition's website).

I must admit that it's great to see new, large scale work from Blu, a street artist, animator, draughtsman and painter from Bologna, whose work manages to be charming and naïve but shot through with urban anxiety. The westernmost 'panel' of the Tate Modern's façade has been filled with his intricate painting of a massive staring head, cutaway to reveal claustrophobic rooms and silos, filled with girders, girders and jostling figures.

Nonetheless, it is important to grasp what we are dealing with here. Though the term 'street art' has been in use since the heydays of ghetto graffiti culture in the 1970s, its use then was really only ideological: since the invention of art as a form of making and experience in the eighteenth century and deliberate sectioning off from 'productive' work, increasingly taking the form of wage-labour, forms of production which are not



Blu at work on his panel at Tate Modern

driven by necessity (or are perceived not to be), instead by 'creativity', come under the rubric of 'art'. The language leaves us little other choice for conceptualising activity which is undertaken not to provide us with the money necessary to live, which nonetheless produces something of its own worth (whether this is what professional artists actually do is another question entirely).

Instead, with these kinds of exhibitions, we are literally dealing with Street Art. It is produced by professionals you can commission work from, and the reactionary rhetoric of 'genius' and individualism comes back into view. The communal mixing of words and images in circumstances of precarity and illegality are gone. Graffiti's clandestine egalitarianism gives way to the elitism of professional Street Art. Of course, there were respected graffiti writers, but if they were 'artists' then we need another word for professionals commissioned by the leading white cube gallery in Britain with sponsorship from a major multinational corporation.

## QUIZ ANSWERS

1. They took over the merchants club he built in 1908, in 1918 as the 'house of Anarchy'.
2. William Shatner had a part in *Incubus*, a gothic horror film which was the second ever made in Esperanto.
3. She challenged the State of Virginia's ban on inter-racial marriages and won. The Supreme Court struck down all such laws in any states in 1967. She married her

- husband, Richard, who was white, in Washington in 1958. But when they returned to Virginia they were arrested and convicted of cohabiting as man and wife, against the peace and dignity of the Commonwealth.
4. Mikhail Bakunin, after reading his 'confession' where he admitted his own publicly known actions but refused to implicate anyone else.

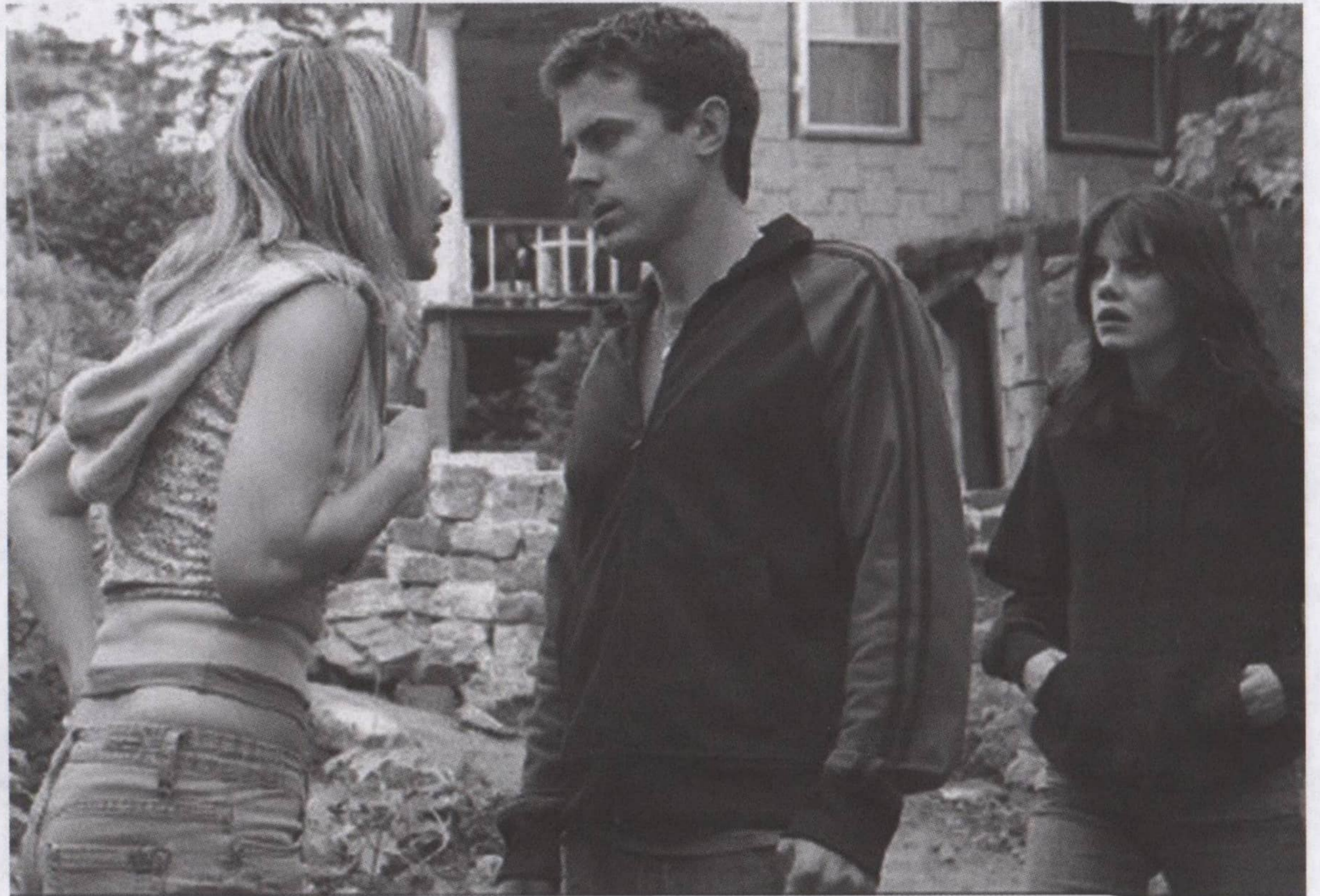
# Gone, Baby, Gone

**Tom Jennings is relieved that Ben Affleck's first film as a director is thought-provoking and yet avoids the ham sentimentality of much of his acting**

ts UK release delayed in sensitivity to the Madeleine McCann case, *Gone, Baby, Gone's* child abduction scenario bears scant resemblance but probably boosted box-office by association. Here, news-team vultures descend on Dorchester, South Boston, Massachusetts, as single-mother Helene McCready (a magnificent Amy Ryan) laments her disappeared four-year-old, Amanda, shepherded by steely-eyed police and neighbours and family rallying supportively. Director Ben Affleck and the story's creator Dennis Lehane hail from these parts, while protagonist PIs Patrick Kenzie (Casey Affleck) and Angie Gennaro (Michelle Monaghan) have lived there all their lives. Passionate attachment to the 'hood is reflected in the latters' conduct and the camera's naturalistic pans around inner-city blight, alighting on variously battered and beleaguered, resigned and/or residually energetic residents – many also cast in minor caricatures complementing consistently fine acting by star-turns.

Despite high-minded pronouncements by cop supremo Doyle – who lost his own child to kidnapers – and ace detective Bressant (Morgan Freeman and Ed Harris lending grizzled gravitas to proceedings), official inquiries falter. Specialist skip-tracers tracking down debtors and errant spouses, the reluctant Kenzie and Gennaro are hired by Amanda's aunt. Local confidence in their discretion immediately yields clues – the involvement of notorious gangster Cheese and missing drug-money; Helene's substance-abuse and corresponding suspicious unreliability; her boyfriend's sudden violent death clinching the link. No longer patronised by the police for naïve amateurism, the investigators uncover the cash and broker its exchange for the girl at a remote flooded quarry – but she's believed drowned when the botch-up leaves Cheese shot dead. Doyle is sacked for tragic incompetence and retires to the sticks; everyone sees closure achieved. Only Kenzie's not so sure, and a subsequent spiralling descent into the violent degradations of paedophilia and addiction eventually reveal depths of duplicity at all levels even he'd never dreamed.

These last unlikely plot twists serve to undermine our assumptions as cultivated so far – and Kenzie and Gennaro's, leaving them disagreeing over a final dilemma so



fundamental as to terminate their professional and romantic relationship. Nevertheless, ultimate judgements and justifications concerning rights, wrongs and likely consequences remain suspended. Not only are heroic rescue, reassuring redemption, and cautionary tragedy refused, but the conservative grounds upon which viewers might expect such outcomes – from banal Hollywood crime-action pulp to the parallel (but no less fantasy-ridden) morbid tabloid shock-horror over current affairs – are comprehensively undercut. Such disquieting limbo was obviously deliberate, and script-writing decisions altering and cutting the source novel wholesale pass the buck to us even more starkly. This is the film's unusual strength, but discussing its effectiveness necessitates spoiling the suspense – so anyone not wishing to know the score should look away now...

**In the best interests of the child**  
Unbelievably enough, the entire saga constituted a conspiracy choreographed by Doyle in connivance with his lieutenants down to Helene's disapproving relatives, with varying material, malicious and purportedly altruistic interests and moral righteousnesses interweaving, spiriting the lass to 'safety' while her mam drank in the bar. The ensuing host of casualties, whether dead or bereft – unmourned criminals, Bessant and his partner, written-off lower-class dupes – were blithely sacrificed, pawns for the patriarch's peace of mind retiring from burdensome power. Out the window also went all pretensions of institutional credibility as, crucially (and, predictably, eluding the critics), the scheme's success hinged on accepting at face value the normal

scripts, cliches and homilies of governance, public welfare and basic decency among higher- and lower-order model citizens obeying the law. Nonetheless – although the film sadly loses Lehane's meticulous characterisations (particularly of Kenzie and Gennaro) and dialogue conveying the full convincing texture of attitudes in action – viewers were given several hints among the red herrings that things weren't as they seemed.

Two especially stand out. Encouraged to perceive Helene harshly through circumstantial implication and the harsh glare of unforgiving attention, we never once glimpse her actual everyday relationship with her daughter. Conversely, Doyle's parental fitness is unchallenged, despite his known trauma and willingness to wreck lives to heal it. Who is the child, to him, beyond a substitute salving private pain? Do his influence and affluence – displaced from urban hell to rustic idyll – guarantee saintly credentials in arrogating to himself godlike choice? Then shouldn't all the suffering children be saved from the vicious agony of the ghetto and the evils impoverishment produces? Even if the manner of its accomplishment adds to the oppression and injustice nourishing desperation in the first place, simultaneously precluding youthful renewal? While, irrespective of increments of positivity which might (arguably) transpire, serving the selfish desires of those in positions to exploit the system to advantage? ... Anything for a happy ending?

No. The relentless message from media and politicians is to abandon the irredeemable poor, demonising any deviation from passively respectable defeatism. The innocent purity to be protected here, then, is the lingering



**Review**

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quasi-religious illusion that things might turn out right by trusting the benevolence of those in charge and believing their rationalisations. Whereas, surely, if a single soul spared is the best to hope for, this betrays an utmost cynicism – the complete collapse of legitimacy of the status quo to match its guardians’ insincerity. But Kenzie won’t give up on his people (or himself), following simple ethics, fulfilling his promise – returning Amanda to her mother – when others see Greater Good colluding with thoroughgoing corruption in

a broken society. Even he suspects he chose wrong, in the final babysitting scene mournfully contemplating prospects, Helene again out on the razzle. Yet with no individual correct answer to a collective quandary, maintaining honesty and integrity and nourishing it around you may represent a pragmatic faith preferable to fairytale wish-fulfilment making token exceptions to busted-flush rules. Credit is due to *Gone, Baby, Gone* for going against the grain, rendering such thorny issues even conceivable on mainstream screens.

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

*Gone, Baby, Gone* will be released on DVD in September.

**THE QUIZ**

1. What connects Russian architect Ivanov-Shits (!) with Moscow’s anarchist movement?
2. Which typecast sci-fi actor starred in one of only four feature films ever made in Esperanto?
3. What did Mildred Loving do?
4. Of whom did Tsar Nicholas I say “He is a good lad, full of spirit, but he is a dangerous man and we must never cease watching him.”

Answers on page 14

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