

## AFTER THE BATTLE AT BANK

**Rob Ray and Andy Meinke**  
look for the full picture of  
what happened in the G20  
protests

In the second of *Freedom's* special issues on the G20 protests, we look at the events of the day and round up both eyewitness reports and comment on what happened, as well as offering a run-down of some of the more bizarre and outrageous slurs heaped on the anarchists by the mainstream media.

On page 3, Andy Meinke, who takes over with Dean Talent as full time editor of the paper as of next issue, gives his view as a legal observer of the protests of what actually happened, and expands on some of the legal issues which have been raised as *Freedom* goes to press.

On pages 4 and 5, Rob Ray, who will remain at the paper as a reporter but steps down as editor, takes a look at what the papers had to say for themselves over the week surrounding the protests.

On page 11, in place of the usual letters and comment section, a selection of comments from a variety of sources is printed to give an idea of what people saw and thought about the events which occurred.

### LENS CAP THIS IS NOT A RIOT!



'This is not a riot! This is not a riot!' the crowd chant, while people at the front raise their hands to show they are unarmed and not attacking. Police waded in regardless with a baton charge, shield-slammings and battering anyone who gets in range. The crowd is too thick for the people they are hitting to move out of the way. These tactics, tightening a cordon until the crowd is dense, then using a wedge formation to beat up anyone they take exception to, were repeated across the city, including on the crowd of which Ian Tomlinson, the man who died during the G20 demonstrations, was unwittingly a part.

Picture: Indymedia screen grab

## PRESCRIPTION CHARGES RISE IN ENGLAND

Prescription charges in England, which effectively bar poorer patients from some treatments, should follow the Scottish model as it drops to £4 this month, say campaigners – or be abolished altogether.

The charges have already been abolished in Wales and with Northern Ireland set to follow suit, campaigning group Health Emergency say the marginal savings that England's £7.20 charge brings should be borne as part of the NHS's £110bn budget.

Geoff Martin, Head of Campaigns at NHS pressure group Health Emergency, said: "Prescription charges have become a grotesquely unfair tax on the sick in England. On the day that the costs are being in Scotland they are being jacked up again south of the border.

"The time has come to bring England into line with the rest of the UK and to move to abolish prescription charges.

"In the current recession these charges hit people even harder and there is a very real risk that some people, particularly those recently made redundant and not yet qualifying for benefits, simply won't be able to afford the medicines they need."

Prescription charges generated just under £500m towards the NHS budget last year.

Critics say the charge deters those on the lowest incomes from accessing all of the medicines they need.

The NHS was founded with a free drugs service, but this was rescinded in 1952. Currently, the government says around 88% of prescriptions are free of charge.

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## NEWS

## IN BRIEF

**ECONOMICS:** A record number of companies are predicted to go bust this year according to new reports from insolvency firms. Begbies Traynor, the insolvency and restructuring group, reckons more than 35,000 firms could go under this year – equivalent to more than 95 a day. The figure would be 18% higher than during the previous peak in the 1990s crash.

**EDUCATION:** Parents have seized control of the closure threatened Wyndford Primary and St Gregory's Primary Wyndford in the Maryhill area of Glasgow.

School occupations of Wyndford Primary and St Gregory's Primary Wyndford both now running through the night. Both schools are threatened with closure by Glasgow City Council.

**FOOD:** A crisis is unfolding in the UK as people in poverty struggle with rising food prices and the recession, the Save the Children charity has warned.

It comes as new figures from *The Grocer* magazine show food prices rose by more than 18% over the last year.

**MEDIA:** Journalists with the NUJ union at the *Daily Record* and *Sunday Mail* have walked out in a 24-hour strike over job cuts. Owner Trinity Mirror wants to shed 70 jobs after merging production of the two titles.

The union voted overwhelmingly last month for two strike days, on 4th and 10th April.

The company announced proposals in February to cut 70 out of 276 editorial staff in a bid to make the titles better equipped for what it described as a "dramatically different media economy".

**SURVEILLANCE:** Two senior executives at French state energy giant Electricite de France (EDF) have been charged on suspicion of spying on Greenpeace, a judicial official has said.

EDF security chiefs Pierre Francois and Pierre Durieux are charged with conspiring to hack into computer systems including at the environmental group, the official said, confirming a report on the Mediapart website.

Two executives named in the case deny knowingly hacking into a computer system, but the computer expert has admitted the charge, the judicial official said.

**TRANSPORT:** Twenty-eight NCP traffic wardens who staged an unofficial strike in Belfast on Friday have been suspended from their work.

The workers are understood to be unhappy about conditions, including sickness pay and rota changes.

Brian Campfield, from the NIPSA union, said the workers were facing further disciplinary action.

NCP employs more than 50 parking attendants in Belfast.

## LENS CAP HYSON GREEN



Subvertising activists get their message across about a new billboard campaign which has been put out by police, which urges people to shop their neighbours for such heinous crimes as putting out empty containers of bleach with their weekly rubbish. The multimillion pound 'Don't rely on others' campaign has been roundly condemned as a cheap sideshow designed to distract from the economic crisis by raising the threat of a terror attack.

## Attitudes harden at Visteon

As *Freedom* goes to press, determination to win the occupation of two sites owned by car part manufacturer Visteon has hardened in Belfast and Enfield, despite the failure of workers in Basildon to secure their own site.

Workers for the company are looking to secure replacement jobs or reasonable redundancy packages after the shock closure of their sites, which it is thought are set to have their equipment and operations outsourced overseas to break union power and cut wages.

Some 565 employees were fired with almost no notice by the company, which is 60% owned by Ford and makes parts for a variety of firms, including Jaguar and Landrover.

The firing followed promises by Ford when they redesignated Visteon as officially separate from the company that they would benefit from the same work rights and guarantees as all Ford employees.

In response to the sackings, first Belfast, then Enfield (pictured left) and Basildon started occupations, though Enfield's only controls part of the site and Basildon had to call theirs off.

Solidarity came from a number of sources including left groups, the occupation at Waterford Crystal, which gave 5,000 euros, and through the refusal of workers coming into Enfield to cross the demonstration line.

While the sudden nature of the cuts has sparked widespread anger, workers had been

seeing the slow running-down of the company for the best part of two years, and had already made major concessions – including buying their own tools and taking cuts to shifts – to keep the site running.

Occupation of the sites allows the workforce to slow the pace of the closure. Many of the machines used in manufacture are the size of a large car themselves (and several times as heavy), and only one could be transported on the back of a lorry at a time. They are still in the factory.

The components go to Dagenham, to Southampton for transit vans, to Halewood on Merseyside, and to a factory in Hungary. It is apparently an open secret that work at the Southampton site itself is at serious risk of being off-shored to Turkey in the next twelve months.

The occupiers are hoping the strikes will spread to other parts of the Ford empire.



Photo: Peter Marshall



A memorial demonstration for Ian Tomlinson took place outside the Royal Exchange in London on 2nd April.

## 'Only one died'

As some 7,000 people protested against the G20 in the City of London, one person died. Ian Tomlinson, 47, who worked at a nearby newsagent, collapsed and died in the early evening on his way home from work. As we go to press, details are still coming in but two things are already clear.

Firstly the initial police account that they were attacked by the crowd while trying to give first aid to Mr Tomlinson is completely false. In fact numerous witnesses have come forward with exactly the opposite account – police pushed away protesters attempting to help him. Secondly it is now emerging that police knocked Mr Tomlinson to the ground ten minutes before he collapsed causing him a head injury. One witness said “I saw a quite tall, quite stockily well-built man of about 50–55 years with a slight beer belly in a grey and blue t-shirt, violently propelled forward as though he'd been flung by the

arm or pushed with the full force of a shield – I didn't clearly see how he was pushed or by which policeman – and fall forward on his head.

“He hit the top front area of his head on the pavement, I think primarily on his left side. I noticed his fall particularly because it struck me as a horrifically forceful push by a policeman and an especially hard fall – it made me wince.

“The manner in which he fell was impossible without an external force violently pushing him forwards; he fell with great force not consistent with simply tripping but with being violently, aggressively pushed by the police.”

The death is being ‘investigated’ by the Independent Police Complaints Commission (IPCC) so far they have not even appealed for witnesses while their ‘independence’ may be judged from the their website's description of the latest Statutory Guidance “making the

new complaints system work better for police forces”.

While we back the campaign for a full public inquiry, experience from the 2005 shooting of Jean Charles de Menezes and also the last deaths in London on a demonstration (Blair Peach in Southall, 1979, and Kevin Gately at Red Lion Square, 1974 – the headline for this article is the title of Tony Gilbert's book about the event) suggest the shoddy cover-up will be followed by an implausible whitewash.

In the next issue we will have a fuller analysis of what was, in most respects, a very positive demonstration but, in the interest of journalistic balance, we quote Robert Broadhurst the ‘Gold Commander’ on the day, who “thanked Metropolitan Police Officers for their hard work throughout the day, which resulted in a restrained and proportionate policing operation”.

## London raids follow after police violence



Activists caught up in London raids by the Met are recovering after riot police crashed into their homes despite clearly being told they would not face any violent resistance.

The RampART building (pictured left), one of London's biggest and longest-running squatted social centres, and another building on Earl Street were ransacked and around 80 people hauled out shortly after the end of the G20 protests.

A witness at RampART said: “When the police arrived, someone went outside to speak to them, telling them that if they had a warrant they could just knock on the door.

The police told him not to worry.

“A few minutes later riot police in black uniforms, wearing balaclavas came through a downstairs window, the door to the roof and a door to an adjoining building. The police stormed in with drawn tasers.”

Police said four people had been taken into custody, naming Mindaugas Lenartavicius, Daniel Champion and Ben Shiells. A 17-year-old girl was also charged with burglary and pleaded guilty, but was then forced to brave a scrum of paparazzi outside the court despite the bar on identifying her.

## G20 IN THE PRESS

# Propagandist: What the papers

## Rob Ray with a rundown on what the anarchists allegedly did

In the absence of a realistic threat to the *status quo* from Islamic fundamentalists, the state has tentatively been trying to paint anarchists as a parallel and growing internal threat to the nation.

Despite minimal evidence, the conjecture of the police that a major anarchist atrocity is inevitable has been taken almost verbatim by the mainstream media and was pushed even further during the G20, with several ludicrous stories appearing about what the movement might get up to appearing.

Some of the best of these appear below.

### Daily Mail

Not, for once, the most hysterical voice around – an honour which must go to the *Evening Standard*. However their suggestion that activists “pelted police with bottles as they tried to save a dying protestor”, echoed uncritically from the police report by every other major paper, was among the most vicious libels to appear.

In lighter news, the *Mail* noted that a *bête noir* of the paper, Russell Brand, had been in attendance on the day, neatly capturing in the form of a single ‘sleb’ their favourite editorial

line that the activist milieu is made up mainly of effete decadents.

The *Mail* was also responsible for perhaps the most bizarre bit of reporting of the week, suggesting that a popular hand cream, Charity Pot, has been funding those extremist coves at Plane Stupid. Reporter Barbara Davies was outraged to find that of £250,000 raised for charity by the product, some £2,000 of that had gone to Plane Stupid, and the CEO of the company was even thinking of making ... da da daaaa ... a personal donation!

Outside these tantalising glimpses into the worlds of celebrity and smellies however, the *Mail* does win the award for most hyperbole in a single feature, for its ‘Undercover with the anarchist mob’ by Arthur Martin, who “struggled to maintain the pretence that I was one of these hate-filled anarchists” during his month-long sojourn in the depths of the circled-A hordes.

Poor old Arthur was outraged by the threatening characters in face masks, shrugging off their injuries from police (who apparently “fared little better” than the protestors in the injury stakes – interesting perspective there Arthur, I didn’t see many shots of bloodied cops knocking about even in the most sympathetic press reports, did you?), led by the grand puppeteer Chris Knight.

Seriously, where do these people come from? Bless him, Chris is many things but the shadowy head of a lethal gang of organised bully boys looking to tear down

the banks? Really? Anyhoo, Arthur’s main complaint appeared to be how downmarket everything was – repeated five times in the one piece. Sorry about that Mr Martin, if they’d been aware you were there I’m sure they would have broken out the Bollinger specially, but who knew that some people have to live with dodgy sofas in this day and age?

### Daily Telegraph

The Torygraph went one better than the *Mail*, reckoning it was “bottles and other missiles” that got thrown at the medics of Ian Tomlinson “in front of a cheering mob”, forcing police back before they finally got to the injured man and pulled him to safety.

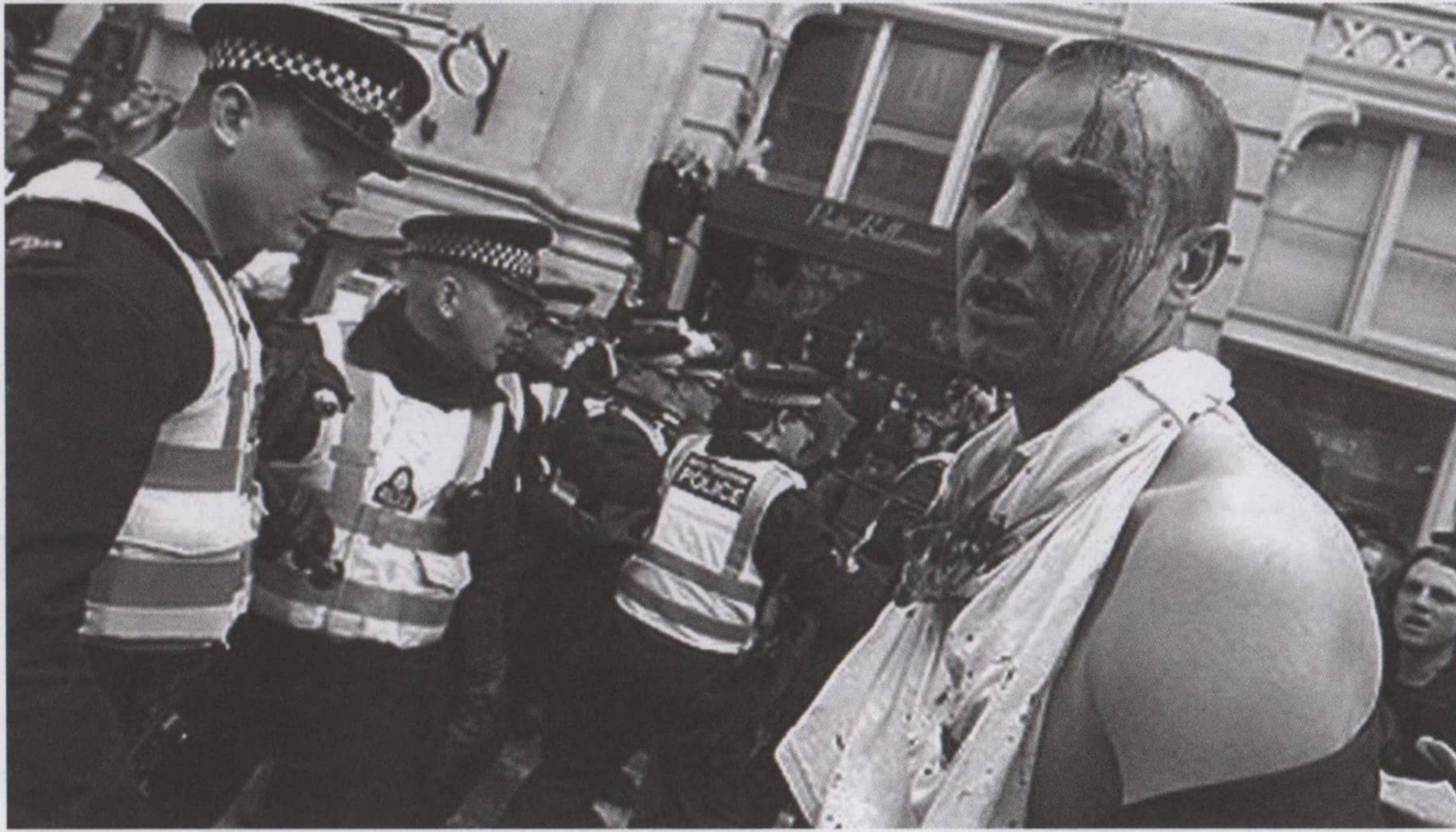
The trusty paper of Colonel Blimp also brought us shocking news that anarchists are capable of using mobile phones to co-ordinate actions, and that some of the protestors were (gasp) foreign.

Alongside other papers, the *Telegraph’s* sleuths suggested that the Wombles had reformed (having been unaware as recently as the Heathrow protests that they’d broken up in the first place). Never let a name go once you’ve got it, hey lads?

On the subject of a police raid which found disabled weaponry and fireworks, the headline ‘G20 Terror Plot Foiled’ was followed by an admission somewhat further down that “disruption” was the worst thing being considered by police, which was a good bit of er, artistic license on the part of the sub.



# said



## Evening Standard

Where to start? The headline 'Anarchists recruit children', by Finian Davern and crime correspondent Justin Davenport was a particular corker, saying that twisted individuals would be "infiltrating" meetings of pupils to push their "message of hate" – presumably with carefully concealed bottles of helium and extreme plastic surgery to hide their height, bulk and wrinkles.

The *Standard* also 'outed' Mark Brown and Alessio Lunghi as ringleaders of the protests, in an astounding piece of investigation which must have cost them several minutes in their press cuttings room looking for the box of 'people whose names we actually know'.

Their evidence for this startling assertion? A conversation between the two which they allegedly saw but didn't hear. My goodness, people with similar political views having a conversation before a major demonstration? Break out the manacles.

Alessio, who was unlucky enough to get named as 'chief' of the Wombles a few years ago and have his photo put in the DMGT's archive (DMGT own both the *Daily Mail* and the *Standard*), had earlier in the month already been "revealed" in the *Een Stanna* as head of the entire direct action anarchist movement, as part of an article which reckoned a black bloc armed with their own riot shields, truncheons, biker helmets and steelies would be confronting police.

If anyone actually saw any of these armoured fighting machines crashing through police lines, let us know.

Not to be outdone by their sister paper and the *Telegraph*, the *Standard* proudly stated in their headline about Ian Tomlinson that not only was it bottles and missiles, but bricks which had come flying in at the brave bobbies trying to save him. It's just a wonder they didn't notice the kitchen sinks being lobbed from the back of the crowd – oh dear, I've said too much.

## Guardian

Suggested that "anarchist cells" would peel off from the main demonstration and swoop on up to 138 targets across The City on 1st April (assuming a half-dozen people per target, well over 800 comrades would need to be independently organised in total secrecy to carry that one off – by the way they got this figure from a list of buildings which had been publicly circulated) and said that protestors had "barricaded" themselves into a convergence space (the *Standard* reckoned it had been "seized"). So they had squatted a building, in other words.

Alongside everyone else, the *Guardian* repeated the police story about being assaulted by bottles during their attempted resuscitation of Ian Tomlinson, despite having access to photos of a protestor putting him in the recovery position in the first place – hardly the actions of a baying mob. In their favour, they did at least run a second story later, suggesting that this might not be the only version of events.



## Independent

Was surprisingly quiet on the whole, but did manage to run a piece about how protestors were handing out pamphlets giving advice on how to outfox police kettles (anarchists in not wanting to be penned in shocker), uncritically parroting the police line that the pamphlet might propagate violence, before revealing that the contents of the pamphlets listed entirely non-violent methods.

Um ... yeah ...

## ITV News

The television channel gets a special mention only because they hilariously cut into their afternoon programme with a big 'Breaking News' banner across the bottom of the screen – to announce four windows had gone at the Royal Bank of Scotland. Breaking News ... geddit? Well I thought it was funny. Also, under what circumstances is a couple of broken windows worth ten minutes of breathless national news reporting? Can I report those kids who put through my uncle's greenhouse the other week?

## The Times

And in a late-breaking rush, the *Times* gets in on the act with its entirely unbiased representation over raids launched against two London buildings connected to the protests, RampART in Whitechapel and a squat in Earl Street.

Again mirrored by every other major title, the *Times* held forth on the raids capturing "violent protestors", one being found with a "bladed article" (breadknife? Spatula? How dare they use bladed articles in their own buildings).

Allegedly one woman, while being hauled away for daring to stay in a politicised atmosphere, totally unreasonably spat at a policeman. Oh the humanity! Doubtless our brave bobby will be deeply traumatised by this violent event, having seen nothing so vicious ever before in his career as a Met officer.

## INTERNATIONAL

### IN BRIEF

**CANADA:** The University of Ottawa is planning to fire physics professor, IWW member and renowned researcher Denis Rancourt. The university claims it is firing him because he announced that all his students would get A+ grades on the first day of the physics class so that they could get on with learning, rather than compete and perform for grades.

The IWW General Defense Committee Local 6 (GDC Local 6) rejects this pretext as an exaggeration that does not justify the university's repressive approach.

For more go to [academicfreedom.ca](http://academicfreedom.ca)

**COLOMBIA:** Ramiro Cuadros Roballo and Walter Escobar Marín, both members of SUTEV, a teacher union affiliated to FECODE, and two other trade-unionists were assassinated last month, as the violence against trade union activists continues to mount.

**FRANCE:** French police have been accused of committing gross human rights violations – often against ethnic minorities – for which they are seldom brought to justice, says a new report. Allegations of unlawful killings, beatings, racial abuse and excessive use of force by France's police officers are rarely investigated effectively according to Amnesty International.

**GREECE:** The decision of academic authorities to evict an occupation of the university Dean's offices in Thessaloniki has led to a further university administration occupations. The decision of the Dean of the Aristotelian University of Thessaloniki came alongside threats of lifting the academic asylum and allowing riot police forces in. However this backfired when the Dean's offices and university administration headquarters were occupied in Athens and Patras.

Thousands of Greeks also took to the streets on 2nd April to protest a government decision to freeze wages in public and state-run companies. Public utility services were closed and air, train and sea transportation services were stopped for several hours. Teachers, hospital workers and journalists were also expected to join the strike.

**IRAQ:** The Iraqi teachers Union (ITU) held its second national protest on 28th March with over 500 protesters to demand the right to free trade unionism without state interference. The ITU protest attracted Iraqi media, and support from Iraqi trade unions and civil society organisations such as the Association of Political Prisoners (victims of former regime).

**POLAND:** Truck drivers have called off an occupation of their firm after being denied access to food and water by guards stationed at the doors. About 20 drivers from Schavemaker Transport occupied the firm's Polish headquarters in Katy Wroclawskie, demanding that their colleagues, dismissed in a union-busting campaign, be reinstated.

### LENS CAP SPAIN



Picture: Madrid Indymedia

Hundreds turn out to a demonstration in Madrid, called against the Bologna Process – a series of controversial education reforms currently being pushed through across Europe. The demo comes as police have been cracking down violently on the Spanish campaign against the reforms, which has seen major demonstrations across the country. The Process has been criticised for attempting to standardise higher education along lines which would effectively introduce GATs guidelines, privatising schooling and disallowing access for poorer students.

## Millions march in Rome

According to the Italian union Cgil, 2.7 million people marched in the streets of Rome on 4th April to demonstrate against the current financial crisis.

According to the police, only 200,000 people were there. In reality, five different processions took hours to get to the main meeting point, the Circo Massimo. Dozens of trains, two boats and 7,000 buses took people from all over Italy to Rome in order to demonstrate against inequality of income (a recent survey showed that in Italy one in three people have an annual income of less than 10,000 Euros while 0.9% of the population state an income of over 100,000 Euros) and to ask for fair social measures.

Politicians joined families and students, and many immigrants, often illegal, came from all over the country. One of them talked to the crowd on the stage denouncing how immigrants are the first to lose their jobs and how the increasing racial discrimination in Italy is serious and dangerous.

Many stories were reported by workers on the stage. The son of a factory worker told the story of his dad who died on the job due to the poor safety rules (Italy is characterised by a very high rate of deaths on the jobs, called 'white deaths', a recent survey showed that in Italy 2,500 accidents happen everyday on the job and three where people die).

Adapted from [libcom.org](http://libcom.org)

## Notes from the United States

Although only while it "evaluate[s] the projects' impact on streams and wetlands", the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) – the equivalent of the Department of the Environment – put hundreds of mountaintop coal-mining permits on hold in late March. This controversial practice has previously been reported in *Freedom* in the context of local protests to stop or lessen environmental damage and impact.

During mountaintop coal-mining forests are clear-cut and holes are drilled to blast apart rock, as massive machines scoop coal from the exposed seams. The rock and dirt left behind is dumped into adjacent valleys, affecting streams and waterways.

Now the EPA will at least delay between

150 and 250 permits that are being sought by companies wanting to begin blasting mountaintops to access coal. Such permits are issued by the Army Corps of Engineers. This agency has repeatedly been criticised by environmental groups; it's also been sued for not evaluating the environmental impact of mountaintop removal properly.

There is a Clean Water Act, under which companies are forbidden to discharge rock, dirt and other debris into streams unless they can prove non-permanent damage to waterways and the fish and other wildlife that live in them.

In February an appeals panel in Richmond, Virginia, overturned the ruling of a lower

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# Who's invited to the NATO party?

In the first days of April, massive protests took place against the NATO summit in Strasbourg and Baden-Baden on the German-French border.

NATO leaders are meeting to celebrate the 60th birthday of the organisation. NATO was founded in 1949 as part of the American anti-communist containment policy. Over the years, NATO grew and took on a number of members. West Germany, as one of the important capitalist countries on the front line, was able to build up a military, supported by NATO, just a few years after the end of fascism. The politics of NATO also led to the arms race with the Warsaw Pact, which had quite an impact on the downfall of the Soviet empire.

NATO faced one big problem after the end of authoritarian communism – its main enemy and cause was gone. So the organisation had to define a new strategy and new villains.

Defining a new strategy is one of the main subjects of this NATO summit, with such topics as: security of energy resources, worldwide military intervention, an expansion of NATO's remit and a closer cooperation between the European Union, which has got its own military forces, and NATO, show that there are enough points where anarchists have reasons to criticise NATO.

There have been wide protests against the summit, reaching across all sorts of anarchists from trade unions, pacifists, groups such as attac or even authoritarian communists and stalinists. Some of the critics, especially from the peace movement and attac, don't criticise capitalism or the state, they only militarism and war.

The left wing parties are quite well represented, groups such as the new German social



democratic 'Leftparty', are able to mobilise a lot of people. The 'Leftparty' uses a more radical rhetoric than the old SPD (Germany's traditional social democrats). They argue that the NATO alliance is a tool to support the capitalist interests of western states over the world. There are also anarchist and autonomous groups from all over Europe, these groups run their own Indymedia for the region, and have called to block the meeting. The anarchist groups have got a strong criticism of militarism as one of the most illiberal tendencies in modern society.

As *Freedom* goes to press, there has already been a demonstration in Freiburg, Germany, where 1,500 people demonstrated against

the NATO summit. This demonstration was shadowed by massive police force. In many towns in the area there are large contingents of police, the motorways and border crossings are being checked, and people being stopped on the border and sent back. The state had to enable the Schengen Agreement, which actually guarantees freedom of movement to EU citizens. There will be an anti-NATO camp in Strasbourg.

If you want up to date information on the summit and the protests check the website [linksunten/indymedia.org/en](http://linksunten/indymedia.org/en), where the most important information will be translated to English.

GW

## Notes from the United States

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court requiring the Corps to conduct more extensive reviews. This cleared the way for a backlog of permits that had been previously been delayed. Now the EPA's ruling places them back into an unknown status.

Joe Lovett, executive director for the Appalachian Center for the Economy and the Environment, said, "If the EPA [had]n't step[ped] in and do[ne] something ... all those permits would go forward ... bury[ing] 200 miles of streams."

In a separate action, the EPA recommended that two permits which the Corps was planning to issue allowing two companies to fill thousands of feet of streams with mining waste in West Virginia and Kentucky be denied. And, although widely seen as an endorser of government policy with more of Agency than of Protection about it, the EPA did announce in late March a plan to monitor the air quality outside over 60 schools in 22

states in the interests of determining whether toxic chemicals permeate the air that schoolchildren breathe.

• After an incident where he had war protestor Stephen Howards arrested after he'd stopped him in public to criticise his policies, Dick Cheney has been ordered by a federal judge in a lawsuit brought by Stephen and his lawyers to give his account of what happened, and why.

They are suing the five secret service agents who were in Cheney's detail at the time. Magistrates originally agreed with Cheney's legal team that his account was unnecessary. Now Judge Christine M. Arguello in Denver has reversed that decision. It may be significant that in earlier hearings several of the agents accused one another of unethical and perhaps even illegal behaviour in the way they dealt with the incident.

Louis Further

## Soldiers refuse to fight

In a statement, hundreds of Greek conscript soldiers have said they support the struggles of workers and students in the recent troubles and will not mobilise against them on behalf of the state.

"We refuse to become a force of terror and repression against the mobilisations. We are soldiers who, very recently, in Hania, have been ordered to turn ourselves upon and bear weapons against university students, workers and combatants in the anti-militarist movement. We believe that Athens, Thessaloniki and a growing number of Greek cities have become areas of social agitation, environments in which the resentment of thousands of young people, workers and unemployed people resounds. They are preparing us to oppose our friends, the people we know and our brothers and sisters. But we are civilians in uniform. We refuse to take the streets, under the name of any state of emergency, against our brothers and sisters."

# Under siege – the People's Clinic in Milan

**An independent health centre run by the people, for the people, is under threat**

The People's Clinic in Milan, open since 1994, has been one of the most audacious examples of self-help in the city's community of recent times, following on from Rome's own similar projects in the 1970s.

Now legally recognised as a healthcare provider, the initiative was born when a building, Transiti 28, was occupied, renovated and equipped in the city in response to an appalling lack of medical facilities for the poor and a focus on profits over people in mainstream medical facilities.

In a context of social and care services which have been whittled away by the local state, the clinic has represented a force for social transformation and care for those most in need – particularly the immigrant population. In the final analysis, the group aims to make itself irrelevant by achieving a sea-change in health provision, to make it a right guaranteed for all.

However after 15 years, the clinic is under threat of eviction, with the state claiming they have been improperly involved in medical activity. In the following translated article from Italian newspaper *Umanita Nova*, Richard Bonelli interviews Stella, from the clinic.

**Richard:** Hello Stella, can you briefly tell us the story of the People's Medical Clinics?

**Stella:** When in 1994 there was the rise of the League [a grouping of progressive trade unions, pressure groups, individuals, left wing doctors and nurses], there was a big town meeting in the city of companions who put on the table the issue of active solidarity in healthcare. Two projects were discussed: a permanent and legal defence of free medical care.

But only one was realistically on the cards: the People's Medical Clinic. Initially there was a large participation, many volunteers, we were open five days a week, because there was also a high attendance. It was an era when there was still a well-defined law on immigration, in practice for immigrants healthcare did not exist.

Now, 15 years later, many things have changed, some for the good, but some other things have gone very badly.

On the plus side, in I would consider mostly a fascist law, the Bossi-Fini, there are articles that were effectively written by us. One was a popularly-supported bill that sought to ensure, without forcing doctors to report them to the police, that health rights would be extended to labour migrants, children, the sick etc. These articles had been written by us in 1995.

Initially this did not go forward and we found them so in the Turkish-Napolitano. But these articles were written well, because by using the code 'STP' (alien temporarily present), undocumented immigrants are entitled to all the care required by a physician, in addition to an exemption from the ticket which would otherwise have seen them reported when they asked for help and placed in detention camps.

From this basis, the problem from 1998 to now has more been making sure these rules are actually applied, because there has been a lack of GPs to help. That is why we have continued to exist.

Now, however, paragraph 5, which forbids the police to report an alien who turns to the hospital, is hereby repealed. We are trying to equip ourselves, as the situation could be dramatic. We fear that there may be women who do not go to give birth in hospitals, children who can not get vaccinations out of fear, not with serious illnesses who can not heal and other similar atrocities.

*Since the Clinic has a political connotation, is this combined with the care?*

We try not to just offer mere assistance. From an ideological point of view we are not particularly uniform, but what unites us is a strong libertarian matrix. It is very simple and perhaps best explained with an example.

About ten years ago, there was a little girl with a big lump under the tongue, it did not seem anything serious, but she was still scratching it with her teeth and it bled, and then got infected. He had been directed to the Hospital but they hadn't helped, saying he would need to pay.

When they turned to us, I called a paediatrician, Caritas, who told me that we could send her to them, so that the paediatrician would operate for free. Faced with protests and my proposals to go to the hospital to enforce the New York Convention on the rights of children, I felt that we could not do anything.



Above left, via dei Transiti; above right, entrance to Ambulatorio Medico Popolare (AMP); below left, the AMP logo; below right, flyer for a forthcoming AMP event.

We are not Catholics, we are not here to save souls. We want to make these cases a complaint policy and 15 years doing this, complaining, putting pressure on health services in order to take full advantage. And we have had some good results. For example there was a structural change in the provision of safeguards for diabetics in the Region of Lombardy, which previously did not supply immigrants without permission. We made a political battle out of this and we won. Our goal is not only the care of individual needs but, through the actions of this kind, we think it is also possible to build a social network of solidarity that can help us to react against racism when it raises its head.

Successful cases like that of Preziosa, the transsexual woman who complained that the cops had beaten her up in the middle of Via Corelli, would not have been possible



without the People's Clinic and others, who went to give her support in hospital.

These networks of active solidarity are increasingly important to ensure that immigrants can rebel. So our policy can be summarised in two aspects: the complaint and the construction of networks of self-solidarity, possibly within the immigrant community itself.

*Today in Milan there is the threat of eviction for the clinic, two occupied homes, a crackdown on the Circle Anarchists. There was also the evacuation of CSOA Conchetta (a radical social centre which was evicted in January after 33 years). All this in a city ruled by the right for 15 years and during a crisis on the left. Can you say more about this?*

Even before the evacuation Conchetta had launched an appeal which was called "beyond the defence of the People's Clinic", which provocatively said that could also move, as the strength is there, but we would be interested to know what happened after: a possible reoccupation, a possible revival in the city of our battles.

We also wanted to connect with the issues brought forward by the other centres, connect with the other systems of alternative

cultural expression. We are thinking of the problems of women, we think of a criticism of the divestiture of social services and more generally on the offensive against welfare.

So on four topics, women, job insecurity, social services, defending the social space, we called for a general confrontation. Early discussions had revealed a positive climate, an attempt to think about experiences and how to revive the movement.

The evacuation of Conchetta however has changed the cards on the table, in that then there was this very beautiful event with people resisting the eviction, where the heart of Milan has responded in some way.

But now it is time to go beyond the parade, to find strategies to attack this administration. We must turn to the city to tell us that they are stealing money from our pocket when we increase the ticket or other things.

So we are trying to think about a campaign against the town of Milan, which represses and wastes the resources of all. Now let's see how it goes. The clinic's eviction was postponed to April and this continued delay may be a sign that did not feel they could dare kick us out.

Here are the other two clearing houses, because our Clinic is located inside of the

house occupied by the Transiti, where they are separate but also sympathetic in such cases. And even in these cases there have been references to the evacuation. So we have some 'time to think of a strategy to communicate the social value of these initiatives.

We say clearly: in Milan there has been the notorious story of Santa Rita Clinic, where they cut people's legs to increase their profits. So we told the city: what do you fear the most? The Santa Rita Clinic? Or the houses occupied by via dei Transiti?

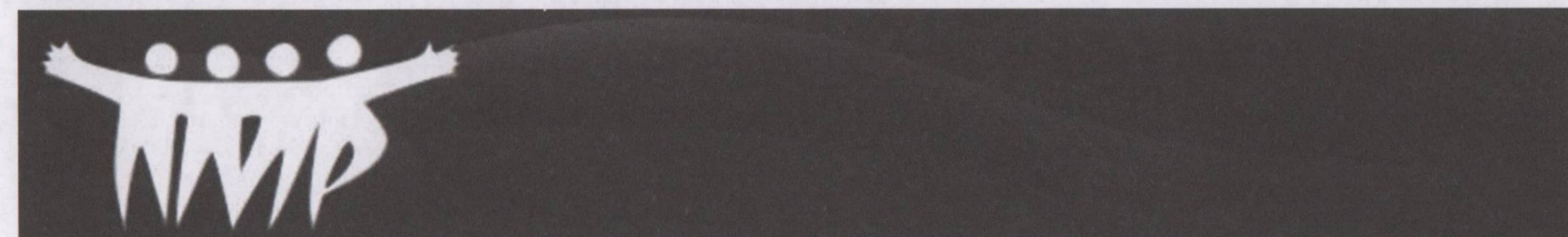
This is our response to this prevailing hood of fascism that is surrounding the construction of networks of active solidarity.

Ambulatorio Medico Popolare, 28 via dei Transiti, Milan 20127, see [www.ambulatoriopopolare.org](http://www.ambulatoriopopolare.org)

Sabato 18 Aprile 09  
**AMPy Hour**  
Aperitivo dalle 19.00 a notte fonda  
Dj Set

COA T28 via dei transiti 28  
Milano  
[www.ambulatoriopopolare.org](http://www.ambulatoriopopolare.org)  
[ambulatoriopopolareinventati.org](http://ambulatoriopopolareinventati.org)

Mercoledì 22 Aprile h. 6.00  
Presidio Anarchista con colazione e lettura  
tema dell'Accademia dello Sgombro:  
"Lo Stato è Testo in Oro"





## COMMENT

## ABOUT FREEDOM

## ANGEL ALLEY

Our neighbours at the Whitechapel Art Gallery have just reopened after many months of refurbishments. This is very good news as it means that even more people will be visiting the area and we won't have to answer any more questions like 'how do you get into the gallery?' – 'disguise yourself as a builder' being our usual answer.

Everyone has been incredibly busy in the run up to the G20 and this has put back the move of Corporate Watch to Angel Alley for a little while longer – apologies to them.

We are left with quite a few unused G20 posters and flyers so if you want any memorabilia for your walls please come and help yourself to souvenirs, or, if you're a true anarchist, hide them under your bed.

Don't forget to check out the website at [freedompress.org.uk](http://freedompress.org.uk) for all the latest news and events in the shop.

## SUBSCRIPTIONS

To work out if your subscription is due for renewal, you'll notice a mysterious number above your name on the address label – here's what it means. This issue is vol 70, no 7, so if your sub runs out with this issue you'll have 7007 above your name; if it ran out with the last issue you'll have 7006 above your name, and so on. So if the number is 7007 or less, then your subscription is due for renewal. See page 16 for the subscription rates and a renewal form or, if you don't want to worry in the future about remembering to renew your subscription to *Freedom*, just ask us for a standing order form either by emailing [subs@freedompress.org.uk](mailto:subs@freedompress.org.uk) or you can write to us at 'Subscriptions', Freedom, 84b Whitechapel High Street, London E1 7QX.

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## NEXT ISSUE

The next issue will be dated 25th April 2009 and the last day to get copy to us for that issue will be Thursday 16th April. 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 few days before the G20 protests, some local anarchists decided to try and do a banner drop at the President of Mexico's motorcade. It was heavily policed and they were stopped before they got anywhere close enough to do it. This was a shame as they had slogans proclaiming solidarity with the struggles of Oaxaca in both Spanish and English, which might have made it onto Mexican television.

They were held for over an hour, by a number of different coppers, while their details were checked. The police varied from chatty to aggressive and one in particular was manic. There was some shoving by them and at one point the cuffs came out, but mostly my comrades report it was a bit boring. The only humour came from the police attempting to pronounce 'Oaxaca'. In the hour or so it took to carry out the checks, the President's motorcade had been to Buckingham Palace and back, which was probably the intention of the police.

Later that week, the police were estimating that their operation to contain the protests against the G20 as well as to provide security for the world leaders would be £8 million. This is before all the other cost for the summit such as hotels, the conference centre and loads of money to management consultants because you can't do anything without them, can you? There's also the opportunity costs – all the things that can't happen instead and all the inconvenience for the people who live near the Excel Centre.

Many people will think that much of the police operation is a waste of money. The thing is, keeping the lid on political protest has always been one of the roles of the police. The lack of large scale serious protest for some time has meant many have forgotten this. I think we are about to be reminded that behind all the diversity initiatives and 'neighbourhood-led policing' the primary role of the police is to protect the wealthy and their property. In the last two decades the police have made great strides to reflect the society they operate in, aware of the crises of legitimacy they had

with the overtly political policing pioneered under Thatcher and the endemic racism. They've come some way to doing this and their success can be measured by the photos showing black riot police bludgeoning protesters in an animal frenzy outside the Bank of England.

Of course, the experience for most working class and poor victims of crime is very different from that of banks which behave like criminals. Half a dozen coppers can spend more than hour each detaining some anarchist trying to do a banner drop. Get burgled and all you'll likely get is a visit from a beat copper to give you a crime number and maybe a forensics visit. You won't get your stuff back. Let's hope you were insured. The police's role in this is just a formality, rubber stamping the insurance claim. Some councils and housing associations won't even change the locks or board up windows after a break-in without the crime number. Like most procedures used by bureaucracies, it makes people jump through hoops for no reason outside the process itself.

In poll after poll, working class people say that crime is one of their most pressing concerns. Outside of often fantastic self-protection schemes, we have little to offer on this issue. Many have made this connection, and identified the weakness of the left and anarchist movement in its remoteness from the concerns of working class people. I have to say though that I don't think we're any more remote than most others. The three main establishment parties and their outriders on the far right all have a touching faith in the police's ability to solve crime. Maybe they've watched too much television. Some believe the police are hampered by 'politically-correct' management and if they were properly racist or sexist detection rates would go up. But they've always been crap at solving crime in working class areas, preferring to resort to fit-ups and getting suspects to 'confess' to all outstanding local crimes. The difference is that years ago we didn't have anything worth nicking.

## Blog Bites

(from [infantile-and-disorderly.blogspot.com](http://infantile-and-disorderly.blogspot.com))

Today's demonstration outside the Bank of England was directionless and leaderless, but otherwise vibrant. It was also marred by severe police brutality, certainly the worst protesters have experienced this year, eclipsing the police violence at January's Gaza protests. Today, at the hands of the police, one man died. Seven were taken to hospital. Tens were given medical assistance. After the wave of police brutality that occurred at around 7.30pm when hemmed-in protesters – thirsty, hungry and cold – attempted to break through the police cordon and escape, many were left bleeding. A number had

head wounds. One young man knelt on the ground with his head in his hands. Another sat on the floor crying.

I was knocked to the ground and trampled underneath others who were trying to flee the police batons. A well-built man dragged me to my feet; it was painful but I'm grateful to have escaped with nothing worse than bruises. Following the crush, riot police ran into the mass of protesters, hitting people with both their batons and their shields. Many protesters were shaken and dazed. Easy targets.

## COMMENT

## Bearing witness at the G20: blogs and comments from the big day

At Bank I witnessed people being beaten around with batons being ordered to move when they had nowhere to go – we were already being crushed in a police kettle. This was the kettle where we had been pushed by police into the RBS building and held there, assaulted and then the police stood and watched while a small number of people reacted by breaking RBS's windows. The police allowed this to happen for a good hour before stepping in to move the crowd on.

From the various photos I've seen, the police FIT team were clearly already inside the RBS building before any windows were smashed. The cops can't just walk in and out of empty buildings at will, so how did they get there? I think this is answered if you look back at what everyone was saying – this was the only building in the area without boarded up windows.

And not only not boarded up, but with mirrored glass on the windows. Everyone has seen how cops use two-way mirrors on the TV to watch people without being seen. What are the odds then that this building was being used by the FIT team to get good street-level surveillance photos of the crowd without being seen? And that the last thing they expected was people coming in through the windows at them!

### Blog bites

#### ◀ page 10

This early on, little is known about the man who died on the demonstration. I saw an unconscious man taken away by ambulance – I can't say whether this was him, or indeed whether he was killed in the crush, from a police baton, or from something else entirely. Already, however, the police appear to be covering up their role in the violence, portraying protesters as mindless hooligans and removing the media focus from their own thuggish attacks against unarmed protesters.

Following the attack I have described above, reinforcements of riot police arrived to guard every exit. The last chance at escape had been lost, and protesters were subsequently detained for another hour and a half. Even then, we were only allowed out one-by-one, with each protester being escorted away by their own police officer (and led past barking and snarling police dogs). Most were searched and several of the so-called 'trouble makers' arrested.

The police had also set about decimating Climate Camp, while many of the Climate Campers were otherwise engaged (being beaten by cops) outside the banks.

Meanwhile, the bizarre behaviour of the two or three unmasked nutters performing for the cameras gives the cops and the world's media everything they wanted from the day. Now, I'm not afraid to use violence or to encourage its use in the right situations (i.e. where it might actually succeed) but this stupidity overshadowed everything else and allows a determined police attack that results in the death of a demonstrator to be portrayed as an appropriate response to dangerous hooligans.

In the evening outside Climate Camp the police were again being excessively heavy-handed and a large group of protestors outside the kettled Climate Camp (of which I was part) decided to sit on the ground to show that we were non-threatening and not give them any excuse. The police then proceeded to kick people who were sat down in the face. (It is worth noting that the police had already blocked that road off so at this point the protestors were not even stopping traffic).

Project Sheffield

I have an eyewitness account from on the ground who saw a man who'd collapsed (rather than pushed or beaten to ground or whatever, although he may have been concussed from an incident earlier).

Protesters called for assistance from the police and helped medical assistance get through. The police were not obstructed in any way.

Jim Jay

A natural death is having a heart-attack waiting for the bus, or passing peacefully in your sleep. It's not keeling over whilst being penned in by dozens of armoured, baton-wielding police.

Jack Ray

Various participants in the City of London demonstrations on 1st April have come forward as witnesses to the collapse of a man later identified by authorities as Ian Tomlinson.

While the first aider was helping the man, another demonstrator with a megaphone was calling the police over so that they could help.

Natalie Langford, a student at Queen Mary, said: "There was a police charge. A lot of people ran in our direction. The woman giving first aid stood in the path of the crowd." The running people, seeing a guy on the ground, went around them.

Another demonstrator had already called 999 and was getting medical advice from the ambulance dispatcher. "Four police with two police medics came. They told her [the first aider] to 'move along' ..." said Peter Apps. "Then they pushed her forcibly away from him. They refused to listen to her [the first aider] when she tried to explain his condition."

The first aider, who did not wish to be named, said "The police surrounded the collapsed man. I was standing with the

person who'd called 999. The ambulance dispatcher wanted to talk to the police, the phone was being held out to them, but the police refused."

Another witness, Elias Stoakes, added "we didn't see them [the police] perform CPR."

Other people who had tried to stay with the collapsed man were also pushed away.

All of the witnesses deny the allegation that many missiles were thrown.

According to Peter Apps, "one bottle was thrown, but it didn't come close to the police. Nothing was thrown afterwards as other demonstrators told the person to stop. The person who threw the bottle probably didn't realise that someone was behind the ring of police."

All the witnesses said that the demonstrators were concerned for the well-being of the collapsed man once they realised that there was an injured person.

Natalie Langford said "when the ambulance arrived the protestors got straight out of the way."

Indymedia

[At 12.35 in the RBS building], breaking in through the windows the crowd trashed the office, smashing computers and spraying angry messages on the walls, but failing to torch the place before police arrived. The mega-bank HSBC had its windows smashed later.

This end of the street faced the police all day, suffered lots of arrests, and an unprecedented number of head injuries as the police held their lines by batoning the crowd. It was a mixed bunch, but many people in the crowd were militant and resisted the police.

The day ended for the Meltdown in a number of cordons at different places, eventually letting people go in ones and twos if they gave police their details.

Around 7pm, 47 year-old Ian Tomlinson died in the cordon. Whether he meant to be on the protest and exactly how he died is unclear – but the cordon and the aggressive policing are seen as responsible for preventing medical aid from saving him.

The Climate Camp was first attacked by the police at 7pm, not to clear it but just hold it in a tighter cordon. The nonviolent crowd were batoned and hit with shields by officers in full riot gear as they raised the hands above their heads.

Things continued in the City until about 1am, and it is reported that approximately 300 young people fought a rearguard battle with the police all the way back to Hackney.

Bill Stickers

One of the protesters, a man in his twenties or thirties, collapsed on the pavement. The guy was totally out of it when I went to take a look at him. Protesters informed the police, and then allowed the police to carry the man back to their lines using what looked like a tarpaulin to carry him away.

Andrew Kendle

## GETTING ACTIVE

### PRISON NEWS

#### Appeal for G20 witnesses

This issue we concentrate on keeping people out of prison with an appeal for witnesses to arrests and assaults by the police on the G20 protests.

Initially reports have 122 arrests but very few charges with only one person on remand. With people on police bail for so long, many to July, it is more important than ever to gather evidence while memories are fresh.

Comrades will notice that there are two sets of contact details for people who can help. We are pleased to tell you that this is not due to a sectarian split in legal support but having a specialist team for Climate Camp and that both teams are working in co-operation. We give their appeals in brief below but check their website for full details and future updates.

Firstly the Legal Defence and Monitoring Group are asking for anybody who witnessed someone being arrested (even if you don't know who they are), please write a detailed account on the incident as soon as possible and forward it to LDMG:

- email [ldmgmail@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:ldmgmail@yahoo.co.uk)
- Legal Defence and Monitoring Group, BM Box HAVEN, London WC1N 3XX. The LDMG meets at Freedom on the first Tuesday of the month at 7pm.

Meantime Climate Camp Legal Group have a call out for legally aided people (on a low income, i.e. earning less than around £14,000 with minimal savings) who might be willing to be parties to a judicial review case on the searches and who suffered an excessive number of searches under section 1 and section 60. Also people threatened with section 50 (antisocial behaviour), or immigration offences to obtain their name and address or people threatened with arrest having stolen a mobile phone.

- email [legal@climatecamp.org.uk](mailto:legal@climatecamp.org.uk)

#### CNT members arrested at anti-NATO protests

Urgent Solidarity call for three CNT members who have been arrested in Strasbourg during protests against NATO. They have to go to court in the context of immediate actions against what the government is calling 'terrorists'. We are calling on everyone to show the High Court of Strasbourg and the Fiscal Office our solidarity with these comrades and demand the immediate release of these people. You can use the following model:

To: Monsieur le Procureur de la République de Strasbourg.

Regarding the detention of Jean-François Moricet, Mathilde Michel and Olivier Dubois during a demonstration against the NATO summit in Strasbourg. We would like to remind you of the right of freedom of expression that is guaranteed by the Constitution and is well established in European as well as International Law. We would also like to express our solidarity with the three detainees and demand their immediate release. Fax to (03) 8823 0263



● After their exploits bringing attention to the housing crisis in Birmingham at the John Lines homeless village last year (pictured above), campaign group **Justice Not Crisis** have taken some direct action to improve the situation and have become the new stewards of Beechwood Hotel, 201 Bristol Road, Edgbaston in Birmingham.

Beechwood Social Justice Centre, a potential urban homestead, is the new protest squat site against Environmental Resource Misuse and Homelessness. This protest squat is part of a wider campaign to promote social and ecological justice within the city of Birmingham in the form of social housing, the better use of vacant and disused land and property and effective resource management.

Contact [justice.not.crisis@googlemail.com](mailto:justice.not.crisis@googlemail.com) for more information.

● Following the publication of *The Wheel's Still in Spin*, the second part of his autobiographical trilogy *Stardust and Coaldust*, Dave Douglass will be available as of May for readings from his work, starting with a launch at the Broadway Hotel, Broadway, Dunscoft, Doncaster on 7th May.

Dave Douglass was a pitman for forty years in the coalfields of the Tyne and in South Yorkshire, and was a mainstay of the miners' union movement throughout that time. Politically an anarcho-syndicalist, Dave was involved in some of the biggest political upheavals of the last four decades, from flower power to Class War.

A London reading will follow on 13th May at Houseman's Bookshop in King's Cross, another in Bristol in June and yet another at Ruskin College sometime in September.

Stuart Christie of ChristieBooks, announcing the launch, said: "The book deals with the period from the end of the '60s to the coming to power of Thatcher. In this 15-year period, dramatic events in the world revolution

course around the globe. Dave Douglass transports us back to a time conventional histories have tried to forget or bury or rewrite. It is political and social history told by a direct participant in the events and not from some distant hill of academic neutrality."

If you'd like to organise a venue and invite Dave along email [christie@btclick.com](mailto:christie@btclick.com)

● A new resource for conflict resolution and coping with personal conflicts within diy/activist communities, Keeping it Together, is looking for contributors to share their experience and contributions. Some of the information the collective is looking for includes:

- Recommended resources e.g. books, leaflets, organisations.
- Personal experiences, such as frustrations encountered, how you've managed difficult situations and whether, if you ever felt that your own behaviour may have caused conflict within a group, you found positive ways to deal with it.

Contributions can be sent to [kit.contributions@googlemail.com](mailto:kit.contributions@googlemail.com)

● Anti-fascists have once again found hacked their way into **white power website bloodandhonour.org**. The network, which was founded as a neo-nazi musical promotions group, has been banned in Germany and Spain but maintains a large online presence.

The hackers have provided usernames, many passwords, IP addresses and the entire private message lists for the international ubermenschen on a large database dump, currently being hosted by the wikileaks website.

Go to [wikileaks.de/wiki/Blood\\_and\\_Honour\\_international\\_Neo-Nazi\\_network\\_messages\\_and\\_passwords\\_Mar\\_2009](http://wikileaks.de/wiki/Blood_and_Honour_international_Neo-Nazi_network_messages_and_passwords_Mar_2009) if you fancy a chuckle.

# Occupation and success

**With occupations breaking out at four workplaces in the UK, we reproduce a short history of the successful occupation 2001 occupation of refuse workers in Brighton and some notes on the response of local anarchists and libertarian communists to it.**

## Refusing collection

In the week between the 11th and 15th June 2001, a workers' struggle of a kind not experienced in the UK for a long time took place in the refuse collection depot in Brighton. In defiance of the dominant spectacle of social peace, the bin men of Brighton took collective action after being sacked for refusing newly imposed work routines. Quickly, their struggle took the character of a complete refusal to continue working under the same management.

On Monday the 11th, SITA, the French company which was contracted by the Brighton and Hove Council to run street cleaning and refuse collection imposed new working routines, ones which were completely impossible to achieve, such as cleaning a 17-mile stretch in eight hours with a broom.

On hearing these new measures, twelve workers refused to carry them out and were immediately suspended. When this happened, the twelve called in their fellow workers who had already left the depot and explained the situation. In response, they all returned and blockaded the entrances of the depot, refusing the management's action and demanding their immediate re-instatement. SITA management responded by sacking them all. As a consequence, and in an act which had not happened in Brighton for at least 20 years, the workers occupied their workplace and demanded:

- The immediate re-instatement of all workers (full-time and agency).
  - The termination of the contract with SITA.
- A day later the following demand was added to the list:
- The formation of a workers' co-operative to take control of street cleaning and refuse collection.

The Council responded by giving SITA 48 hours to prove that they were capable of carrying out the work that they were being paid to do. In its attempts to do this, and to break the workers' 'strike', SITA used local (private) employment agencies in order to employ scabs. The jobs of the 240 suspended workers were advertised in the local papers.

A few direct action anarchists and communists joined the struggle, and participated with workers in the various actions that were deemed necessary. The first was to go with some workers at the other depot from which the scabs were leaving and to stop their trucks



from coming out. This was hugely successful: one man locked himself underneath the first scab truck at the entrance of the depot, effectively stopping any other truck from leaving, while the workers who were there persuaded the majority of the temps not to scab by either explaining to them the situation, or by threatening them that their union would make sure that they would not be able to find another job in Brighton.

When the fire brigade was called in to de-lock the comrade, a shop steward from the depot explained the situation and in an inspiring act of solidarity the firemen refused to participate, leaving as quickly as they had come.

A second action concerned the agencies that were employing scabs in Brighton. In collaboration with the union and after their request, a leaflet was put out at the agencies warning workers that taking up the job made them scabs. The management of the agencies called in the police. The fact was however that there was nothing that the police could do apart from abstract threats. After the agency management realised there was nothing they could do, they promised that they would not recruit any more scabs.

The fact that anarchist militants managed in collaboration with the workers to stop the scabs gave even more strength to the workers' struggle, since SITA was unable to comply with the Council deadline. Negotiations between the workers, the Council and the company would have definitely been very different otherwise.

Since the beginning of the occupation, SITA had refused any negotiations with the

workers, while the agency preferred using outright threats to break up the struggle. However, after the actions that the workers took and the extent of public support, the Council mediated between the two and a further meeting was agreed. In that, the final agreement was made: SITA lost the contract and would leave the management of the refuse collection in September; all sacked workers would be re-instated and fully paid for the week spent in occupation; the working routines would return to the way they were before the 11th June; all further dismissals have to be negotiated with GMB, and a council representative would supervise any further changes in the organisation of work.

## What next?

Within the context of the struggle's potentials, the result was definitely a victory for the workers. The final agreement granted most of the demands, and there remains the possibility of forming a workers' cooperative. At the same time, such a development does not in itself solve anything. Although work conditions would possibly be better under a cooperative (at least for a while), this solution effectively represents self-managed exploitation. By putting them in charge of their own alienation, a workers' cooperative would integrate workers as 'equal' members of what remains a capitalist company, rendering them responsible for its profit-making. This situation would most likely deter many of them from engaging in further struggles.

From Libcom.org

## REVIEWS

## WHAT'S ON

## APRIL

19th Radical Islington walk with David Rosenberg, who brings alive the sights and sounds of Islington's rich radical history, meet at the Mitre pub, Copenhagen Street, London N1 0SR at 11am.

22nd Anarchist Federation public meeting at Calthorpe Arms, 252 Grays Inn Road, London WC1, starts 7pm, see [afed.org.uk](http://afed.org.uk)

22nd Elevator Gallery discussion on Debord and *The Society of the Spectacle* and the Situationist International at 7pm, Housmans Bookshop, 5 Caledonian Road, London N1 9DX, see [housmans.com](http://housmans.com).

25th March and rally to call for an end to animal experiments, meet 12 noon at Reformer's Tree in Hyde Park, for details see [wdail.org](http://wdail.org).

25th Reel News and Smash EDO film night at Housmans Bookshop, 5 Caledonian Road, London N1 9DX, for more details see [housmans.com](http://housmans.com), [reelnews.org.uk](http://reelnews.org.uk) or [smashedo.org.uk](http://smashedo.org.uk).

## MAY

4th Mayday Reclaim the Streets against EDO MBM/ITT, Brighton's bomb factory, wear red, see [smashedo.org.uk](http://smashedo.org.uk) for more.

**MAYDAY!  
MAYDAY!**

**MASS STREET PARTY**

AGAINST WAR AND GREED  
SMASH EDO/ITT - SMASH CAPITALISM  
BRING PASSION, DRUMS, SOUND SYSTEMS - WEAR RED!  
BRIGHTON, MAY 4TH, 2009, 12 NOON  
TEL 07983084019 EMAIL SMASHEDO@RISEUP.NET

FOR LOCATION AND DETAILS SEE

9th Out of Step, anarchic punk-rock poetry and music from 6pm at Housmans Bookshop, 5 Caledonian Road, London N1 9DX, see [housmans.com](http://housmans.com) for more.

23rd Cardiff Anarchist Bookfair at Cathays Community Centre, 36 Cathays Terrace, Cardiff CF24 4HX from 10am until 6pm, see <http://southwalesanarchists.org> or email [cosmoinnit@talk21.com](mailto:cosmoinnit@talk21.com) for more.

30th Haringey Independence Day, grassroots gathering for social change at West Green Learning Centre, Park View Academy, West Green Road, London N15 3RB, from 12 noon until 6pm, for more information see [haringay.org/independenceday](http://haringay.org/independenceday).

## JULY

4th Independence from America, organised by CAAB, from 5pm until 10pm outside the main entrance of NSA Menwith Hill near Harrogate, HG3 2HF, call 01423 884076, email [mail@caab.corner.org.uk](mailto:mail@caab.corner.org.uk) or see [caab.org.uk](http://caab.org.uk) for more details.

## BOOKS

**Mutual Aid: A Factor in Evolution**

by Peter Kropotkin  
Freedom Press, £15

Pursuing its long-standing remit to keep the anarchist classics in print, Freedom Press has recently published an impressive new edition of a venerable old friend. *Mutual Aid*, although not strictly speaking an anarchist classic, in that it is far from being a work of explicitly anarchist political history or thought, is nevertheless permeated by an obvious anarchist spirit – a concern for the ways in which human beings historically have organised themselves without the intervention of coercive authority, and the roots of such organisation to be found in nature.

Kropotkin's thoroughgoing and meticulously detailed rebuttal of T.H. Huxley (and the Social Darwinism with which he has, not entirely correctly, become associated) has, as Donald Rooum writes in the new preface, long suffered in academic circles from a superstitious misunderstanding. Namely, that it was the work of a woolly, naïve crackpot who strove to deform and distort the natural world so as to fit reality into the cosy Procrustean bed of his ideology. Wilful simplification of his argument though it may be, this superstition still widely prevails.

The book's basic thesis, neatly summarised in modern terminology, again by Donald Rooum, "that reciprocal altruism, and other forms of cooperation, give selective advantages to animals which practise them" is now generally taken as read among scientists. Yet its author is routinely misrepresented as exaggerating the importance of such mutual aid, in concluding it to be the primary motive force behind evolution. Kropotkin, however, may well rightly have rejected Hobbes' belief in a natural war of all against all, but he equally

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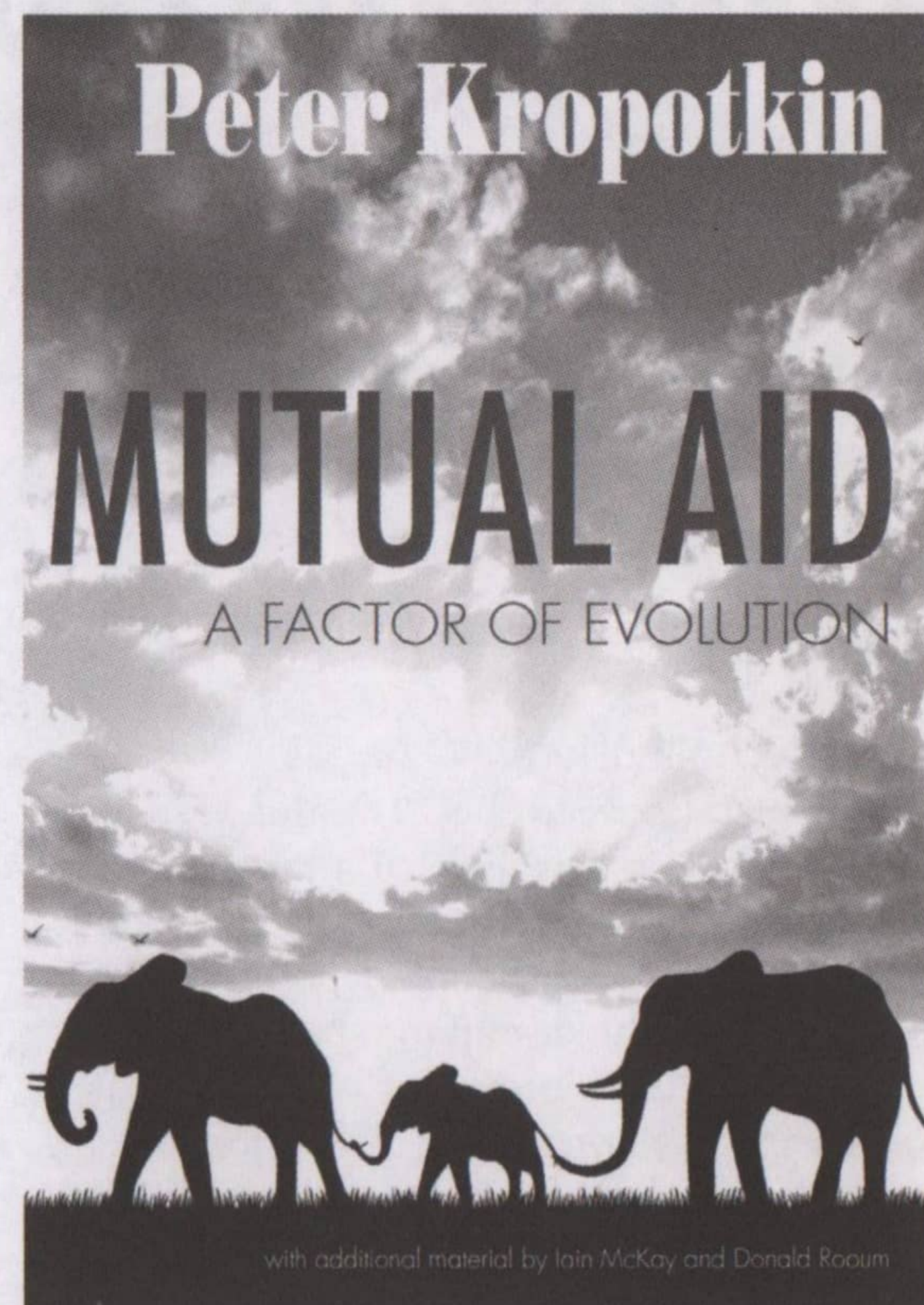
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## QUIZ ANSWERS

1. It describes the routine and monotony of modern life. Métro refers to commuting by tube, boulot is a slang word for work, and dodo is baby talk for sleep.
2. An hour and a half each way, i.e. up to three hours a day. Anyone refusing to do twice what McNulty refuses to do will lose their Job Seekers Allowance.
3. Professor Chris Knight. In Martin's words, he infiltrated the Whitechapel Anarchist Group and found "the leader of the bizarre group of misfits ... revealed that he was taking orders from Chris Knight, a 66-year-old anthropology lecturer". Utterly unbelievable tosh.
4. He painted a black cat.



rejected Rousseau's blindness to the reality of conflict. Kropotkin believed in a class struggle after all! For him, mutual aid was only one factor among many in evolution – hence the book's subtitle.

So it is a book that, in spite of its august years, still warrants and deserves close reading – both by those that have too readily dismissed it, and by those that wish to prove them wrong. But it is worth picking up for much more than that. It's an easy, enjoyable read that nevertheless provides a fascinating and voluminous wealth of material in support of its argument. Drawing on such diverse fields as zoology, history and anthropology, it could conceivably provide the uninitiated with nothing less than a fresh view of the world. In short, there is a very real danger that this book could broaden your mind.

Continuing Freedom Press' recent marked improvement in production values (the text is much easier on the eye than the previous edition and the cover is a peach), as well as a new preface relating the book to contemporary scientific debate, this re-issue also includes a brief biography of Kropotkin and a comprehensive guide to further reading courtesy of Iain McKay. A book, then, that should take pride of place on any self-respecting anarchist's book-shelf.

Anton Pawluk

# Katrina's ordinary heroes

**Tom Jennings recommends this Hurricane Katrina documentary as a superior example of genuine 'reality TV'**

September 2005: two regular Michael Moore collaborators reached Louisiana shortly after Hurricane Katrina, planning to examine National Guard redeployment from Baghdad to New Orleans' new warzone. Instead, rebuffed by authorities fearing Fahrenheit 9/11-style crusades, they stumbled on Kimberley Rivers Roberts and her husband Scott flooded out of the Lower Ninth Ward. Buying a secondhand camcorder just before the evacuation order – which, like many thousands, they had no wherewithal to obey – Kim had decided to film their experiences during and after the storm. The gripping footage from its eye and destruction in its wake – full of CNN-savvy pans and angles and peppered with canny commentary and testimony from locals, friends and family – then formed the core of a cinema documentary following them to exile in Tennessee and finally back to their ravaged 'hood. Tia Lessin and Carl Deal's Oscar-nominated *Trouble the Water* subsequently won the Grand Jury prize at the Sundance Festival before its UK television premiere on More4 on 25th February.

The utter institutional neglect at all levels, from Bush and his crony Michael Brown of the Federal Emergency Management Agency all the way down the government hierarchy, is by now well-known, and the mortal horrors facing the abandoned poor of New Orleans extensively documented – but nowhere else are these phenomena shown with quite the direct, bottom-up intensity of this film. An oppositional political logic thus grows out of the Roberts' earlier cynical fatalism, in tandem with anger and determination channelled into helping as many fellow survivors as practicable. From shots of disinterested police to submerging 'Stop' road signs; attempts to float the young and elderly out on makeshift rafts being turned back at gunpoint from empty naval barracks; Kim's younger brother Wink (inside for a misdemeanour) recounting a jailful abandoned with no food or water; the haphazard bureaucratic mess of later relief efforts, whether to collect dead neighbours, get tap water reconnected, or grant financial aid for the displaced – all the story's dimensions weave into a profoundly moving but unsentimental journey of kind, likeable and charismatic folk struggling to overcome.

No Bridge Over ...

'Troubled waters' is indeed an appropriate metaphor for the whole saga, not just Katrina's aftermath but the entire trajectory of American

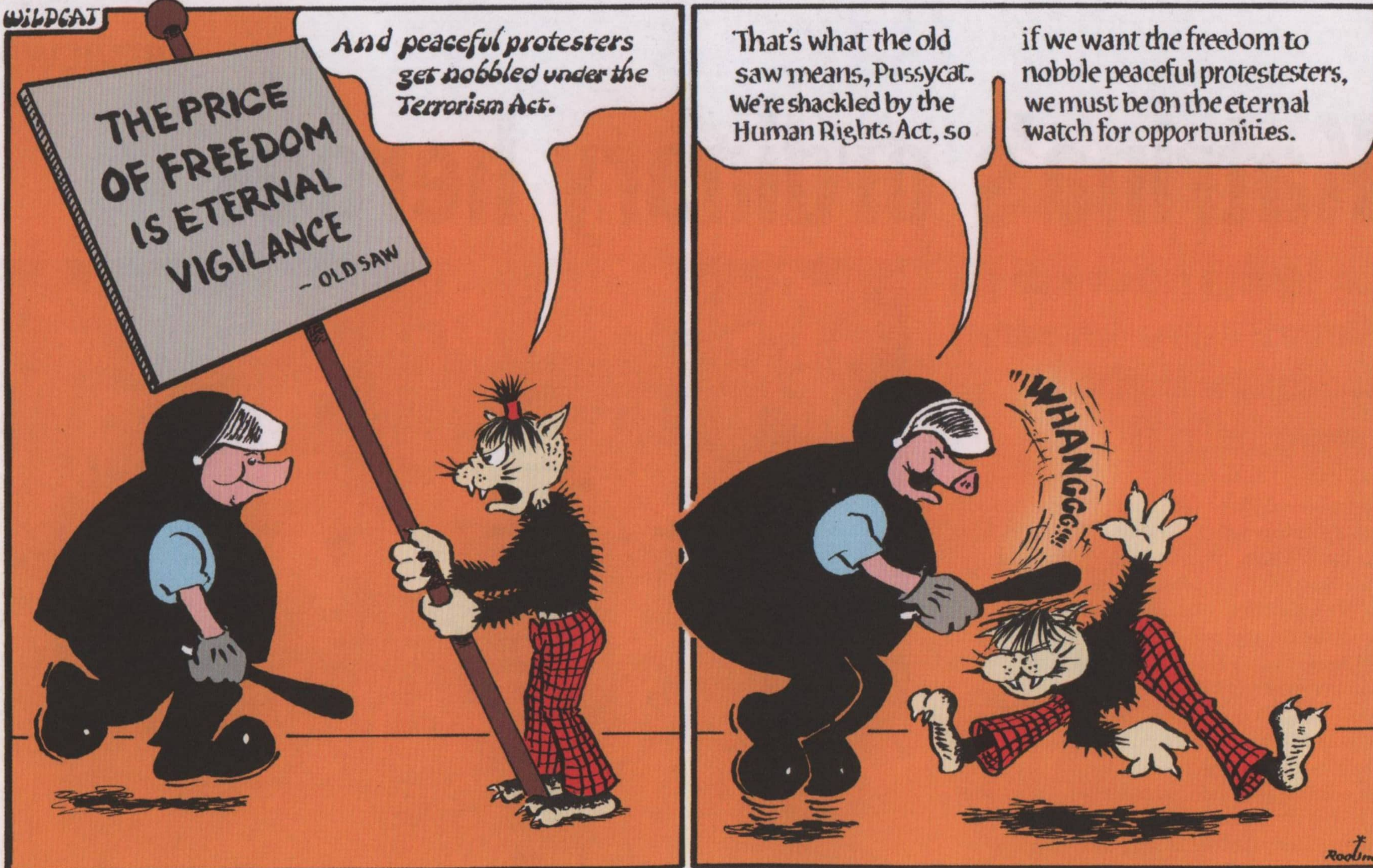


society's increasing numbers consigned to official scrap-heaps irrespective of convenient 'natural' or financial catastrophes. And, as repeatedly emphasised in the film, ordinary people now realise more explicitly that lack of resources leaves you with 'no government' – except as a hostile force with entirely separate interests. Another recent documentary, on US national debt (*I.O.U.S.A.*, dir. Patrick Creadon, 2008), showed – among countless scandals – federal accountants uncovering massive theft and fraud of FEMA funds paying for top management necessities like cars, vacations, champagne, lap dances and porn films. Not 'trickle-down' or even 'trickle-up' economics but funds veritably flooding along faultlines of power, uncannily negatively correlating with the deluge afflicting New Orleans ghettos. Nevertheless, in vignettes of dignified courtesy shown to military and government personnel prevented from providing proper assistance on the ground, *Trouble the Water* carefully highlights the understanding among survivors, evacuees and relatives that the causes are systemic.

The selfless heroism and humility of the film's subjects in caring for and about each other, including those previously shunned, also effortlessly contradicts preferred media hysteria concerning pathological criminality<sup>1</sup> as well as default modes of liberal charity for helpless victims. The latter tendency pervades other prominent film accounts of the events, like Spike Lee's heartbreaking visual testament in the four-hour *When the Levees Broke: A Requiem in Four Acts*, and Greg MacGillivray's *Hurricane on the Bayou* (both 2006) meticulously detailing the ecological significance. Surveying the lower-budget progressive filmmakers flocking in since autumn 2005, Dennis Lim's 'The Angry Flood and the Stories in Its Wake'<sup>2</sup> pinpoints

the main dilemma of "the emerging genre of Hurricane Katrina cinema" as outsiders objectifying Louisiana citizens – in effect, reproducing in representational forms their supposed passivity in the face of the storm itself.<sup>3</sup> Therefore Lessin and Deal aptly foreground community self-activity and cultural expression even while Kim and Scott are forthright about the price paid for prior urban decay and disintegration, including them both having in the past been low-level drug-dealers.

Moreover in *Come Hell Or High Water: Hurricane Katrina and the Color of Disaster* (Basic Civitas Books, 2006), Michael Eric Dyson notes that the only significant remaining records of life in the drowned zone are music videos by Southern rappers; the latter also being the most prompt and vociferous celebrities to plunge straightaway into protest and aid activities. But, given the persistent strength of local culture even in appalling circumstances, it's fitting that the film score's versions of 'Wade in the Water' by the legendary Dr John and contemporary R&B/gospel duo Mary Mary are trumped with four blistering tracks by Kim in (then amateur) gangsta rap guise as Black Kold Madina.<sup>4</sup> Her fortitude and determination will doubtless come in handy, with *Trouble the Water's* summarising captions stressing that, "billions of federal rebuilding dollars have not been disbursed; rents in the city have doubled and so has the homeless population; thousands of livable public housing units are being demolished; most African-Americans have not returned while most white residents have; the majority of the city's public schools are deemed academic failures; Louisiana's incarceration rate is still the highest in the world; and the rebuilt levees in New Orleans



## Review

◀ page 15

remain flawed and vulnerable.”

So it's heartening that the final sequence shows Kim and Scott at a boisterous demo at City Hall, complete with trad-jazz band in trademark funereal and celebratory modes, signalling new potential with fewer illusions. Next time it might be the grass-roots troubling the waters.

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

### Notes

1. Lucidly interpreted by Slavoj Zizek in 'The Subject Supposed to Loot and Rape: Reality and Fantasy in New Orleans', *In These Times*, 20th October, 2005; see also James Lee Burke's hard-boiled post-Katrina crime thriller *The Tin Roof Blowdown* (Orion Books, 2007) and my analysis

in 'CSI: The Big Sleazy' (*Variant* 31, 2008; [www.variant.org.uk](http://www.variant.org.uk)).

2. *New York Times*, 15th August, 2008 ([www.nytimes.com](http://www.nytimes.com)).
3. Raising general questions of 'objectivity' in documentary strategies – also discussed in relation to *Fahrenheit 9/11* in 'Extracting the Michael' (*Variant* 21, 2004), and social-realist cinema in 'Hunting, Fishing, and Shooting the Working Classes' (*Variant* 34, 2009).
4. Namely, 'Amazing', 'Hustle and Struggle', 'Bone Gristle', and the closing credits accompaniment 'Trouble the Waters'. Her CD is now available, after the original masters were lost in storm-damage, via the Roberts' own independent label ([www.bornhustlerrecords.com](http://www.bornhustlerrecords.com)).

*Trouble the Water*, directed and produced by Tia Lessin & Carl Deal, is released on DVD on 27th April, priced £12.99.

## THE QUIZ

1. What does the French expression 'métro, boulot, dodo' encapsulate?
2. Minister for Employment and Welfare Reform Tony McNulty has claimed £60,000 for two homes because his constituency is in Harrow, outer London, 45 minutes by tube from Westminster. How much commuting does his department think jobseekers should put up with?
3. According to Arthur Martin, a journalist with loony right hate rag the *Daily Mail*, who were anarchists taking orders from before the G20 demonstrations?
4. French anarchist painter Charles Angrand was famous for what design?

Answers on page 14

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