

FREEDOM

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THE POLITICS OF DEMOCRACY

From social peace to summer of rage?

The recent European elections, and the local county council elections in England, have come at a time when the activities of UK parliamentary democracy is being examined and questioned by the population as our expectations increasingly hinge on some very unique social features.

As markers for gauging the current feeling of the electorate, it makes interesting if not unsurprising reading. In the local elections support for New Labour crashed, losing control of all their previously held councils with the Tories taking control of 30 out of the 34 being contested. The British National Party (BNP) had three councillors elected with a turnout in most areas of around 40%. In Europe the BNP gained two members of the European Parliament despite a fall in the share of the vote. As a protest vote the BNP failed to capitalise on New Labour's problems although their election to Europe gives them a legitimacy, access to resources and a political platform previously denied them.

To understand the significance, if any, of these results we must look at them in context. Still fresh in people's minds is the **page 3 ►►**

LENS CAP SCRAMBLING AWAY



Fascism is often described as an ideology of fear and here British National Party leader Nick Griffin does his best to show it while hiding from the odd flying egg, well you can't make an omelette...

INDEFINITE STRIKE OVER LINAMAR SACKING

Workers at the car parts manufacturers Linamar Automotive Systems Swansea Company Limited (LassCo) are on all-out indefinite strike over the sacking of union convenor Rob Williams for his role in the recent Visteon dispute.

Rob was originally sacked on 28th April over an "irreversible breakdown of trust" after management discovered he'd had talks with the Visteon workers during their dispute about picketing the Swansea plant. Workers were balloted for indefinite strike action, which began 11th June, in support of Rob's reinstatement with an overwhelming 88% majority. After hearing of his dismissal workers immediately stopped work and surrounded Rob's office in an attempt to prevent management forcing him to leave, with some being threatened with the sack if they walked out in support of the union official. He was briefly reinstated after emergency negotiations but was eventually sacked by the company.

Linamar, Canada's second largest automobile parts manufacturer took over the Visteon-owned South Wales plant in July 2008 implementing a programme of mass voluntary redundancies. Some see the sacking of Rob as a continuing process of victimisation in an attempt to demoralise and undermine the workforce in an already beleaguered industry. Rob is known to be a vigorous and vocal supporter of workers rights at the factory and it is widely documented that management are in the process of 'buying down' contracts involving a drop in wages and sickness benefits for the skilled workforce who make engine-related car components.

Workers have confirmed they intend to stay out until he is re-instated.

STOP PRESS: Rob Williams was reinstated by Linamar the morning the strike was due to start. Management have backed down and given in unconditionally to the strike demands.

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NEWS

IN BRIEF

JUST JUDGES: Three terror suspects whose freedom is restricted by control orders have won a legal battle in the House of Lords over the use of secret evidence. Nine Law Lords unanimously ruled it was unfair that individuals should be kept in ignorance of the case against them. They did not quash the men's orders, but one warned the ruling could spell the end of the control orders system. After last issues surveillance win in the Court of Appeal we may have to set up and honest judges column.

COP LET OFF: A traffic officer jailed for dangerous driving has had his prison sentence quashed by the Court of Appeal. Sergeant Craig Bannister, 30, of Briton Ferry, was sentenced to five months in March after earlier being found guilty by crashing his car at 115mph. He served 20 days before he was released on bail in April pending an appeal against conviction. Three judges adjourned his conviction challenge, but ruled a custodial sentence should not have been imposed. Once again *Freedom* has been proved right in its consistent stand against the stupidity of the judiciary.

TOSSERS UNITE: Libyan leader Muammar Gaddafi has arrived in Rome for his first visit to Italy. Colonel Gaddafi was greeted by Italian prime minister Silvio Berlusconi.

Gaddafi will host visitors in his Bedouin-style tent which has been set up in the park of a seventeenth Century Roman villa where he is staying. He is also due to address a group of 700 women at Rome's concert hall, having requested a meeting with prominent Italian women from the fields of business, politics and culture. He held a similar meeting on a visit to Paris in 2007 with 1,000 selected women guests, who were told he wanted to "save European women". Further proof if ever needed that all leaders are the same, beside he never gave *Freedom* any money in the '80s

FLU UPDATE: A sharp increase in swine flu cases in Australia may mean the infection has become a pandemic, the World Health Organisation (WHO) says. For that to happen, officials would have to verify that the disease had become established outside North America, where the crisis began.

"Once I get indisputable evidence, I will make the announcement," said WHO director general, Margaret Chan.

More than 1,200 people have contracted the virus in Australia – none fatally. The total means Australia has seen a four-fold increase in a week.

Less than a month ago the country had only a handful of cases of the H1N1 virus, but it now has the highest number of infections outside North America. Victoria and the state capital, Melbourne, are the worst-hit with more than 1,000 confirmed cases.

LENS CAP LINCOLNSHIRE



The Lindsey oil refinery has been hit by fresh industrial action with hundreds of workers staging a walkout. Employees at the north Lincolnshire depot downed tools on 11th June after being told that a number of staff, thought to be 50, were being made redundant.

Local residents refuse refuse change

Hundreds of local residents in Barking and Dagenham are set to defy the council and opt-out of the £2.4 million wheelie bin project to be introduced across the Borough this summer.

Half the residents in streets with narrow frontages, which have little space for the

140-litre bins, are poised to reject the scheme, which has been rolled out to save millions of pounds in EU landfill taxes. Up to 300 households are expected to use the council opt-out, with others continuing to use their bin liners rather than the 'unsightly' bins they say threaten to ruin the borough's appearance and make it look like a 'rubbish tip'.

The scheme, voted for by council officials at the beginning of the year, was introduced to avoid being hit with hefty Government fines for sending too much rubbish to landfill and will cost an estimated £2.1 million with running cost of more than £300,000 a year.

Community campaigner Tony Richards submitted a Freedom of Information request to find out how many bins have been ordered and how much taxpayers' money may have been spent before the opt-out requests start coming in.

Mr Richards said: "I want to know whether, at the time they said there was freedom of choice, they had, in fact, ordered all these bins. It wouldn't make sense to have hundreds of thousands of pounds of ordered bins and then say whichever way you like."

The council expects to save around £620,000 in landfill tax in 2010/11, rising past the £1 million mark from 2013/14.





A working class education

Reports confirm education system favours rich over poor

The educational expectations of working class children as compared to those from middle class backgrounds have been thrown into sharp relief yet again with the publication of two new reports.

The Sutton Trust, a charity set up to improve the educational opportunities of those from non-privileged backgrounds, commissioned a study of working class children who were sent to private schools as part of the Conservative government's assisted places scheme in the 1980s and 90s. It revealed, unsurprisingly, they felt "estranged and alienated" often struggling to fit into the elite atmosphere. It was also found they were financially and socially unable to participate in extra-curricular activities and for the most

part ended up "feeling like the poor relation". Contrary to popular opinion only around 7% of those on assisted places came from working class backgrounds.

The Sutton Trust previously revealed in 2007 "a small cadre of elite 'feeder' schools" who dominate Oxbridge admissions, listing a hundred schools that accounts for nearly a third of all UK undergraduates starting at Oxford or Cambridge universities each year. Only two state comprehensives made the list.

The Nuffield Review, which published its final report at the beginning of June, is the largest review of its kind on education since 1959. The three year study, commissioned by the Nuffield Foundation, found that the current education system for 14 to 19 year olds was tailored to serve the interests of richer pupils. It said of those from middle class backgrounds: "More often than not, such learners will be on the 'royal route' to higher education, from which will flow preferential

access to better paid and more interesting work" concluding that working class children are almost all universally being left behind by the current education system.

The Nuffield Review comes just days after official figures showed a drop in the number of working class students admitted to university last year. Students from working class families are also taking a smaller share of places at university after the introduction of £3,000-a-year tuition charges in 2006 according to figures published by the Higher Education Statistics Agency.

These findings should come as no surprise to those who work in education. As far back as 2004 a government funded report reached similar conclusions, but also found university students from working class backgrounds do least well after graduating, reinforcing the idea it is not just a university education that opens the door to better career opportunities but the social background you came from originally.

The politics of democracy

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banking collapse and the government's massive billion pound bail-out, along with the biggest recession to hit us since the dark days of Thatcherism. The predictive and presumptive summer of rage rumbles onto the horizon as we feel the fall out from the housing market crash, massive job losses and sudden price increase of basic necessities. Along with the MP's expenses scandal and the rise of the far-right as a definable political voice amongst the disenchanted and desperate.

It is these features, along with the fact the British economy is almost entirely dependent of financial services, and the expansion of the service sector in general, for its growth

that gives us a unique array of social causes to the current economic situation along with the means to confront it.

The working class has been excluded from the political map for the last ten years, its militancy bought off by a government institution wedded to the growth of the stakeholder economy. What Blair brought with his tenure as premier, along with government policy by PR consultant, was a kind of frigid social peace. This was manufactured by freeing financial institutions from external control, thus giving them free reign across the spectrum of borrowing and lending, creating a mass of debt coverage. So while people's wages

weren't increasing in real terms their access to available wealth, through easy mortgages and easier credit consumption, was.

Shifting debt onto individuals and society at large, allied to privatising by the backdoor for public services – education, health, housing – meant New Labour could alleviate its own responsibility on social spending, allowing it to fund its wars and balance its books. For the last ten years people thought they were living in a safe and secure market economy, the reality of which is only now becoming apparent. The current economic climate has the potential to inspire resistance and self-organisation absent in working class activity for a decade.

NEWS

LCAP takes on London councils

Community Direct Action outfit, London Coalition Against poverty (LCAP) take on nine inner London councils this month in a fight to secure housing rights in the capital

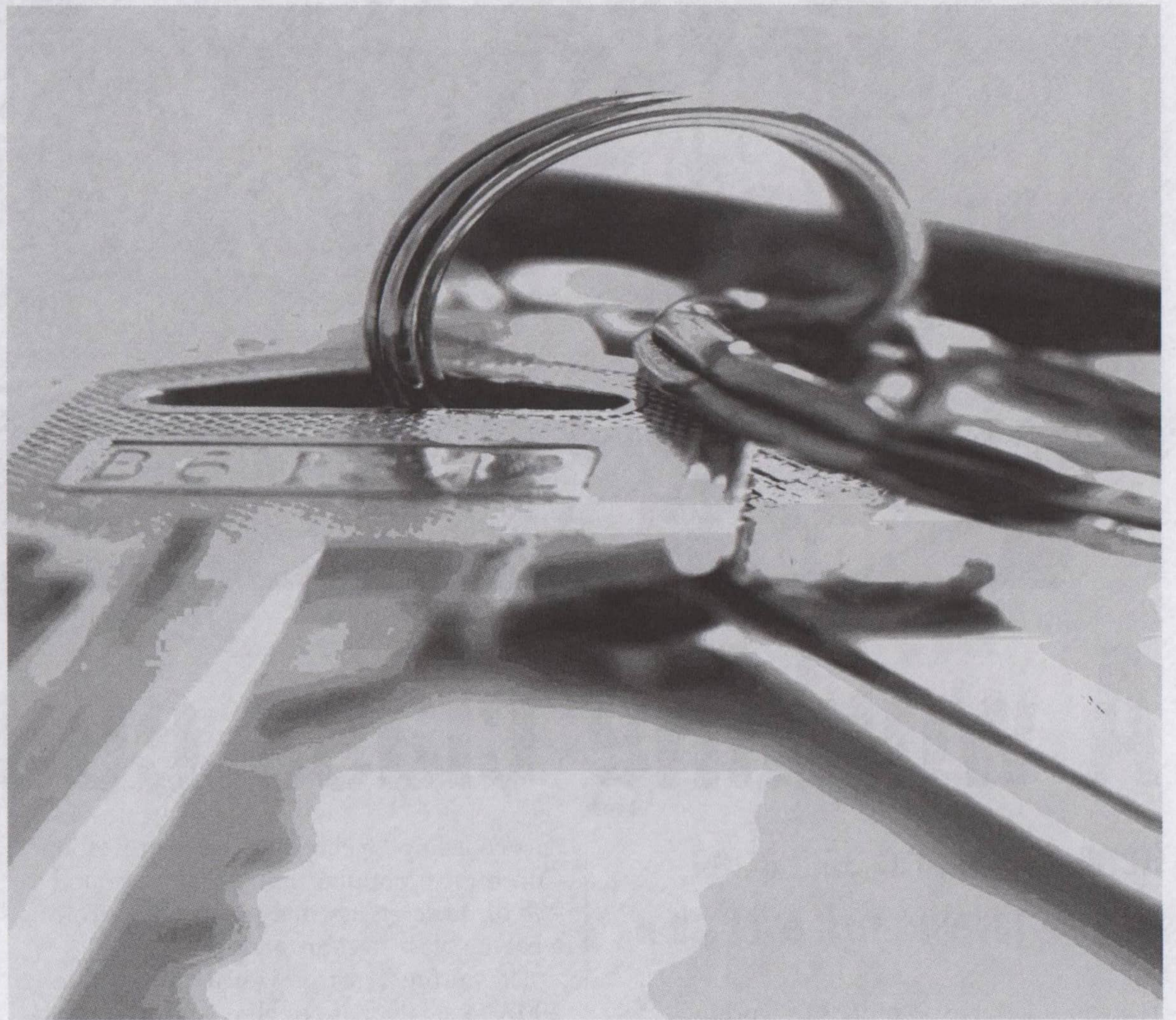
The Gatekeeping Roadshow has ready visited housing offices in Hackney, Lewisham, Woolwich and Tower Hamlets. Armed with the traditional lefty weaponry of pasting tables and leaflets LCAP activists distributed information, collected testimonies and talked to countless people.

The visits aim to combat the practice of gatekeeping, a practice that ranges from gentle dissuasion, lies, refusal and intimidation but which is always aimed at the same thing: avoidance of an application for housing as a homeless person. A right supposedly guaranteed by law.

Although clearly insufficient, (provision of housing relies on the satisfaction of five tests which exclude many immigrants as well as people who are not in 'priority need' or who are considered to have made themselves 'intentionally homeless') the existing right to a homeless persons application is an important and hard won concession of the housing struggles of the 1970s.

Councils are driven to gatekeep by the shortage of housing in the capital, exacerbated by lack of investment and the thatcherite right to buy and by a cynical system of targets for 'preventing' homelessness which links government funding to a reduction in homeless households. Government statistics show a reduction of 53% in the number of homeless persons applications accepted since the targets were introduced.

Ellenor Hutson, an LCAP activist said: "Gatekeeping is a way for bureaucrats to meet meaningless targets by kicking people when they are down. In the long term, gatekeeping allows the state to ignore the housing crisis by hiding the scale of the problem. It is



an attack on working class people and must be stopped."

Founded two years ago, LCAP has already built a reputation in Hackney, east London, as an uncompromising defender of housing rights. Their infamous housing office occupations have won housing for dozens of families and lead to the formation of a tenant lead campaign for improved conditions in temporary accommodation.

LCAP activists hope that the Gatekeeping

Roadshow will expand these activities to other areas of London and can point with pride to the formation of South London Coalition Against Poverty (SLCAP) who kicked off the roadshow with Lewisham housing offices on the 1st June and will go on to target Lewisham on the 10th June. Visits to Brent, Camden, Islington, Westminster and Newham councils are to follow (details can be found on the LCAP website at www.lcap.org.uk).

Fujitsu attacks pensions

IT firm Fujitsu Services has announced it is turving up to 4,000 people out of its final salary scheme. Only about a quarter of the companies' workers are in the final salary scheme and they are instead to be offered a defined contribution pension scheme which is reliant on the stock market, so could potentially pay out less than the worker puts in.

The union Unite has condemned the plans. Peter Skyte of Unite said "Fujitsu Services is a highly profitable company and made profits of £177 million in the last financial year. The company has yet to produce any proper justification for this latest attempt to raise profits by cutting pension benefits, and this action may hinder future bids for blue chip private sector outsourcing contracts." It's also worth noting that Fujitsu have been operating a pay freeze this year.

The union promised "a robust campaign" on the matter. The outsourcing element is key to this – a lot of Fujitsu's new business is won from the government and often involves staff transfer under TUPE regulations. The latest TUPE regulations, while silent on pensions for transfers between private sector companies insists on final salary pensions for anyone who has them as part of their public sector terms and conditions. Fujitsu are not currently attacking the Comparable Pension scheme, which is the one that workers transferring under TUPE join, as long as they already have a final salary pension. Any change of roles within the company means that workers are then put under intense pressure to ditch their pension. Either Fujitsu doesn't expect to win any more work that involves staff transferring, or they are confident that this

provision will be ditched as part of the general attack on public sector pensions. Apart from one site in Manchester, Fujitsu's workforce is not organised and the company is clearly calculating that the current economic crisis means they can force through what amounts to a pay cut.

However, the Manchester bargaining unit has unanimously agreed to campaign on this and organise a ballot for industrial action and further agreed to try to spread this around the company. This might not seem like much, but it is a big deal in the IT sector.

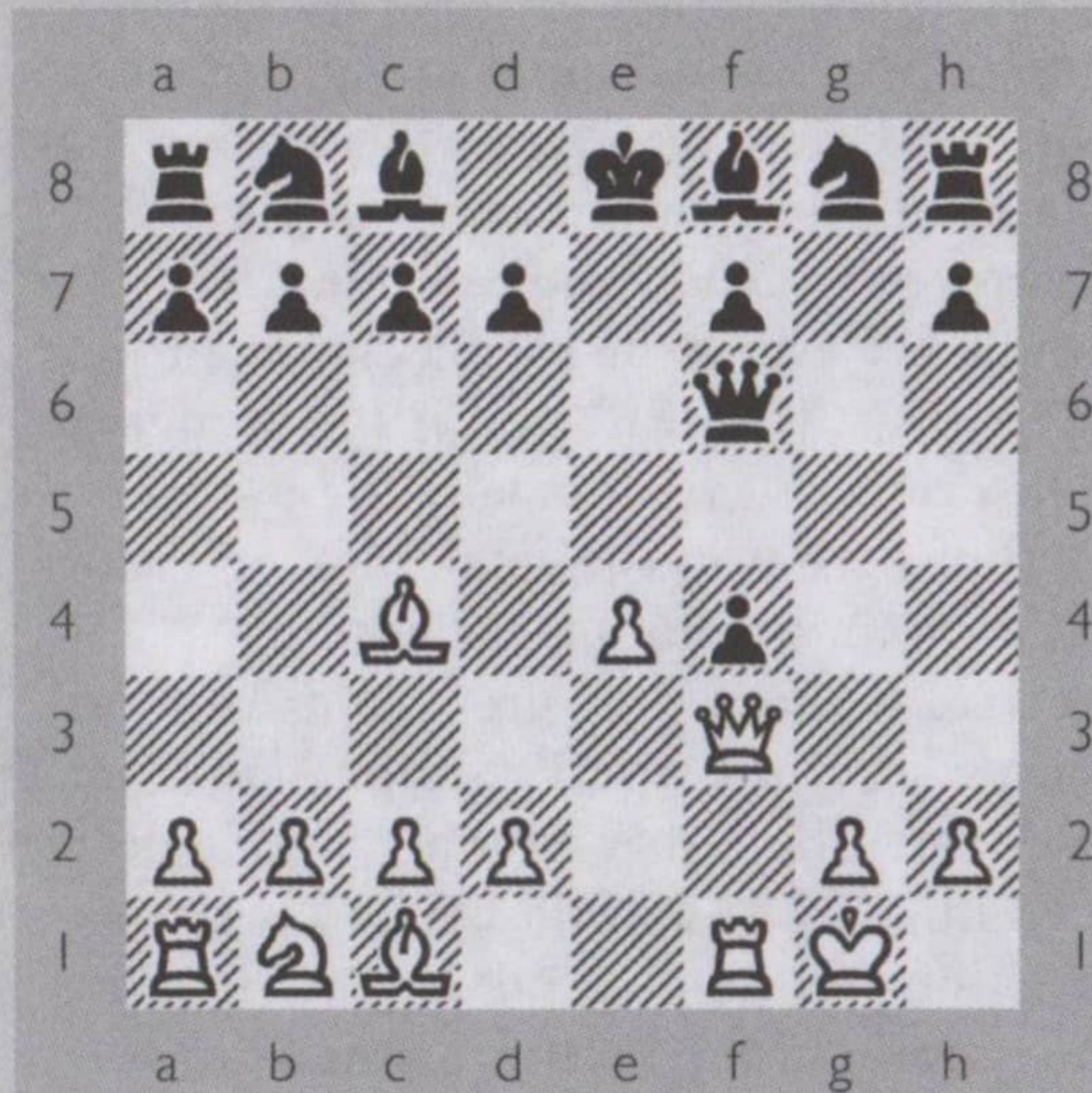
Against a backdrop of big companies such as BP and Barclays announcing they are closing their final salary pensions, the workers at Fujitsu are to be applauded for fighting back.

IN BRIEF

HURRICANE WATCH: As reported last issue, the North Atlantic hurricane season has started. So far there has been only one tropical depression (a baby hurricane) so we thought we'd use the space to let you know the names that will be used this year. Retired names, if any, will be announced by the World Meteorological Organisation in the spring of 2010. If there are more than 21 named storms (the 21st being Wanda) then any more tropical storm-strength systems will be named with the Greek alphabet, starting with Alpha. This has only occurred once, in 2005. Ana, Bill, Claudette, Danny, Erika, Fred, Grace, Henri, Ida, Joaquin, Kate, Larry, Mindy, Nicholas, Odette, Peter, Rose, Sam, Teresa, Victor and Wanda.

CHESS: As we promised, we have acquired a chess columnist and he starts off with Marx's only recorded game. We hope comrades will benefit from this knowledge as come the glorious day we will need to outfox the trots in all forms of struggle. *Karl Marx v Meyer 1-0, Germany, 1867, Muzio Gambit*

1.e4 e5 2.f4 exf4 3.Bc4 g5 4.Nf3 g4 5.0-0 gxf3 6.Qxf3 Qf6 7.e5 Qxe5 8.d3 Bh6 9.Nc3 Ne7 10.Bd2 Nbc6 11.Rae1 Qf5 12.Nd5 Kd8 13.Bc3 Rg8 14.Bf6 Bg5 15.Bxg5 Qxg5 16.Nxf4 Ne5 17.Qe4 d6 18.h4 Qg4 19.Bxf7 Rf8 20.Bh5 Qg7 21.d4 N5c6 22.c3 a5 23.Ne6+ Bxe6 24.Rxf8+ Qxf8 25.Qxe6 Ra6 26.Rf1 Qg7 27.Bg4 Nb8 28.Rf7 1-0



Renowned to work in practise but not in theory, the Muzio Gambit is the opposite one would expect from the founder of the 1st International. However, Marx's opponent Meyer's immense accumulation of material, vampire-like sucking piece after piece, produces his own grave-digger only. Marx sacrifices a whole piece for pace after 5.0-0, 6.Qxf3 sets up a veritable May Day parade down the f-file and white's thorough attacking play prevents black from any advantage based on superior forces. Note especially 16.Nxf4, eventually threatening e6 and protecting 20.Bh5. Meyer's final blunder, 22...a5, is not quite the holy alliance needed to exorcise the spectre haunting his king, the spectre of white's f-knight. 22...Nf5 or Rf6 and the counter-revolution tramples white's barry.

An Italian view on protest

In our ongoing consideration of public disorder, we reprint a speech from an Italian protester recorded during disturbances in Florence. Though somewhat dated we feel it still has value in addressing key concerns of those involved in contestation with the state.

If the question now were, whether we should take up arms, rob and burn the houses of the rich, and plunder churches, I am one of those who think it worthy of further consideration, and should, perhaps, prefer poverty and safety to the dangerous pursuit of an uncertain good. But as we have already armed, and many crimes have been committed, it appears to me that we have to consider how to lay them aside. And secure ourselves from the consequences of what is already done. I certainly think, that if nothing else could teach us, necessity might. You see the city's rulers full of complaint and indignation against us; the rich are angry and the politicians in league with the judges. You may be sure they are contriving something against us. We ought therefore to keep two things in view; the one is, to escape with impunity for what has been done in the last few days, and the other, to live in greater comfort and security for the time to come. We must, therefore, I think, in order to be pardoned for our crimes, commit new ones; redoubling the mischief, and multiplying arsons and robberies; and in doing this, endeavor to have as many companions as we can; for when many are in fault, few are punished; small crimes are chastised, but great and serious ones rewarded. When many suffer few seek vengeance; for greater evils are endured more patiently than private ones. To increase the number of crimes will, therefore, make forgiveness more easy, and will open the way to secure what we require for our own liberty. And it appears evident that the gain is certain; for our opponents are disunited and rich; their disunion will give us the victory and their riches, when

they have become ours, will support us. Be not deceived about that poshness by which they exalt themselves above us; for everyone having had one common origin, are all equally ancient, and nature has made us all after one fashion. Strip us naked, and we shall all be found alike. Dress us in their clothing, and they in ours, we shall appear noble, they ignoble – for poverty and riches make all the difference. It grieves me much to think that some of you are sorry inwardly for what is done, and resolve to abstain from anything more of the kind. Certainly if it be so, you are not the people I took you for; because neither shame nor conscience ought to have any influence with you. conquerors, by whatever means are never considered anything but glorious. We have no business to think about conscience, for when, like us, people have to fear hunger and imprisonment or death, the fear of hell neither can nor ought to have any influence upon them. If you only watch human proceedings, you may observe that all who obtain great power and riches make use of either force or fraud; and what they have acquired by either deceit or violence, in order to conceal the disgraceful methods of attainment, they endeavor to sanctify with the false title of honest gains. Those who either from imprudence or want of sagacity avoid doing so, are always overwhelmed with servitude and poverty; for faithful servants are always servants, and honest men are always poor; nor do any escape from servitude but the bold and the faithless, or from poverty, but the rapacious and fraudulent. Nature has thrown all human fortunes into the midst of mankind; and they are thus attainable rather by rapine than industry, by wicked actions rather than by good. Hence it is that people feed upon one another, and those who cannot defend themselves must be worried.

Nick M

(thanks to Christian Detmold for the translation)



INTERNATIONAL

IN BRIEF

THE GULF: Thousands of workers at a major Bahrain construction company staged a wildcat strike over pay yesterday. More than 5,000 workers at Al Hamad Construction and Development Company claimed they had not been paid their salaries. They also accused the company of delaying repatriation of the bodies of their colleagues, claiming that the body of one had still not been flown home to his family a week after his death.

GREECE: Workers at Public Power Corp (PPC), Greece's biggest electricity company, are set to go strike next month. Workers want PPC, who have recently posted record profits, to hire 7,000 new staff to reduce strain on current employees and cut accidents. Four employees have died in accidents since the beginning of the year.

IRAN: Thousands of demonstrators camped around the state broadcaster to protest against a final television address allocated to the controversial incumbent president Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, while hundreds of thousands joined carnival-like parades through the country.

Reformist candidate Mir Hossein Mousavi has pledged to loosen social restrictions and to pursue detente with the west, while Mr Ahmadinejad has vowed to continue his controversial economic and nuclear policies in close presidential election race.

CROATIA: Hundreds of protesting farmers have driven their tractors through the capital city of Zagreb, demanding regular subsidies, higher prices for their products and limits on food imports. Farmers have parked about 200 tractors on the main streets of the city, near the Agriculture Ministry, hampering traffic. They are demanding to meet the agriculture minister.

BANGLADESH: Over 50 people were injured in a clash between workers and supporters of management of a garments factory on Tuesday. Supporters the factory management attacked the workers agitating for salary arrears and unpaid overtime. They accused management of using hired musclemen against them. About 400 to 500 workers began work abstention from the morning. Shahjada Prodhan Babul, Director of the factory, said the workers stopped work and went unruly despite assurance of payment.

EGYPT: Postal workers are calling for the formation of an independent union. Some 200 postal workers throughout Egypt attended the press conference, which was followed by a protest on the steps of the Journalists' Syndicate. Ahmed Allam told the press conference that postal workers "are not frightened" by "the intimidation of state security investigations".

LENS CAP ROMANIA



The Romanian Railways Company CFR staff went on a wildcat strike, with eight trains being blocked in Bucharest's North Railway Station. The workers are protesting over the delayed payment of the wages due in May.

Direct action beats government plans

Peruvian community campaigners have won a major victory over the government's controversial plans to open much of the Amazon's natural resources to free trade at a cost. Government officials have suspended one of the nine decrees, dubbed 'Law of the Jungle' covering forestry and fauna in Peru's north-eastern Amazon rain forest after violent confrontations between indigenous campaigners and police ended in the killing of dozens of people.

The decrees are vehemently opposed by half a million Indians of 65 ethnic groups who live in the Peruvian jungle. The natives, who see the development of the jungle as an assault on their way of life, have been holding continuous demonstrations, as previously reported in *Freedom*, since April across the region.

Violence peaked on 5th June when Peruvian

Special Forces staged a raid on a group of indigenous protestors blockading a road outside of Bagua. Over 600 police attacked several thousand unarmed Awajun and Wambis peoples including many women and children forcibly dispersing them using tear gas and live ammunition resulting in 25 civilians confirmed dead and hundreds more wounded. Despite the media claims protest leaders insist the death toll is much higher.

The decrees were originally to be suspended for 90 days, but in the final vote legislators agreed on an indefinite suspension "to negotiate without pressure," said Aurelio Pastor, a legislator with President Alan Garcia's APRA party. Both measures are among decrees issued in 2007 and 2008 by Garcia easing restrictions on mining, oil drilling, logging and farming in the Peruvian Amazon.

Notes from the United States

The Pentagon, a congressperson and fraud met in May when it emerged that Robert Murtha, nephew of champion of the left and chair of the House Appropriations Defense Subcommittee John Murtha, received \$4 million (around £2.8 million) in Pentagon contracts in 2008 – all without competitive bidding.

A probe carried out by the Pentagon has found that US forces had 'committed serious errors' in bombing two Afghan villages in May killing nearly 150 people. The investigation said at least half the bombings wouldn't have occurred had US forces followed 'operational rules'.

The Pentagon also reported on fraud and politicians: a top auditor revealed that the military contractor KBR (a former subsidiary of Dick Cheney's Halliburton and the Army's largest contractor in Iraq and Afghanistan) was responsible for the 'vast majority' of 32 cases of suspected combat-zone fraud.

Big business has to be protected though: a federal jury in Montana acquitted W.R. Grace and Company and three of its former executives of knowingly exposing mine workers and residents of Libby, Montana, to asbestos poisoning and then covering up their actions. The government has called this

Ireland's anti-Shell action

Dredgers are forced from Broadhaven Bay as the Rosspoint campaigners step up their action against Shell

The campaign against Shell's plans to construct a massive gas pipeline off the coast of County Mayo has intensified as local protesters have become more determined in their resistance to prevent the energy giant's construction project.

For the second time in three days a Shell dredger has been boarded and occupied by a Shell to Sea protesters. As a result all the ships working in the bay have ceased work and returned to harbour. Reports confirm that work has been abandoned due to the action of the protesters.

On the evening of Monday 1st June, dredgers and accompanying boats returned to Broadhaven Bay to begin work on the off-shore pipeline for Shell's Corrib Gas project in County Mayo, Ireland. The pipe-laying ship, the *Solitaire*, is expected to arrive within the next few weeks.

The boats have met stiff resistance from people at the newly formed Rosspoint Solidarity Camp. There have been attempts to dismantle the causeway at the Shell compound and numerous water based actions against dredging work. On Tuesday night the crane on one of the dredgers was occupied for over 10 hours, halting work for this period.

Over the past month, the local community have made a concerted effort to stop work. Shell's construction of a compound at Glengad (the beach where the off-shore pipe



is planned to come on land) was resisted from the beginning. Trucks attempting to bring materials to construct the compound were blockaded and occupied and initially the fencing was removed by the community. Shell's response to the resistance was a vicious night time attack on Willie Corduff of the Rosspoint Five, by Shell security IRMS, while he was blockading a truck.

Willie, a father of six and a grandfather, was jailed for 94 days in 2005 for refusing Shell access to his land to lay the high-pressure pipeline. Shell is still seeking planning permission to lay the pipeline along this route, which crosses the land of Willie Corduff, other members of the Rosspoint Five and other land-owners who also object to it.

The compound was eventually constructed,

but resistance continued. There were several attempts to dismantle the compound by pulling down the fences but the focus of resistance has now moved to the water based work. The ongoing actions have forced Shell to rely on a permanent presence of security and Gardai (police) boats while they are working. So far, neither the security nor the Gardai have been able to prevent activists stopping work.

Last year, the pipe-laying ship, the *Solitaire*, was forced out of Irish waters with no pipeline laid. The time frame for pipeline work is limited – if resistance can be sustained for enough time, pipeline work can be halted again. The camp is calling for people to go to Mayo to support the struggle against Shell.

Notes from the Unites States

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the nation's biggest environmental disaster. Hundreds of miners and residents of Libby have died, and at least 1,200 more have developed cancer or lung disease from exposure to the asbestos-containing ore from W.R. Grace's vermiculite mine.

Also in May two studies showed that the poorest in the country are actually its most generous: Virginia Hodgkinson, former vice president for research at Independent Sector, a Washington-based association of major non-profit agencies points out: "The lowest-income fifth (of the population) always give at more than their capacity. The next two-fifths give at capacity, and those above that are capable of giving two or three times more than they give." Such a statistic is confirmed by the US Bureau of Labor Statistics, whose latest survey of consumer expenditure discovered that the poorest fifth of America's

households contributed an average of 4.3% of their incomes to charitable organisations in 2007. The richest fifth, on the other hand, gave at less than half that rate, 2.1%.

- In Arizona Walt Staton, a human rights worker active with the group No More Deaths, has been convicted of leaving plastic jugs of water for undocumented immigrants crossing the border between Mexico and the US to prevent them from dying of dehydration – as nearly 2,000 men, women and children have over the past decade. At the beginning of June, the jury trying Staton (for littering) was ordered to reach a verdict. A statement from No More Deaths said, "By penalising life-saving work, the United States is showing callous disregard for the lives of our neighbours to the south, whose only crime is to seek a better life."

Pirate Party

The Pirate Party received 7.13% of the total Swedish votes in the 2009 European Parliament elections, resulting in gaining a seat in the European parliament.

The Pirate Party came out of the file sharing internet website The Pirate Bay, whose owners were recently sentenced to a year in prison for contravening copyright laws against multimedia giants like Sony. It strives to reform laws regarding copyright and patents, support for strengthening the right to privacy, both on the internet and in everyday life, and the transparency of state administration.

The Party has intentionally chosen to be independent on the traditional left-right scale. It is the third largest party in Sweden in terms of membership. Its sudden popularity has given rise to parties with the same name and similar goals in Europe and worldwide.

Anarchist movement conference report

Since we've been shamelessly plugging this event for the last few months readers can look forward to an objective and unbiased report. The author was involved in the conference from its inception and this is very much an insider's view of the process. Because it concentrates on the contentious issues, I will explain at the start that it was a worthwhile and enjoyable experience for me and, I believe, for the anarchist movement as a whole.

Conferences long ago and far away Rumour reaches us that the Anarchist Federation of Britain had national conferences way back in the 1960s, but the model and inspiration for the 2009 event was the Bradford Conference of 1998. That conference came about from a majority in the Class War Federation deciding to disband their organisation and issuing a 'last' copy (no 73) of their paper calling for the anarchist movement to reassess itself. Comrades from other parts of the movement became involved and a conference was held over the Mayday bank holiday with the format of dividing people into groups of around 20, deliberately mixing up those from different political and geographical backgrounds. The conference, which attracted some 300 people, was widely seen as a great success, not primarily for the practical initiatives such as 18th June carnival against capitalism but for engendering a renewed spirit of co-operation and mutual respect in the anarchist movement and for forging links between the anarchist and ecological milieus.

However the key premise of Bradford '98, 'if our ideas are so good why is the anarchist movement so ineffective', which was generally agreed with in 1998, was not the ethos of British anarchism in 2009. The change from 'we're in trouble we need a conference to sort ourselves out' to 'oh, a conference, how nice, I think I might go'

CHOOSING THE GROUPS

On Thursday night the 220 people who had signed up in advance were allocated to groups. This was done by making a list of attendees grouped by the political affiliations they put on the registration form and then numbering off the list from 1 to 15. After this there were a few shuffles of people to get a better London/non-London balance and the occasional tweak to avoid clashes of personality. People who signed up on the day were slotted into the existing groups.

was to dramatically influence the build up of the 2009 event.

The planning process.

Although the idea of a conference on Bradford '98 lines had been discussed for some time it was only in January that the first open meeting to discuss it occurred. Around 60 people came to a meeting at Conway Hall in London and after four hours of chat came to the conclusion that a conference would be a good idea. The main blocks on making firm decisions about the format and content were the need for some groups to discuss the options internally before mandating delegates to the next meeting, the lack of a decision making structure and a general reticence to be seen forcing a model on an unsuspecting movement. However a working group was set up to hold a second meeting and look at potential conference venues. Also an e-list was established for people to gas on endlessly ... sorry, put forward constructive suggestions.

Inevitably the second meeting was twice the size of the first, but it was well prepared for with an agenda, proposals for format, content and decision-making carefully compiled from the e-list and distributed to all attending. Then it all went anarcho shape. Three hours later we had decided the format of Saturday but not Sunday and not even discussed content. Worse the 'careful compiler' had quit in disgust and the meeting facilitator went home to write to the list that the whole thing should be called off cos no one could make up their mind about anything.

The Bookfair model

Those most keen on the conference now went into overdrive to save the project. A £1,000 loan was obtained from Freedom Press to pay the deposit on the venue and, although the formal structure remained the same (open meeting consensus with working groups accountable to general ones), in practice a core team of about eight people based around the Anarchist Bookfair Collective decided to pull off the event come what may. Perhaps this was inevitable given the time frame, but from here on in it was very much an event to be consumed which the majority of the movement felt no ownership of or responsibility towards. This process, of course, is self reinforcing and divisive. The working groups became the 'organisers' and largely thought of themselves as such - 'we've got to get more people to register/facilitate/raise money', not 'the movement better get it's arse in gear or it'll be a flop'...

Registration, facilitation and info packs With the structure was finally set up and the working groups performing their mandated tasks, you might think the controversies



Comrades pose for the conference group photo. Some comrades are wearing masks to avoid state repression...

were over. Oh no! Firstly to separate people as intended they needed to provide details of the groups and locations they worked in. Kick in the paranoia. Registrations came in a trickle. Even those registering were non-committal. The form asked under skills if people could facilitate. It's hard to believe that only 8% of comrades can chair a meeting, which is the response we got. Also there were endless requests for stalls and workshops, despite the clearly advertised decision that there wouldn't be any because the whole conference was set up to have everyone in meetings discussing agreed topics. With a week to go and still needing 12 more facilitators, we launched a desperate ring round only to find that some people who had registered for the event didn't know that facilitators would be with their group for both days. Overstretch caused mistakes and the usual giggles and some real political differences, even into deciding who spoke at the conference itself, but it's pleasing to be able to report that this was done in an atmosphere of respect than was to be shown at the conference itself.

D-day arrives

Finally Saturday 6th of June dawned and, despite transport problems, comrades appeared bright-eyed and bushy tailed and, after a quick introduction, trundled off to their groups to chat away happily. There were odd complaints - 'what the fuck are you doing to me. Oh my god. This is the worst thing that has ever happened I swear to fuck' texted one concerned facilitator. However in general an atmosphere of comradely behaviour prevailed and much productive discussion ensued. Of course by far the best part of the conference was the social at Freedom afterwards. Fearing inclement weather the original plan of a barbecue was abandoned in favour of obtaining curry en masse from a local emporium and dishing it out to the starving multitude hot from the pot. The event raised £234 towards repaying the Freedom Press loan - huzzah.

On Sunday at 2pm there was a plenary session. Notes of the groups' discussions are being compiled into a conference report so we will not go through it in detail but

concentrate on the most contentious issue class. It swiftly emerged that the key difference among groups was between the view that there is a 'shopping list' of oppressions, of which class is one among many, and the view that class is the fundamental question which determines all the others. Worryingly there were many cases, both in feedback and anecdotally, from groups of a failure to understand class in the sense of a social relationship rather than a cultural identity. As a successor to Charlotte Wilson in editing *Freedom*, I think we may have to restore her original subheading 'A journal of Socialist Anarchism'. Which brings us to...

The feminist intervention

However all the buzz afterwards was around the interruption of the feedback by feminist group No Pretence. Seven of them entered masked up and showed a five minute film comparing sexism in the anarchist movement to that in mainstream society. The good humoured reception they got made this action seem like a planned part of the programme and there is a disquieting paternalism that

this disruption was not challenged in the way we would expect others to be. It was certainly effective in that it has got the movement talking about feminism, see you local internet board for the latest. However what was problematic was No Pretences refusal to engage with the planning process of the conference. Also the selection of images of the anarchist movement was, in parts, deliberately misrepresentative but, most seriously, there was no constructive element of how the conference could or will in future be organised differently. We hope to have an article from No Pretence for next issue and invite comments from anyone else who can help fill the letters page.

Working groups and beyond.

At 4pm the brave souls who were still going strong went into working groups for a number of projects that had come up in discussion. As we have not yet spoken to them all, and many are in embryonic stages, we won't go into them now but hope to report great things in future. It must be said that the most intriguing was the group for a national anarchist newspaper which was attended by both current and former *Freedom* editors, so watch this space. There will be a meeting at the London Anarchist Bookfair to start work on Conference 2010 so, if you feel like writing a whinging article for *Freedom* this time next year, come along and get involved.

Andy Meinke

CONFERENCE STATISTICS

Around 260 comrades attended the conference which, at a total of £6,000, makes a cost of £23 a head. We are still £500 short of the target and it's hoped to raise more than this to enable next years conference to get off to a flying start.

- **Gender Balance:** We estimate around a quarter of participants were women. In terms of taking on responsibility, 8% of facilitators, 26% of those feeding back from groups and 33% of speakers from the organising group.
- **Socio-economic status:** Using the Saturday social as a sample, 68% of 109 punters bought concessionary tickets, indicating the movement is still solidly grounded in the lumpen proletariat. Fortunately better off comrades rallied round to subsidise the needy and 263 cans of refreshment were polished off.
- **Racial Balance:** Don't ask, but both the black comrades are due a refund.

COMMENT

ABOUT FREEDOM

ANGEL ALLEY

It's been busy as usual in the Alley. The pointing outside is nearly finished, thanks to Tony and his keen helpers. Inside Corporatewatch moved into the old Freedom admin office on the second floor on the 29th May, and the admin office has moved into the old bookshop on the first floor. The next step will be a cleaning and redecorating weekend to spruce up the communal parts of the building. Date to be announced.

With summer upon us and light just about reaching the shop windows, we hope to have a series of late night openings with talks and discussions, as well as light refreshments.

In Gunthorpe Street Aldgate are installing a brand new printing press, and this would be a useful time to remind comrades to use them for all your printing needs, an example of which the Anarchist Bookfair poster is now available from Freedom Bookshop.

SUBSCRIPTIONS

As mentioned in our previous issue, we've had to put the cover price up to £1, but our subscription prices remain the same. To work out if your subscription is due for renewal, look at the number above your name on the address label. This issue is vol 70, no 11, so if your subscription runs out with this issue you'll have 7011 above your name. If the number is 7011 or less, then your subscription is now due for renewal. See page 16 for the current 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 by emailing 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 20th June 2009 and the last day to get copy to us for that issue will be Thursday 11th June. You can send your articles to us by email to copy@freedompress.org.uk or by post addressed to 'The Editors', Freedom, 84b Whitechapel High Street, London E1 7QX.

A sideways look

by SVARTFROSK

There's an old saying, attributed to Emma Goldman, but used by plenty of others: 'if voting changed anything, they'd make it illegal'. It sums up the near impossibility of changing things through elections. I was reminded of it recently when countering the usual 'if you don't vote you've no right to complain' arguments from colleagues at work. One went so far as to say that voting was the only way things had ever changed. This statement is so self-evidently not true, but it is worrying that people have so little understanding of history that they could think this.

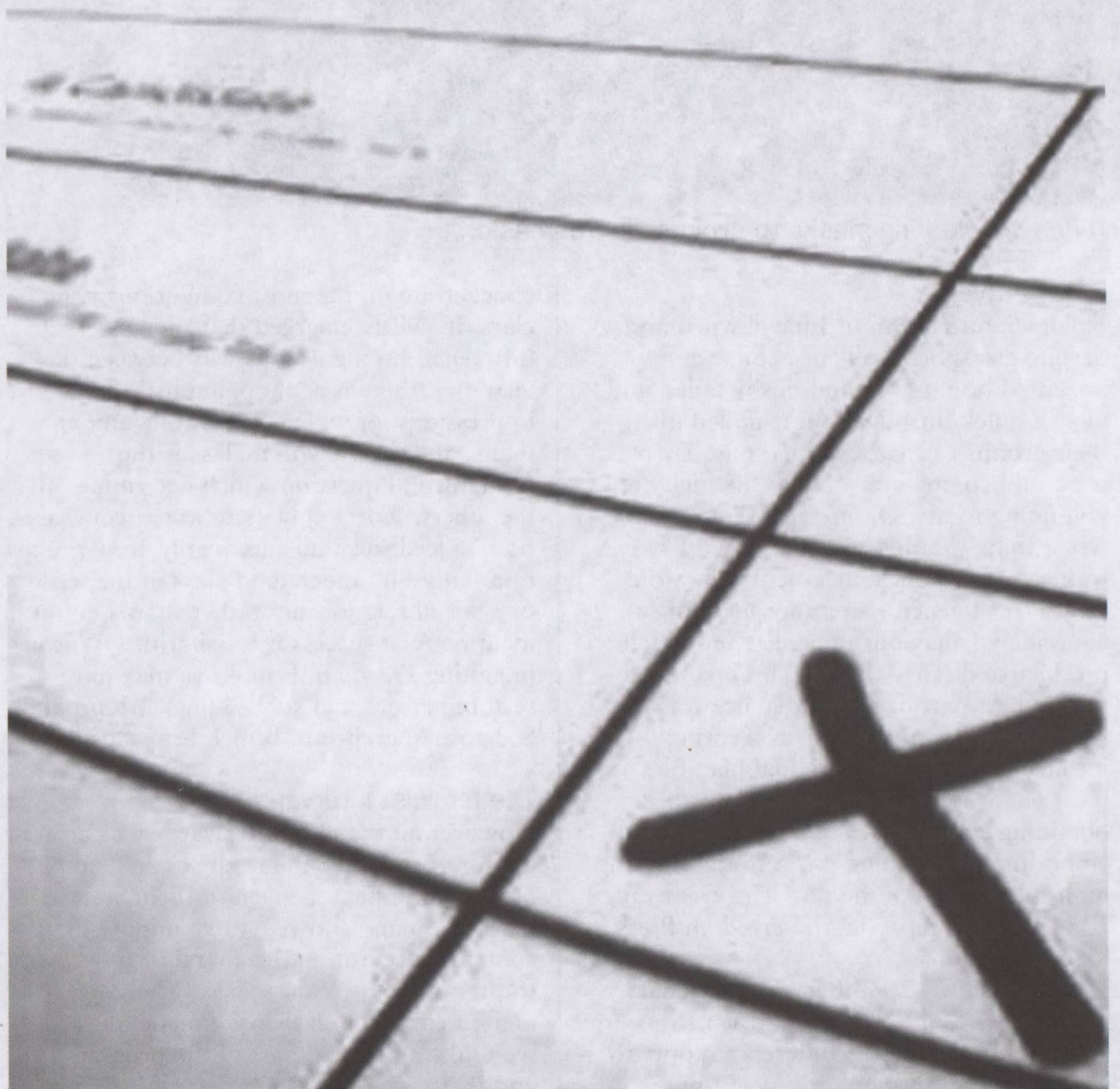
Of course, every time there is an election you can expect to run into the same arguments. Even one as mind-numbing as the European Parliament. 'People died so that you could vote'. Well they did, but put it in context. A lot of them thought at the time that similar rights for one half of humanity ought to extend to the other half. And quite a few of the original agitators for the extension of suffrage did so because they thought a universal democracy would lead to socialism. Well, we know better now.

We can also look back at how women got the vote – and it wasn't by voting! Women's suffrage was achieved through a combination of political and social struggle. The same is true of the vote being spread to the property-less classes. And even where voting looks like it achieved something, such as the

extension of social rights in the late '60s, this was merely a reflection of the wider struggles for those rights.

But this leads me on to another topic – related but only tangentially. Who struggles? An old acquaintance of mine who lives down the road from Lewisham Bridge school, currently occupied, exchanged opinions with me when we bumped into each other. His view was that it was orchestrated by middle class professional types who were slumming it with the ethnic kids for a few years before moving to the suburbs to get their kids into grammar schools. This is utter rubbish and I refuted it, but underlying it is an oft-held opinion that any organised protest must have 'someone' to do it, and by 'someone' they mean a person with the class background to get it together. As it happens one of the main parents involved in the occupation does have an activist background, but the other one doesn't, and works in that terribly middle class profession, catering.

Such an attitude is not unknown in some anarchist circles, either; of course it's harder to organise things if you've no experience of doing so, or you've had a lifetime of being told you're not able to do anything. But if we believe that the task of the liberation of the working class is the task of the workers ourselves, then it follows that we have some faith in our fellow workers to organise things, and that in doing so, we will all learn more.



Why I vote

As inconsistent as the anarchist community is here in London – and surely not only here – most seem bizarrely in agreement on one issue: *'I'm an anarchist! I don't vote!'*

Well, I am an anarchist and I do vote. And as much as I am aware how taboo and anathema a thing this is to most, I do think it is especially in this current climate (full of infested swines inflicted either with pandemic-potential flue or inherent snobbist greed), worth re-evaluating our traditional principles.

I am also fairly sure that there is a need to highlight the different cultural roots this taboo stems from. Here in the UK most will happily agree that the two main parties are just as bad and useless from each other so then, why vote? What would that change? Nothing, so why bother?

In the German political set-up – as fragile as it always has been historically – people tend to approach it with a more shall we say, pragmatist approach: *'Let's vote for the lesser evil.'*

This obviously stems from the German post-Second World War generation, particularly the 1968ers who will possibly perpetually be blaming their parents for having voted in Hitler – and that was democratically.

And it is this which I deem to be the central political nutshell: to vote to avoid a potentially even more 'evil' party to gain power. To vote out of a certain civil responsibility. Essentially to vote, to counter-vote. That is inherently what I did. I did not vote for the LibDems because I think they are competent politicians. Far from it. I think they are a bunch of plonkers. Though compared to NuLabour and the Tories, I simply deem them to be a lesser evil. That's why I voted for them.

The obvious other reason for me to do this was also the prognosed success of the BNP party in the just passed EU elections, who have in fact gained two seats in the EU parliament.

And this has got to be something all of us are also in agreement of: aside from capitalists, we all strongly oppose the rightwing. No anarchist will be happy in the same room with a nazi, a BNP-member or some NF-bonehead. We will all agree that these two new BNP-seats in the European parliament are exactly two too many.

I can't help feeling the need to do whatever it takes to stem the brown tide (and yes this is indeed due to my own cultural German roots). So even if an anarchist who opposes participating in the voting system because of his political convictions, I insist in these circumstances s/he should.

In this vein we should further remind ourselves when just a few years back the French fascist Jean Marie Le Pen was about to receive the majority of (again mostly protest) votes. People voted to the hundred thousands for the fervently despised Chirac, according to the simple slogan *'Vote for the crook, not the fascist'*. The French back then

hated Chirac who, in his boundless arrogance, tested several atomic bombs just miles away from the coast of Australia. However the French collectively chose the crook and voted for him, in order to avoid an even worse one, the fascist to gain seats. And as it turned out, the French successfully had to bear Chirac for several years more.

Particularly among us anarchists some, unsurprisingly, go even further: they form their own political party. The APPD (Anarchist Pogo Party Germany), who set themselves up to give a political voice for all the disillusioned voters and politically active people. They were aiming from the beginning to be the subversive alternative party. As such, the APPD is the self-declared party of the traditionally non-voting Pöbel (mob) and the 'Sozialschmarotzer' (social parasites) and was founded as early as 1981 by two 17-year-olds in Hanover. In the following years it was joined by many punks, demonstrations and the usual baton-eager police. The party dissolved in 1986, reformed in 1994 and soon chose to participate in elections. In the 1997 Hamburg city elections the APPD received a stunning 5.3% of the votes, making them the fourth-strongest party in that district. In 1998 the APPD ran in the Bundestag election using slogans like *'Work is shit'* (*'Arbeit ist Scheiße'*) and *'Drinking, drinking, just drinking every day'* (*'Saufen! Saufen! Jeden tag nur saufen'*). They failed to gain the 0.5% of the votes needed; and also and to pay voters back with a promised big party with free beer. Nevertheless, with approximately 35,000 votes, they were ahead of the German Communist Party DKP.

And, granted, APPD members realised quite early that they have to yield to the pressure by traditional anarchists who do not vote

(yes, you've got those as well in Germany, albeit to a lower degree) and distance themselves from the classical definition of anarchy (thus Pogo-anarchism).

However, there was one close English equivalent: the Monster Raving Loony Party. Next to Screaming Lord Sutch, it was the other founder Bill Boaks who proved influential on Sutch's direction as the leading anti-politician, summing up his general attitude of the Loony politics by saying: *'It's the ones who don't vote you really want, because they're the ones who think'*.

The point of all this though is setting right priorities: am I sticking to my traditional anarchist principles and do not vote and potentially risk some fascists gaining more foothold (as happened), or am I voting for a party who I deem to be capable of causing the least damage (as much as I still think what a bunch of plonkers the party consists of)?

To say the least, I am quiet pissed off about the recent success of the BNP in the EU elections. But I would have been more pissed off with myself, had I not voted for someone else and thus equalised things, as tiny as it might seem.

Quantity is not quality. It is an old adage and it applies here as well. I do not think we would have had a quality European Parliament had the entire anarchist community voted. I distrust too much people in politics for that. However, I do think we would have less fascist scum.

This is not rocket science. It is merely prioritising. It is simply being politically responsible. I am convinced there is a way to bring this in line with current anarchist politics. Can we please bear this in mind for the future and make sure that two BNP MEP's do not turn into 20.

Hal, aka Kebabpunk



Oxfordshire, 23-27 July 2009

Join people from across the broad spectrum of the British peace movement for five days of exploration, celebration and empowerment. Bring your contribution to a hothouse of creativity, a small self-governed society run by democratic camp meetings, a viable example of the kind of world we are trying to bring about. The Peace News Summer Camp helps build a radical movement for the future by building a living community today.

We will be learning from other movements, struggling with challenging issues, creating more cohesion in a segmented peace movement and debating nonviolence. Workshops will range from theoretical discussion to practical planning for actions later in the year. Fifty years of activist experience will be represented, along with fresh faces and new blood.

Fed by local organic fruit and veg (lovingly cooked by the wonderful Veggies of Nottingham), we are camping in a family-friendly and renewably-powered way from 23-27 July near Faringdon, Oxfordshire, to make the world a better place.

There will be over 40 sessions at the camp, including:
 - Libertarian Education with David Gribble
 - Chomsky's Politics with Milan Rai
 - Workers Control and Parecon with Mark Evans
 - Local Anti-Arms Trade Campaigning with Smash EDO

The camp costs £15 - £50 depending on income.
 For more information on the camp see:

www.peacenewscamp.info

Peace News
 The voice of the anti-war movement
 peacenews.info

GETTING ACTIVE

PRISON NEWS

The Association of Prisoners

In 2002, following legal action by then prisoner John Hirst, the Prison Service was forced to accept that Article 11 of the European Convention on Human Rights (freedom of association) meant serving prisoners had the right to set up and join 'representative associations'. The Association of Prisoners (AOP) had been set up shortly before this, but did not become active. However, in April 2009, life sentence prisoner Ben Gunn announced via prisoners' paper *Inside Time* that he was the AOP's new General Secretary. Ben invited all prisoners to be involved in the Association. Here's a shortened version of a recent article he wrote:

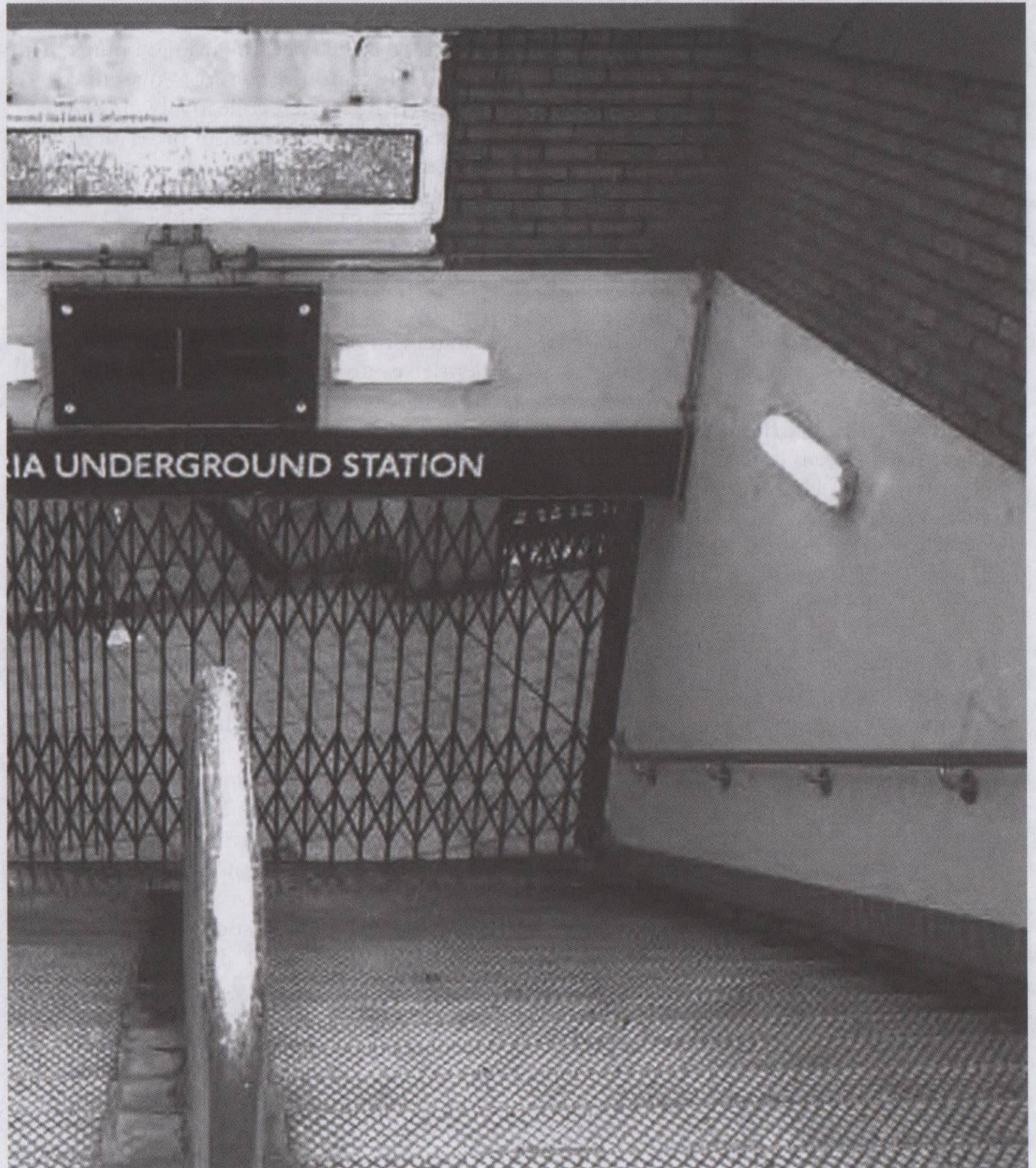
"We are at a unique point in prison history. On the downside, the system has spent the period since the 1990 riots developing a mesh of controls that weaves around each individual prisoner. The changes in the system's intelligence gathering, the training of riot-control staff, changes in prison architecture and security procedures, all suggest that any attempt at 'reform through riot' as in 1990 is likely to fail.

"The daily controls created since then comprise the managerialist bog of paperwork and procedures. Led by the Incentives and Earned Privileges Scheme, this web includes risk assessments, sentence planning, parole dossiers, offending behaviour courses – an endless list of seemingly professional tools which are, in reality, responsible for oppressing a whole generation of prisoners. Whilst casual physical brutality and squalor have far from disappeared, most cons find greater frustration arising from dealing with 'professionals' in shiny suits who hide behind a mantra of risk and public protection, than from thick-necked landing screws.

"Today, we are allowed to organise. For the first time in British prison history a group has organised in public and the system has had to grin and bear it. We need to capitalise on this and that means encouraging prisoners to reassert their inherent dignity as human beings. The main aim of all that I do is to try to persuade prisoners that we are not helpless, that we don't have to lower our eyes in the face of being treated as irrelevant.

"Change is possible, if we have the courage and fortitude to reach for it. We enjoy the benefits of generations of prisoners who went before us, and it is past battles which have brought us to the point where we are able to organise and support each other. But let us be clear: change doesn't come from the formation of the AOP; it doesn't come from the vote or media coverage. These things have their place but change originates within each individual prisoner who decides to refuse to be treated with contempt. And now is the time for each of us to stand up and be counted."

• Ben Gunn, K12612, HMP Shepton Mallet, Cornhill, Somerset, BA4 5LU



● A support group has been set up to aid the London Underground tube workers in the forthcoming strike. Over 50 people attended the first meeting with RMT union reps, tube workers, along with comrades from IWW, Solfed and Haringey Solidarity Group with a positive, angry and militant atmosphere.

The RMT tube workers will be holding a 48-hour strike starting at 7pm on 9th June over compulsory redundancies and an enforced five-year pay deal. Beyond that it's Boris's attempt to break the strength of the tube workers, one of the more militant worker forces, and as such has far reaching implications.

It was clear from the meeting the tube workers are looking for active support beyond the union structure. Suggestions involved leafleting tube stations in the run up to the strike informing people about the reasons for the strike, leafleting during the strike as well as organised picket line support. It was also made clear the support group should be independent from the RMT.

An email list has been set to aid communication and the organising process of the support group, as well as two websites to cover the strike: supportthetubestrikes.org.uk and rmtlondoncalling.org.uk (which is essentially for RMT/tube workers as a means of general update, although anyone can register). RMT

leaflets and stickers (Support the Tube/TfL Strikes) are available from RMT HQ at Unity House, 39 Charlton Street, London NW1 1JD and can be picked up anytime.

● As part of the eleventh annual International Refugee Week from 15th to 21st June, local community group Hackney Refugee and Migrant Support Group (HRMSG) is hosting a public meeting to share information and build solidarity in support of migrants in East London. It is open to everyone concerned about the impact of tough immigration policies and the rise of the Far Right on our communities.

Confirmed speakers include:

- Jamima Fagta (Kalungan): 'Care workers and undocumented migrants – the work of Kalungan'
- Don Flynn (Migrants' Rights Network): 'Migrants' struggles in east London'
- Sharif Rahman (Community Links): 'Locked in poverty by cash-in hand working – waiters and the informal economy in London's Brick Lane'

Tuesday 16th June 2009 from 7.00 to 9.00pm at Praxis Hall, Pott Street, Bethnal Green, London E2. If you'd like to make a contribution from the floor about issues or work in your area, you are welcome to tell them in advance or, if you just wish to attend, contact: hrmsgroup@googlemail.com or call 07791 991416.

Glasgow's Commonwealth Games

East End games – Glasgow's Commonwealth con

The 2014 Commonwealth Games have been sold to Glasgow under the premise that there will be no impact on council tax in Glasgow to pay for them. However, what has become abundantly clear is that the people of Glasgow will have to pay for the Games in other ways. The casual remark made by Glasgow City Council (GCC) leader Steven Purcell that the council would instead sell surplus property and land has revealed a wide-ranging plan which affects the working class of Glasgow on many different levels. It is already widely acknowledged that Glasgow will struggle to raise the money required to pay for the Games through property sales alone. This is due to the downturn in the property market as well as a decline in interest for regeneration projects in the private sector. However, taxpayers have already lost out as GCC has not been selling land at its full value, losing millions of pounds worth of public assets.

Unfortunately, GCC has already run out of 'surplus property and land' which needs to be replenished. Saleable land has been found underneath 25 primary and nursery schools throughout Glasgow, as well as other public buildings and housing estates. This has led to communities fighting against GCC and its blatant agenda of taking away from them so that the land can be sold to private investors and property developers. GCC and the developers argue that a proportion of the properties are given over to social housing, therefore reinvesting in the communities. However, only around 20% of the properties are given for social housing, forcing many to rent privately or struggle to buy, whereas the number of those claiming housing benefit continues to rise, money which then has to be handed over to private landlords. All this while waiting lists for social housing continue to grow. Considering the developers already got the land at discount prices, the profit to be made from those forced to rent privately is essentially a gift from GCC to developers which just keeps giving.

Furthermore, Glasgow 'won' the Commonwealth Games under the promise that it would be able to deliver a 'green games'. However, GCC has already shown their promises to be simply 'greenwash' rather than any sort of real commitment to lowering carbon emissions when a key 'legacy' component of the Commonwealth Games is the five-mile extension of the M74 which will run into costs of £80–85 million. To put this into context, this works out at over £80,000 a metre. The Scottish Government has also already admitted that the planned works will increase carbon dioxide emissions by more



than 250,000 tonnes by the year 2025.

All this was predicted by Jam 74 (a coalition of community groups, activists and campaigners) who argued the road would seriously decrease the amount of green space in the area which is already limited, bring further noise and pollution through the inevitable increase in traffic and, with the motorway running through the middle of it, cut the local community in half. They also argued that the reported 59% of East Enders who don't have cars would in no way benefit from the road and so made sure the road went to a public local inquiry after tireless campaigning. The recommendation of the Scottish Government's own independent inquiry could not be more clear: the road should not be built.

In 2004, the reporter Mr A. Hickman recommended: "this proposal should not be authorised" and that "the various orders should not be confirmed". He even went so far as to say: "looking at the policy, transport, environmental, business and community disadvantages of the proposal as a whole, it must be concluded that the proposal would be very likely to have very serious undesirable results; and that ... the economic and traffic benefits of the project would be limited."

It seems Mr Hickman put it too mildly since, despite all the evidence, Mr Jack McConnell, the Labour First minister at the time, simply ignored the findings and approved the road anyway. Massive road building schemes in the Southside of Glasgow (M74) and through the East End (dubbed the 'Regeneration Route'), whilst simultaneously ignoring calls for more cycle routes and better public transport, show GCC's claims

of committing to a 'green' transport policy as token lip service.

GCC is trying to cushion the blow with promises of jobs which will revive the city during the recession. At times such as now, hopes of new jobs to the figures of 50,000 and safeguarding thousands more is enough of an incentive for the majority who are currently searching for work to back the Games. However, it is difficult to find evidence that these claims have been fulfilled to the same extent in real terms since there are no guarantees of jobs going to the people in the local communities who would be affected the most. Not only that but advisers from the Sustainable Development Commission (SDC) presented a report to First Minister Alex Salmond and Prime Minister Gordon Brown on why their economic system is broken and reliance on growth and consumerism to get Britain out of the recession are 'delusional' and 'pathological'. The report shows that growth based on consuming goods has failed to bring social justice, prosperity or happiness.

Britain has been duped into not questioning economic growth and those who do question are labelled lunatics, idealists or revolutionaries. If economic growth was in line with human values and the common good, then the communities of Glasgow would not be actively showing their disagreement with the decisions being made by GCC. When economic growth is to the detriment of its citizens, we have the right to demand governments and councils to re-direct money where it is desperately needed, such as schools for local communities and public services, and not into projects full of empty promises such as the Commonwealth Games.

REVIEWS

WHAT'S ON

JUNE

9th Benefit gig for No Borders South Wales from 7pm at Meze Lounge, 6 Market Street, Newport NP20 1PU, <http://noborderswales.org.uk/2009/04/28/benefit-gig-on-9th-june/>
23rd to 29th Calais No Border Camp, a joint venture between UK and French activists aiming to highlight the realities of the situation in Calais, for more info see <http://london.noborders.org.uk/calais2009> or <http://calaisborder.eu.org>

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 or see caab.org.uk for more details.
15th Blake: London's Visionary Anarchist, Peter Marshall recounts the life of one of London's finest artists, William Blake, at Housmans Bookshop, 5 Caledonian Road, London N1 9DX, from 7pm until 8.30pm, see housmans.com for more.
23rd to 27th Peace News summer camp near Faringdon in Oxfordshire, call 0845 4582564 or see <http://peacenewscamp.wordpress.com/>

AUGUST

1st Musical protest against the arms fair at the ExCel Centre, Victoria Dock Road, London SE16 1XL, from 2pm until 5pm, call 07513 792705 for more information.
18th to 24th Earth First! Summer Gathering, ecological direct action without compromise – five days of workshops, skill sharing and planning action, plus low-impact living without leaders – at a location in Cumbria, see earthfirst.org.uk or email summergathering
22nd Violent London: 2000 Years of Riots, Rebels and Revolts – Clive Bloom charts the story of London through centuries of popular insurrection and protest, a story of political activism expressed in street fighting and slum warfare, in assassination and bombing, at Housmans Bookshop, 5 Caledonian Road, London N1 9DX, from 7pm until 8.30pm, see housmans.com for more.
26th until 2nd September Climate Camp 2009, see climatecamp.org.uk for more.
29th A historical walk through the radical Jewish East End with David Rosenberg, for more information see housmans.com or email nik@housmans.com.

SEPTEMBER

5th Musical protest against the arms fair at the ExCel Centre, Victoria Dock Road, London SE16 1XL, from 2pm until 5pm, call 07513 792705 for more information.

OCTOBER

1st Bath Activist Network meeting from 7.30pm until 9pm downstairs at the Hobgoblin, James Street, Bath, see myspace.com/bathactivistnetwork for more

TELEVISION

Endgame

written by Paula Milne, Channel 4

Directed by Pete Travis with trademark queasily paranoid camerawork, *Endgame's* ponderous pseudo-conspiracy thriller re-sanctifies heroic African National Congressmen rescuing South Africa, nobly assisted by white liberal and international capitalist elites. With the country dissolving in civil war in the late 1980s, P.W. Botha's spooks separate Nelson Mandela from imprisoned colleagues, planning watered-down 'power-sharing'. Meanwhile a British goldmining corporation brokers secret talks at its Somerset stately home between exiled ANC leaders, Afrikaaner academics and big-business representatives – all anxious to sustain their minority interests. The core of the film (screened on 4th May) contrasts the chaos on the postcolonial ground with these civilised boardroom tête-à-têtes where Thabo Mbeki (later President; played by Chiwetel Ejiofor) and prominent Afrikaans philosophy professor Willie Esterhuysen's (William Hurt) growing friendship paves the way for Mandela's release and apartheid's demise.

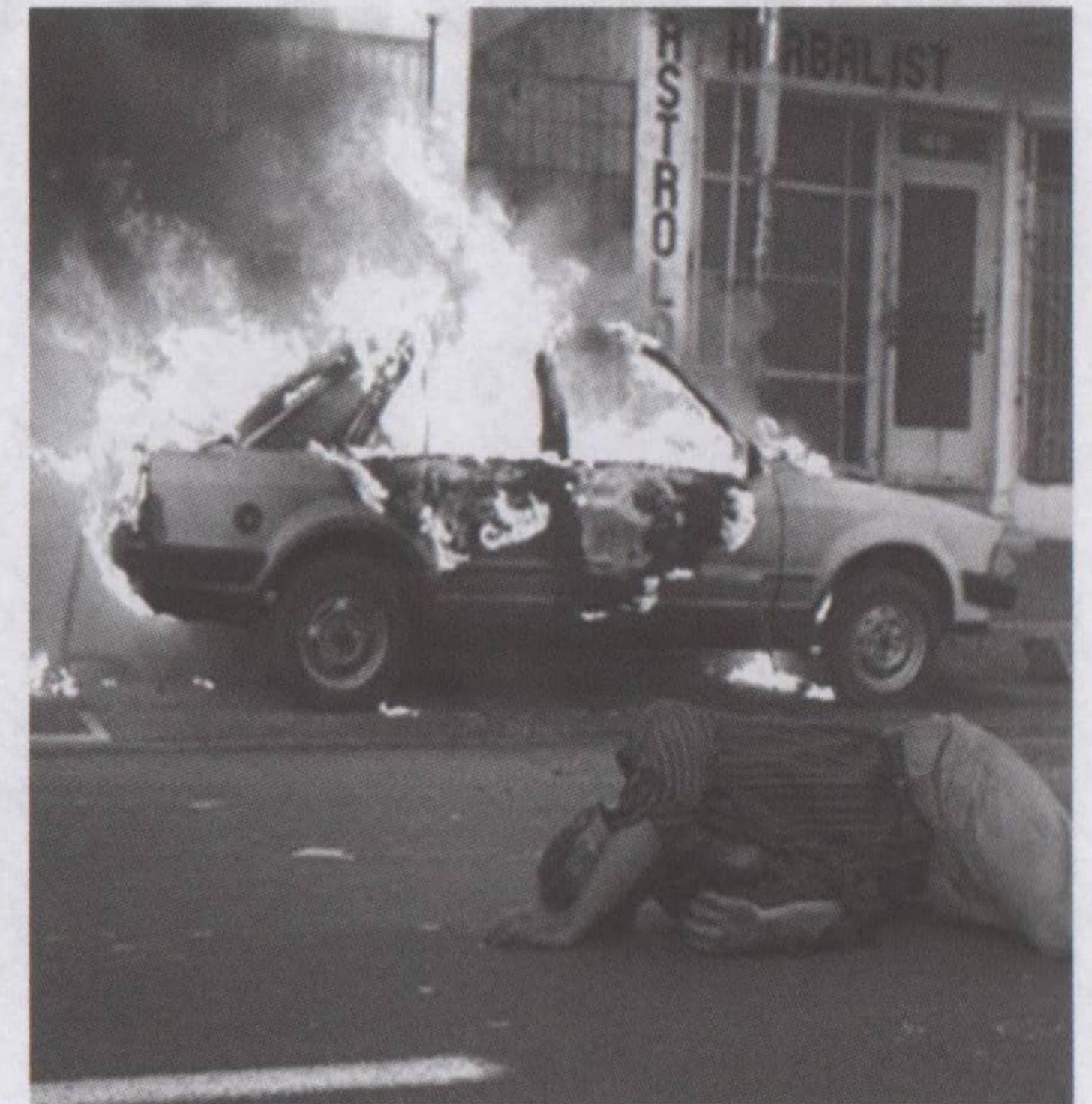
Liberation Chequemate

Based on *Telegraph* journalist Robert Harvey's equally tendentious skim in *The Fall of Apartheid* (2001), the narrative's escalating crescendo of deceitful omissions scuppers all documentary pretence. Paralleling Esterhuysen's high-ranking Broederbond (sub-Nazi Boer freemasonry) membership, Politburomen Mandela, Mbeki et al had long sought negotiations – the Mells Park junkets being insignificant late examples – whereas their more salient high-level skulduggery is ignored, like acceptance of the IMF structural adjustments whose devastating effects are ongoing. Stakes of economic stranglehold thereby mystified in 'freedom' and 'national interest' rhetoric, the undisciplined rabble's threat to Communist Party hegemony appears as rogue guerillas killing civilians – conveniently overlooking intensifying industrial revolt (despite coopting the formerly militant COSATU), township youth insurrection, and a rapidly-radicalising UDF alongside collaborationist rackets like the Zulu Inkatha.

The SACP's invisibility here also conceals impending ANC cashflow crisis after Soviet collapse, hitting both statesmanlike

QUIZ ANSWERS

1. 'Anarcho'-capitalism's inventor, Murray Rothbard. This was because "all" anarchists had "socialistic elements in their doctrines" and "possessed socialistic economic doctrines in common".
2. To be a dunce or a rogue.
3. The Sparrow's Nest.



hobnobbing and local infrastructures mired in gangsterism – its cadres contemptuously dubbed 'maBenzi' for favouring upbeat German rides rather than the beat-up jalopies we see. Camouflaging a familiar sorry story of Stalinist degeneracy, figureheads personifying these trends are conspicuously absent – the disgraced Winnie Mandela, but also Jacob Zuma (now President with Nelson's nod; then head of iMbokodo, his 'KGB-in-waiting') who actually attended Somerset with Mbeki. So, belying its grudging hint of naked money and power's background manoeuvres, *Endgame's* 'end of history' falsification flatters the blinkered Western liberal-left's ANC infatuation – obscuring its catastrophic legacy in poverty, homelessness (currently forcing the poor off urban real-estate to desert hell-holes) and ill-health (helped by Mbeki's notorious AIDS-denial).* And it's far from over – the final captions ominously describe the IRA seeking ANC advice on going legit; a similar process allegedly under way with Hamas.

www.tomjennings.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk

* On the 'democratic' stalemate, see Michael Schmidt's (of the Zabalaza Anarchist Communist Front) 'The Jacob Zuma Cargo Cult and the "Implosion" of Alliance Politics'. Michael Neocosmos's 'Civil Society, Citizenship and the Politics of the (Im)possible: Rethinking Militancy in Africa Today' traces grass-roots counters to Stalinist supremacy; see also shackdweller movement Abahlali baseMjondolo's S'bu Zikode recently interviewed in 'Resisting Degradations and Divisions' (all at <http://libcom.org>).

4. It is a classic method based on the principle that a minimum salary is set for a particular job which no one is allowed to go under. If an employer offers a lower wage anyway he is blockaded. It was used historically by the Swedish SAC union and has come back into use in their work with migrants in Stockholm.

Raising the standard

Dean Talent runs his eye over the latest offering from Black Flag and is pleased with what he finds

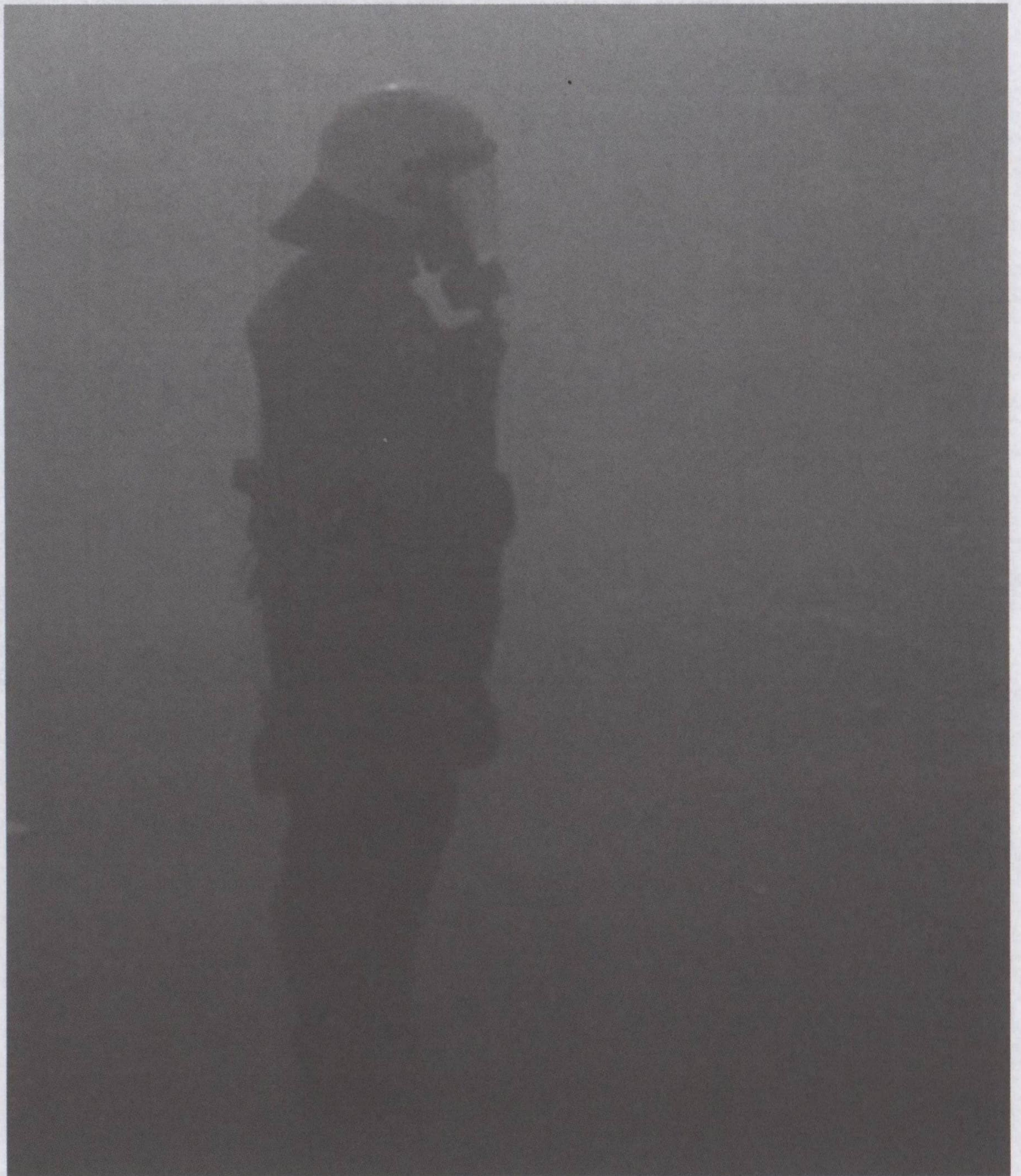
The latest issue of *Black Flag* (no. 229) is the fourth to be published by the 'new' editorial team since its re-launch in October 2007. As ever it's beautifully put together (coming as it does with a stark and wonderfully evocative image of a lone riot cop standing swathed in the cinder yellow smog of burning Greece), and provides us with an impressive range of articles, despite suffering from that most perennial of anarchist diseases – lack of interest from the anarchist movement. As stated in their editorial they approached various anarchist groups with a proposal for increased co-operation, by their own admission the response was slow and spasmodic.

Yes, anarchism is a small tendency in this country with limited resources, yet if we are to grow as a movement we need to nurture those parts of it that seek to promote anarchism and provide an outlet for anarchist ideas. That said the articles submitted display a maturity and level of execution that could sit easily within mainstream literature.

Paul Stott gives us his take on the similarities (and differences) between Islamic and anarchist use of violence. Stott's always an engaging and interesting writer and certainly knows his subject well; he does however seem to get lost in what he's trying to identify.

Comparing as he does anarchism (a concept) with Al Qaeda (a group) to make a point seems clumsy and forced. Also the phrase 'anarchist terrorism' sits uneasily as both description and criticism. The nineteenth century European anarchist tradition targeted individuals from the ruling classes; they were assassins certainly, and at the extreme end of individualising propaganda by the deed, but their activities were intended to inspire the masses to action, not put them in fear. As such how far can it usefully be described as terrorism as we accept the term today?

The Anarchist Federation (AF) provides a detailed examination of the current economic crisis. Starting promisingly enough with a no-nonsense analysis of the crisis and an overview of the state of capitalism today which is both jargon-free and easy to absorb, it loses momentum in the final section on what we as anarchists could do during this period. At best it feels like an AF position paper (which to be fair to the authors is probably how and why it was written), but in terms of practical things anarchists should be engaging with it feels tacked on and a mite patronising, although it's hard not to agree with the final quote of the article from the AF's industrial strategy.



Which unfortunately can't be said of the examination of New Labour's time in power, failing as it does to deliver what it promises. The author relies on sweeping generalisations (e.g. "the post war settlement was capital's attempt to secure itself against the chaos unleashed by the Wall Street Crash") without telling us what these things mean in real terms, giving it the feel of an end of term student essay. There's no real mention of how Labour transformed itself into New Labour, when the rash of middle class spivs and PR consultants took charge, firstly by abolishing the infamous Clause 4 and secondly by re-structuring how the party organised itself by excluding branch members from making decisions. Perhaps this will be made clear in the next two parts of the essay, but as there is no clue given we are left with more questions than answers.

Where this issue does excel is the historical articles. Glasgow's Bloody Friday is an account to the Clydeside workers struggles of 1919 culminating in a mass demonstration of 60,000 people in support

of the 40 hour week strike which was viciously attacked by police leading to the British state deploying 10,000 troops on the streets of Glasgow to quell any further industrial militancy and revolutionary political activity. Plus there's a wonderfully realised short biography of anarchist, union activist and feminist Simone Weil.

There's also an entertaining interview with Andrew Flood (Workers Solidarity Movement) who undertook a tour of the USA in search of the American Anarchist. It's hard to know what's more amusing: him describing parts of America by reference to imported TV shows ("My New York didn't look much like that of *Sex and the City*", "Miami on the other hand was nothing like what is portrayed in *CSI Miami*") or his raging pathology against primitivism? Coming from a tradition as I do where anarchism and primitivism don't even register in the same orbit, it's hard to get as angry as Flood does on the subject, conjuring up images of him waving iPods



Review

◀ page 15

and motherboards manically in the blank faces of insouciant primitivists as they sit out there in another world.

The outstanding piece by far, and rightly the cover story, is the account of the recent uprising in Greece. Written by two anarchists, living in London, who went back to Athens last December when Greece exploded into unprecedented social conflict, it captures brilliantly the mood, the intensity and potential of those days when the streets were literally controlled by the people and the state had to retreat behind lines of riot police. It's an excellent piece of reportage that rather than focusing on the street confrontations gives a considered insight

into the background and reasons that led to the uprising as well as the role the anarchists had to play.

If *Black Flag* are seeking to deliver a magazine informed and accessible about current anarchist thoughts and ideas then with this issue they have achieved something very close. Despite the very minor criticisms every anarchist should buy a copy, and every serious anarchist should buy a copy and give to their non-political friends.

Black Flag is stocked in radical bookshops across the UK and available from AK Distribution and Active Distro. The editorial address is Black Flag, BM Hurricane, London, WC1N 3XX, UK. Each issue costs £3 + £1 p&xp. UK cheques payable 'Black Flag'. Email blackflagmag@yahoo.co.uk for more information.

THE QUIZ

1. Which leading 'anarcho'-capitalist once concluded that "that we are not anarchists, and that those who call us anarchists are *not* on firm etymological ground, and are being completely unhistorical"?
2. According to Emma Goldman, what choices were there in the political arena?
3. What's the name of Nottingham's new centre for Anarchist Culture and Education?
4. What is the Syndicalist Registry and who uses it?

Answers on page 14

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