

POLICE RAID ON UNIVERSITY

University occupied as immigration police arrest cleaners

Cleaners at the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), University of London were detained by the UK Borders & Immigration Agency on Friday 12th June, when they were invited to attend an unannounced early morning meeting at the university. Between 40 and 50 police in full riot gear were involved in the raid, some of whom hid underneath raised seating in one of the main lecture theatres whilst the workers were led into the room by their managers.

The nine cleaners were all employed by ISS Cleaning & Hygiene Services, a company notorious for exploiting undocumented workers in London. Amongst the nine cleaners detained was Luiza Venancio, a sixth month pregnant women who reportedly collapsed as she was being handcuffed. Six cleaners were fast tracked for deportation and taken to Communications House in Old Street, whilst three others were held at Borough police station.

This attack on workers has taken place in the context of struggles by cleaners as part **page 3** ▶▶

LENS CAP BA WORKERS



British Airways has said 800 workers have volunteered to work for nothing for up to a month, following the airline's request to cut costs. We say working just to get a medal is stupid. Time for Muttley to throw off boss out the plane!

SUPPORT FOR REFINERY WORKERS SPREADS

Sacked Lindsey oil refinery construction workers remain defiant and unrepentant as support for their struggle grows. Thousands of workers across the UK, including 900 contract staff at Sellafield in Cumbria, walked out in solidarity with the 647 Lindsey workers sacked for striking in support of fellow workers.

Employees at the north Lincolnshire depot downed tools two weeks ago after 51 fellow workers were made redundant by French energy giant Total, who owns the site. Actions in support of the Lindsey workers have escalated across the country, including power stations at Drax and Eggborough in Yorkshire and Ratcliffe, Nottinghamshire, and BP's Saltend refinery near Hull. Workers were also out at the BOC oxygen plant in Scunthorpe. Action started at power stations at Fiddlers

Ferry, Cheshire, and Aberthaw, South Wales. At the Ensus site in Teesside, all 1,100 workers have walked out in sympathy. More than 100 contract maintenance staff walked out at the Stanlow Oil Refinery in Ellesmere Port, Cheshire. Some contract workers have downed tools at Ferrybridge power station in West Yorkshire and at Longannet power station in Fife.

One of the sacked Lindsey workers said "We are asking for support from workers across the country which I am sure will be given. Total will soon realise they have unleashed a monster".

There are concerns that these workers may be being victimised for earlier industrial action and that these redundancies are in breach of the agreement that brought industrial peace to the site some months ago.

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NEWS

IN BRIEF

IRAQ WHITEWASH ... SORRY, INQUIRY: Gordon Brown has been accused during a Commons debate of making a “monumental mess” of setting up the Iraq inquiry.

Shadow foreign secretary William Hague said the PM had “set out trying to keep it behind closed doors” and said there were still “serious deficiencies”. But Foreign Secretary David Miliband accused the Tories of “sham outrage” and said the inquiry deserved support. He said that while it was not a “trial or impeachment” it would be free to “praise or blame whoever it likes”.

The Conservatives called the debate after Mr Brown told MPs last week the inquiry would be in private. Amid much criticism, he later said it was up to the inquiry’s chairman, Sir John Chilcot, to hold some sessions in public if he chose to.

There you go, squabble, squabble, squabble. MP’s take a break from ripping off their constituents to avoid blame for a war both main parties supported.

DISCRIMINATION: A woman claims clothing firm Abercrombie & Fitch made her work in the stockroom because her prosthetic arm did not fit the shop’s image. Riam Dean told an Employment Tribunal she felt “diminished” and “humiliated” by the incident at its Saville Row store in central London.

The 22-year-old law student is suing for disability discrimination and seeking up to £20,000 in damages. Always nice when lawyers and bosses fall out.

SLUMP: The Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) has revised down its forecast for the UK economy in 2009.

The OECD warns that the UK is in “a sharp recession” with output set to contract by 4.3% in 2009, worse than its previous forecast of a 3.7% fall.

The OECD predicts zero growth in the UK economy in 2010 and says the UK budget deficit will hit 14% of GDP next year. Its UK forecasts are worse than those the Treasury made during the Budget, which has nothing to do with who’s up for election next year.

STRIKE: About 300 contractors at the Longannet power station in Fife have voted by four to one to continue their unofficial strike.

About 150 workers walked out on Monday 22nd June in support of sacked staff at the Lindsey oil refinery in Lincolnshire. The Longannet contractors had been urged to return to work by unions, but voted to continue their sympathy stoppage on Wednesday and Thursday.

About 200 other workers in Scotland have also joined the unofficial action. They are based at Cockenzie power station and the Mossmorran plant.

LENS CAP BEDFORDSHIRE



Yarl's Wood Immigration Centre, Bedfordshire. Actions are ongoing to let the Yarl's Wood detainees know they have support in opposing the injustice of immigration controls, the imprisonment of innocent people and the denial of basic access to healthcare.

Yarl's Wood protest continues

A mass hunger strike by families detained at Yarl's Wood Immigration Removal Centre in Bedfordshire continues despite intimidation by staff and violent assaults on men, women and children by Serco security guards managing the prison on behalf of the UK Border Agency.

The detainees started the hunger strike last Monday as a last resort in protest at the conditions at the centre they say are inhuman and becoming intolerable.

Many of those detained, awaiting deportation, have been there two or three months and say they are being emotionally traumatised and humiliated on a daily basis. Reports of children, some as young as five months old, being sick and not receiving the necessary medical care was cited as one of the reasons for the protest. Many adults, including

pregnant women, have serious medical conditions and they too are being refused proper medical attention. Most feel they are being treated like convicted criminals.

In April, following a visit to Yarl's Wood, Children's Commissioner Sir Al Aynsley-Green called for an end to the detention of children before deportation. He found that every year nearly 2,000 children were locked up solely for administrative reasons and that the length of time they were being held was on the increase.

Solidarity actions are being organised by No Borders and refugee groups.

Meanwhile in Brook House, the newly opened detention centre at Gatwick airport, a ‘disturbance’ broke out on 12th June and a fire was set by rioting detainees in the exercise area causing some damage.

ABOUT ANARCHISM

Nicolas Walter with an introduction by Natasha Walter

Available from Freedom Press, £4.20 (post free worldwide)



Roma families flee racist attacks

Violent attacks on Roma families in Belfast force them to leave

Anarchists in Belfast came to the aid of twelve Romanian Roma families last week after a sustained campaign of violence and intimidation forced them to leave their homes.

Anarchists, including members from Organise, mobilised in support of the Roma families who were living in houses attacked by racist gangs over several nights in South Belfast. The gang smashed windows and verbally and physically threatened the occupants on Belgravia and Wellesley Avenue. In one particular incident a member of one of the families was attacked with a plank of wood receiving a broken nose and injuries to the head and back.

Police raid on university

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of the living wage campaign, a campaign which has managed to gain widespread support from students, lecturers and staff within Universities across London. This follows on from the recent sacking of cleaner and union activist Jose Stalin Bermudez at the same university. Campaigners believe the raid was the management's 'revenge' against the cleaners' successful campaign, Justice for Cleaners, which saw them winning the London living wage and trade union representation.

An emergency rally was called on the steps of the university with over a hundred people in attendance. As supporters frantically tried to arrange legal representation for the cleaners it became clear that the process of deportation had already started. Within 48 hours, six

The group of 115 people, including babies and small children, tried to take refuge in a single house, but were eventually taken to a local church by police minibus. Later the following day they were moved again to a nearby leisure centre. The level of intimidation made many fearful of returning to their homes.

The anarchists stayed to protect the empty houses from further attack and went to the church to help bring in mattresses and food that had been delivered. They maintained a further presence at the church due to reports of threatening behaviour from a hostile group congregating outside.

A week previously several hundred people attended a demonstration organised by local residents against the racist attacks and in solidarity with the targeted families the South Belfast. This too was attacked by racist gangs.

Racially motivated attacks are on the increase in Northern Ireland. There were just 41 incidents of racially motivated crime

recorded in 1996, when records began, compared to nearly 1,000 last year, with South Belfast having the highest number of reported racist incidents at 169. Tensions have been rising recently between locals and other immigrant groups who have settled in Belfast since 2004 when the UK, along with Ireland and Sweden, lifted restrictions on workers from eastern and central Europe. In April east Europeans living in the area were threatened and intimidated following violent clashes between Poland and Northern Ireland football fans on the day of a World Cup qualifier.

A government official said the remaining Roma families would be leaving the country by the end of the week: "We have spoken with the Romanian families and most of them want to go home." It is said around a thousand Roma are presently living in Northern Ireland.

So far five people have been arrested over the attacks.

cleaners had already been deported, including Ms Venancio. Another two women, Marina Silva, who has claimed asylum, and Rosa de Perez are currently being held in Yarl's Wood Immigration Removal Centre.

In response to the attack around 40 students and supporters occupied the directorate building marching into the offices of the Principle and Director of SOAS, Mr Paul Webley, and demanding he take action in support of the remaining three cleaners currently being detained. After a 20 minute debate, the students and supporters took over his office to run the solidarity campaign. With free use of phones, computers and meeting spaces, a campaign was built up and messages of support were pouring in from

across the UK and all over the world.

With a threat of an injunction apparently being called off for the following day, a 'partial success' over the demands led to the occupation ending. In a statement issued by Mr Webley and Nizam Uddin, SOAS Student Union, there was a commitment to "write directly to the Home Secretary within 12 hours of the end of the protest, requesting that he grants exceptional leave to remain in the UK for those cleaners still being detained". The statement ended by declaring in a personal capacity that they "like to indicate our support for the regularisation of non-documented workers". The campaign continues and further support rallies are organised.

NEWS

Councils harass housing rights roadshow

Campaigning initiative met by security attack and calls to police

A roadshow in London designed to gauge levels of malpractice in the benefits system was met by council security attacking stalls and calling police late last month.

The ongoing initiative has also, in its initial findings, pinpointed Lewisham as a hotbed of poor service.

The London Coalition Against Poverty launched the roadshow as part of a drive to organise vulnerable people against gate-keeping, a process where council staff are encouraged to find spurious excuses to keep people off benefits in order to hit national targets.

Particularly affected are the homeless, who are told they are not eligible, or put on council house waiting lists rather than being treated as urgent cases, despite councils having a duty of care to house them.

The roadshow also introduced a new localised branch of the group in south east London, Selcap, which is aiming to make contacts and find cases in the area.

Alan, from the group, told *Freedom* about strong council hostility the group encountered, particularly in Lewisham.

He said: "We got some hostility from most of the councils, but it was Lewisham Housing Options which got nasty. We set up next to the building, then management and security came out and tried to intimidate us, move us physically. They tried to break up our stall, bust our camera and threw our banner into oncoming traffic.

"A passer-by called the police on the security guards, who then tried to say we



had assaulted them! So the situation got quite heated – I ended up getting arrested.

"After that, though, we came back and it was much more successful, we got a lot of names, we were having conversations with people coming out of the building. Now we are planning a meeting so bit by bit we can see where we can go from here."

Alan added that, along with being the most hostile, Lewisham also produced some of the worst anecdotal evidence of malpractice so far encountered by LCAP activists.

"Lewisham was by far the worst place we went to. We know last year up to 50,000 people were made homeless in Lewisham

and the people we spoke to there were much more wound up.

"People would be pushing past us early in the morning to get to the queue and coming back to us for something to read because the wait is so long. One mum in her early 20s for example came in at 9am, and with only a couple of breaks to get food or have a fag, had to wait there all day just to be seen, let alone to have her case sorted out."

The roadshow is touring Camden, Lewisham, Newham and other areas.

To get in touch with LCAP, contact: 07932241737 or email londoncoalitionagainstopoverty@gmail.com.

The latest from the Whitechapel Anarchist Group

Local struggles continue over in the East End, notably around the subject of education. Firstly the Bethnal Green Centre,



one of the oldest adult education centres in the country, has been under threat since April, but a local campaign is building momentum and going on the offensive by turning up to the Tower Hamlets Council meeting on the 25th June to take the fight to them.

Also Tower Hamlets College is now under threat with massive cuts and redundancies sprung on them within a time scale of thirty days. Staff and students are appalled, especially due to the fact that, despite Government cuts to education, the Tower Hamlets College is not in financial crisis. A Community March is planned for 1pm Saturday 27th June from Bethnal Green Gardens to Altab Ali Park.

In other news, four people involved in the anti-fur campaign on Brick Lane have been recently let off. Two people faced Section 50

charges, one person faced a Section 14 charge and the final person had an assault PC charge but despite the hard thumbing twiddling work of the Mets finest the CPS decided to drop all charges after a long drawn out case. This was mainly due to the fact that lots of video evidence proved that the police were talking nonsense. Surprise, surprise.

Remaining with Brick Lane, the Market Inspectors have intensified their 'cleansing' of the area by hassling market traders without licenses. One brave inspector even threatened to report a woman to social services for having a child with her! The market has been under attack for many years now and the gentrification is increasing as the Olympics approaches. But the fight back has already begun.

IN BRIEF

BENT COPS: Two Sussex Police officers have resigned following drugs accusations. Inspector Mark Andrews and PC Bobby Newton both left the force after being arrested on suspicion of possessing Class A drugs. It is understood that after answering bail PC Newton received a caution for possession and Inspector Andrews was released without charge.

Sussex Police confirmed that two officers from the Brighton and Hove area had resigned from the force.

Both officers spent part of their career at the city's gay, bisexual and transgender unit. Inspector Andrews represented Sussex Police during a visit to San Francisco in May 2005 to find out about new ways of dealing with cases of homophobia. Both men have left the force voluntarily.

Two other men who were arrested at the same time were also released without charge. A spokesman for Sussex Police said: "Two police officers, aged 30 and 38, from the Brighton and Hove area, have answered bail having been arrested on suspicion of possession of class A drugs.

"One accepted a caution for possession offences and no further criminal action was taken against the other. Both officers have now resigned from the Force."

CLIMATE CLAPTRAP: The European Union will next week start moves to help China and India develop technology to trap and bury carbon dioxide underground in the fight against global warming, according to a draft European Commission document. Doubtless you think the fair minded editors of *Freedom* will give praise where it's due and support any step that can stave off calamitous climate change. Not on your nelly.

This is another cynical attempt at climate window dressing while making a quick buck. It is also another example of the cunning plan to create an artificial split between reduction of energy consumption and technological fixes.

While people can sensibly debate which combination of them would be most effective, capitalism cannot deliver on either because there is no profit to be made in avoiding future disaster. Attempts to introduce the market into the process, such as 'carbon trading', inevitably lead to business finding better ways to siphon off money rather than CO₂.

Now it may be that putting all the planet's efforts into carbon capture technology will hold temperature rises below two degrees or perhaps only abandoning car and plane transport can. Perhaps both are needed, or it is possible that the world has gone beyond a tipping point and runaway climate change is inevitable.

What is certain is that a new form of social organisation is needed that can make decisions based on human need rather than profit is the only chance of averting meltdown.

The selling of Sidney Street

It's a dispiriting fact that if you scan the indexes of history books of Britain in the twentieth century, all you're likely to find under 'anarchists' is the Siege of Sidney Street. Otherwise our contribution is so piss poor as not to register even a scanty footnote. Indeed if you then turn to the imposing *Dictionary of National Biography* – a who's who of dead people who did something – you'll find impressively knowledgeable entries, by Professor Bernard Porter, on everyone who had any association with the siege from George Gardstein onwards. The siege has even been commemorated on Churchill postage stamps issued not by Britain but incongruously by our South Atlantic colonies!

Last Sunday I was watching *Casualty* on the BBC when into the hospital comes – blow me down, guv, with a feather – a Latvian anarchist on suspicion of a bomb attack. The erudite script has him being cross examined by a copper about 'How often do you go to the Jubilee club' with knowing asides about the 'Tottenham robbery'.

So what I'm saying comrades is this: Sidney Street is now woven into our popular culture in the same way as Dan Leno's music hall and Spring-heeled Jack and kindly costermongers and Reggie and Ronnie and knees up Mother Brown. There's photos still on the walls of The White Hart pub.

Another pub prominently displayed a photo of Peter the Painter until it was demolished in the '60s. There's even a couple of blocks of flats in Sidney Street

named Peter House and Painter House after the lovable rapsallion himself.

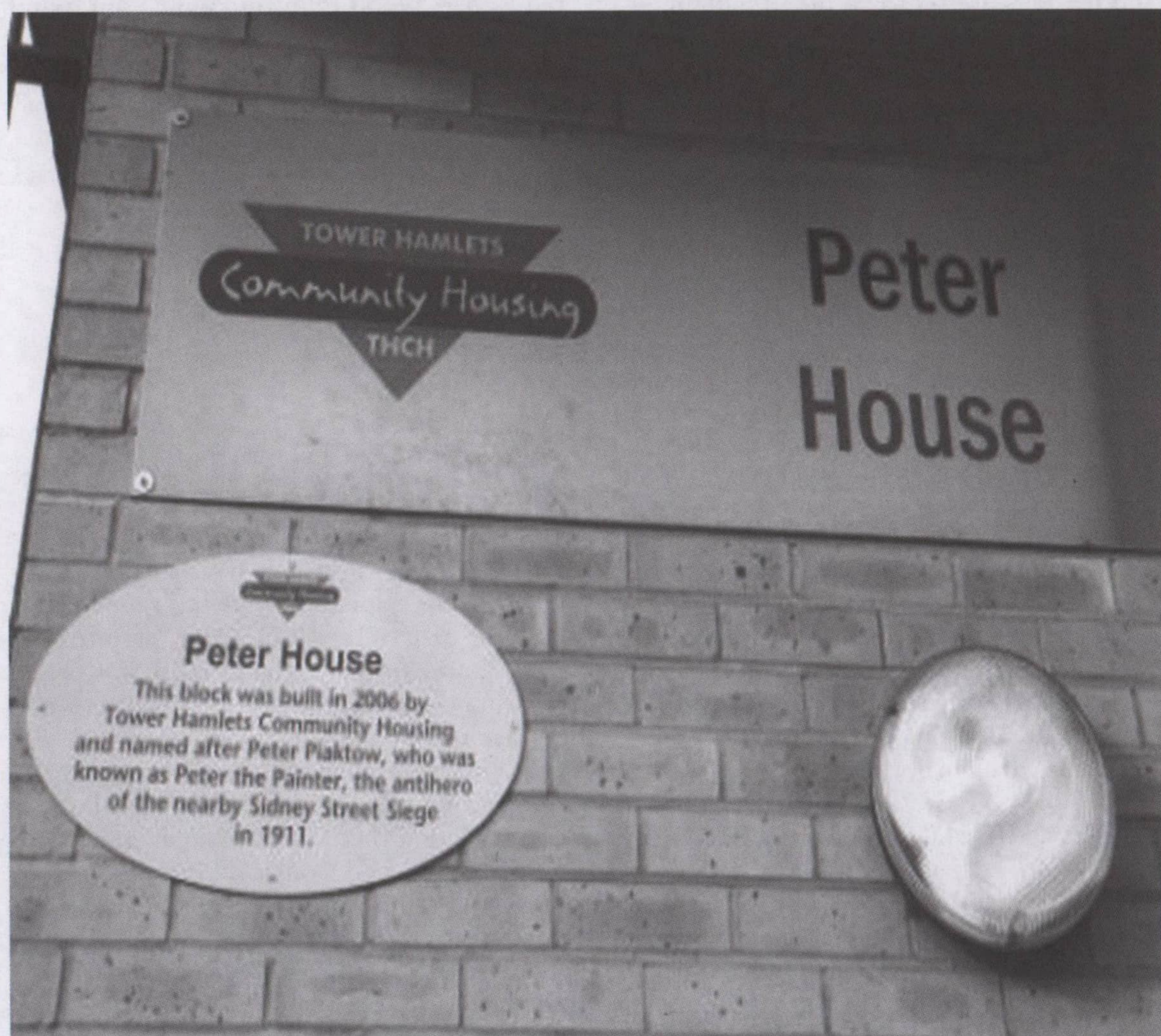
The 100th anniversary is coming up in January 2011, and we should take full advantage of it. Now I know m'learned friend Phil Ruff will be publishing the definitive work on Peter the Painter, but he is far too principled a comrade to be merchandising associated tat and commercial tie-ins ... which leaves the market open to us!

I want to see Whitechapel High Street awash with street traders flogging cheapo Sidney Street merchandise – tea towels, cigarette lighters, caps, Guevara-style t-shirts with The Painter on, pants, socks, handbags, beer mats. Freedom Bookshop can act as the wholesaler – the Cash'n Carry Matalan – as eager traders crowd the door demanding 'another gross of Gardstein kiddies duvet covers, guv' and 'any more of them Jacob Peters ironing board covers Mister Andy Sir?'

Then there's the week long festival (haven't I mentioned that yet), the Sealed Knot style re-enactments (twice daily, Saturday matinee), the shoot out (family tickets £22), the applause for the Peacock style parade of Georgeous George himself (Gardstein that is) flaunting it with pisteleros in fat belts down the High Street.

It's the only mark we've made in a hundred years comrades. Let's not sell ourselves short.

Ian Bone



INTERNATIONAL

IN BRIEF

DENMARK: The rubbish collector's strike that began in Copenhagen two weeks ago has spread as workers across the country walked out in sympathy with their colleagues, employed by disposal company HCS, who are unhappy that management would not accept their choice of union representative to lead current pay negotiations.

BRAZIL: Anarchists in Sao Paulo are to hold their second encounter in July, building a Sao Paulo Anarchist Federation to try and strengthen the anarchist presence in the area. Over this first year, the participants have engaged in many activities with the aim of joining the popular struggles and contributing social and practical ideas such as direct action, autonomy and solidarity.

ITALY: What started as a two hour strike by Sicilian workers at the Fiat Termini Imerese plant ended with the workforce of nearly 2,000 marching down and occupying the local rail station and blocking the tracks on the main Palermo-Messina line, after management threats to move the car production plant elsewhere

CHINA: Over 70,000 protestors took to the streets of Shishou city at the weekend to stop riot police claiming the body of a hotel chef who locals say was murdered. Residents blocked access to the hotel to prevent police taking the body after local authorities claimed it was a suicide. Thousands more fought running battles with police.

INDIA: Employees of the Maharashtra government, local self-government bodies and teachers are set to go on an indefinite strike from 4th August to demand parity with Central government staff. Teaching and non-teaching government staffs would also observe a day's strike on 14th July.

PHILIPPINES: Low skilled and low paid workers abroad are sending more money back to the Philippines than highly paid ones. The Institute for Migration and Development Issues reported that, contrary to government claims, household and service workers and men in production have been the country's top dollar senders. According to figures domestic workers account for the biggest number of Filipinos working overseas.

FRANCE: The 10-week-long nuclear power plant strike is set to continue and could threaten electricity supplies this summer, according to state-owned utility company EDF. In a dispute over pay, French EDF workers are delaying annual maintenance operations at all major nuclear power plants.

KAZAKHSTAN: Workers at the Almaty factory have held an unsanctioned protest to demand unpaid wages for May. According to the protesters, the factory recently cut salaries and vacation days and increased prices in the factory cafeteria.

LENS CAP LUXEMBOURG



EU farmers attack riot police during a 4,000-strong demonstration at a meeting of the Council of Agriculture Ministers.

US workers lose healthcare

The Center for American Progress, a Washington-based think-tank, estimates that since the start of the current recession nearly 2.5 million workers have lost the health coverage provided by their employers. In March of this year alone, more than 320,000 people lost their cover; that's equal to over 10,000 workers a day. And a new study by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation found that over 60% of US personal bankruptcies are caused by medical bills which patients are unable to pay. More than 75% of bankrupt families had health insurance but were still unable to pay medical debts.

This comes at a time when healthcare 'reform' is being debated on Capitol Hill. In order to ensure that the healthcare industry not lose its grip on its existing revenue streams, Senator Max Baucus, chair

of Senate Finance Committee hearings and leading architect of health reform in Congress, has consistently refused to allow advocates for 'single-payer' systems (the proposed arrangement closest to the UK's National Health, where there is one source of finance and administration to fund providers, instead of multiple profit-seeking competitor companies) to present their case.

Vocal advocates of the single-payer universal system – the system actually favoured by most Americans – have repeatedly protested at their exclusion from discussions. In late May, for example, five doctors, nurses and single-payer advocates were arrested at one of these Senate Finance Committee hearings, bringing the total number of arrests in less than a week to thirteen.

Notes from the United States

Various judicial decisions have caused alarm in June. The Supreme Court has refused to hear the case of the Cuban Five, despite the fact that the original trial in 2001 was the only judicial proceeding in US history to be condemned by the UN Human Rights Commission. It was held in Miami, where a fair hearing was impossible given the large concentration there of anti-Cuban exiles. The five men were convicted for allegedly spying on the US military and Cuban exiles in southern Florida. In fact they were monitoring violent right wing Cuban exile groups that have organised attacks on Cuba, and gone free.

The same Supreme Court has also refused to accept a case which seeks to stop the construction of a wall along the US-Mexico border. Several Texas border communities have already sued the federal government after former Homeland Security secretary Michael Chertoff waived 36 federal laws protecting water, air quality, endangered animals and Native American sites in order to build the border wall.

In late June the Court incredibly also ruled that the Clean Water Act does permit the Coeur d'Alene Mines Corporation's Kensington gold mine near Juneau (Alaska)

Uprising in Iran

Defiant Iranians fear state repression after election protests

Relative calm has returned to the streets of Tehran in the wake of rioting and mass demonstrations sparked off by the disputed re-election of Mahmoud Ahmadinejad as President of Iran. Order has been restored as thousands of riot police and plainclothes security officers have swamped the streets of the capital to prevent crowds re-emerging, using tear gas and water cannons to disperse and discourage further protests.

In what has been an extraordinary two weeks in Iranian politics, with commentators calling it biggest unrest since the 1979 revolution, millions of people gathered on the streets and in the city's main squares to voice their dissent after the 12th June election result, favouring Ahmadinejad, was called into question.

What began as a protest against voting irregularities and accusations of vote rigging and intimidation during the election, turned into a nationwide uprising against years of repression by the ruling Iranian regime.

After intense street protests on 14th June, government-sponsored paramilitary vigilantes entered Tehran University in the late hours, attacking students in their dormitories. Through independent sources it is estimated that three were killed, over 80 students arrested and others brutally beaten, many suffering broken bones. Despite these and other violent attacks, more than one million Iranians participated in a demonstration in Tehran's Azadi Square on 15th June, defying an official ban on a rally in the city's centre area. So far there have



been hundreds of deaths, with thousands seriously injured and thousands more arrests.

Even with the real threat of reprisals, the crowds remained defiant and confrontational throughout the week, with protestors at Tehran's three main universities attacking police and revolutionary militia, many others attacking government offices, police stations, police vehicles, and banks, denouncing the dictatorship and calling for democracy and freedom. The chants in the street were 'Death to the dictator', a familiar cry amongst student activists, and 'Iranians do not accept disgrace'. There are also chants of 'end to Taliban, whether in Kabul or Tehran', highlighting the level of state violence and continued infringements to the social and political rights of Iranians.

Initially the main forces behind the uprising were said to be mainly students and women, although it is clear the unrest has

spread across all social and age ranges. The most senior officials of the regime have admitted the protests have nothing to do with any of the candidates of the sham presidential election.

Media censorship on the unrest was bypassed with thousands using up-to-the-minute internet networking sites to send information, images and footage of the unrest around the world.

In the past week the protests have shifted focus with auto workers at Iran Khodro, the largest car producer in the country, taking strike action on the 18th June and issuing a statement condemning the repression and supporting the 'people's movement', resulting in a slowdown as a show of support. This is along with the Iranian bus workers who issued statement condemning the violence and calling for a day of action and justice for Iranian workers.

Notes from the United States

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to pump over 200,000 gallons of toxic wastewater slurry daily directly into Lower Slate Lake in the Tongass National Forest. The legalised destructive pollution will take place over ten years and will eventually deposit 4.5 million tons of solids in the lake; this is certain to kill nearly all its aquatic life.

Meanwhile Obama has asked a federal appeals court to 'reconsider' its decision to allow a Boeing subsidiary to be sued over its roles in the CIA's 'extraordinary rendition' (or overseas torture) programme. As happened under Bush, Obama is citing the State Secrets Act. The American Civil Liberties Union (the equivalent of Liberty in the UK) filed the suit against Jeppesen International Trip Planning on behalf of five former prisoners. Jeppesen has provided at least 70 flights since 2001 as part of the CIA's extraordinary rendition and torture

programme. Ben Wizner of the ACLU said, "This is a watershed moment. There's no mistake any longer ... the Obama administration has now fully embraced the Bush administration's shameful effort to immunise torturers and their enablers from any legal consequences for their actions."

And continuing the trend, the Senate in early June confirmed the nomination of General Stanley McChrystal to head the illegal occupation of Afghanistan. When in a senior position at the Joint Special Operations Command, McChrystal oversaw a programme to hunt down and assassinate suspected 'terrorists' around the globe. Now, having been given carte blanche to choose his subordinates (a team of up to 400), he is going for many Special Operations veterans linked to torture.

Louis Further

Greek prisoners freed

Anarchists arrested during the uprising in Athens last December are to be released from Koridallos prison after six months detention.

Hundreds of protestors were rounded up and imprisoned, including dozens of known political activists, in an attempt to quell the waves of social unrest that gripped Greece at the end of last year when thousands took to the streets, attacking government and financial institutions and battling state forces after the murder of a young anarchist by police in Athens.

The remaining four political prisoners are to be released after an intensive campaign targeting police stations, as well as days of action during 12th to 15th June.

A. Kiriakopoulos, the only named anarchist, will be released with the other final three later this week.

Special feature on military cutbacks

This week the Institute for Public Policy Research has issued a report saying that the UK should consider slashing defence spending by up to £24 billion and revisit plans to renew its Trident nuclear deterrent. Its authors include former defence secretary Lord Robertson and the ex-Lib Dem leader Lord Ashdown, himself once in the marines, so not exactly pinkos. They go on to say that Britain cannot afford much of the defence equipment it plans to buy. We thought we'd have a quick look at five of the big defence projects and put in a helpful suggestion of our own.

The Astute Submarine.

Confusingly 'nuclear' submarines come in two types, those with nuclear weapons and those powered by nuclear reactors, or both at the same time, like the Vanguards that carry Trident.

The Astute, which will come into operation this year, is the first of a class of 'attack' submarines that are nuclear powered but not nuclear armed.

Keen readers will have noticed that there have been a series of accidents with submarines lately. You may even be wondering whether a brand shiny new sub may be less inclined to leak radioactive waste or crash into other nations boats. Nevertheless submarines, even ones that work properly, have limitations. Submarines are the 'hard power' element of the navy. They are very good at sinking ships, as the survivors of the General Belgrano can testify to, but they can't do much else. In fact the Belgrano is the only ship ever sunk by a nuclear submarine, deliberately. Quite a few fishing vessels have been pulled under when their nets have been accidentally caught by subs, for example the trawler Gaul lost with all 36 hands in 1974. Don't worry, money is going to surface ships as well.



HMS Dragon coming out of its den – would you invest in it?

The Daring Destroyer.

Britain scrapped its last battleship in 1960 and its last cruiser in 1980, which pushes destroyers pretty much to the top of the tree as far as surface combatants go. So what are they meant to destroy you ask. Originally they were 'Torpedo Boat Destroyers', itself an improvement on 'Torpedo Boat Catchers'. Now their supposed job is to protect other ships against air attack. At around a billion pounds a pop for the new type 45 Daring class you would hope for them to be able to shoot down a lot of planes. They do have 48 missiles each for doing just that but there is a problem. Planes are fast and high up while ships are slow and stuck to sea level. It's far easier to drop things on a stationary target than shoot down supersonic targets at 50,000 feet. As Scotty so wisely put it, 'yer canna change the laws of physics, Captain'. Perhaps the whole destroyer project is a white elephant whose sole purpose is give future admirals the chance to say they were in charge of a ship once. However there is a better way to fight planes, that's with other planes and they can be brought out to sea and taken around the world in aircraft carriers. Let's look at...

The Queen Elizabeth Class Carriers

Britain's last proper carrier, the Ark Royal, went to the breakers in 1979 to be replaced by three 'light' carriers of the Invincible class (a tad presumptuous as a name, especially when the previous Invincible was blown up in the First World War with over a thousand sailors killed). These ships could only take helicopters and Harrier jump jets, but now there are plans to build two proper size carriers – well, three-quarters the size of an American one, and they are pretty big.

It is a tradition of the Royal Navy (along with rum, sodomy and the lash) that the first capital ship of a new reign is named



Not only is the F35 really expensive it's also very small. Okay, this is a model used for wind tunnel experiments.

after the monarch. So 'Er Maj has been waiting a good while for a big boat. She was going to have one named after her in the '60s but it got cancelled by some Labour government hard up for cash. See the pattern? And let's hope so, because the carriers are the one project that are likely to cause a lot of harm. Principally by dropping shed loads of bombs on the unfortunate folk in foreign parts who have the temerity to hold wedding parties or aren't manufacturing 'weapons of mass destruction'. So what sort of plane will do that?

The Eurofighter Typhoon

The Typhoon is the replacement for the Tornado, the previous European joint production and not all that clever a plane. Full technical details are on the web, but for ease of memory the main difference is in the use of concrete. The Tornado flew with the Royal Air Force for six years with concrete in the nose cone rather than a radar set because it wasn't ready, while the Typhoon

Trident Replacement.

The Labour Party still believes that it was out of power for so long in the 1980s and '90s because of its commitment to unilateral disarmament, hence the repeated statements that a replacement will go ahead.

Replacement could mean almost anything in theory, but it's already clear that it means a new set of nuclear powered ballistic missile submarines.

We will not rehearse the arguments against the Bomb, but look at an example of what a country might do if it thought it was under a genuine nuclear threat and was prepared to use nukes themselves. Guess who? Well, Israel for instance has an arsenal of perhaps a hundred bombs which can be delivered by plane or cruise missile without seeing the need for 15,000 ton nuclear subs. Israel does in fact have three far cheaper diesel powered subs of less than 2,000 tons which can launch cruise missiles from under the sea and Britain could easily get the same, though perhaps with not such a big discount, from the German manufacturers that Israel did. Once again it's all for show.

All roads lead to BAe

So what's the common theme in all these money wasting projects? BAe. Formerly British Aerospace, the only big player in world arms manufacturing based in the UK. They are part of all these and many more cock-ups, as well as a raft of bribery and corruption cases from Sweden to South Africa. The Campaign Against the Arms Trade (CAAT) provide much detail on BAe's misdeeds on their website, while *Lions, Donkeys and Dinosaurs* by Lewis Page is a good starting point for these cock-ups.

THE CLASS BOMB

Anarchists have long been accused of delighting in throwing bombs despite the evidence of far wider bomb use by other political ideologies. However there is one bomb we can recommend, the Class Bomb. The Class Bomb distinguishes between the parasitical rulers of humanity who it blows to smithereens and the suffering proletariat who it leaves unharmed. New more sophisticated versions also incorporate a stunning blow for the middle class and those whose classification remains unclear (Punch and Judy Professors are a good example) who will wake up once anarchist communism has been established..

was to have had its gun replaced by a block of concrete to save money, until it became clear that this was incompatible with the computerised flight controls and would make it crash, so the gun was put back but with no ammunition. Originally it was called the Eurofighter, then briefly the Eurofighter 2000 to make up for the fact it was due in service by the mid '90s but wasn't ready, but then back to plain old Eurofighter by the time it was ready for action in 2005. However, action comes there none – unsurprisingly. The Eurofighter really is a fighter aircraft, designed in the cold war to battle it out with the far more numerous jets of the Warsaw Pact. As a fighter it really is rather good. However there are minor flaws. It isn't designed to take off from aircraft carriers, has a very short range and if you simply want to blast the citizens of the third world it's cheaper and easier to push the explosives out the back of a cargo plane. Don't worry the 232 planes at £75 million a time can sit in storage, another plane is on the way.

The F35 Lightning II

As shown by the Eurofighter fiasco, modern combat aircraft are both very expensive and take a long time to get into service. Even the United States has been forced into international co-operation for its latest project. This is the F35, now known as the Lightning II, the two being it is the second plane called lightning for both the US and UK, who are paying 10% of the research costs. Other countries have smaller shares in the project which you don't need to be told is behind schedule and over budget. This is a bit of a blessing in disguise for the UK as the this means that the aircraft carriers can be postponed as the planes aren't going to be ready. Yes, the F35 can fly from ships and it's stealthy, with the radar profile of a golfball it is claimed. Clouds are already on the horizon with the jump jet version ordered by the UK already under threat by US budget cuts. Watch this space we predict worse to come, but never mind, at least we've still got the Bomb.

COMMENT

ABOUT FREEDOM

ANGEL ALLEY

A merry solstice to all our readers which we have spent hobnobbing with our neighbours at London Action Resource Centre again holding their excellent annual party. Upcoming we have another barbecue, this time in conjunction with Whitechapel Anarchist Group on Sunday 28th. More events are planned and will be advertised as usual on the Freedom Press website.

Sales have been generally quiet in the shop, but still thankfully up on last year and, on the mail order front, with five, that's five!, people taking advantage of the free postage on all books we send.

The Advisory Service for Squatters are about to publish a new squatters handbook which, in addition to be an invaluable guide to getting cheap accommodation, may bring both *Freedom* and ASS some much needed cash. Speaking of which, the pointing is nearly complete, thanks to Tony and co, and we can look forward to a dry winter in the building – but it has cost £2,500 and more fundraising will be called for, or even selling of books.

SUBSCRIPTIONS

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 12, so if your subscription runs out with this issue you'll have 7012 above your name. If the number is 7012 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 to send you 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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Freedom Press Distribution (trade book orders): distro@freedompress.org.uk

NEXT ISSUE

The next issue will be dated 4th July 2009 and the last day to get copy to us for that issue will be Thursday 25th 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

One of the groups feeding back at the recent Anarchist Conference mentioned not bringing atheism to the fore when approaching people, as a tactic in working with immigrant and ethnic minority groups.

I'm an atheist and have campaigned against religious groups in the past. It's probably more accurate to describe myself as a humanist; it's not just that I don't believe in god, I actively believe in having ethics. This is a distinction worth making, because there are plenty of people, usually religious, who think that you cannot be ethical without god in some shape or form. I've worked with Africans who knew me, respected me and recognised I had ethics, and were then shocked when I said I didn't believe.

The group at the conference were talking about how atheism, especially when it is forcefully expressed, can be a barrier to working with many of the people that anarchists ought to be concerned with. One of the main Latin American cleaner activists goes to Mass every Sunday. The church-inspired London Citizens campaign created the political space for the justice for cleaners campaign. Now, I don't think we need to downplay our atheism, but I don't think it is relevant to most political activities. The obvious exception to this is education, where opposition to religious schools is well-founded. As a friend of mine put it a few years back, "Why should we pay for schools our kids can't go to?" If the religious want to fund and run their own schools, fair enough. But they don't – they want us all to pay for their views, and

probably their intolerance, to be promoted.

I was particularly surprised recently to find out I've been on two demonstrations this year with the Salvation Army. The Salvation Army was founded in 1865 explicitly to address dissolute behaviour among the working classes and acted as a conservative enemy to socialism, anarchism and other forms of working class self-organisation. Joe Hill was seen as such a thorn in the side of the US establishment because he wrote songs which parodied the Army and he famously poked fun at them in the refrain "You'll Get Pie in the Sky, When you Die, That's a Lie!" The Salvation Army itself used its bands to drown out working class speakers of a socialist or radical bent, back when local speakers' corners were cheap entertainment for the masses.

So what were they doing on the People Before Profit and Strangers Into Citizens marches? It seems that the rough edges of capitalism are getting a bit rougher again. While I think their ultimate aims are misguided, I think the Salvation Army (and indeed many other religious groups I disagree with) are motivated primarily by compassion.

On most issues that matter to us as a class; like pay, conditions and local services, whether someone believes or not is irrelevant. If we want to make common cause with those at the bottom of the social pile, it helps if we talk firstly about what we have in common; when we have mutual respect we'll have plenty of time for what separates us.



Remembering Geoff Barfoot

Geoff Barfoot died on the 16th June aged 90 after a short struggle with leukemia. He contacted me in 1967 when I was trying to set up an anarchist presence in the Bath area. A group was established and one of the successes, in co-operation with Bath Arts Workshop, was the disruption of the local Mary Whitehouse inspired Festival of (B)Light in Bath Abbey – we were eventually thrown out but the ‘festival’ never recovered.

The group attempted to spread the message with varying degrees of success and published a small propaganda-sheet, *Scrump*, which sold up to a hundred copies for two old pence, churned out on a manual duplicator (what fun). Geoff was active in local issues when these arose and we were both at the now ‘notorious’ anti-war demo in Grosvenor Square in March 1968.

Geoff fought in Italy in World War Two as an infantryman and was eventually promoted to Captain. After the war he gained a place at RADA and took up the actor’s life, his partner Olive became a stage designer. Increasingly politicised, Geoff became chair of the Bristol Communist Party, something he was reluctant to talk about, nor could he be persuaded to relate how he progressed from Marxism to anarchism.

He and Olive ran the Llandoger Trow pub in Bristol before moving to Wells to establish the Wells Pottery. Ceramics from here went to the replica Puritan colony in the US. Geoff made the pots and Olive decorated them. Geoff was an amateur flautist and played with a local orchestra. He had an abiding interest in philosophy.

In recent years macular degeneration led to Geoff losing his sight, but he coped with this remarkably well.

Roy Emery

Making a society free of domination

If you ask any anarchist communist they will tell you that the root of all evil is capitalism. If you ask any anarchy-feminist they will tell you that the root of all evil is patriarchy. But both of these evils must have come from somewhere. If we want to plan a vision for the society we want to see in the future then we must try to figure out where these came from and plan the society in a way that will prevent them from being reproduced.

It seems that patriarchy, the state and the forerunners of capitalism all started at about the so-called dawn of civilisation, approximately 5,000 years ago. Many of the ‘primitive’ societies, such as many of the native American tribes, had little or no distinct patriarchy or matriarchy, had no absolute hierarchy – even though there were chiefs they were kept in check with highly

creative checks and balances – and most, if not all, of their economic life was based around sharing. With the so-called dawn of civilisation grotesque forms of domination, such as slavery – later wage slavery – patriarchy and war became the norm. Not that these weren’t around in ‘primitive’ societies but they were isolated cases and were far less extreme.

So what is it that brought these tendencies on? It is important that as anarchists, we try to find out what it was and plan our society in a way that will prevent these forms of domination from re-emerging, as anarchism seems to me to be the appropriate response to these tendencies. Many of us know that the state was imposed upon the people by force, but what was it that allowed it to be imposed and what made it so some people wanted to impose a state?

To do this will require we look within ourselves and at the history of modern civilisation. It seems to me that the advent of modern civilisation either changed something within humans or brought something out that humans had previously managed to keep in check and this event allowed the oppression and domination we see today to happen. We must try and figure out what changed in us so we can combat it in ourselves, raise awareness to it and plan a

future world so that there is as little domination as possible.

My intuition tells me that it was when people were given access to obscene amounts of power, as in the monarchy and the hierarchy of organised religion; domination began to establish itself as the norm. If this were correct then anarchism alone would be appropriate for ending this grotesque pattern of domination. But that is only my intuition. And even if this were the case we would still have to ask how this hierarchy started and why it was allowed to happen. Capitalism, patriarchy and all the other forms of domination seem to me to be a concentration of the part in us that allowed these hierarchies to develop. Trying to establish what it was that allowed these patterns of hierarchy and domination to become established is a highly important task for any anarchist concerned with exactly how to make a just society free of domination.

Robert Miller

The future of Freedom

I’d prefer a newsy fortnightly, and would be happy to pay a pound or even £1.50.

Mark



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

We are pleased to announce that our prisons column will soon be taken on by Brighton Anarchist Black Cross. This has the enormous benefit of being written by people actively involved in, and with intimate knowledge of, prison struggles. We also take this opportunity to thank all the comrades who have contributed items to this column without whose help it could not have carried on and to say that we will still have an eye out for longer articles and features on these issues so please keep sending stuff in.

Like many anarchist papers, *Freedom* is available free to prisoners both in the UK and around the world. We also contribute our titles to Haven Distribution who give books to prisoners. New readers may not be familiar with why we have a prisons column or why anarchism calls not just for decent treatment of prisoners but the abolition of the prison system itself, so here's a quick outline.

There are now over nine million people in prison globally, an appalling statistic of human misery but a far worse indictment on the form of society that inflicts it. Prison is not just a method of state control but an industry and key component of the way modern capitalism works. Sometimes it is claimed that prison can be used to 'reform' or 'rehabilitate' criminals. There are many examples of people who have achieved great things both for themselves and others while in jail and many people involved in the current system are instrumental in transforming the lives of prisoners for the better but this is in spite of rather than because of incarceration.

The anarchist position of supporting prisoners and calling for the abolition of prisons is often criticised as an example of anarchists naivety and for the contention that anarchism can only work if everyone were good. While anarchists are right in saying that the vast majority of so-called 'crime' is caused by inequalities in society and the selfish ethos perpetuated by capitalism, we cannot hide behind this when answering questions of how to deal with situations where people suffer attack by others. Anarchists believe in freedom, but freedom balanced by the freedom of others and must be willing to use force if necessary to protect people from harm. What we do not advocate is vengeance, not even disguised as 'justice'. Administering punishment demeans those who do it as well as those it is done to and imprisoning people can never be part of a free society.



● A new support group has grown out of the recent **London underground workers strike**. Endorsed by the RMT union, it seeks to offer physical and financial support to tube workers and their ongoing dispute with Transport for London and the Mayor over agreements about pay and conditions. Made up of activists and varying political groups, including those from Industrial Workers of the World, Solidarity Federation and Haringey Solidarity Support, it is committed to promote the issues surrounding public sector transport. Ideas for a free new sheet as well as leafleting campaigns through the underground network are two activities currently being developed. See www.supportthetubestrikes.org.uk

● Activists from Bristol have put a call-out for groups across the UK to get involved in a week-long series of autonomous actions and events this coming autumn. **Bristol Co-Mutiny** is a coalition of local community and activist groups including Bristol Rising Tide, Bristol No Borders, Bath Activist Network, and Kebele Social Centre who are asking groups involved in social change throughout the UK to get involved. The themes for events and days of action are centred around: climate justice, freedom of movement, anti-militarism, work and financial collapse/community growth. Any groups wishing to contribute should contact

comutiny@riseup.net or visit their website: <http://comutiny.wordpress.com/>

● Groups from France and the UK, including the UK **No Borders Network**, have organised a **Noborder Camp** in Calais, France, from 23rd to 29th June 2009, including a mass demonstration for freedom of movement and the abolition of migration controls to be held in Calais on 27th June 2009. London NoBorders is organising a coach/ferry for those who want to come to the weekend (including the demonstration). The coach will leave Friday (26th June) and return to London Sunday (28th) evening. If you are interested in booking a place please contact noborderslondon@riseup.net soon. More details (times, prices) will be announced soon via their website: <http://london.noborders.org.uk>

● Anarchists from Whitechapel, London, are to resurrect the grand traditions of rebellious East End carnivals by hosting the **Spitalfields Fair** this July, near Brick Lane. As with the original fairs of the 1900s, it promises such attractions as coconut shies, sound systems, dancing, fancy dress (thieves, pirates, vagabonds), food, stalls and face painting. A public meeting has been organised at Freedom Bookshop on Sunday 28th June at 4pm (for a 4.30pm start) to discuss the fair followed by a barbecue at 6pm. All are welcome.

Comrades remembered

We remember two comrades who, in their different ways, contributed to our present day political landscape

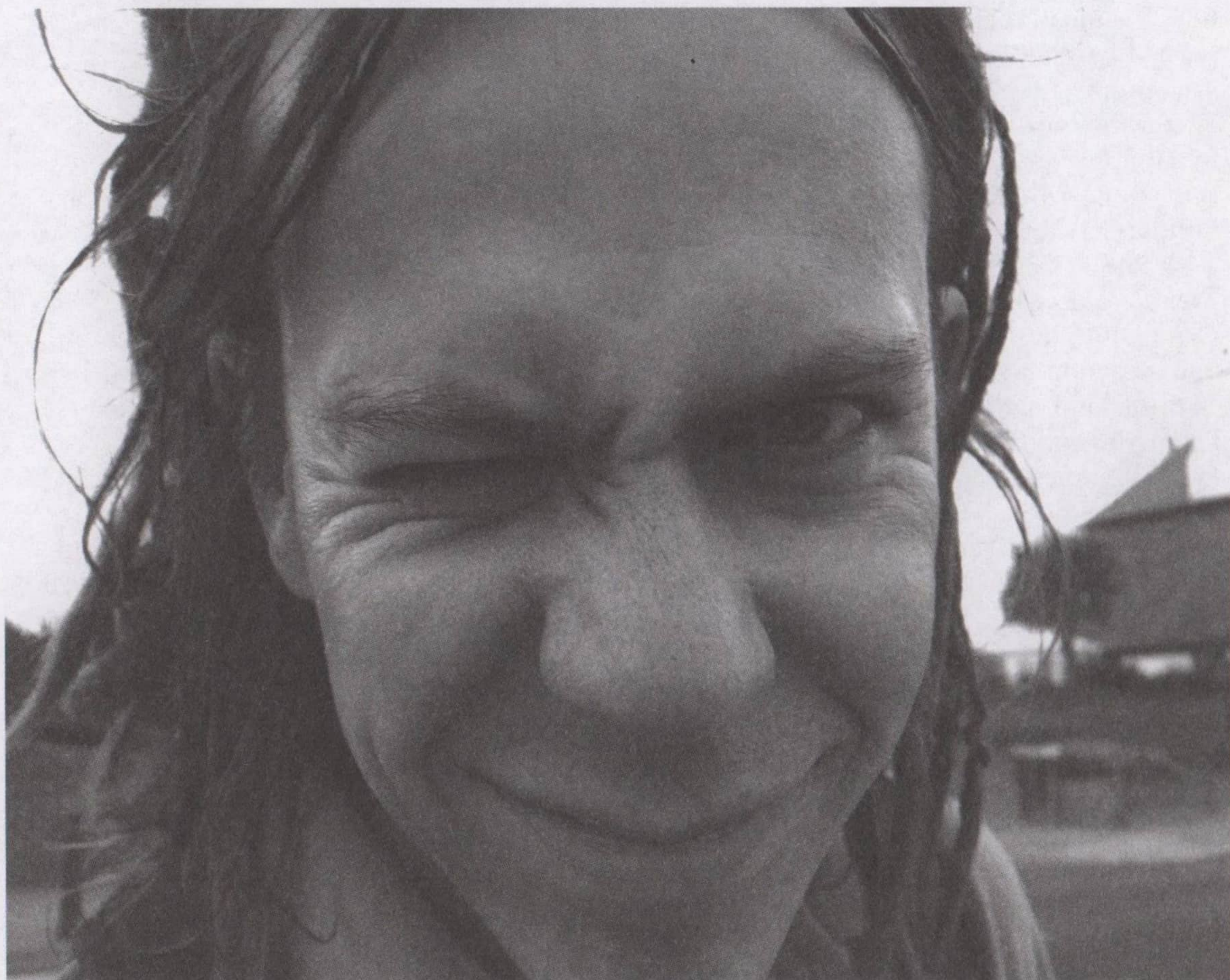
Antony Frey (January 1977–August 2008), friend to the anarchist movement, committed anti-fascist, and comrade. Antony was a skilled and experienced rock climber, as well as a dedicated political activist, who was tragically killed while on a climbing expedition in the French Alps last August.

To all of those involved in the London anarchist movement, Antony was a familiar and recognisable part of the scene, in no small part due to the way he looked – tall, skinny (although physically very strong) with a mass of dreadlocks reaching all the way down his back.

Many remember him as the ‘caretaker’ of the Eton Mission Social Club, a squatted social centre in Hackney Wick that played host to numerous fundraisers and benefit nights where he would, without fail, open the doors to what was essentially his home at the time, to all manner of political activity. He was the model of restraint in what could be quite turbulent events.

I first got to know him when we worked together preparing the building for the first Reclaim The Future benefit some years back. He had his own tools and, unlike most involved, knew what he was doing and worked non-stop to make sure the place was ready. He was one of the few people involved in the movement who took time and genuine care with everything he put his hand to, which cut across all aspects of his life. He was an accomplished joiner and we have over the years together built more stages in more buildings for more events than is probably healthy.

As an anti-fascist he was committed and fearless, although occasionally his distinctive appearance sometimes didn't help. On one particular expedition there was a call-out to confront the BNP at a local election result in Barking, which to us at the time was unknown and enemy territory. The meet-up point was the pub nearest the station; what no-one bothered to tell us was it was the local fashion-friendly drinking den. We walked in trying to look inconspicuous and the whole place, filled with skinhead-rough tattooed-heavy blokes, stops and turns towards us. We pause and Antony gives me a ‘well I'm staying’ shrug and wanders off to the bar where we spend a long and uncomfortable twenty minutes waiting for the rest of the group to arrive. Never once did he let his nerves show, or indeed let on that there was a problem.



Antony Frey, comrade and friend, who died in August 2008

He was in every sense a cool customer and this kind of calm assurance reflected in almost everything he did. He was never outspoken or arrogant about his politics, often just getting on with the job. The only time I saw him get aggressive with his opinions was on the subject of religion, which he vehemently opposed in all its forms. This could be traced back to his strict religious upbringing in Liverpool which was to be the foundation for his anti-authoritarian outlook.

Politically he was a communist more than an anarchist, he'd often balk at the more unworkable anarchist ideas, although he contributed more to the anarchist movement in London than most self-styled anarchists. When Simon Chapman was arrested during the EU Summit in Thessaloniki in 2003, it was Antony who volunteered to climb up Tower Bridge (and to train someone to climb with him) and unfurl the banner for the demo, despite knowing he'd get a criminal conviction which could have jeopardised any future teaching jobs.

It was always good to know when Antony was on board with something because then at least you'd be reassured someone was taking it seriously. He also maintained an active London social life – it was often amazing where he got all the energy from.

He was a member of the Phoenix Housing Co-op and taught maths at Newham Further Education College. Those who knew him will always remember him with much love and respect, and will be sadly missed by all. Definitely, and defiantly, one of a kind.

Freedom bookshop is proud to host, along with Antifa, a commemoration of Antony with the unveiling on a plaque outside the bookshop to celebrate his memory. Antony Frey Commemoration, Saturday 4th July from 2pm until 7pm, unveiling a plaque followed by a barbecue and drinks at Freedom Bookshop. All welcome.

Harold H. Thompson, US anarchist, died in prison 11th October 2008

As a last request Harold Thompson got his final wish by having his ashes scattered across Lough Neagh in Ireland in a ceremony attended by fellow anarchists a few weeks ago. Harold Thompson died in a Tennessee prison last October aged 66 after being convicted of killing a police informer who had killed his partner, the mother of his son, and threatened the life of another.

Here's what the Anarchist Federation say about the man: “Harold witnessed first-hand the brutalities of the American state, not only in the gulags (as he labelled US incarceration facilities) but also serving in Vietnam where he was wounded under fire. It was a war that disillusioned many of the combatants including Harold who went on to adopt the ethics of anarchism from which he would never thereafter deviate. As Harold used to sign off his letters, ‘They'll never get us all!’ Rest easy, cherished comrade” (from *Anarchist Federation Organise! Magazine*, #72, Summer 2009). Harold H. Thompson's obituary was published in *Freedom* on 20th December 2008.

REVIEWS

WHAT'S ON

JULY

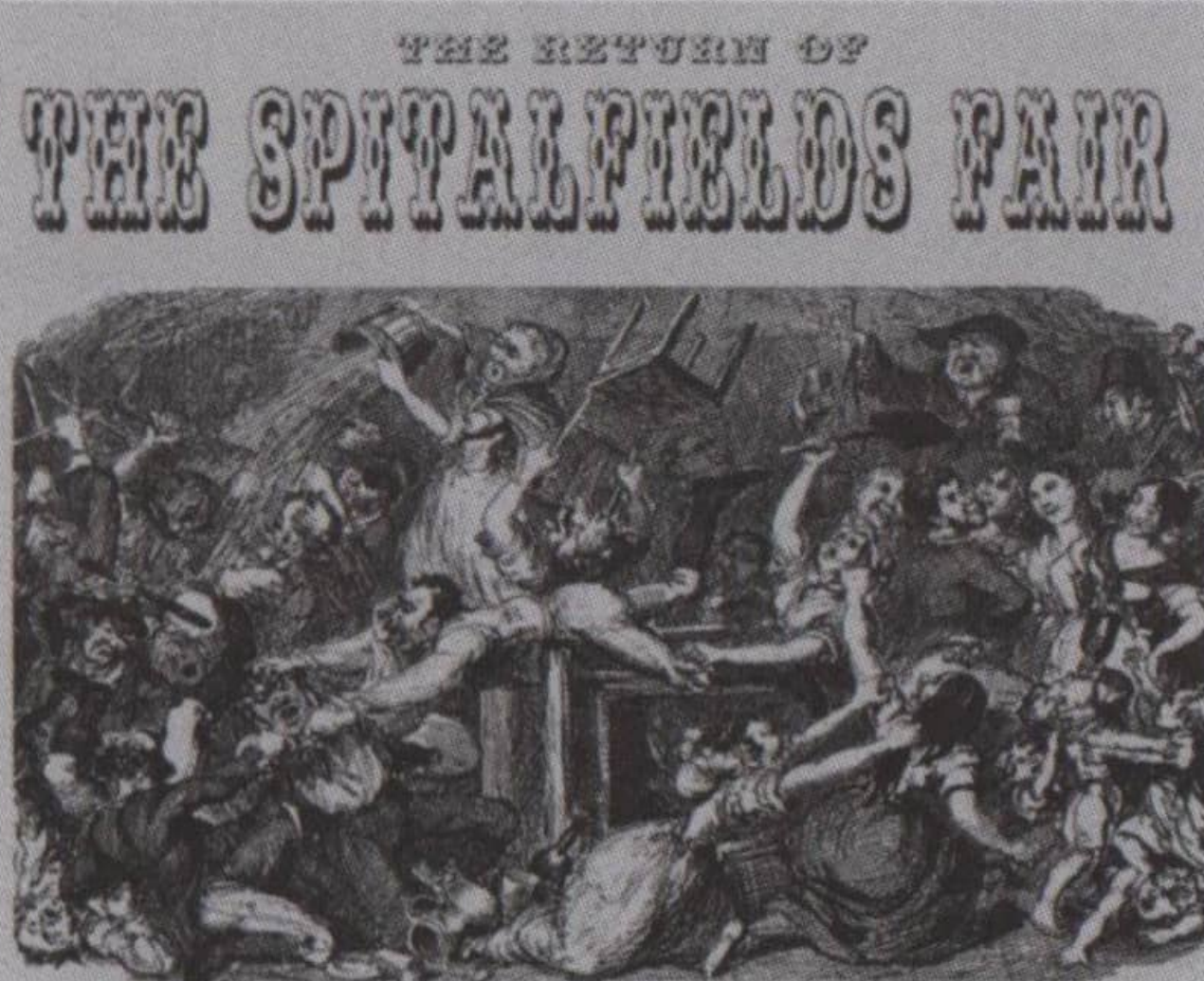
4th Independence from America, organised by CAAB, from 5pm until 10pm outside the main entrance of NSA Menwith Hill near Harrogate, HG3 2HF, call 01423 884076, email mail@caab.corner.org.uk or see caab.org.uk for more details.

4th Antony Frey Commemoration, from 2pm until 7pm, unveiling a plaque followed by a barbecue and drinks at Freedom Bookshop, 84b Whitechapel High Street, London E1 7QX (see also page 13).

14th Public Order Policing, talk by Andy Meinke of Legal Defence and Monitoring Group, at SPES, Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London WC1R 4RL, at 11am.

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/>



SUNDAY 26TH JULY 12 NOON

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.

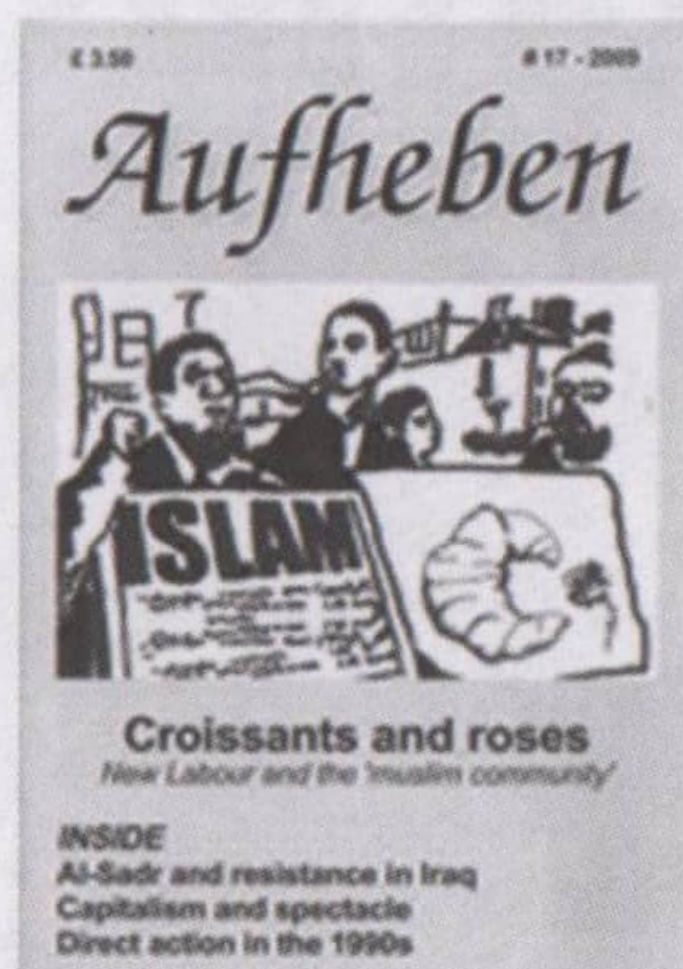
18th to 24th Earth First! Summer Gathering, ecological direct action without compromise – five days of workshops, skill sharing and planning action, plus low-impact living without leaders – at a location in Cumbria, see earthfirst.org.uk or email summergathering

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.

MAGAZINES



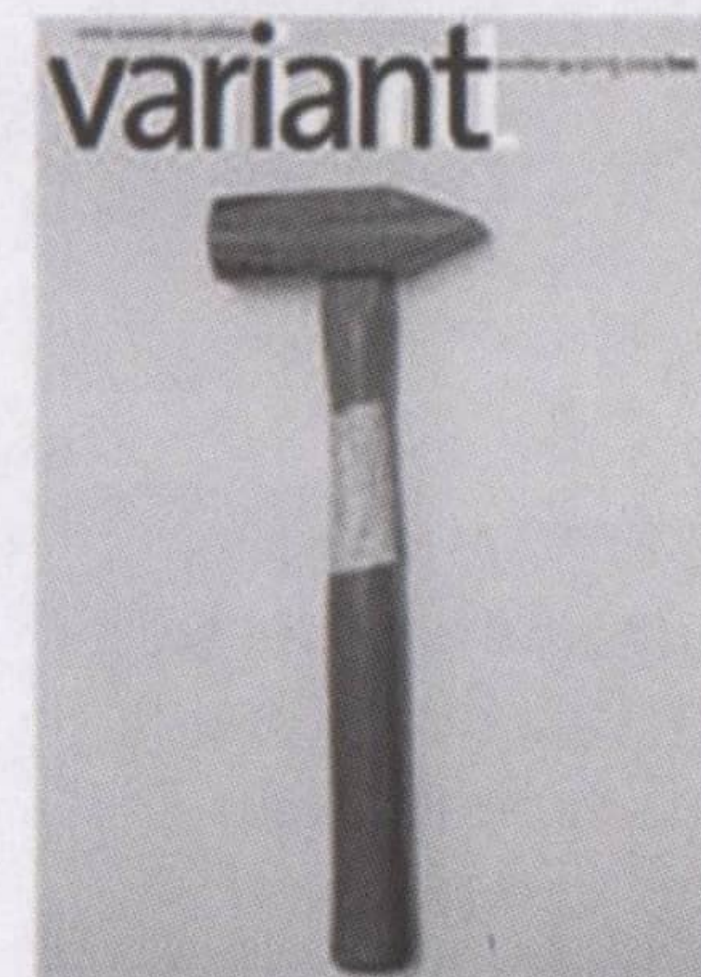
Aufheben
#17, 2009, 64-page
A4 magazine, £3.50

The new issue of *Aufheben* features a lengthy article (in three parts) about Islam and the left. This starts with a detailed analysis of how New Labour was instrumental in the creation of an official 'British Muslim Community' with its recognised spokesmen and the twists and turns in that relationship. This is followed by a detailed look the history of Muslim communities in Britain, ending with a look at the SWP's attempt to gain credibility and build a mass party using the anti-Iraq war movement and militant Islam.

Alongside the feature article there's a detailed look at the career of Muqtada al-Sadr and Mahdi Army, through a review of Patrick Cockburn's book about him and how the SWP came to see al-Sadr as the personification Iraqi resistance. On a lighter note there is a review of The Retort Collective's *Afflicted Powers* book, in particular its use of Guy Debord, and finally

a review of Peter Styles book about direct action (which gets the thumbs up).

As ever *Aufheben* have produced an excellent readable magazine. Thoroughly recommended.



variant
#34, Spring 2009
40-page A3
newspaper format,
free (but you'll need
P&P at least to get
from bookshops).

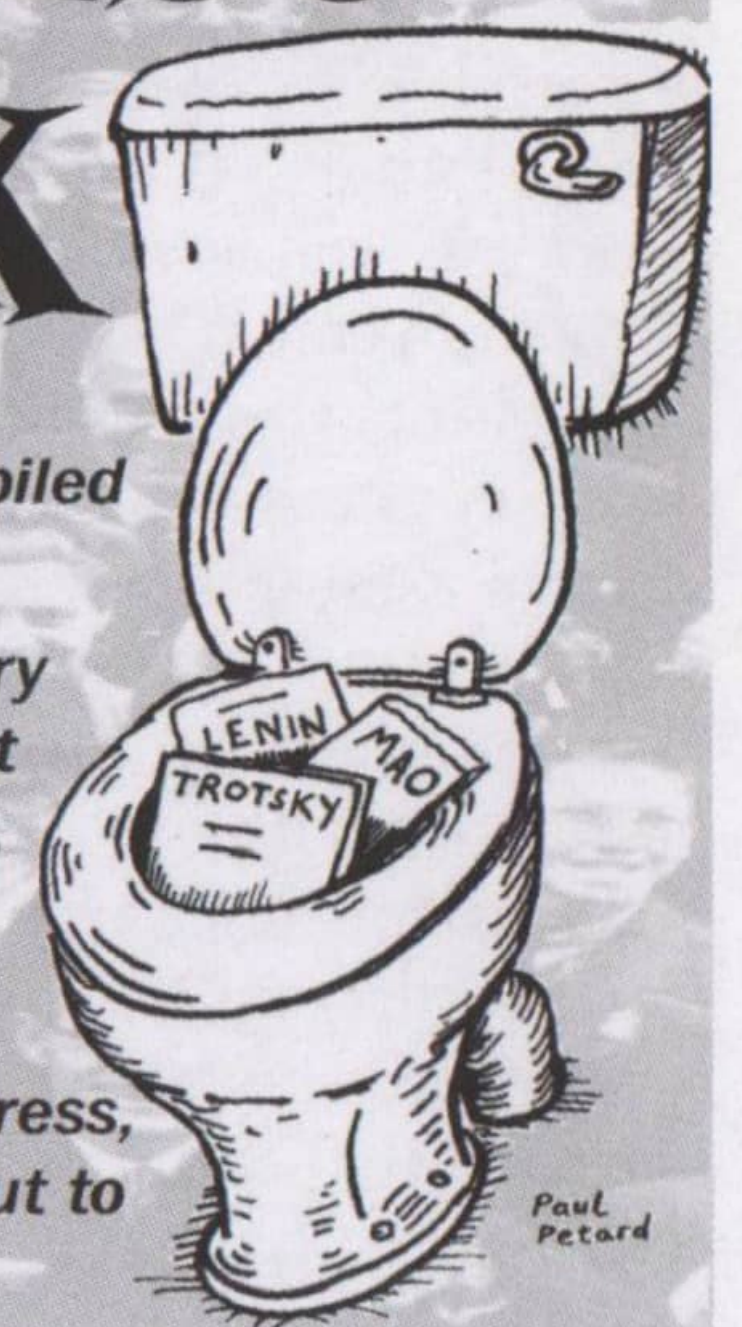
For those who have never read a copy, *Variant* is a thrice yearly free newspaper format Scottish magazine, covering the interface between culture, the arts and politics, and more besides. This issue has three articles on town planning, gentrification and the 'Creative Class', John Barker on the dangers of ad hoc trans/inter/quasi governmental agencies, Ploughshares hammers, Artists and Art schools, Tom Jennings on the Amber Collective's films, Isreal, and The Toughest Man in Cairo vs The Zionist Vegetable. Excellent value for money (ahem) and well worth reading. (Or visit their website if you have difficulty finding copies.)

The Anarchist Quiz Book

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

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

Get your copy now for £5 (post free) by mail order from Freedom Press, 84b Whitechapel High Street, London E1 7QX (cheque/PO made out to Freedom Press) or from www.freedompress.org.uk



QUIZ ANSWERS

1. They are all councillors or candidates for the British National Party, despite being of mixed parentage, respectively Greek-Armenian Muslim, Jewish, Turkish and Jamaican. BNP policy is to 'voluntarily repatriate racial foreigners', by which they mean anyone who isn't white and British. Obviously these saddoes have really fallen out with their relatives.
2. The BNP. He was their East London organiser, but was thrown out for having a girlfriend from Ecuador.
3. A badge worn by police on picket duty. It stood for 'Arthur Scargill Pays our Mortgages', reflecting the generous overtime paid to smash the strike.
4. The archives of the Situationist Guy Debord, including the handwritten manuscript of *The Society of the Spectacle*.

Playing by the rules

State of Play's pretensions to contemporary relevance break down into a bungled bog-standard retro-romp, finds Tom Jennings

Kevin Macdonald's passably entertaining *State of Play* sees a young likely-lad gunned down in a professional hit, whereupon Cal McCaffrey (Russell Crowe), intrepid chief reporter at *The Washington Globe*, investigates. Immediately afterwards nearby, a political researcher falls under a commuter train, with her Congressional Committee boss Stephen Collins (Ben Affleck) tearful at an ensuing press conference arousing Monicagate-style tabloid suspicions. However, McCaffrey discovers that his victim phoned the dead woman immediately before the murders – after a bagsnatch yielded surveillance material on her, having obviously tried to flog it back to the killer. So he commandeers the now-merged story, helped enormously by being the Congressman's old college-buddy. Repelling interference from police, his managers and colleagues and the assassin running amok, he unravels a plot further thickened by revelations that the monolithic private security contractor Collins was probing ran the researcher as a mole – planted, moreover, by his own Party grandee mentor. Touching all the tainted bases of the contemporary military-state-industrial complex, the film thereby neatly fits current ultra-cynical (or, arguably, realistic) Hollywood fashions.

Abandoning increasingly tired international espionage templates, 1970s US conspiracy thrillers exploited greater awareness of high-level hi-jinks among Big Money and Power – with well-meaning reformers, journalists and citizens victimised by government and corporate agencies in *The Parallax View* (1974), *Three Days of the Condor* (1975), *Winter Kills* (1979) and *The China Syndrome* (1979). Then, after a protracted cinematic truce, Jonathan Demme's *The Manchurian Candidate* (2004) conservatively revised John Frankenheimer's 1962 Cold War mind-boggler, with benign intelligence services and traditionalist politicians now deploying patriotic dirty tricks only against the multinational menace, while John Sayles' equally transparent anti-Bush sentiment in *Silver City* (2004) resuscitated countercultural heroics to thwart naked neo-con pollution. And whereas the *Bourne* series and its ilk pit macho postmodern solipsism against schizophrenic secret-state apparatuses, the more sophisticated *Syriana* (dir. Stephen Gaghan, 2005) sketches



parapolitical convergence among conflicting powerful interests overdetermining apparently insane global events. Yet throughout – however strident the rhetoric – generic resolution looms via public exposure of the evil exceptions infecting otherwise healthy body-politics.

None of the President's Men

State of Play reproduces cliché individual corruption despite twisting its tale to also indict the Democratic good guys, whose righteous crusade derails after adopting methods attributed to the other side. Incipient critique is, however, recuperated by displacing dispassionate checks-and-balances onto the independent press – albeit with capacity all but hamstrung by modern business practices favouring profitable cheap tat, like celebrity chitchat and the opinion-peddling bloggery that McCaffrey so derides. But then our film's low-rent blown conspiracy hardly measures up to its explicit cinematic inspiration – the *Washington Post* Nixon-busters classically portrayed in *All the President's Men* (dir. Alan J. Pakula, 1976), naffly referenced by locations in Watergate and sinister underground carparks. But here the ruling echelons escape scot-free, with even the shocking scoop the screenwriters conjure – a privatised Blackwateresque monopoly of state security – already yesterday's news. Plus the story was sleuthed by the congressman, not the newshound – thus representing a remarkably tepid testament to the virtues of old-school investigative journalism. In effect, if this is the fourth estate's best shot, no wonder the sector faces terminal decline.

It's all the more ironic that the source material for such a disappointing cop-out was so provocatively intelligent. The BBC's 2003 six-part drama, directed by David Yates, shattered a similar hiatus in UK intrigue after some doom-laden mid-Thatcher prognostications – sundry Cold War throwbacks, nuclear nightmare in the *Edge of Darkness* (1983), and *A Very British Coup's* (1988) embroidering of Wilson-era aristocrats plotting soft-socialism's overthrow. Presumably later Tory mega-sleaze (rather than penny-ante expenses-chiselling) rendered fictitious finessing superfluous, after which Blair's new deal took time to fester – but Paul Abbott's *State of Play* emphatically puts the boot in. His script implicates Cabinet-level machinations arranging the espionage of their own rising-star MP (by the energy lobby), specifically undermining the adversarial posture which simultaneously furnishes the government's public-interest alibi. The resulting policy stitch-up represents a prescient metaphor for New Labour's entire neoliberal trajectory, boosting heavyweight economic agendas, socialising risks and privatising profits – disingenuously concealed under vapid spin complemented by the newspaper's proprietorial Murdoch/Maxwell amalgam riding shotgun. Whereas the film's lone crooked politico conniving a corporate paymaster's advantage pales infinitely limply in comparison.

Worse, Macdonald's cardboard cut-out cast's stereotypically wooden acting cements a complete lack of believably rounded human



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intercourse matching entirely unconvincing institutional settings. Conversely, the television series fully incorporates personal biography into political allegory, fleshing out threadbare idealism, compromised loyalty and troubled maturity into fractures and divergences in professional and intimate relationships and ambitions. The intricate social nuances work effortlessly thanks to impeccable dialogue and performances, so that even weaker plot points pass muster – as does the microcosmic contrast of conflict, morale, competition and suspicion in the newsroom and at Westminster. The humble utopian core of Abbott's vision is his fully-functioning reporting ensemble – representing,

at a stretch, any genuine collective of ordinary folk. Diverse skills and flaws meld in their relatively egalitarian endeavour to transcend systemic corruption and collusion characterising an official public realm constitutionally riddled with corrosively alienating manipulative duplicity – the writer's lack of interest in superhuman saviours and liberal grand narratives of journalism's lofty nobility palpable in playing its management as farce. Meanwhile, Hollywood's contempt for honest dirty work – and final clinching evidence of Macdonald's all-round botch-job – surfaces in Collins' objection to a privatised military based on its employees only showing 'loyalty to the pay-packet'. So much for the honour of wage-slaves everywhere – but what on earth does he

imagine motivates the low-rank-and-file to enlist in the armed forces in the first place?

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The film version of *State of Play* is released on DVD on 17th August.

THE QUIZ

1. What do Sharif Gawad, Patricia Richardson, Lawrence Rustem and Sharon Ebanks have in common?
2. What party was Kenneth Francis expelled from in 2002, and why?
3. What, during the miners' strike, was ASPOM?
4. Which 'national treasure' is the French National Library trying to keep in France?

Answers on page 14

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