

ANTI-FASCISTS TARGETED

Police arrest anti-fascists in dawn raids across the UK

Police orchestrated early morning raids on addresses across the UK and arrested eighteen people for their involvement in anti-fascist activities. Homes in London, Brighton, Leeds and Barnsley were raided in the early hours of 29th July by British Transport Police with arrest warrants in connection with an incident involving fascists attending a Blood and Honour gig in South London on 28th March, the same day as the Put People First march against the G20 summit. In one instance the front door was smashed in and whole flat ransacked by police, in another the girlfriend of the wanted person was also arrested and questioned.

Despite the mass arrests no-one has yet been charged with any criminal activity and all have been bailed to return to British Transport Police stations in October.

Those arrested were kept detained for over eight hours and interviewed about the incident.

Along with the warrant for arrest was a search warrant to seize all computer equipment and mobile phones, as well any black or dark clothing, hooded tops,

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LENS CAP TAIWAN



A mudslide triggered by torrential rains from a typhoon may have buried up to 600 villagers in mountainous southern Taiwan. Our next issue *Freedom* will be a climate special to coincide with the London Climate Camp Action.

JOBLESS FIGURES ESCALATE

The number of unemployed people has increased by 753,000 to reach 2.38 million, the largest increase since records began in 1971, according to figures just published by the National Statistics Office.

Other figures reveal that the total number of people in employment for the three months to May 2009 has fallen to just under 29 million. Hardest hit are the young with the number of 16 to 24-year-olds out of work tipping the one million mark.

In July, the Prince's Trust said one young person was losing a job almost every minute. Economists are warning that the jobless total could reach three million by Christmas despite the continued optimism that the recession has peaked.

The redundancies level for the year so far

risen to 182,000 compared with 429,000 job vacancies in the three months to June 2009, the lowest it's been since 2001, and is almost certain to hit wages. Already average earnings have increased by just 2.6% in the three months to May, the lowest annual growth rate for almost ten years.

The public sector will again bear the brunt of the government's mismanagement of the economy with councils in England and Wales still facing a £4 billion deficit which will inevitably result in massive job cuts across all services.

Seven thousand town hall jobs have been lost in the past six months, as officials face falling incomes, according to the Local Government Association, with more will follow in the next year.

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NEWS

IN BRIEF

AFGHANISTAN: The American-led occupying forces suffered 76 deaths in July, including 22 British troops. This breaks the previous record of 46 coalition forces in June and August 2008, as well as the British worst month of 19 in September 2006. Meanwhile, on the eve of the Afghan elections, Taliban militants have attacked official buildings in eastern Afghanistan, firing rockets at a police headquarters and government offices.

IT COULDN'T HAPPEN TO A NICER...

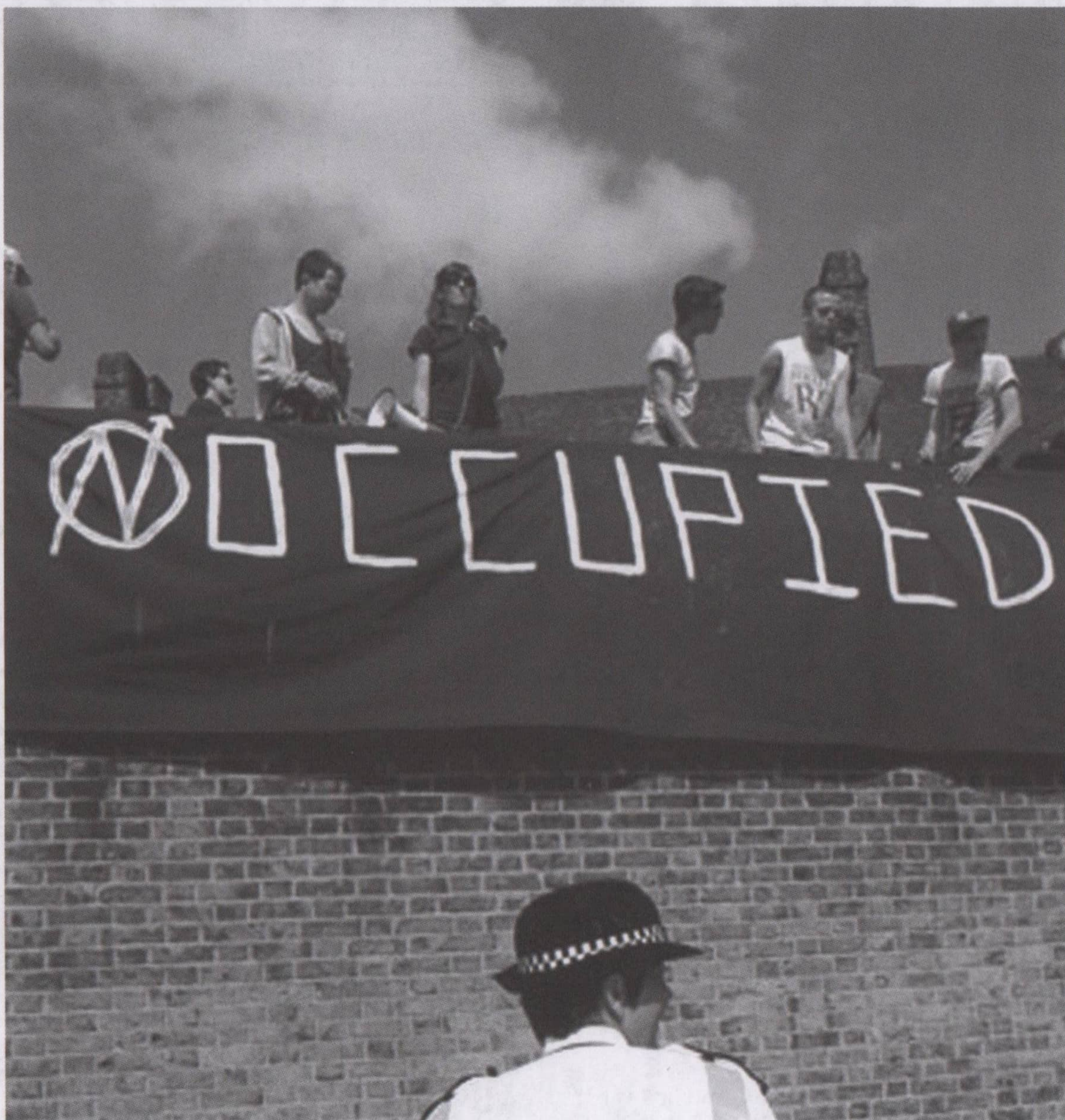
Former cabinet minister Hazel Blears' car has been attacked while she was out canvassing for votes. Vandals slashed the tyres of the Labour MP for Salford's Citroen Xsara Picasso and smashed its windscreen. The ex-communities secretary said she did not think her car had been targeted because of who she was and called the attack "pathetic and cowardly". But not so cowardly as pocketing £13,000 in unpaid capital gains tax on a property sale. Just less profitable.

LAW POWERLESS: How often do we see this phrase when something goes wrong, "A family has called for a change in the law". Fortunately this time it's not too serious - "... after a 13ft (4m) Burmese python crushed and ate their cat. Four-year-old Wilbur, who lived with his owners in the Brislington area of Bristol, was apparently ambushed by the reptile in a neighbouring garden. Owners Martin and Helen Wadey said they heard 'blood curdling cries' which they knew were being made by their pet." How rare to hear people demand a life of riches and luxury for lawyers, judges and police instead of sorting out neighbourhood disputes themselves.

SECTARIAN RESEARCH REQUEST: A comrade has asked: "Do any of *Freedom's* readers have any personal accounts of the late and much unlamented Revolutionary Communist Party? If so, send them in. For those of you who don't know, the old RCP was a comet that blazed for a few years on the insane wing of Marxism before the Party leadership supposedly had a collective outbreak of common sense, realised Marxism was nonsense, and dissolved the Party. In reality the RCP was always more of a religious cult than a political party and still exists today, funded by big business and pushing right wing ideas through a number of front organisations. See the website . Lobbywatch for detailed information on this. It's time these tossers were brought to account and faced the vengeance of the proletariat. Contact *Freedom* today and chase up anyone you know who had any dealings with the RCP. Disgruntled ex-RCPers are particularly welcome."

WAG HOLIDAY: Whitechapel Anarchist Group are taking a well deserved summer break. They will be back with more dynamic local derring do next issue.

LENS CAP SOUTH EAST LONDON



The protesters camped out on the roof of Lewisham Bridge School since 23rd April have won their fight to prevent the demolition of the Grade II listed building by Lewisham Council. Eleanor Davies, from the Hands Off Lewisham Bridge group, said "This is a great victory for our campaign ... We are happy to come down from the roof at the earliest opportunity when we receive confirmation from Lewisham Council that our children will be back at Lewisham Bridge ready for the new term in September". Children from the school had been moved to temporary classrooms in New Cross. Lewisham Council wanted to bulldoze the primary school and rebuild a larger school for three- to 16-year-olds on the site.

Last WW1 veteran dies

The last surviving soldier from the First World War has finally been laid to rest at St Michael's Church, alongside his parents and brother, near Bath. Harry Patch, who died on 25th July, aged 111, fought in the trenches during the First World War and later became critical of those who glory in war.

Born in a small Somerset village, he worked as an apprentice plumber before being conscripted into Duke of Cornwall's Light Infantry where he fought at the Battle of Passchendaele, one of the bloodiest and costliest of the war. Masterminded by General Haig, it lasted three months, gaining just five miles of ruined ground at the cost of more than half a million British and 300,000 German lives. Patch was injured by an exploding shell that cost him three of his closet friends. After the war he returned to working as a plumber, became a part-time

fireman during the Second World War and remained in the plumbing industry until his retirement.

It was only ten years ago he began to talk publicly about his war experiences, mostly critical of the motivations and reasons behind war and those who forced ordinary young men to their deaths. In his autobiography, *The Last Fighting Tommy*, he wrote: "politicians who took us to war should have been given the guns and told to settle their differences themselves, instead of organising nothing better than legalised mass murder."

Modest and unassuming to the last, he refused to become a spokesman for the glorification of war, commenting "I wasn't at all patriotic. I went and did what was asked of me and no more" and dismissing Remembrance Day on 11th November as "just show business".



G20 a tale of two cities

The latest in the aftermath of the G20 is in two parts. First, what happened to the demonstrators.

A total of 37 people have now been charged with crimes relating to the G20 protests, the City of London Police announced on Friday 7th August.

Charges include arson, violent disorder and impersonating a police officer.

- Eleven people are charged with impersonating a police officer;
- Nine charged with violent disorder;
- One charged with violent disorder, theft and possession of an offensive weapon;
- One charged with assaulting a police officer;

- One charged with burglary;
- One charged with causing fear/provocation of violence;
- One charged with criminal damage;
- One charged with possession of articles for use in criminal damage.

All 26 people, charged as above, are on police bail to appear at City of London Magistrates Court on 3rd and 4th September.

Three people are currently on court bail, charged with:

- Arson and recklessly endangering life;
- Criminal damage and burglary;
- Possession of articles for use in criminal damage.

Eight further people have been dealt with, for a variety of offences including criminal damage and burglary:

- One community order;
 - One referral order;
 - Four conditional discharges;
 - One charge dropped by CPS;
 - One charged, later replaced with a caution.
- Six people remain on police bail, and three have failed to answer bail.

But what of the naughty coppers who killed Ian Tomlinson and are now revealed to have refused to allow a woman with heavy vaginal bleeding leading to a possible miscarriage to leave the cordon on 1st April? A big fat zero.

Anti-fascists targeted

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baclavas and any literature and items connected with the militant anti-fascist group Antifa.

It is still unclear why the police mounted such an operation in the way that they did given eight people were arrested on 28th March over the same incident and have already been interviewed and bailed to return twice without being charged. It is understood the Forward Intelligence Team (FIT) were monitoring the Militant Workers Bloc on the anti-G20 march of which Antifa and other anti-fascists were present.

Those involved in anti-fascism believe the arrests are part of a co-ordinated attack by the state as a pre-emptive move to gather information and intelligence on Antifa's

current activities especially concerning the British National Party's (BNP) up and coming Red White and Blue Festival (RWB) and to put active members of the group out of commission while they remain on police bail and under investigation.

Last year's RWB festival in Codnor was targeted by Antifa who mobilised anti-fascists from around the UK to close it down. South Derbyshire police remained unaware of the group's plans and were taken by surprise as over 80 anti-fascists got within 100 metres of the festival undetected on the opening day.

Antifa, a national federation comprised largely of anarchists, was formed as a response to the Left's failure to effectively

confront the rise of the BNP, and other far-right groups, as a mobilising political force. In the past it has organised actions against such overt Nazi groups as the British Peoples Party buoyed by the electoral success of the BNP. Anti-fascists are concerned the far right are making political capital out of the current economic crisis and fear it's only a matter of time before their confidence grows into a more confrontational street presence once again. The BNP are still revelling in the election of two of its members to the European parliament where it shares a far-right platform with other European fascist organisations like France's Front National and Italy's Forza Nuova.

NEWS

Vestas occupation ends

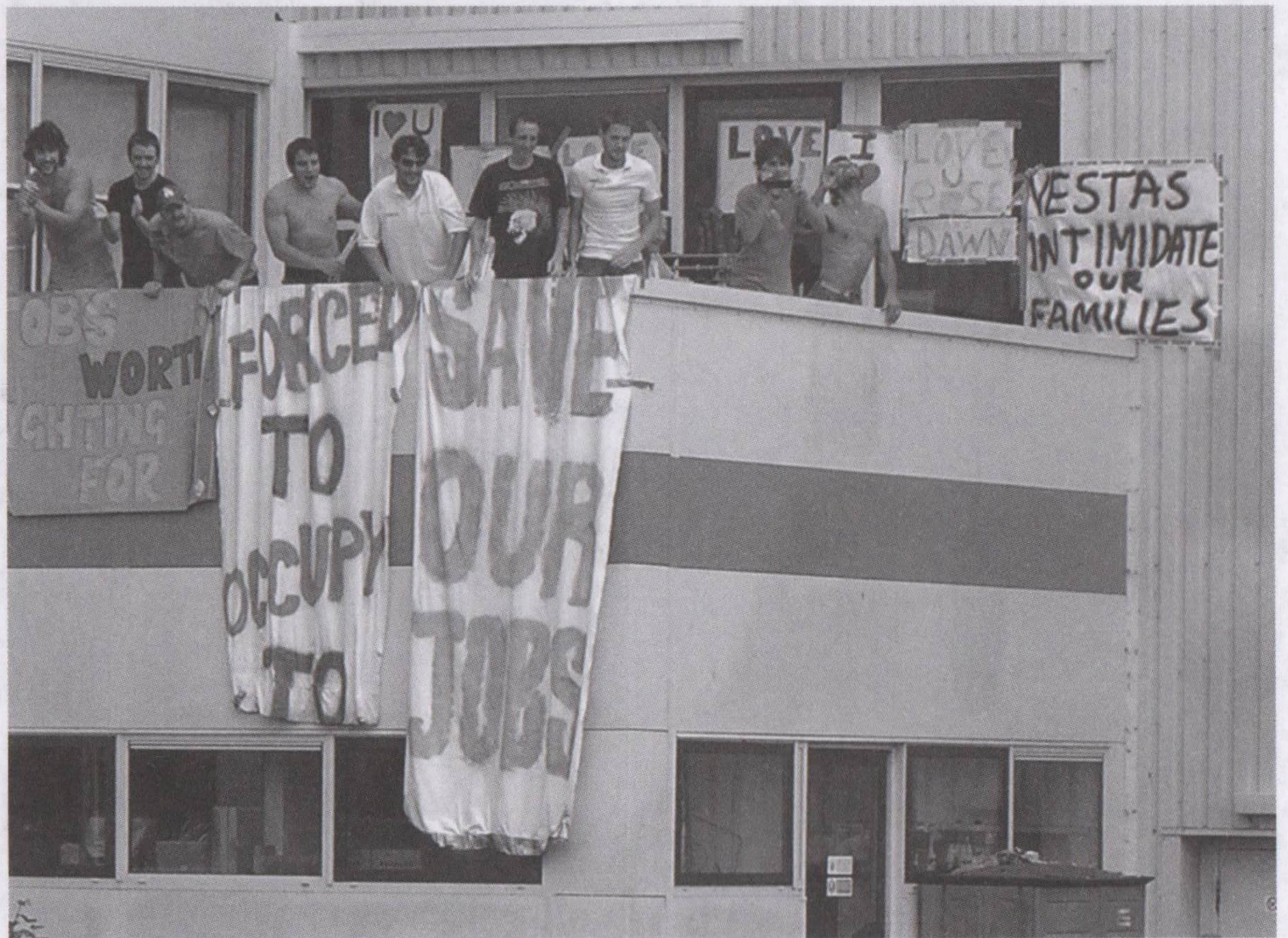
Workers defiant to the end despite factory closure

Workers at the Vestas factory on the Isle of Wight finally ended their occupation after the court issued a possession order granting bailiffs the right to enter the building and evict the occupiers. The nineteen-day occupation, originally by nine Vestas workers, was in protest at the Danish owned company closing the factory with the loss of 625 jobs to the island.

In a final act of defiance, one occupier jumped from the balcony where the workers had made their temporary home rather than be led out by police, with two other abseiling down the side of the building.

The protest has been the longest sit-in ever seen on the Isle of Wight and has made headlines around the world. Hundreds of supporters from across the UK converged at the factory gates in support of their struggle. The workers have vowed the campaign will not stop with their eviction and plan to organise rallies and marches in the coming weeks.

During the occupation a camp was set up on the roundabout opposite the factory where climate camp activists, trade unionists and leftists gathered daily to show their support. Groups like Workers' Climate Action, who mobilised coaches from London in support of the occupation, see the Vestas dispute as a progressive move forward, the conglomeration of climate change and workplace struggles. Despite a lack of any organised response from the anarchist movement many anarchists did attend, including people



involved in *Freedom* newspaper, and climate activists brandishing red and black and green and black flags occupied the roof of a Vestas warehouse on the quayside in Cowes in support of the Vestas workers, where they remain still.

Workers, many of whom lost their redundancy because of the occupation, called on the government to nationalise the wind turbine factory, as it had done with Royal Bank of Scotland, only to be met with silence from the Energy and Climate Change Secretary Ed Miliband.

Miliband has previously promised the government would create as many as 400,000 green jobs by 2015, claiming Britain will become a world leader in low-carbon technology and manufacturing. Green campaigners saw the lack of intervention to save the factory as New Labour reneging on their commitment to invest in greener industries.

Vestas Wind Systems is the largest manufacturer of wind turbines in the world installed over 33,500 wind turbines in 63 countries on five continents supplying 28% of all wind turbines.

Easier access at the 2009 Anarchist Bookfair

The 28th London Anarchist Bookfair will be held on Saturday 24th October at Queen Mary College, London E1 4NS. There will be the usual meetings, stalls, cabaret, films and kids' spaces, but this year we're making some changes to improve deaf and disabled access. Ideally the whole event would be fully accessible so that people wouldn't have to contact us in advance to access it, but unfortunately at the moment this isn't possible – if you have any particular access needs, please get in touch to let us know what you need and, if you have experienced any access problems with previous bookfairs, please feedback. Please also let us know if you are able to volunteer with support on the day – see our contact details below.

Some of the changes planned are:

- There will be a 10 minute handover between meetings to allow comrades with limited mobility to get to them on time, and for any support to be set up. Accessible

seating will also be reserved in meeting rooms.

- Some British Sign Language interpreting, electronic/manual note-taking and induction loops will be available for deaf and hard of hearing comrades – please get in contact ASAP to let us know which meetings you'd like to attend so we can organise support.
- We can provide guides for comrades who are blind/low vision – if you need this please get in touch ASAP to let us know.
- Audio or large print copies can be made of the bookfair programme, so please contact us to organise if required.
- While dogs are not allowed in the building, guide dogs and hearing dogs are of course welcome.
- We will be reducing the use of rooms not on the ground floor, improving signage, providing rest areas and a floor-plan. If you use a wheelchair, please come to the information stall on arrival as you will

need to pick up a card-key for lift access.

- If you have any other access requirements, or if you would like to meet up before the bookfair to talk about what you need, please get in touch.

Keep an eye on the bookfair website access page for further updates. On the day please go to the info stall for final access details.

Please also contact us if you can volunteer with support, if you want more information about how to make your meeting accessible, or if you have any access questions or suggestions.

Mobile (phone or text): 07807 795428

Email: access@anarchistbookfair.org.

Post: Anarchist Bookfair access, c/o Freedom Press, 84b Whitechapel High Street, London E1 7QX.

Note that the mobile number and email address above are for access matters *only* – for anything else please email: mail@anarchistbookfair.org. See www.anarchistbookfair.org for more information.

IN BRIEF

RICH COCKIER THAN POOR: Bright state school pupils are less likely than independent school pupils to apply to the most prestigious universities, suggests research.

The Sutton Trust charity, which promotes access to university for poorer pupils, is to publish research suggesting a lack of self-confidence. It suggests that guidance from schools needs to be improved. But the Sutton Trust argues that a key barrier to getting into leading universities is pupils' own fears about not fitting in and a lack of support from state schools. "What we've found is that independent school pupils with similar grades to state school pupils are far more likely to apply to leading research universities," says the charity's research director, Lee Elliot Major. "One of our concerns is that there is a confusion between excellence and elitism in many state schools – that often the prestigious universities are perceived to be 'not for the likes of us'."

It remains to be seen whether public schools dominate charities that produce reports telling us the bleeding obvious.

CLIMATE: Arctic sea ice extent for the month of July was the third lowest for that month in the satellite record, after 2007 and 2006. The average rate of melt in July 2009 was nearly identical to that of July 2007. A strong high-pressure system, similar to the atmospheric pattern that dominated the summer of 2007, brought warm winds and clear skies to the western Arctic, promoting ice melt. The melt season has around a month to go and we shall soon see if this year will break the record low of 2007.

ATHLETICS: After championing cricket in our last issue, we recommend readers to emulate the feats in the World Athletics Championships in Berlin 15th to 23rd August. Once again throwing far and running fast feature prominently, plus some silly jumping stuff.

Obviously success does not come through talent and dedication alone, you need to take a swig of the magic potion. We are pleased to report that the drug testers are on the back foot and performances rising.

Prognosticating we foresee the world record in the women's 4 by 100 meters relay falling at these games which will leave only three records remaining to the Corinthian spirited athletes of the former German Democratic Republic.

Anyone looking forward to the London Olympics can spot the potential stars of 2012 on show but should Britain's Carl Myerscough improbably succeed in qualifying for the shot put final on Saturday 15th don't expect to see him in London 'cos he's banned from the Games for taking drugs when he was a teenager. No other shotputter, of course, has ever taken drugs.

Steel doors campaign

Possil neighbourhood demands security

In a recent Glasgow Housing Association (GHA) press release, the stock transfer landlord noted that up to a 75% drop in housebreakings has been achieved in areas fitted with 'secured by design' doors.

Hamiltonhill is a neighbourhood in Possil in North West Glasgow. It has consistently been top of national statistics for unemployment, and multiple indices of deprivation (beaten only to second place by Paisley's Fergusliepark). It has also been scheduled for demolition since 2008. Tenants in the area have been left in limbo however, since the crash in land values and crisis made speculative developments (for which the centrally located area was to be demolished to make way for) no longer viable, the area's future has been left in doubt.

In the meantime tenants have seen no significant investment. Streets have been left boarded up, but many still live in the area. There is constant speculation about what's happening to the scheme.

In recent months, however, tenants have started to come together on the estate to fight for investment in the here and now, and to demand that tenants are treated with respect. A poster campaign was followed with a community survey. The survey asked neighbours their priorities for change in the area. From this a programme has emerged for the new Hamiltonhill Action Group.

Hamiltonhill Action Group Programme:

- No to forcing people out of their homes. Yes to investment.
- A dry warm home for all.
- A safe, secure community.
- Facilities for children and families must be kept and improved.
- Our homes and our surroundings should be a pleasant place to be.
- Our rents must be affordable, for all of us.
- This is our community. We demand respect!

The first action was to survey the close doors in the neighbourhood. With nearly half of all close doors found broken or vandalised, tenants wrote to the GHA to demand action. Seventeen repairs were carried out. Many have since been broken once more, so tenants are demanding that steel 'secured by design' doors are fitted on the estate.

In a letter to the Chief Executive of the GHA the action group outlines that they expect a reply with a timetable for the doors to be fitted by the end of August.

Freedom understands that the Action Group is taking pledges of solidarity from concerned citizens keen to see a bit of fairness. If the GHA are not forthcoming, further action will need to be taken and so the Action Group is asking for supporters to register with them so that they can make contact if events to bring pressure against the GHA become necessary.

Freedom will keep readers updated on the progress of the campaign
Contact Hamiltonhill Action Group at 07526113198 or email hamiltonhillaction@googlemail.com.



INTERNATIONAL

IN BRIEF

CHINA: Authorities closed a chemical plant after up to 1,000 local residents in central Hunan Province protested against cadmium pollution, which killed two people and affected hundreds of others, media reported on Monday 3rd August.

GERMANY: Protests are taking place against proposals to drastically cut youth schemes in the capital of Berlin. Facilities are due to be closed and social workers thrown out of work by plans to cut three million Euros a year from the budget, a move which campaigners say would virtually end some areas of child and youth care work.

GREECE: Media activists are fighting attempts by the state to shut down Indymedia Athens and Indymedia Patras over their coverage of the Greek riots last year.

Several politicians and commentators in the mainstream media have called for their closure and a number of hacking attempts have been launched.

INDIA: Bank unions representing around 900,000 people went on a 48-hour strike on 6th August for higher wages and pensions, affecting cash transactions and foreign exchange trading volumes. The strike was called after talks with industry negotiating body Apex failed.

IRAN: More than 100 people have gone on trial in Tehran accused of organising recent widespread civil protests questioning the legitimacy of President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad. Those charged include a former Vice President and other senior former officials, an advisor to one of the presidential candidates, academics and journalists. Human rights group Amnesty International criticised the trials, saying they are likely to be unfair.

IRELAND: Staff who occupied the offices of Thomas Cook in Dublin for six days have vowed to keep fighting after a major police operation was ordered to dislodge them. The workers gained an international audience after they took action against cutbacks at the travel agency.

JAPAN: Activists took to the streets in Hiroshima on 7th August against the 'fake peace city'. In the wake of the nuclear bomb memorial day in the city, in which the mayor reiterated Japan's commitment to a non-nuclear future, anti-militarists are stepping up a campaign to close military and naval centres in and around the city which they say show a shameful hypocrisy.

MALAYSIA: Scores of demonstrators who demanded an end to Malaysia's decades-old security law are still being held by police. Ismail Omar, Malaysia's deputy inspector general of police, told Al Jazeera that many would likely be charged with holding an 'illegal procession' or with other offences.

LENS CAP GREECE



A Somali refugee appeals for asylum from the window of a deportation coach in Samos, Greece. He and 54 other detainees were temporarily saved after a large crowd of supporters turned out at the Samos docks to disrupt police operations there. After hours of demonstrations the bus was turned back and the captain of the deportation ship was told to leave. Activists believe this to be the first victory of its kind in the area.

Panama port workers on hunger strike

Four port workers who were sacked for attempting to create two independent unions are on hunger strike in the Panamanian port of Balboa.

The workers, who are staging their protest at the entrance of the port, are part of a group of 70 workers who were dismissed by their employers Panama Ports – a subsidiary of Hutchison Whampoa Limited – and Ports Outsourcing Service. They lost their jobs after they attempted to create two independent unions in each workplace, with the support of the Central General Autónoma de Trabajadores de Panamá (CGTP).

The majority of the other workers were reinstated after they accepted an agreement offered by the companies; the remaining 17

workers, however, are adamant they want to return to work and continue to organise independent unions.

The companies are refusing to reinstate the workers, despite instructions from the Ministry of Labour to do so, and have replaced them with workers who are members of the company controlled unions.

Luis Fruto of the CGTP said: "The managers and business representatives don't want any unions that genuinely represent the interests of the workers. They prefer it if workers belong to the two unions controlled by the companies. Workers believe that the hunger strike and the foundation of a new union is the only way to have a genuine union to defend the workers' interests."

From itfglobal.org

Notes from the United States

In a new book, *Wired for War: The Robotics Revolution and Conflict in the 21st Century*, military expert P.W. Singer from the right-wing Brookings Institute details how US warfare overseas is being streamlined.

Computers inside a (camouflaged) lorry parked in the desert not far from Las Vegas, for example, can now show live images of locations in Afghanistan. This feed is coming from a Predator drone, an aircraft piloted from the US airbase.

After observing Afghans entering a building, which is shown on the remote

screens in the US, the controllers – safe at home – trigger their own weapons of mass destruction 8,000 miles away and a half-ton bomb flattens the building.

Surreally, Singer talks of pilots shooting missiles thousands of miles away and then getting into their cars to go home. "You are going to war for 12 hours, shooting weapons at targets, directing kills on enemy combatants, and then you get in the car, drive home, and within 20 minutes you are sitting at the dinner table talking to your

Reprisals begin against Ssangyong

State launches campaign of arrests and legal case to underscore victory

Police have announced a purge of activists connected with the Ssangyong car factory occupation in South Korea which ended on 6th August.

They are also filing a damages claim against the union and its allies for 548 million won (£269,000).

The 46 workers arrested for their part in the tense standoff in Gyeonggi province were part of a 100-strong group which police had brought in for questioning on the siege, which turned bloody during a series of violent state raids.

The agency said: "The union leaders orchestrated violent rallies in June and July in Pyeongtaek, hurting 49 policemen and damaging a police bus and other equipment. We are going to file another suit against them for the damage and injuries sustained from 4th-5th August."

Unions have lauded the workers for their heroism in the face of extreme state violence and their refusal to buckle to a company which has been pushing for mass lay-offs.

Support was so high through the country for the occupiers that a general strike was called by the South Korean TUC.

However with the both local and national strikes finished and the occupation ended, there has been bitterness about the outcome.

Demands for job security for 976 workers, which formed the core demand of a workforce facing near-closure by the troubled firm,



have been largely lost, with a much-reduced deal being agreed by union bosses.

Rather than full job security for all, only 48% of jobs will be saved, and the rest of the workforce – undoubtedly numbering those who fought hardest – will be made redundant.

The union also agreed to a salary freeze and reductions in bonuses and benefits as the company looks to find new loans to bring itself out of bankruptcy. Initially, while most of the workforce left as it became clear that the fight was over, 20-30 people remained in the factory.

The conflict grew massively in the initial weeks of the strike, which saw police brutality met with strong responses from strikers and their supporters.

In the streets, riot police savaged solidarity pickets, rushing in with batons and tear gas, only to be met by molotovs and counter-strikes

by seasoned picket line veterans armed with quarterstaves.

At the factory itself, shock troops supported by helicopters attempted to take the Ssangyong facility building by building, rappelling in from choppers and dropping tear gas from above, and playing loud music to deprive the strikers of sleep.

The paint department proved to be the most difficult to take, and police risked serious injury to the workers inside when they dropped tear gas onto the roof, which mixed with other volatile chemicals to produce a highly toxic mixture.

On 4th August, a massive assault involving 2,500 police was launched, eventually crushing the occupation two days later.

It is thought that the two-and-a-half month long action cost the company around £155 million and reduced production by 99%.

Notes from the Unites States

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kids about their homework," he quotes one pilot as saying.

Then there are robots sniffing for IEDs (improvised explosive devices) in the streets of Baghdad, and US combatants on the ground using instruments such as the Raven (barely three feet long) or the even smaller Wasp, which carries a camera the size of a marble.

Even smaller objects are planned – some the size of small insects. And more of them: an air force study notes a 75% increase in combat hours flown by Predators last year.

In a parallel development, the Pentagon is accelerating deployment of a 30,000-pound 'bunker buster' bomb – probably the largest bomb the US will have ever used.

• In the wake of Barack Obama's recent humiliation over police racism, television has not been far behind. Brian Kilmeade, the co-host of *Fox & Friends*, remarked recently

live on the Fox News Channel that inter-culture marriages aren't pure: "We keep marrying other species and other ethnics and other ... the problem is the Swedes have pure genes, because they marry other Swedes, because that's the rule ... Finns marry other Finns, so they have a pure society. In America, we marry everybody."

Around the same time conservative commentator Pat Buchanan made comments on the national MSNBC TV channel during a discussion about Supreme Court nominee Sonia Sotomayor: "White men were 100% of the people that wrote the Constitution, 100% of the people who signed the Declaration of Independence, 100% of the people who died at Gettysburg and Vicksburg, probably close to 100% of the people who died at Normandy. This has been a country built, basically, by white folks."

Louis Further

Freeport McMoran sued over mine

A Papuan tribe has launched a legal bid to recover \$30 billion in damages from one of the world's largest mining companies. The Amungme tribe, a 13,000-strong community living in the forests of West Papua, say that the Freeport McMoran mine in the Grasberg mountains has caused environmental devastation.

Freeport McMoran have already been found to have contaminated rivers in the area with heavy metals, including cobalt and arsenic, but lawyers for the community say this is only the tip of the iceberg, as the company has ravaged the locally-sacred mountains in its hunt for gold and copper.

The suit claims that land had been irreversibly damaged and the tribe has not received pledged development funds. A third of the damages sought are for alleged human rights violations. The company is confident that the case, to be held in Indonesian courts, will fail.

Rome and the G8 way to hell

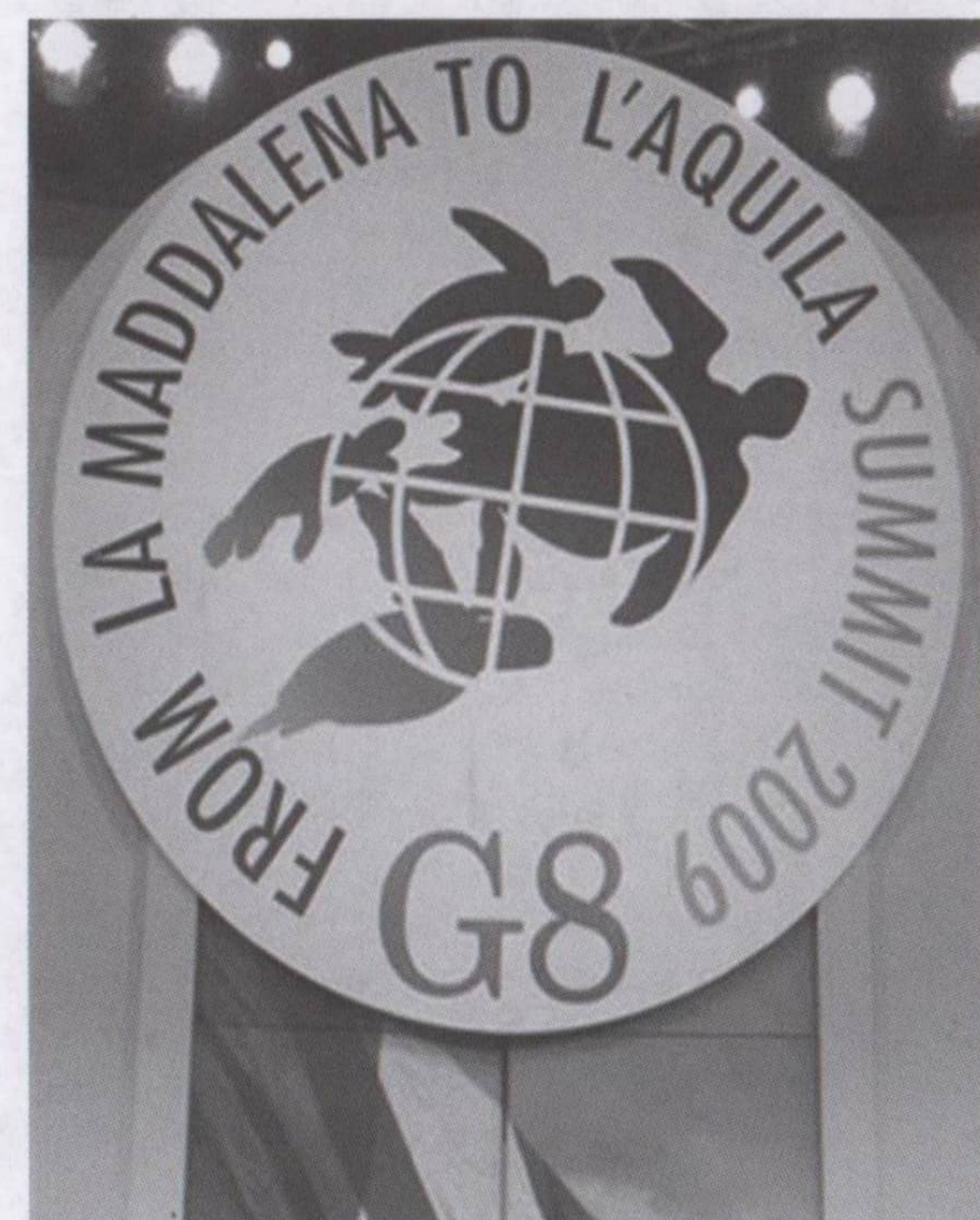
First-time summit protester Clare was disappointed by a lack of action in Italy, as activism there continues to reel from rising fascism

“Let’s say that you were on your way to do some covert, well-planned, semi-legal direct action at a particular animal testing lab, you wouldn’t steal a car to drive to the laboratory would you? Would you even jump the train?” His example was spot on, but I still couldn’t help feeling really frustrated and helpless about the way things were turning out.

When I’d arrived in Rome the week before I was one of the first ‘Internationals’ (activists from other countries) to arrive, and apparently had spoken the magic words when I said I intended to write for the radical press, because the Forte collective had agreed that they would only allow media activists to stay with them during the G8 Summit.

Forte Prenestino is the most thrilling squat I’ve ever stayed in; I actually gawked when I wandered into the cool basement to escape from the heat one afternoon and realised that as well as the sheer size of the place at ground and first floor level, the building possesses hundreds of metres of corridors and countless catacombs and atriums underground.

Built in the fourteenth century, the fortress features on tourist maps and is open to the public during the days and some evenings. The activists there host events and run workshops, a bar and farmers’ market. They go to Palestine and other war torn countries. They do earthquake relief in L’Aquila. They



do a lot, but they didn’t ‘do’ G8 the way I expected, and this was the basis for the debate I was having with my fellow journalist.

Forte Prenestino has been open for 23 years, and along with the semi-commercial Leoncavallo in Milan, it is the most established social centre in Italy.

During the G8 Summit I wanted to see it heaving with heads huddled together and high fives, teeming with tenuous translations and technical points. Instead the organisers put an apologetic notice on the door and the legal advice team’s phone number.

As the full situation became clear it was difficult to accept that there had not been braver preparation for a response over the days of the summit. Internationals, although welcomed to Rome with open arms by Italian activists, often found themselves alternately tearing their hair out and twiddling their thumbs when they weren’t participating in a tepid parade of disgruntlement.

But with Italy currently living under a near-fascist government, given the chilling events of Genova 2001 and Prime Minister Berlusconi’s strategic decision to move the Summit to an earthquake disaster zone only weeks before it was due to take place, the challenge for Italian activists to organise a response to G8 2009 was complex and confusing.

As most alternative spaces across Rome became packed solid with Internationals who had come to participate in the actions against the G8, Italian activists in the city were preoccupied with the pressing issue that under Berlusconi, Romani squats can be and are evicted without warning, justification or legal basis.

Upping the pressure further, on the Monday before the Summit, 21 people across Italy were arrested for actions which had happened more than two months ago, stripping away a number of organisers and forcing other Italian activists to work on prisoner support rather than fight G8 directly.

Italians are also still standing in the shadow of the violence which happened in Genova, for which, eight years on, no police or official has been held to account. This is the ominous knowledge that hangs in the void between local activists and the state at present.

So while the existence of social centres is far more commonly known by the general public in Italy than in the UK, their position and that of the activists who run them is precarious to the degree that they are obliged to choose their battles carefully.

For the Forte, organising a grand mobilisation against the G8 Summit was not worth the risk of forfeiting the work they were doing in their community, in L’Aquila and abroad. When news network Al Jazeera



The interior of Forte Prenestino.

TV came to find out what the Forte had planned, they were told that actions would be localised and decentralised.

The collective instead chose to facilitate an activist media team, holding meetings every evening and accommodating writers, film-makers and photographers. They hired a camper and faithfully followed the anti-G8 events in Rome and L’Aquila.

They maintained close links with Radio OndaRossa, an activist-run radio station that interviewed protestors in different cities and broadcast updates of the demonstrations, occupations and arrests.

Then on the last day of the summit the media team brought the camper to student-saturated Piazza San Lorenzo, and bestowed the hankering crowd with house and breakbeats until past midnight.

Beyond the Forte, daily organised demonstrations around the country had a

spontaneously tried to disrupt the city’s main railway station although they were, of course, promptly arrested. For the love of a good lark, some Brits took to graffiti-tagging ACAB (All Coppers Are Bastards), on a police buggy, and promptly got arrested.

Such well-intended efforts would have benefitted from a strong communication network and better preparation, so it was unfortunate that no group stepped up to the task this year.

It is probably a testament to the movement that most visitors to the city behaved themselves this G8, explaining that it is the Romans who understand the local complexities and from whom direction should come. And the Romans wanted to respect the wishes of the earthquake victims by keeping overtly political action in the capital city rather than in L’Aquila where the Summit was held.

In fact Roman activists have been instrumental in supporting the people of L’Aquila, practically, politically and emotionally since the disaster. On the three-month anniversary of the quake a candlelit vigil was held, and on the last day of the Summit thousands of activists came from Rome to L’Aquila to participate in a parade along the scorched roads of the surrounding area.

A person or a collective only has a finite amount of time and energy and is faced with a unique set of circumstances which inhibit their resistance and defiance.

This was certainly the case for activists in Rome this year, their priorities being equally split between opposing the G8, providing on-going support to the people of L’Aquila and keeping their social centres in tact in the face of ever-widening police powers.

This was what my journalist friend was explaining when he talked of stealing cars to get to demos and it’s a lesson which warrants deliberation on a wider scale.

There will be activists in Canada who have already emptied their diaries of upcoming projects and are squirreling away for the G8’s visit next June. But I also entreat all you armchair alternatives both Canadian and International to take the lead and give the G8 a bravely-prepared and creative welcome next June.

The solution to overcoming the restraints which trap us between the banal and the burn-out must surely be that more people who have never done it before need to organise, host, prepare and co-ordinate. We can learn how as we go along.

Oh and one more thing. I wouldn’t steal a car to get to the scene of an action, but I did meet some amazing Scandinavians in Rome – who had travelled all the way down on immaculately forged InterRail passes.

Go to g8.indymedia.it/italy.org for continuing coverage of the aftermath of the G8 Summit in Italy.

vibrant and purposeful atmosphere, with ‘Tutti Libere!’ (Freedom for All) quickly becoming the predominant mantra.

Many of the loudspeaker narratives were centred around the introduction in June of a law which incriminates immigrants and gives new permissions for civil control.

Anyone housing ‘illegal’ immigrants now lives under the threat of a three-year prison sentence, while immigrants themselves face fines and a uniformed far-right paramilitary force, the Italian National Guard, which has been given official powers to police the Act.

Students from two of Rome’s three universities arranged demonstrations and occupied their institutions as well as residential buildings, in defiance of dwindling financial support and increased privatisation of the country’s educational institutions. Road blocks were set up and met with violent police action.

Although the numbers this year were significantly smaller than at previous G8 mobilisations, those who came to the streets were motivated and keen to cause disruption to the Summit, had there been the instruction.

One particularly frustrating example was that when details of the First Ladies Luncheon were mentioned in the mainstream media it was not translated into a call-out to go to the location, thus an opportunity to react was wasted.

Perhaps it’s only the tactically-naïve who would be compelled to respond to this sort of information, but I suspect that many activists who spent the afternoon milling about wondering what was going on would have valued the tip.

Despite the absence of a coherent plan to counter the G8 in Rome, autonomous actions did occur: Internationals

COMMENT

ABOUT FREEDOM

ANGEL ALLEY

Since we never got round to a spring clean, we will be having a summer one on the weekend of 5th and 6th September. The plan is to have a general clear out and scrub down on the Saturday, followed by some redecorating on the Sunday. Action on both days will commence at 12 noon and will be followed by social activity in the evening. Anyone interested in helping will be most welcome and there will be a prize of a copy of *Mutual Aid* for the Comrade who sweeps hardest.

The new *Squatters Handbook* has been flying off the shelves helping shop sales to rise by 95% on July last year.

Thanks to Donald, *The Wildcat ABC of Bosses* has just been reprinted and is available from the shop or via mail order post free (as are all our books) for the mere snip of £3.

We also take the opportunity to thank Erin and Zoska for their hard work as shop volunteers and wish them well on their respective expeditions round the planet.

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NEXT ISSUE

The next issue will be dated 29th August 2009 and the last day to get copy to us for that issue will be Thursday 20th August. 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

While we anarchists might have a lot of qualms about citizenship as an idea, it remains something that most of us can't avoid. We are all citizens of somewhere. It stands to reason that some of us might want to change where, which is why some migrants opt to go for citizenship of their new home.

Gaining citizenship in itself can be problematic for individuals and many have to seriously bite their tongues. Many countries, this one included, require an oath of loyalty to the government or monarch. When Australia had the oath to the Queen, I knew a lot of people there who decided not to go for citizenship.

I generally think citizenship ought to be a choice for the individual, but I'm not that keen on making things harder for people. Of course, I'm not the government and don't have daft ideas designed to appeal to the *Daily Mail* and people who vote BNP. The latest wheeze for the government on citizenship, from another lifetime politician, Phil Woolas, is that citizenship should be 'earned' by gaining or losing 'points'.

The idea that the State might choose who can become a citizen comes as no surprise. It obviously wants productive, obedient citizens who don't question things. This is where Labour's ideas get into sinister territory. Points will be gained for contributing to society, including canvassing for political parties! Presumably only the mainstream parties are acceptable – I can't quite see that working for the BNP or Socialist Workers Party will count.

Points will be lost for behaviour that is not in accordance with British values. The example used is demonstrating against the return of troops from Iraq or Afghanistan. There are gaping problems with this argument – most of the people who did demonstrate against a returning troops parade

in Luton were born here and are British citizens, even if they don't identify as British.

Apart from not criticising soldiers who've been abroad killing and being killed, Woolas is light on definitions of what constitutes a 'British value'. He was fairly explicit that demonstrating against the war is not a British value and that migrants who wanted to become citizens would have to curtail their free speech. Presumably once they've passed the test and shaken the Mayor's hand, they can criticise British foreign policy. Until then, mum's the word.

Of course, 'British values' are a contested idea. The *Daily Telegraph* holds that statutory patriotism is an "intrinsically un-British notion". The *Telegraph* also sought to define them, in terms that include no one being above the law, not even the government, and the sovereignty of British political institutions over other religious or political ones – a barb aimed at Muslims, Catholics and the EU. Others on the liberal left would point to tolerance and trade unions.

But what other British values might potential new Britons emulate? Invading countries at the behest of a religious nutcase in search of non-existent weapons of mass destruction? Fighting in the courts to stop victims of that conflict, including those on your own side, from getting compensation? Recalling an ambassador after he expresses disquiet about the regime he's posted to boiling people alive, just because they happen to be an ally in the 'War on Terror'? Fiddling your expenses, perhaps, or is that reserved for politicians and journalists?

It used to be that going on strike was a British value – perhaps it can become one again? Though the UK Border Agency's eagerness to deport cleaners who organise and fight for their rights suggests the government don't see it that way.



LETTERS AND COMMENT

Future of Freedom

Concerning the future of *Freedom*, I'd much prefer it to remain fortnightly (or more) and news-oriented because I think that stands a much better chance of engaging potential sympathisers than any of the past few decades-worth of earnest monthlies (no disrespect to any of them, but...).

Of course if the present production team can't continue on the current basis without burning out, then so be it – make the change – but even then the aspiration should still be to publish more frequently (onward to the daily). If it has to go monthly, sure, make the best of it even if it's far from ideal. But keep the news focus. The news coverage is always out of date only because distribution is so very slow (my subscription copy is usually well over two weeks late arriving). Again, those involved do their best, but there aren't enough of them. As before, the fact that more people won't get involved is, to me, indisputable evidence of the movement's weakness – and should be acknowledged as such. Ditto if the cost of the present regime is another problem. So, for that matter, is the redundancy of so many separate magazines produced by national organisations (again, no disrespect intended) – which to my mind could pretty effortlessly be condensed into a few pages of a single publication (given the necessary magnanimity – and, of course, person-power). But that's another issue entirely...

Tom Jennings

The anarcha-feminist intervention

A radical and widely supported anarcha-feminist intervention has gone down in the *Freedom* newspaper (6th June 2009) as a mere interruption whose acceptance is attributed solely to the good humour and paternalism of the movement. This clearly disregards all those at the conference who showed solidarity and support for the action, not only on the No Pretence blog and on Indymedia, but through the debates, call-outs and meetings which have emerged within our autonomous spaces and groups as a result of it. In a style dangerously similar to that of the corporate media, the author of the article halves the number of protesters, and misrepresents, misunderstands and underestimates the objectives and effects of the action.

It seems clear that No Pretence did not refuse to engage with the planning process, but merely opted for a different and perhaps more effective approach in order to raise the issue of gender inequality. It is anyway naïve to assume that engagement is always preferable, after all we engage every day on the issue of sexism at home, in the street, in the pub – often to little effect. It is not the job of anarcha-feminists to channel their challenges through conference planning processes – to ensure conferences deal with gender by filling their organising committees with women or by making constructive manuals for

participants and organisers on how to stop being sexist. We can't expect other people to think and fight for us, we must think and fight for ourselves, and resist collectively.

What is most 'disquieting' about the article is the authoritarianism inherent in the assumption that any interruption to the conference is 'expected to be challenged', rather than critically engaged with or even celebrated! The fertile ground created by the action has clearly not been recognised. In its place, we find a worryingly liberal analysis of the No Pretence intervention as an act on the part of a smaller antagonistic group tolerated by a larger dominant movement, and in which all the possible effects and productive results of the action are instantly confined to one person's opinion or political vision. We expect more from a paper that calls itself *Freedom*.

Sisters Act, No Pretence

The pain of taxes

The *Daily Mail* (27th July 2009) got itself into a little bit of a frenzy recently when it reported that David Cameron suggested that "the better-off must share the pain of repairing public finances" and so "tax credits for households on £50,000 a year or more could no longer be justified". This would mean 130,000 families losing an average £500 a year. Cameron is quoted as saying that "we've got to be able to demonstrate to people that this is fair and seen to be fair and that everyone is putting their shoulder to the wheel" and "that means the wealthy have to pay their fair share".

This was presented as a 'tax raid' on the middle classes by the *Mail*, as "part of an honest and frank conversation about balancing the books 'elements' of middle-class welfare payments would have to be re-examined". The first step would be to "rein in tax credits by axing payments to middle-income families" and disqualifying a household for child tax credit if its income is below £58,000 (or £66,000 with a child less than a year old).

While the gnashing of teeth by the *Daily Mail* is to be expected, what is perhaps less obvious is the sheer gall of their protest. This is because, in the highly unequal society produced by 30 years of Thatcherism, earning over £50,000 does not make you 'middle-

class' or a 'middle-income' family. It puts you squarely in the top 5% of the population in terms of income. Yes, really, according to the *Daily Mail* the bottom-end of the top 5% is the middle!

Here are so facts about neo-liberal Britain the likes of the *Daily Mail* fail to mention. In terms of number of taxpayers, there are 1,680,000 earning over £50,000 a year. There are 28,590,000 under that amount so just under 6% of taxpayers earn more than Cameron's suggested cut-off point. The median (50th percentile point) of taxed income is £16,400, for the 90th percentile point it is £39,000 and for the 95th it is £52,400. Median earnings for employees in 2007 were £19,943 per year while mean earnings were just £24,908. The 90th percentile earned £42,902. In terms of Annual Net Household income, the 95th percentile of households has £50,000 (the 99th has £75,000). To be in the top 25% of wealth holders, you need to have \$76,098 and they hold 72% of total UK wealth. The top 1% has 21% of the total, the top 5%, 53%.

It is a strange world to inhabit when a suggested policy which will affect well under 10% of a population is considered an attack on the 'middle-class'. In a way, this is to be expected given that neo-liberalism makes the rich richer and squeezes the middle (and crushes the bottom) in order to do so. It would be too much to expect those, like the *Daily Mail*, who wholeheartedly supported Thatcherism to acknowledge the results of that onslaught on the British people – including the very 'middle-classes' whose one goal seems to be to emigrate to continental Europe to escape the effects of what they voted for repeatedly since 1979...

But, luckily for the readers of the *Daily Mail*, 1997 is year zero and New Labour are a socialist party who are definitely have been not implementing Thatcherite policies for the last 12 years. And, of course, the solution to 'Rip-off Britain' is to vote for the Tories who promise exactly the same neo-liberal policies as Thatcher did in 1979...

What could possibly go wrong? Luckily the readers of the *Daily Mail* have the EU, foreigners, single mothers, 'benefit scroungers' (for those unemployed before the credit crunch, of course), trade unionists and a host of others to blame for their current and future situation...

Iain McKay

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GETTING ACTIVE

PRISON NEWS

It looks like the global financial crisis is hitting prison budgets everywhere hard. Against a worldwide backdrop of ever increasing prison populations the need to find financial savings is an ever-present problem.

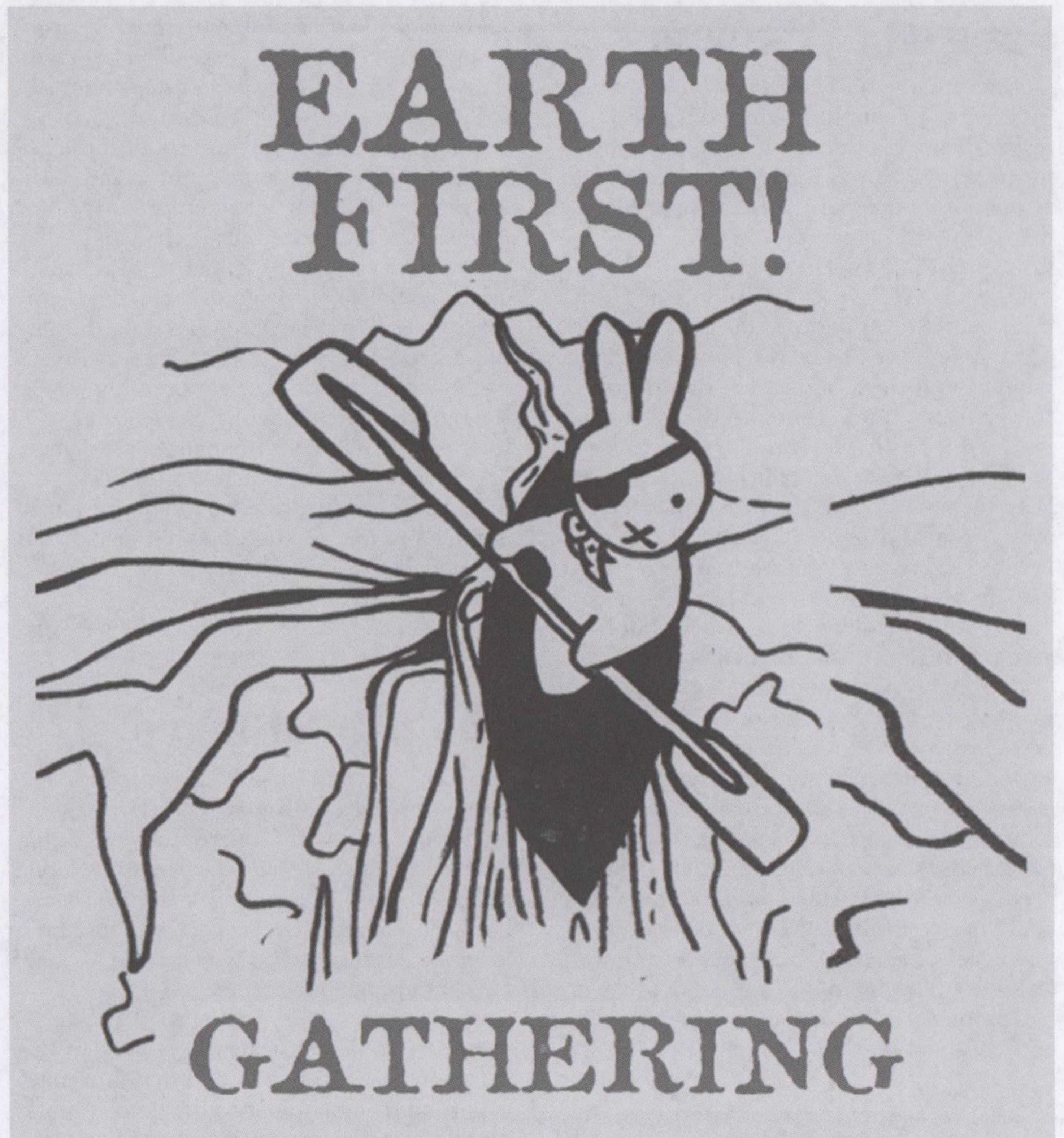
In the UK both Labour and the Tories are planning for increases in the prison population in England and Wales to 96,000 and 100,000 respectively in the next four to five years. And they plan to finance this via PFI agreements with the private sector for both their new-build prisons and for the older prisons they are putting out to 'competition'. Despite the fact that currently new PFI project numbers are at their lowest since 1997, both parties still see this as their best option for coping with their policy of locking ever more people up. It also has the added benefit of removing the increased financial burden from the public purse in the short-term, as well as provide the sort of massive profits for their friends in private industry, as illustrated by the HMP Altcourse debacle.*

Other governments are also seeking to offload costly public prisons to the private sector. New Zealand is seeking to pass legislation to allow its first privatised prisons. In Australia, the New South Wales state government are continuing to try to sell off some of its 28 state-run prisons, despite a number of recent defeats for similar proposals. In Arizona they are seriously considering selling off their maximum-security facilities, including the state's death row, to private companies.

Some states are pursuing a different route to cut their budgets. In Latvia the Prison Administration doesn't even have enough money to pay basic utility bills, so the government's tough new budget cuts mean that some prisons are being merged or even shutdown amid spiralling costs.

In the US, where prison privatisation has actually led to an increased drain on state finances rather than the savings that the industry promised, prisons are also closing. In Michigan three state prisons and five prison camps are being closed to save \$120 million. Illinois is laying-off 1,000 prison employees and Oklahoma deporting 'illegal' immigrant prisoners after serving just a third of their sentences ostensibly to save taxpayers' money.

* Profits from HMP Altcourse in Fazakerley, Liverpool (run by G4S), the first prison to be built under the private finance initiative in 1997, were so enormous that the companies building it recovered all their costs in less than two years. This has left them with 23 years of pure profit from the construction, plus extra profits to come from the running of the £247m prison for 600 local inmates.



● A new grassroots initiative has emerged in the wake of Home Office plans to build 10,500 more prison spaces by 2014. Called **Communities of Resistance (CoRe)**, it seeks to oppose prison expansion in Britain, and forms part of an international movement that believes prisons are not a solution to social harms, but part of the problem. It has a long-term aim of building a broad-based movement to end the violence of incarceration which includes developing effective, community-based solutions to social problems that do not rely on models of imprisonment. They will also help people to organise, inform others, share skills and gain support in struggles against imprisonment. To get involved email communities.of.resistance@gmail.com or see co-re.org

● Penrith in the heart of the Cumbrian countryside is the location for his years **Earth First! (EF!) Summer Gathering** between 18th and 24th August. It promises to be bigger, with more activities, workshops, direct action training and campaign networking than previous years, focussing on info and planning for actions, and the widening ecological, economic and societal crises, especially in the light of the Vestas occupation and G20 climate action. EF! continues to be a network of people and campaigns fighting ecological destruction and the forces driving it, committed to the concept of people doing it themselves rather than relying on governments or industry.

For information see www.earthfirstgathering.org.uk, or email summergathering@earthfirst.org.uk

● Beginning of August saw the launch of a **Northern Indymedia** (aka IMC Northern England). Incorporating the IMC's of Leeds, Bradford and York it is now one of the many established global network of web-based media centres offering independent, non-corporate news coverage. It seeks to report news of political events in the region, accessible to all those involved in struggles against capitalism. See <http://northern-indymedia.org/>

● The second **Liverpool Working Class Music Festival** has issued the line up for its up and coming four day festival this September. Started in 2008 as part of Liverpool's year as the European Capital of Culture, this year's event – the only one of its kind in Europe – is to coincide with the TUC Conference which is also taking place in the city. It brings together the best radical and subversive songwriters in the country to promote songs of struggle, protest and social justice, as well as songs that tell our story. Chumbawamba will be headlining supported by the likes of folk luminaries Leon Rosselson and Robb Johnson and legendary spoken word poet Attila The Stockbroker along with Bob Marley and Clash tribute acts. Full line up can be found at <http://www.workingclassmusic.org.uk/>

Europe's largest arms fair

DSEi (Defence Systems & Equipment international) returns to the ExCel from 8th to 11th September, and already actions have started against it.

Disarm DSEi and friends have come up with a map of where all the UK exhibitors have their headquarters, etc. Many different people are planning lots of different stuff. Disarm DSEi is specifically calling on folk to make it seriously hard for the exhibitors to get their weapons of destruction to London, and inviting everyone to get together Tuesday 8th September to visit the banks and other investors and let them know what we think of them. From Barclays Bank with almost £140 million, to the relative small beer of Royal Bank of Scotland's £36.38 million, you can count on the High Street banks to be wading in blood. Then there's the investment companies, from AXA's £466 million and Legal & General's £2,994 million, down to Schroeders £834 million and F&C Investment's not even £400 million (quite).

From 2001 to 2007 we've been at the ExCel exhibition centre in London's Docklands, giving the arms dealers grief. The investors have stayed in the shadows, raking their blood money in. This time we're going to them

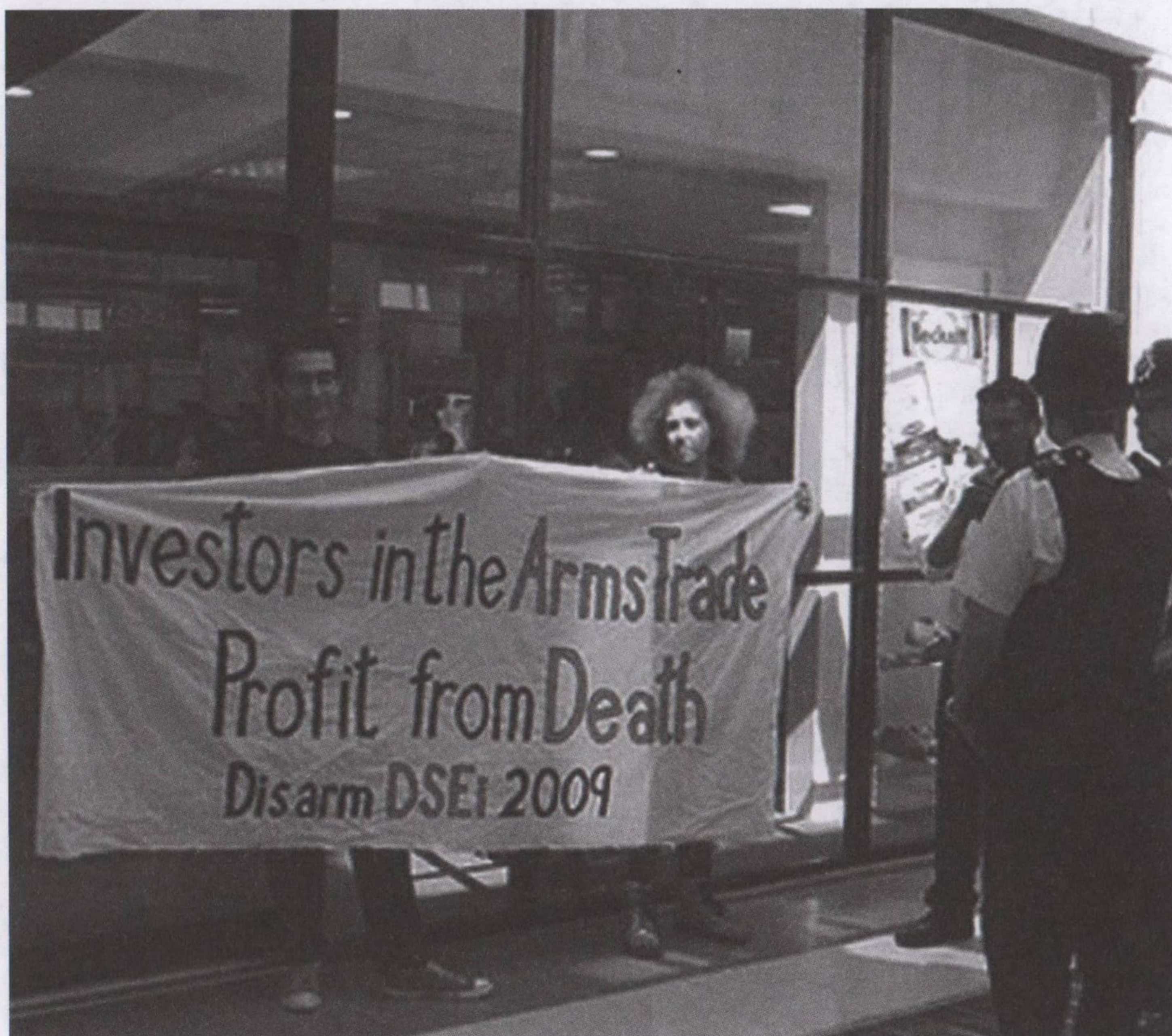
So what's DSEi got to do with anarchists...

... or even Climate activists, come to that. Isn't it just an issue for pacifists and the confused?

Imagine that you live in the Niger Delta. Your tribal leaders (?) have been hanged for complaining about Shell's destruction of the local water table – well, the local environment generally in fact. The Nigerian Army are basically death squads for the oil companies.

So you're fed up with the failures of non-violence. Get me an arms dealer, you cry. Bad mistake. The arms dealer is a capitalist. He wants something back. What've you got? Well, there's the oil Shell's running off with. So you blow holes in the pipeline and flog the 'liberated' oil to dodgy tankers, and then lots of said 'liberated' oil spills everywhere, causing even more pollution. Now you probably get blamed for everything. You're looking a lot like a bunch of gangsters, and it's all turning to shit!

Hard to say how many 'proxy wars' – for example in, say, Africa – started as struggles



for freedom and dignity. But however you start, if you buy guns, you've got to pay for them. Diamonds, rainforest hardwood, that rare stuff that's crucial for computers, oil, opium and cocaine – whatever. Corruption is inevitable (the only corruption-free option is taking them directly off your oppressors).

Meanwhile, 25% of all air pollution is caused by the world's armed forces. The Pentagon is the world's largest oil consumer and generates more toxins annually than the top five chemical companies combined. In addition to that, 30% of the world's production of aluminium, with the huge damage it causes, is used by the arms trade.

Meanwhile the UK government and military science park at Porton Down abused more than 21,000 animals in 2006, an increase of 76% from 2000.

DSEi may be the 'respectable' face of the arms trade. The UK government selects sort of okay countries to invite. DSEi invites the others, and the cops protect them all. Everything from battleships to hand grenades will be for sale. Mind you, pretty much every DSEi some exhibitor gets thrown out very publicly for flogging something even the government doesn't like – often cluster bombs. Does that make it all right? Every weapon carried by a child soldier in Africa could have been bought via DSEi. And anyway, what you can't buy there you'll certainly

meet a man who knows a man who will flog it to you.

Some 1,352 exhibitors from forty different countries – that's an awesome number – and the permanent members of the Security Council will all be there, flogging and buying. The UK is the world's fourth largest arms seller, and if the buying country won't/can't pay, then the UK taxpayer coughs up through 'Export Credit Guarantees'.

But there's no arms trade without investors, keeping a low profile, investing millions, making a massive profit. Banks, whether or not being bailed out by the taxpayer, are responsible for the wave of evictions of homeowners who can't pay their mortgages. They don't lift a finger for those struggling against bankruptcy and who are being driven to loan sharks, but are more than happy to pour money into a trade that kills countless numbers and that is directly responsible for genocidal wars, child soldiers, rape-murder, and indeed rape, as a weapon to destroy communities.

As the British government encourages and protects the trade that does this, it locks up those who flee here to escape the results. Yarl's Wood and other concentration camps – sorry, detention centres – are crowded with ordinary people who have fled violence and torture that has been made possible by companies across the UK – and events like DSEi. Enough said – it's time for action. Check out www.dsei.org for more.

REVIEWS

WHAT'S ON

AUGUST

17th Screening of *The Angole 3: Black Panthers and the Last Slave Plantation*, narrated by Mumia Abu-Jamal with interviews of former Panthers, political prisoners and revolutionaries, at 7.30pm at Pogo Café, 76 Clarence Road, London E5 8HB, call 020 8533 1214 or see pogocafe.co.uk for details.

18th to 24th Earth First! Summer Gathering in Penrith, Cumbria – ecological direct action without compromise, with workshops, skill sharing and planning action, plus low-impact living without leaders – for more details see <http://earthfirst.org.uk> or email summergathering@earthfirst.org.uk

22nd Violent London: 2,000 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 details.

26th to 2nd September Climate Camp 2009, at a location in London, for more see climatecamp.org.uk.

27th to 1st September The Children's Revolution march to Parliament to close down the British political and economic system and save the human race – action by children of the eco-warriors from the 1990s road protests, see <http://sites.google.com/site/thechildrensrevolution>.

29th A historical walk through the radical Jewish East End with David Rosenberg, for more information see housmans.com or email nik@housmans.com.

31st Screening of *No Comment*, a film about the refugee camps of Calais, 7.30pm at Pogo Café, 76 Clarence Road, London E5 8HB, for details call 020 8533 1214 or see pogocafe.co.uk.

31st Bristol bookfair benefit at The Croft, 117-119 Stokes Croft, Bristol BS1 3RW with the Usual Suspects, Spanner, Headjam and more from 7pm, see geocities.com/bastardsquadcollective/home.html

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.

5th Reclaim the Future 5 (RTF5), vast party event somewhere in London from 12 noon until 7am, see rts.gn.apc.org or email reclaiminfo@yahoo.co.uk for details.

7th Screening of *Comrades*, a Bill Douglas film about the Tolpuddle Martyrs, at 7.30pm at Pogo Café, 76 Clarence Road, London E5 8HB, call 020 8533 1214 or see pogocafe.co.uk for details.

12th Bristol Anarchist Bookfair with workshops, stalls, films, café and more at The Island, Bridewell Street, Bristol BS1 2PY from 10am until 6pm, see bristolanarchistbookfair.org for more.

MUSIC

Speech Therapy
by Speech Debelle

This debut from the South London MC was nearly a decade in gestation, with a host of familiar ghetto complications, and – as she disarmingly acknowledges – personal immaturities, getting in the way. So if *Speech Therapy* is a pretty condensed diary of overcoming unpromising (to say the least) circumstances, it's remarkably self-aware and articulate – and thankfully immune from the self-pitying self-indulgence and naff bootstrap-and-bling self-commodification that commercial rap and R&B traditionally frogmarch sassy women into. We'll have to wait and see whether the album's success prompts Speech Debelle to cross the Atlantic when future doors here to superior female artistry close – witness Monie Love, Phoebe One, Floetry, Lady Sovereign, Estelle; whereas after *The Butterfly Effect* (2006), the superb C-Mone simply disappeared off national radar. But for now her frank, intelligent chronicles of struggling to survive the gamut of urban malaise – from family breakdown, homelessness, pennilessness and hopelessness to the lures of criminal anti-sociality – confirm the narcissistic adolescent irrelevance of most Britpop contemporaries.

Angst, Ridden

The distinctiveness of this accomplished first album has already propelled it to Mercury Prize nomination, despite embarrassingly overblown comparisons with Lauryn Hill. What might help it win is the production by Wayne Lotek – best known for the expert reggae-lite revisionism of Lotek Hi-Fi's *Mixed Blessings* (2005) – whose breezy acoustic backdrops and jazz-inflected flourishes complement warm vocal textures themselves belying heart-rending honest lyricism. But while such sonics doubtless appeal to the vacuous indie-loving British industry punditry favouring faux-emotional superficiality, to my mind they rather anaesthetise the visceral engagement this MC deserves. Nevertheless, even without beats to match its heart and guts, *Speech Therapy* is particularly enjoyable because personal tribulations consistently merge into context, effortlessly seasoning biographical



rumination with social insight. Better still, neither are touted as any big deal, countering rap's routine egomania with genuine wisdom courtesy of the school of hard knocks – “I don't need no boastie words or complicated flows” (‘Finish This Album’), and “I been hurt, and it's not an excuse but it's a reason” (title track). Then, more substantive yet equally understated rhetoric is all the more persuasive, as in ‘Wheels In Motion’ (featuring Big Dada labelmate Roots Manuva): “They told me I'll never make it, too smart for my own good / I get rude when they use their authority to abuse / I'm born to prove that rules were made for the obedience of fools / ... Yeah, I see the way they pronounce the nouns / And listen to the way the vowels sound / Subliminal messages are allowed and executed by executives / Who throw pennies to beggars at London Bridge – them is hypocrites/ ... The working class keep the system moving but seem to be systematically losing / Given no choices, who can be choosing? / They say use your vote, but I've looked at the parties and I've looked around / So if I vote for a choice, will my vote count?”

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QUIZ ANSWERS

1. Henry Ford. He bought it in 1918 and turned it into a major disseminator of anti-semitism.
2. A plot by elements of big business in the US to foment a coup against Roosevelt and install a fascist government.
3. Pier Paolo Pasolini's father, Carlo Alberto, was an Italian army officer who stopped and detained 15 year old anarchist, Anteo Zamboni, in Bologna after he tried to shoot the dictator. Nearby fascists killed Zamboni.
4. An un-named aide called them the “reality-based community”. The aide, speaking to journalist Ron Suskind, went on “We're an empire now, and when we act, we create our own reality. And while you're studying that reality – judiciously, as you will – we'll act again, creating other new realities, which you can study too, and that's how things will sort out. We're history's actors ... and you, all of you, will be left to just study what we do.”

The dark side of humanity

Dee assess the life's work of Jan Švankmajer

"The time when a system falls apart is the best. Pre-revolution, wonderful; after revolution, the shit!" Jan Švankmajer (2001)

Described variously as a 'militant surrealist', an 'artist of subversion and necessary opposition' and a 'crafty alchemist', Jan Švankmajer is considered one of the foremost surrealist artists within Europe. His animations have influenced other filmmakers such as the Quay Brothers, Terry Gilliam and Tim Burton, and the dark, disturbing but blackly humorous films and shorts he is noted for stand as a refreshing opposition to the pastel 'happiness' in much animation. Instead, as Paul Wells argues, Švankmajer is using animation to "to invalidate common assumptions and beliefs which have been historically/politically constructed". In particular, his focus on the surface of socially expected behaviours offers satirical critiques on mindless consumerism – the system that is now falling apart.

Born in 1934 in Prague, Švankmajer has spent his entire career working in the city and witnessing the changing cultural impact of political movements. From the Stalinist control over everyday life, through the Prague Spring and the repression that followed, Švankmajer has critiqued all aspects of life, whether sexual, political or cultural.

In this he is following a longstanding tradition of subversion within Czech culture, most obviously in the nightmarish suppressions envisioned by Kafka, vividly expressed in Švankmajer's short film *The Flat* (1968) where an unknown man faces imprisonment in a hostile room, where all elements conspire against his needs. Stones run from the tap, water gushes from the stove, an automated fist knocks him out when he attempts to see outside the room. In the end, defeated and battered, he meekly signs his name – Josef – alongside those who have been incarcerated before.

In this Švankmajer was not only paying homage to an influential writer whose works had been lauded in the brief period of creative



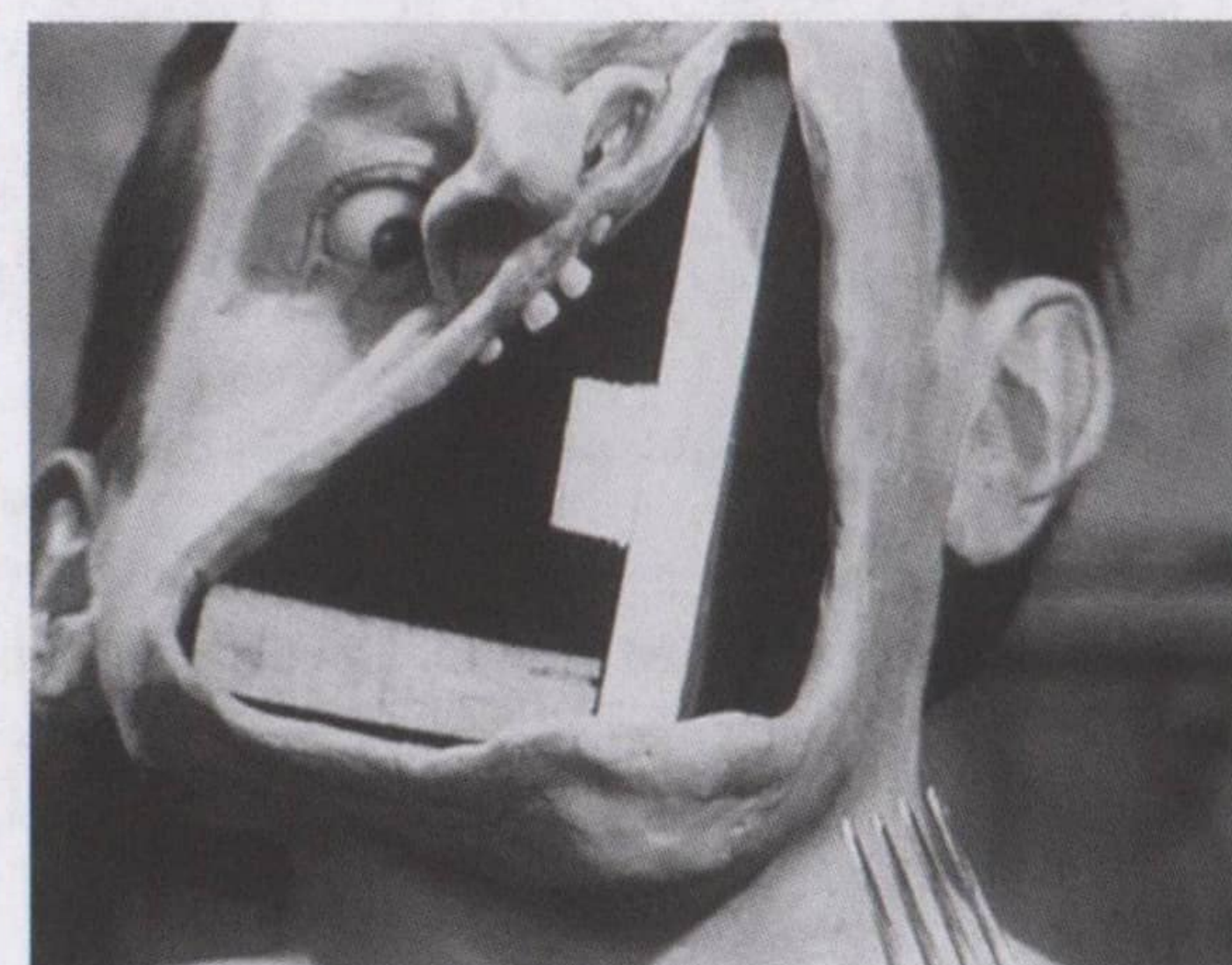
Pictured above, *Dimensions of Dialogue*; below left, *Faust* (1994); below right, *Food*.

freedom during the Prague Spring, but critiquing the repression that he and fellow artists, writers and speakers faced from Soviet repression. His own comments on his work from this period highlight how audiences sought works that offered any critique of the regime. In an interview for *The Context* in 2001, he notes: "Many of my films of the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s were banned, simply because people interpreted them to themselves as a political statement. They were laughing against the situation they were living in."

Despite the repression he faced, Švankmajer rejected targeting individuals and situations (in the manner used by dissident writers of the 1970s and 1980s) as alien to his approach to discussing society – the problem was more widespread: "I thought, surely even this totalitarian regime is only a boil on the face of civilisation. Surely a civilisation which has in one century produced two such terrible things as Stalinism and Fascism must be deeply sick within. The rot must be in the veins, inside the civilisation."

However, Švankmajer has made particular political references within his works, though it can be argued that given the freedom from repression following the fall of the Soviet state he felt the need for catharsis, before moving on to consider the future. His most overtly political short piece, *The Death of Stalinism in Bohemia* (1990), explicitly subtitled 'A Work of Agitprop', briefly portrays the various political leaders and periods of repression in Czech history post Second World War – with a statue of Stalin giving birth to the leaders who came after. Stalinist propaganda is mixed with pornographic woodcuts, skulls that eat away

the politicians, and a sequence decrying the sentencing of dissidents (notably Rudolf Slansky) and the victimisation of workers and individuals. The images of the clay workers assembled on a production line is haunting, as they are created, measured, take to their own feet – only to be hanged and reduced to a heap of clay in a bucket, to be used to produce more workers.



In his other work, while he does not espouse a particular political affiliation, it is clear that the all-consuming nature of capitalism rouses his bitterest critiques. Švankmajer's dedication to exploring the meaning behind bourgeois behaviours has inspired the entirety of his work, from *Dimensions of Dialogue* (1982) where all interactions lead to an eventual reduction to clay, *Virile Games* (1988) where the violence from a football game spills into the apartment of the beer swilling viewer, and most evidently in *Food* (1992) where differing people consume themselves, each other and the surroundings in an attempt to satisfy appetites

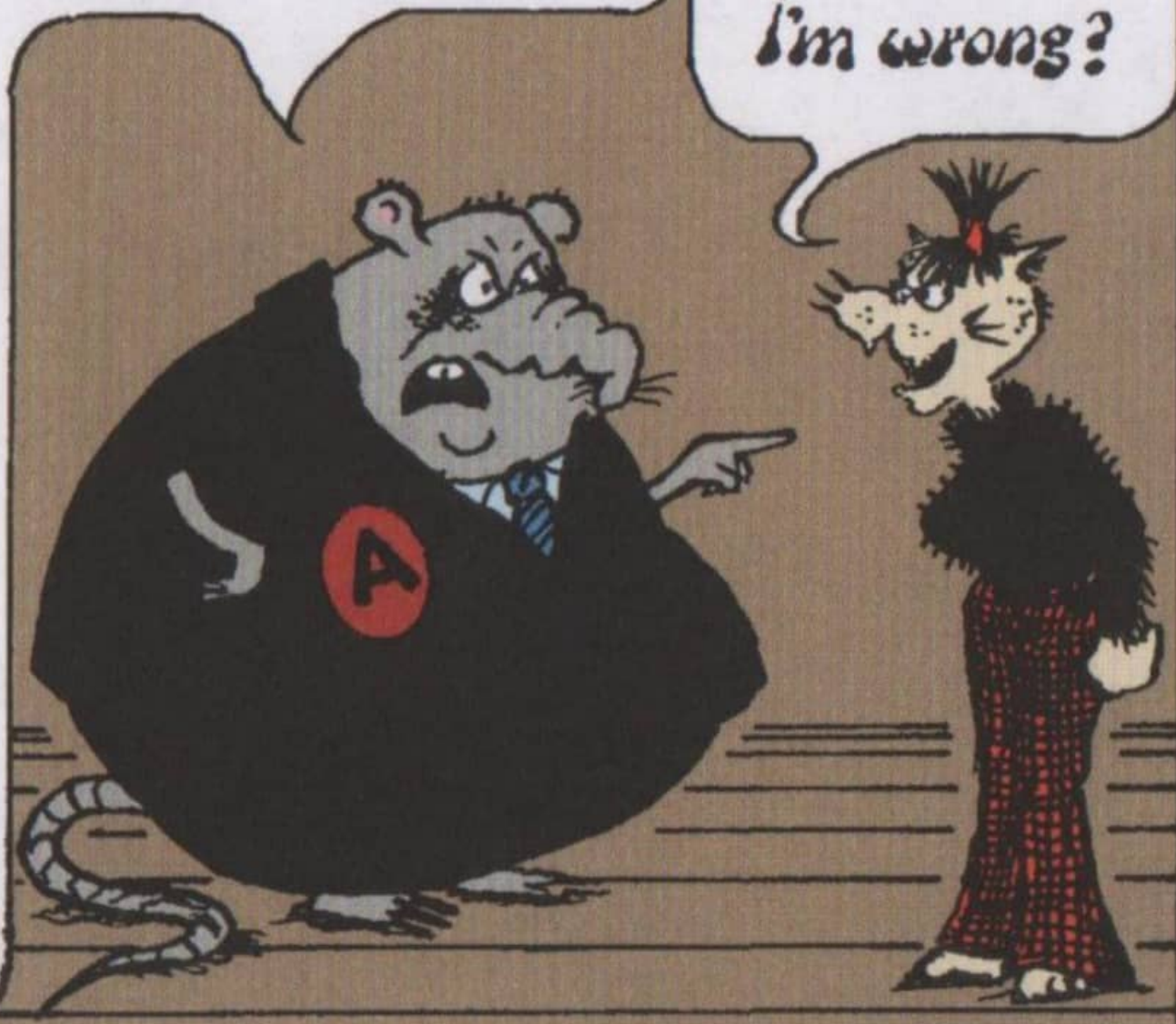
WILDCAT

If you're in favour of (tick all that apply)

- meat-eating
- veganism
- technology
- biotechnology
- allopathy
- quackery
- violence
- pacifism
- religion
- selfishness
- Stirnerism
- Marxism
- individualism
- workerism
- other (write in)

you're **WRONG !!**

What makes you think I'm wrong?



It's a gut feeling

Please don't think with your gut.

Diverting your gut from its proper function might be a cause of indigestion.



Your basic mindset is **morally** wrong.

I won't demean myself by talking to you !!



A demonstration of Argument by Intimidation



Review

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that can never be sated, and are only prolonged by their behaviours.

In his full-length film *Little Otik* (2000) the use of a traditional Czech fairytale is only a surface narrative compared to Švankmajer's searing critique of expected social roles. A woman, desperate for a child fixates on a tree root, her husband presents. In turn, her consuming desires create a childlike tree-monster who proceeds to develop an appetite for everything ... including his parents. For Švankmajer, *Otik* is an obvious parallel for our civilization, which he expressed in an interview with Jason Wood, it "feels the need to devour everything: ethnic groups, cultures". This critique extends to his most

recent work *Lunacy* (2005), where the methods used to run an asylum are the same applied to society, or as Švankmajer terms it, the "madhouse we live in today".

Given the current uncertainty over economic conditions, injustice and surveillance, Švankmajer may well find his work taking on significance for a new generation, as it did for audiences in the 1960s. In his refusal to target specific situations or personalities, Švankmajer has ensured that the validity of his criticisms span different social and historical spaces. As he himself put it in an interview with Wendy Jackson, his efforts are: "Not to just concentrate on the very surface of political activity. So, just because the political situation changed in Czechoslovakia, doesn't mean that the universe or civilisation

changed at the same time. As far as I was concerned, there was no reason to change my enemy. It will always be the same."

THE QUIZ

1. Who published *The Dearborn Independent* and what was it notorious for?
2. What was the Business Plot in 1933/4?
3. Which Communist film maker's father saved Mussolini from an anarchist's bullet?
4. What disparaging term was used by the Bush White House to describe people who "believe that solutions emerge from ... judicious study of discernible reality"?

Answers on page 14

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