

# BATTLE FOR CLIMATE ACTION

## This year's Climate Camp comes out fighting

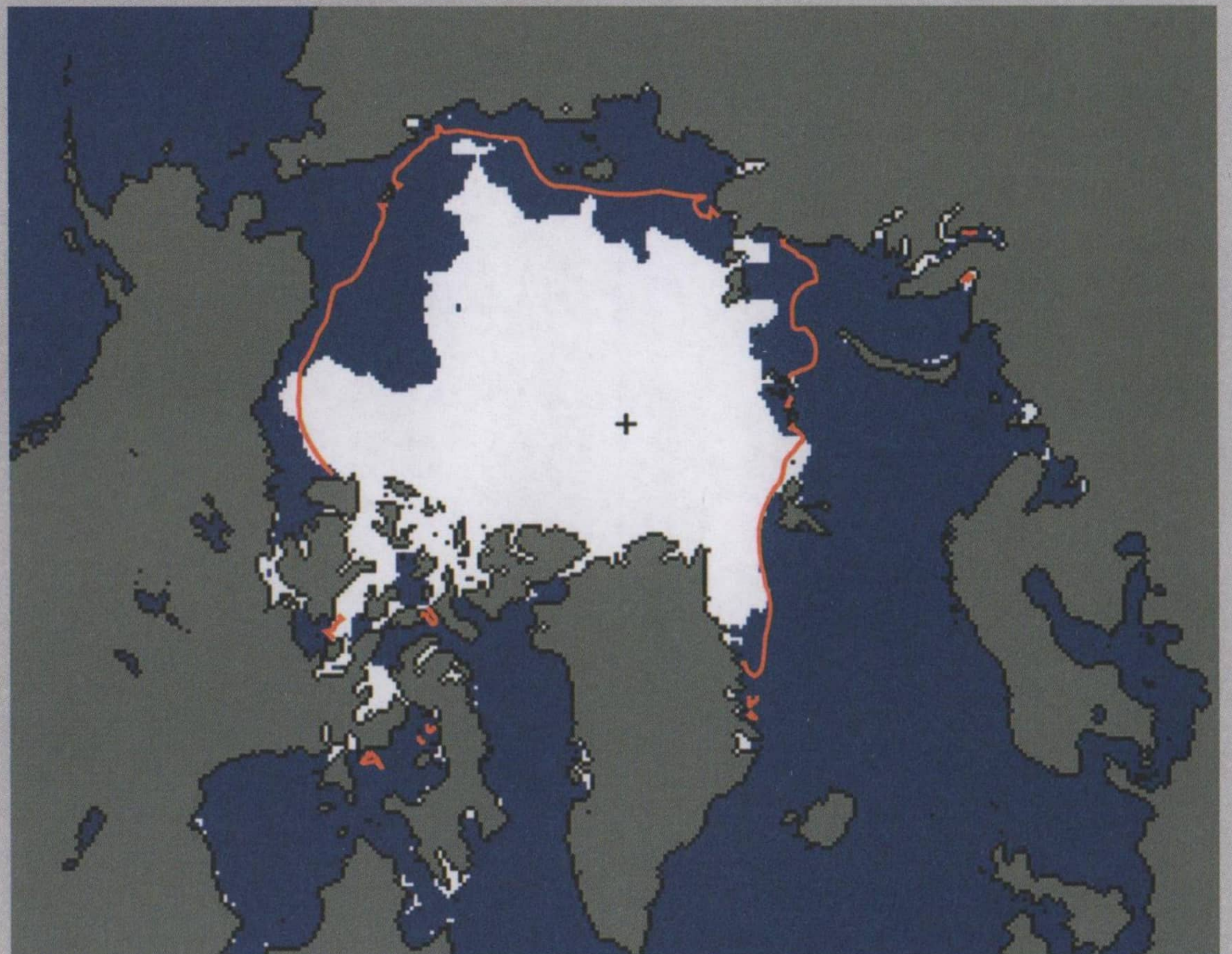
Environmental activists, eco-warriors, anarchists, leftists, green pressure groups and campaigners against climate change of all descriptions, from ex-Vestas occupiers to indigenous representatives from Canada's First Nations, are gearing themselves up for an August bank holiday weekend of activities, discussions and protests to highlight the need for urgent action on the issues and causes of climate change.

Thousands of people from all over the country are expected to converge at a secret location somewhere in London within the perimeter of the M25 motorway squatted specifically for the event.

Previous Climate Camps have targeted coal-fired power stations and Heathrow airport as areas campaigners considered do the most damage to the environment. In what is becoming an annual feature of the activist calendar, Climate Camp has built up its own infrastructure, methods of working, and community 'barrios' representing regions of the UK.

The camp's return to London, after the Heathrow camp in 2007, is an acknowledgement that environmental destruction has its **page 3** ▶▶

### LENS CAP SEA ICE MELTING



Sea ice data is updated daily – here is the data for 23rd August 2009. The orange line indicates the 1979 to 2000 average extent of sea ice (taken from the National Snow and Ice Data Center, see <http://nsidc.org/arcticseaicenews>)

## NATIONAL ID SCHEME IN THE LURCH

New Labour's proposed national identity scheme is losing momentum as the start of the voluntary ID card trial has been postponed fuelling speculation that the government's plans are in disarray.

Home Secretary Alan Johnson was to promote the pilot scheme in Manchester, but instead had to settle for showing off the final design for the new ID cards while promising the scheme would go national in 2011 or 2012.

The government has already spent £214 million on the system with the total estimated cost reaching a staggering £1.3bn for identity cards, more than triple the original estimate, and £3.6bn for biometric passports.

Significantly the £500m contract for the manufacture of the cards will not now be awarded before the next general election,

with Tories committed to scrapping the scheme if they get into power.

Since coming to power New Labour has been obsessed with monitoring its citizens. Britain now has the world's largest DNA database with nearly five million profiles, more than the USA. There are an estimated 4.2 million CCTV cameras in operation and documents reveal there were 504,073 new cases of state-sanctioned surveillance last year, a rise of 44%, the equivalent of one adult in 78 being monitored by the state. When the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act was passed a decade ago, only nine bodies – mainly police and intelligence agencies – could use it to spy on people, now 795 authorities can.

Some 50,000 ID cards have already been issued to foreign workers.

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## NEWS

## IN BRIEF

**WASTED ARMS:** Auditors have been unable to verify the existence of £6.6 billion worth of Ministry of Defence assets such as vehicles, weapons and radio equipment.

In a damning report, the National Audit Office (NAO) criticised financial controls in the department as “inadequate” and also branded its payroll function as “not fit for purpose” after finding tens of millions of pounds worth of wrong payments had been made to soldiers.

The auditors said they had been unable to vouch for the £6.6bn of items because evidence of their existence had “not been available”.

They also found that a seventh of all payroll transactions covering specialist staff and allowances contained errors, indicating underpayments and overpayments for soldiers totalling more than £140 million. The findings came amid long-running criticism of equipment provision for soldiers serving in Afghanistan, including accusations that there are not enough helicopters for troops.

The MoD's Defence Storage and Distribution Agency came in for criticism in the report, with more than a fifth of stock lines tested found to have been inaccurately reported. Amyas Morse, head of the NAO, said: “At this time of high operational demand, it is more important than ever for the Ministry of Defence to have accurate records of where its assets are.”

**SUPER TASER:** A new Taser that fires wireless electric shock projectiles up to 30 metres is being considered for use by UK police forces, the Home Office has confirmed.

The eXtended Range Electronic Projectile (XREP), which went on sale in the US last month, attaches itself to its target with a series of barbed electrodes and delivers a 20-second, 500 volt shock.

If the subject tries to grab the device to pull it off, ‘reflex engagement electrodes’ activate to complete a circuit that sends the shock through the subject's body out to their hand.

The makers of the XREP, Taser International, say it is a “revolutionary” step that will allow police to safely immobilise potentially dangerous suspects from a much greater distance than before – the traditional hand-held Taser stun guns used in the UK only fired darts up to 25 feet – and then give them time to reach the target before he or she is able to move again.

Previous Tasers have only delivered a five-second shock, which could be retriggered. But Amnesty International said it was “seriously concerned” about the XREP and worried by the news it could be authorised in the UK.

## LENS CAP THEY'RE GRRREAT...



Thanks to eagle-eyed reader Laura who pointed out that Siberian Tigers (Lens Cap, 18th July) are not the “world's biggest cat”. Ligers, a male Lion female Tiger cross is in fact much larger, twice the weight of an average Lion or Tiger. We hasten to add that *Freedom* frowns on breeding animals just to see how big they can be.

## Obituary: Peter Kelly

Liverpool SF are sad to report the death in May of Peter Kelly. Pete had been a member of both the DAM and SF, and was heavily involved in Anti-Fascist Action in the late 1980s and early '90s. He was arrested several times for his beliefs, most notably for his part in an AFA action in Rochdale which led to long-running court proceedings, and most spectacularly for painting slogans on a Liverpool Conservative club when he was just a young whipper-snapper!

In recent years he had drastically cut back his political activity to become a full-time carer for his parents. He died very suddenly of a thrombosis. He was only 42.

Pete came to anarcho-syndicalism after being a member of the Revolutionary Communist Group. He was active in Liverpool's squatted Mutual Aid Centre and was a strong supporter of the struggle against British rule in Ireland. Pete was a mainstay of the Troops Out Movement and a founder member of the Phoenix Support Group, a local organisation which raised funds and gave

practical help to Irish republican prisoners and their families.

Pete retained his political beliefs to the end, and had a massive library, literally lining two rooms, floor to ceiling, of his small terraced house in Anfield. It contained works on politics, history, philosophy and his other passion, art. Pete was a self-taught painter and could (and did!) hold forth at length on the merits or otherwise of various schools.

A large man, he often presented an incongruous sight en route to anti-fascist demonstrations – crammed into a minibus seat or sitting in the back of a transit van, shaven head, Doc Martens, yet immersed in a book on Baroque art or somesuch. Fantastic! He was a great character.

The very big turnout at his funeral was both gratifying and surprising for Pete's family, and was a mark of the esteem in which he was held. He is sorely missed. Friends, family and comrades are planning a celebration of his life in October.

Liverpool SF



# Green energy benefits workers

## New research shows that renewable energy is safer for workers

Workers employed in renewable energy producing industries are less at risk from workplace injuries than those in traditional fossil fuel industries new research reveals.

Dr Steven Sumner of Duke University Medical Center, and Dr Peter Layde, Department of Population Health, Medical College of Wisconsin, have had their findings published in the August issue of the *Journal of the American Medical Association*, examining occupational health risks to United States workers in renewable energy industries compared to fossil fuel industries, with some interesting, if not surprising results.

They studied the human health risks associated with traditional fossil fuels, such as

coal, oil and natural gas, relative to renewable energy sources such as wind, solar and biomass, and found wind and solar energy offered less risk of workplace injury and death than traditional fossil fuel industries, as the dangerous energy extraction phase is minimised or eliminated in wind or solar energy production.

The researchers reviewed the occupational cost of energy production in the traditional and new energies and noted that while fossil fuel energies have historically been priced lower than renewable energies, the additional hidden costs, or externalities of energy, especially adverse effects on human health have often not been taken into account. Externalities of energy production include a whole host of problems from damage to the general environment to adverse effects on human health caused by pollution to injury and death among workers.

According to Dr Sumner: "The energy sector remains one of the most dangerous industries for US workers. A transition to

renewable energy generation utilising sources such as wind and solar could potentially eliminate 1,300 worker deaths over the coming decade."

Mining, which includes coal, gas, and oil extraction from underground or underwater stores, is the second most hazardous occupation in the US with 27.5 deaths per 100,000, compared to the average annual fatality rate of 3.4 deaths for all US industries. Additionally, fossil fuel workers risk unintended injuries from extraction, and are exposed to hazardous particles, gases and radiation.

As Dr Layde reports: "Previous research on the health effects of a transition from fossil fuels to renewable energy has focused on the environmental benefits of renewable energy on air quality and global warming. The benefits of reduced workplace injury and fatality have not been sufficiently emphasised in the debate to move to renewable energies. This will be an added benefit to US energy workers."

## Battle for climate action

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foundations in global capitalism and government institutions, rather than individual industries or people's personal choices, with London being recognised as both the heart of global capitalism and centre of state power.

This year there have already been complimentary climate camps in Scotland at Mainhill wood, the site of a proposed new open cast coal mine, and Wales near the Ffos-y-fran open cast mine.

Last year's climate camp at Kingsworth power station saw police use excessive force and intimidation to harass those attending by stop and searching, often unlawfully, each and every person, intrusively filming the camp and its occupants and confiscating many people's personal belongings.

This year, in light of the criticism raised

over police tactics at the Climate Camp G20 demonstration in the City, especially the role of the notoriously out-of-control Territorial Support Group who caused the death of newspaper seller Ian Tomlinson at the Bank of England, the police have issued reassurances about their own behaviour promising 'community-style' policing.

Camp organisers, aware that the police don't always tell the truth, remain defiant and unconvinced by the promises and have published an open letter to Chief Superintendent Ian Thomas, in charge of policing for the camp, stating: "The only secret is the location. There's a simple reason for this: I'm afraid we just don't trust the police. Why? Because it seems as though every time we have a protest, the police turn up and start hitting people."

Climate change has become a key single issue to galvanise many activists into action and the camp itself is offering up opportunities for positive political engagement.

Workshops already confirmed include 'Making our workplaces Red, Black and Green' as well as London Coalition Against Poverty's campaign meeting 'Homeless and Unemployed Fight Back in London', open discussions on climate action and anti-capitalism, the Visteon factory occupation and film showings of the recent Vestas occupation.

There has always been a close relationship between anarchism and ecology. Both Kropotkin and Elisée Reclus were geographers and Murray Bookchin pioneered the social ecology movement, emphasising that ecological problems have their root in social causes.

## NEWS

# Strange adventures in Copland

## Climate camp police liaison talk about their role and trip to Gravesend

This week, the Camp for Climate Action Police Liaison Team spoke at a 'briefing afternoon', at the Metropolitan Police's Training Centre in Gravesend. Why did they do this, and what on earth could they possibly say to the police? Simon Stanley was at the scene...

Let's be frank. It's a weird task to take on. One day you're doing your best to avoid the cops as you try to invade a power station / airport / corporate HQ. The next day, you choose to purposefully sit down in a room full of police. Why?

Well, if you really want to know, the Climate Camp's Police Liaison Team's remit looks something like this:

- To gather information first-hand about likely police tactics, strategy, personnel and attitude.
- To give the Camp credibility in the eyes of the public. Those of us who've had a lot of dealings with the police over the years know that we can't trust them an inch, but many of the public haven't had that experience. If we refuse to talk to the police, then a lot of people will (rightly or wrongly) think we're being unreasonable and so be less likely to get involved with the Camp.
- To a lesser degree, occasionally meeting with the cops also gives the Climate Camp a 'human face' and might make some officers be a tiny bit less brutal towards us (we have no definite proof of this, of course).
- Each meeting brings us one step closer to the day when the underpaid officers at the Camp gates suddenly decide to lay down their truncheons, take off their riot gear, stick two fingers up at Gold Command and join us in building a beautiful eco-anarchist utopia. Possibly.

The Police Liaison volunteers aren't 'representatives' of the Camp – they don't negotiate with the police, make any concessions to them, or give them any information that they wouldn't have found out anyway. In previous years, this has been a slightly frustrating, often uncomfortable, but nonetheless important job.

This year, however, things have gone a bit weird.

Thanks to the police getting caught in the act at the G20 protests, and the serious of vaguely critical official reports that followed, there has been unprecedented media interest in any meetings between the Camp and the police. At the same time, the cops are on the back foot and are desperately trying to repair their image, and so rather than their usual trick of fobbing us off until the last minute, they are instead falling over



themselves to drag us into meetings. It's pretty bizarre stuff? and it's not without its dangers.

From their quotes in a recent *Guardian* article, it seems the cops are keen to say 'look, we're even having meetings with the protesters, aren't we nice!' We need to be careful that we don't unwittingly help them with their propaganda – something that the Camp's media team are clearly aware of.

While in the short term the idea that the police are going to be all cuddly this time round may help to get more people to the London Camp, in the long term it could be very dangerous. If the public and the media decide the police have mended their ways, then their interest will soon wander, leaving the cops free to get the batons out again.

Let's not forget that a fundamental part of the police's job is to defend the status quo, to protect the wealthy and the powerful, and to oppose social change. Meanwhile, we're trying to build a movement to create massive social change by directly confronting the government and wealthy, powerful, polluting corporations. This doesn't make it very likely that the police are ever going to be our friends.

However, one thing that *can* change is the tactics available to the cops – the exact level of violence and intimidation that they're allowed to get away with. It would be lovely to believe that we might influence this by having meetings with the police. Sadly, experience shows that the only thing that works is forcing them to change by exposing their tactics to the world. It's annoying that we have to do this – we'd much rather

spend the time on climate action – but if we don't, then things will only get worse.

Of course, we aren't the only ones being harassed by the police. The camp's Legal Team have been building connections with other activist groups, including Fitwatch and London Defence and Monitoring, as well as organisations representing migrant communities, the Campaign Against Criminalising Communities, the Muslim prisoner support group and the Newham Monitoring Project. Plans are afoot to get funding for a new umbrella group to keep monitoring the police and holding them to account – wherever and whenever they might operate.

So it was with all this in mind that I stood up in front of a crowd of seventy police officers on Thursday afternoon and explained to them why the Climate Camp was happening, how non-hierarchical decision-making worked, and what this year's Camp will probably look like.

I then described what it was like to be charged by a line of riot cops for no discernible reason, to watch your friends being beaten over the head and arrested on meaningless charges, to see people in front of you being pepper-sprayed in the face, and to know you have to stand your ground anyway with your hands in the air because the alternative is to let a beautiful Camp be trampled under their steel-toecapped boots. They listened, in silence. It was one of the weirdest things I've ever done in my life. Whether or not it will make any difference, I really couldn't say; but it felt oddly liberating all the same.

Simon Stanley

## IN BRIEF

**HURRICANE BILL:** The first Atlantic hurricane of the season, Bill, has taken an unusual turn and is heading eastwards towards Britain as we write. However, if the US National Hurricane Centre's predictions are right, you won't have been blown away by the time you read this as it fades to a depression (of the which we have enough already).

Much tree slaughter has been engendered by the debate over global warming causing tropical storms, with the climate sceptics doubting a causal link. They may have a point in that individual hurricanes cannot be ascribed to global warming and that increases so far in storms may be attributable to other factors.

However the strength of these events is ultimately dependent on the amount of energy in the weather system and temperature is a function of that energy. Predictions of where storms occur can never be precise and the jury is still out on if the result will be more frequent cyclones, more powerful or some combination of both.

What is certain is that global warming will lead to more destruction, and the poor will be least equipped to resist it.

**GREEK FIRES:** Firefighters have been battling wildfires threatening areas north of Athens. Thousands of residents of the capital's northern suburbs were forced to leave their homes as dozens of houses and large areas of forest were burnt. Aircraft from several countries are dropping water on the fires. Local authorities have ordered the immediate evacuation of the coastal resort of Porto Germenio, northwest of the capital.

More than 90 fires are thought to have started since Saturday and more than 37,000 acres of land have been burnt. While no casualties have been reported, a regional Athens governor, Yiannis Sgouros, has called the fires an "ecological disaster".

See page 7 for more on the fires in Greece.

**BEES:** Almost a fifth of the UK's honeybees died last winter, the British Beekeepers' Association (BBKA) has said.

Combined with an average 30% loss the year before, it means that beekeepers are struggling to keep colonies going.

Honeybees are worth £200m a year to UK agriculture because of their work pollinating crops.

Bees are suffering from viruses, a parasitic mite and changes in the weather. Experts are calling for more money to be put into research.

A survey by the BBKA suggested an average of 19.2% of colonies died over winter, which is 'double' the acceptable level.

The highest losses were recorded in the north of England, where 32.1% perished, and the lowest in eastern England, where 12.8% did not survive.

# Policing guide for campers

Here's our best info at present on the cops' plan for climate camp. As always things can change and we may have errors in our admittedly scant intelligence operation.

Firstly, the camp is on the same bank holiday weekend as the Notting Hill Carnival. This will be a bigger operation with 11,500 shifts planned and Commander Broadhurst as Gold with Chief Superintendent Johnson (head of the TSG) as Silver.

As the poor relation, Climate Camp gets Chief Superintendent Ian Thomas (head of CO11) as Gold and Superintendent Julia Pendry as Silver. Pendry is a full timer at CO11 and is best known for being in charge during on the Gaza demo in January, when people were crushed in an underpass by baton-charging cops at Hyde Park Corner. The Bronze for the site will be Chief Inspector Jane Connors, Bronze Reserves East will be Superintendent David Hartshorn (famed for starting the 'summer of rage' stories in a press conference), Bronze Reserves West is Superintendent Colin Morgan and Bronze for City Police Chief Inspector Tony Kearny. Chief Inspector Dean Higgins will be the Night Duty Silver.

By some oversight we weren't given the operational order with the number of cops available. However, with around 60 inspectors or their deputies attending the briefing that climate camp police liaison were invited to, we can expect that number of serials and a total of 1,500 cops over the week.

For the first time in at least thirty years the Met has asked for mutual aid (no, not

the Kropotkin type) from other forces. Kent, West Mercia and Cumbria are supplying officers. The forward rendezvous point is the Royal Business Park north of Royal Albert Dock at 2pm on Wednesday 26th August, so they may well be staying in the ExCel complex, ironic eh?

As to use of powers, Pendry's briefing ruled out use of Section 50 Police Reform Act to gather names and s58A Terrorism Act taking photographs of police officers is only to be used where there is a clear link to terrorism, so that's out too. Stop and search is to be kept to s1 PACE and s23 Misuse of Drugs Act, but only where reasonable suspicion arises and is 'not to be overused'.

Knives are a target, including those for use in cooking if not brought in vehicles. Section 44 searches will not be used on the camp neither will s60's if they are already in place where the camp is set up. Any s60 for the camp is only to be authorised by Pendry not inspectors on the ground. Use of s12 and s14 to impose conditions on marches or assemblies are only to be done on the authority of Bronze's. During the swoop potential criminal damage offences are to be monitored by FIT and Evidence Gatherers with authority to arrest reserved to the Bronze's. Containment remains on the agenda.

All supervisors were warned repeatedly that this is the era of the citizen journalist and to JAR (Justify, Account for and Record) their actions. Let's see what it's like in practice. Be careful out there!



Police kettling protesters at the G20 climate camp in Bishopsgate, London

## INTERNATIONAL

### IN BRIEF

**CHINA:** Governors in Wenping, Hunan province, have warned that anyone found to have led protests against the mass poisoning by pollution which spilled out of smelting works in the township will be severely dealt with. Workers and peasants across the region were outraged by an attempted cover-up of the disaster and by derisory compensation payments offered to the families of nearly 2,000 poisoned children, which amounted to just £66 per child.

**EGYPT:** Public transport authorities in Cairo have given in after a bus strike by drivers, ticket-takers and mechanics from 14 of the 19 bus garages in Cairo and Giza. Concessions include an 8% raise, a monthly food allowance, and possible compensation for drivers and ticket-takers for their daily potential exposure to infectious diseases.

**GUANTANAMO:** A newly-released report has suggested that CIA operatives threatened a suspected Al-Qaeda operative with a power drill and simulated executions of other detainees. Abd al-Rahim al-Nashiri was also allegedly a victim of waterboarding.

**INDIA:** Following the deaths of six ship-breaking workers in Alang on 4th August, a local trade union representing 5,000 ship-breakers has called for a judicial enquiry and immediate health and safety changes. The six died on the spot from burns sustained while working in the engine room of a vessel being dismantled. No precautions had been taken to ensure it was free from gas.

**MEDITERRANIAN:** At least 73 migrants have died at sea after ships repeatedly passed them by despite their being in difficulty after their dinghy ran out of fuel. Commercial vessels have largely dropped the sea code of helping such vessels if they're in trouble since a series of incidents in which countries have argued over who should take in saved migrants.

**TUNISIA:** NGO Amnesty has warned that arbitrary arrests, detentions and torture are taking place across the country, making a mockery of European policy which is sending refugees back saying they are safe. Sami Ben Khemais Essid for example, deported by Italy, was sentenced to 12 years in prison and tortured.

**US:** Online social networking site Twitter has failed in its attempt to trademark the word 'tweet' under US patent law. The word, which can be traced back to 1835 as an imitation of the sound a bird makes, had already been trademarked by two other companies.

**ZIMBABWE:** Doctors are being fired in Harare after they refused to accept a paltry £29 allowance on top of their salaries, currently worth £91 a month. Around 300 doctors have been on strike in the capital over what they say are poverty wages.

### LENS CAP SPAIN



A man sits next to a banner reading 'I am human. And you?' in Madrid. DJ Abu Aka was attacked for over 20 minutes by a gang of six neo-nazis after he left a nightclub on 24th August. When police arrived at the scene, they ignored the gang's continued racist taunting, instead asking Abu for papers to prove he was not an illegal immigrant. They refused to give their badge numbers when requested.

## Indonesians demand to go home

Even as the Saudi ambassador to Indonesia promised to enforce the legal rights of Indonesian workers in Saudi Arabia earlier this month, Indonesian workers were being detained for protesting to demand their right to return home.

Up to a thousand Indonesian overstayers – many of whom had had their documentation confiscated by traffickers as they came over to work as migrant labour building the giant cities of the House of Saud – are being held awaiting deportation.

Most were being held after they had demonstrated outside the Indonesian consulate in Jeddah, demanding that the embassy help them to return home. Shortly after their arrest, more protestors began to arrive hoping to be deported.

The problem of overstayers has been growing throughout Saudi Arabia over the

last decade as poor working conditions and terms of service, which amount to indentured servitude for the workers brought over, force many to flee their employers – who hold their documentation as collateral to force people to work.

Labour activist Anis Hidayah, of rights NGO Migrant Care, noted: "Most of them came to work legally but they were abused and weren't paid, so they ran away from their employers." Anis added that they were undocumented because their employers had retained their passports.

Around eight million Indonesians work overseas, with hundreds of thousands in Saudi Arabia alone. It is thought around half of these are undocumented.

Saudi Arabia are currently attempting to recruit 3,000 Indonesian nurses as part of an effort to upgrade their healthcare system.

## Notes from the United States

The Western Hemisphere Institute for Security Cooperation (WHISC) is better known as the School of the Americas.

Operating at Fort Benning, Georgia, it's a notorious institution for training terrorists from Central and South America in torture techniques, weaponry, use of arms, counter-terrorism, intelligence, destabilisation and all manner of human rights abuses.

It emerged last month that the School of The Americas is still actively engaged in many forms of terrorist training.

And despite protests from the US that it is cutting aid to the junta which took control of Honduras last month, these extend to the enrolment of six Honduran military officials who are closely linked to the coup – including its military leader General Romeo Orlando Vásquez Velásquez.

Also trained by the school was the general in charge of the air force which engineered the exile of Zelaya into Costa Rica.

General Nelson Willy Mejía, who has been

# Firefighters told to save wealthy first

## Blaze in Greece exposes two-tier response to disaster

Greek anarchists have accused police of forcing firefighting teams to concentrate on saving the villas of the wealthy around the outskirts of Athens at the expense of working class zones and huge swathes of forest.

Activist volunteers working to help firefighters said that not only was aid and equipment thin on the ground, but police had intervened on several occasions to order extra work to be put towards saving expensive homes.

Reporters on the Athens Indymedia website noted: "The cops were doing everything in their power in order to prevent any attempt to rescue the forest."

"The Penteli has been abandoned to the flames for the sake of the favourite areas of our economic and political leadership. If it's not coordinated to protect the villa of a big name, there is absolute chaos. The rich have fled their homes and left them in the hands of migrant domestic workers who are waiting in the yards for someone to take them and lead them in a safe place."

"Meanwhile orders from their firefighters' headquarters have moved forced to protect the houses of specific people."

"Firefighters, seasonal and volunteer firefighters are now openly expressing their anger at the attitude and behaviour of the cops."

Anarchist groups have also warned that the state may be gearing up to use the catastrophe to try and demonise their organisations,



after unconfirmed reports filtered through of police apparently encouraging the blaze in some areas.

The timing of the fires has been particularly difficult for the Greek anarchist movement, which is currently stretched thin working on an ongoing campaign to support migrant workers and maintain momentum after the conflicts of last year.

An international day of solidarity called for Greek political prisoner Thodoris Iliopoulos on 24th August was to be followed up on the 25th with a week-long camp to fight for similar freedoms for migrants in the country. However the fires meant that both the solidarity campaign for Thodoris and the

No Borders camp failed to make their intended impact.

The failure could be a serious setback for Thodoris, who has been on hunger strike since 10th July saying that his incarceration is unjust. His situation is now critical.

The anarchist was one of hundreds arrested during the riots which shook Greece last year and is the only remaining prisoner from that time.

He is charged with three felonies and two misdemeanours and has now spent seven months in jail, a process which supporters say is designed primarily to make an example of him and to scare potential supporters off the streets.

## Notes from the Unites States

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named minister of immigration and has been connected with the infamous death squad Battalion 3-16, was not only a graduate of, but also an instructor at, the School.

General Herberth Inestroza, the army's top lawyer, Lieutenant Colonel Ramiro Archaga, its director of public relations and Colonel Jorge Rodas Gamero are all graduates of or closely associated with the institution.

In a similar vein the lobbying power of invested companies as such Chiquita is huge enough to provide a case for the involvement of US capital in the region – and this coup in particular.

The company had opposed Zelaya's minimum wage provisions and received support in Washington. It's also instructive to note that Chiquita is allied to a Washington law firm called Covington, which makes its money by advises multinational corporations.

The vice chair of Covington is... arch-terrorist and former US ambassador to Honduras, John Negroponte.

For years a right-wing dictatorship, the changes in Honduras which Zelaya is perceived as representing do not suit Washington.

On top of increasing resistance and labour organising which mirrors that in Peru, Bolivia, Brazil, Venezuela, El Salvador and Chile there are pressures from such groups as the Garifuna, the indigenous Afro-Honduran people.

For Obama to have taken the stance he has serves as a warning from the US to other countries in the region such as Venezuela that they should not expect to be left alone if their governments apparently make moves towards social justice.

Father Roy Bourgeois runs School of the Americas Watch. He took a fact-finding mission to Honduras in July. At the military base outside the Honduran capital, Tegucigalpa, he talked to the US officer in charge there.

He said that nothing had changed, so Bourgeois called WHISC. Lee Rials, their spokesperson, confirmed, "Yes, they're in class right now"!

Louis Further

## Zanon workers win control of their factory

After eight years of battling in the streets and in the courts, the workers' co-operative which occupied Argentina's failed Zanon PF factory have won legal control over the premises.

The Fasinpat collective, which employs 470 workers and exports ceramics to 25 countries, will keep the facility while the government pays off around \$7 million in debts which had been incurred by the original owner and were being demanded by finance houses such as the World Bank.

The workforce have voiced their disagreement with the payoff, saying that the banks who financed Zanon are party to the plant's fraudulent bankruptcy in 2001 and should be prosecuted.

Fasinpat's victory has not however offered a definitive victory for the factory occupation movement in Argentina. Just hours after the legal victory was announced, thread factory Textil Quilmes was violently evicted after a six month occupation despite having temporary legal protection.

# Changing our perspectives to climate change

A look at the current issues surrounding climate change with three groups offering different insights on the subject. Camp for Climate Action explain what the climate camp initiative is and what it seeks to achieve, Workers Climate Action on the relationship between workers and climate change, and Anarchist Federation who present an overview of the effects and real causes of climate change.

## CAMP FOR CLIMATE ACTION

Camp for Climate Action (CCA) is a 365-day of the year movement that for one week of the year squats disused land and produces a camp that takes a simultaneous approach of taking radical direct action on climate criminals, and positively displays sustainable, communal, non-hierarchical, empowered participatory living – thereby showing to ourselves and others that a radical, boss-less alternative to capitalist social organisation is possible.

CCA directly emerged out of the mobilisations against the G8 in Gleneagles in 2005, so is therefore one of many anarchist inspired social movements that have emerged in North America and Europe of late, following the collapse of communism as the dominant opposition to the ‘free market’ nightmare in the early nineties.

It was felt in 2005 that a new frame was needed on the issue of climate change – one that targeted the main economic and political drivers of climate change, and one that was prepared to take direct action to thwart the endless rise of greenhouse gas emissions that are killing hundreds of thousands of the world’s poor each year.

It is to this aim, following very successful camps at the Drax coal-fired power station in Yorkshire in 2006, at Heathrow airport in 2007, and at Kingsnorth Power Station in Kent last summer, that CCA has the city of London as its primary target for 2009 – this financial meltdown is the golden opportunity to highlight an economy that is failing people and planet. On 1st April, to coincide with the G20, CCA held a 24-hour ‘flash camp’ outside the European Carbon Exchange to



draw attention to the idea that more western capitalism and imperialism – in the form of Carbon Trading – as the solution to a problem that it has caused is utterly ridiculous.

On 26th August, thousands will once again ‘swoop’ down onto an as yet undisclosed location in London to set up camp in full view of the habitat of the unholy grail of transnational corporations, that are desperately trying to keep fossil fuels and ‘free market’ capitalism on the table; of our elite representatives who choose their glitzy watering holes and schmoozing avenues above the people they supposedly represent; and of the casino banks that finance the whole thing.

Let’s be clear, CCA demands social justice with a de-carbonised economy. The ‘free market’ model has long been shown to be an instrument of human misery, of which climate change is simply the tip of a rather large melting iceberg. The UN summit this December in Copenhagen looks like it will re-legitimise this failed insanity under the banner of Carbon Trading, which will encourage the march of privatisation of humanities most precious resources, maintain the rigid class structure, instigate carbon colonialism by disposing indigenous peoples of their lands and forcing the worlds poor to sell their rights to pollute, all the while creating a welcome invitation to the cheating Enrons of the future, where corporations and elite politicians will do all they can to fiddle the figures, keep those fossil fuels burning and profits growing, even while the droughts spread and the death toll rises.

We must stop this madness, and to do so we need an urgent radical broad based movement of civil society. If the future is to be bright, it must be red, black and green.

## WORKERS CLIMATE ACTION

Workers’ Climate Action (WCA) is a direct action, activist network of class struggle activists from a variety of backgrounds that came together after the Heathrow Climate Camp. As climate movement activists, we wanted to argue within the movement for working-class, anti-capitalist solutions to climate change – against those who see a ‘greener’ capitalism or an accumulation of individual actions as a solution, and against those who believe that the scale and immediacy of the issue transcends differences of politics and class. And as trade unionists, we wanted to challenge our unions’ sectional and conservative attitudes on issues like aviation and coal mining and rediscover the tradition of radical, rank-and-file working-class environmentalism that inspired struggles like the Lucas Aerospace workers’ plan and the New South Wales Builders’ Labourers Federation’s ‘green bans’ of the 1970s.

For us, the global working class is not just one of many ‘interest groups’ or



Heathrow Climate Camp in 2007; below left, Drax in 2006; below right, the Vestas factory occupation

‘stakeholders’ who will be affected by climate change. The working class is a key agent of social change; the class capable of making society move, and of stopping it from moving. For many of us in WCA, the working class is the key agent of social change. We believe that movements led by organised labour can and must be central to winning a socially and environmentally sustainable world. This is not to say, however, that we do not think climate change can be tackled or combated until a thoroughgoing working-class revolution. The central goal of WCA is to catalyse and support workers’ struggles in the here-and-now that respond to climate change and create the conditions from which wider struggles can grow.

At the 2008 Kingsnorth Climate Camp, WCA activists leafleted the power plant every day at the start of shifts with bulletins discussing ideas around workers’ control and worker-led just transitions. We believe that workers in frontline industries have a crucial role to play in demanding that productive capacity of our workplaces and our humans skills are used to produce goods and services that are socially useful and environmentally sustainable – just as Lucas workers in the 1970s developed a plan for the aerospace factory they worked in to produce hybrid cars, defibrillators, integrated road-rail vehicles and tidal energy hardware. But we also believe that to undertake such high-level, implicitly anti-capitalist struggles, workers often need to build up our political and organisational confidence by fighting more immediate, day-to-day battles. That’s why WCA actively supports all workers’

We have diverse views on many issues, but we are united by our commitment to class struggle and working-class self-organisation as key focuses, and by our belief that only an anti-capitalist struggle for a democratically organised society can fundamentally cut the roots of climate change. We organise non-hierarchically and welcome debate and discussion within our meetings and activities.

Daniel Randall

Workers’ Climate Action: for green jobs under workers’ control. To get involved with our activities, email [workersclimateaction.info@gmail.com](mailto:workersclimateaction.info@gmail.com) or visit <http://workersclimateaction.wordpress.com>. (Daniel Randall is a supporter of Workers’ Climate Action, a member of Workers’ Liberty and an activist in the GMB trade union.)

## ANARCHIST FEDERATION

“Capitalism will either destroy humanity by destroying its ecological niche or it will destroy humanity by changing it. From this statement comes an inescapable conclusion: that the class war is also a war of ecological survival” – *Ecology & Class, Anarchist Federation*

Who will climate change affect most? This question can only be answered in the context of a planet of both absolute and relative environmental limits and resource constraints. The threat posed by peak oil is well known but now ominous warnings are beginning to be heard about the world’s food supply, its energy supply, the availability of water for drinking, industry and agriculture. The commodities that underpin our existence – stable weather conditions for agriculture, secure supplies of water, the oil to make fertilisers, fertile land, energy to produce and move food and other necessary things – are reaching their limits.

Climate change will result in heat waves and droughts, heavier rainfall and monsoons, floods and inundations, hurricanes and tidal waves and extreme weather phenomena will become more common, be more destructive and will be experienced in parts of the world ill-equipped to deal with them. And this changing climate and weather will result in crop failures and starvation, the spread of water-borne disease, mass emigrations, land and resource wars, pandemics, riots and repression as governments try to cope with the effects of climate change and their citizens’ responses to it.

These calamities will be felt most by the working classes of the world and by the poorest amongst them. When crops fail because of falling water levels or salinisation of the land, who suffers? When tribes go to war for grazing land – the origins of the war in Darfur – who will die? When sovereign wealth buys up millions of hectares of land along river systems in order to guarantee national food supplies – as is happening now led by South Korea, China and Indonesia –

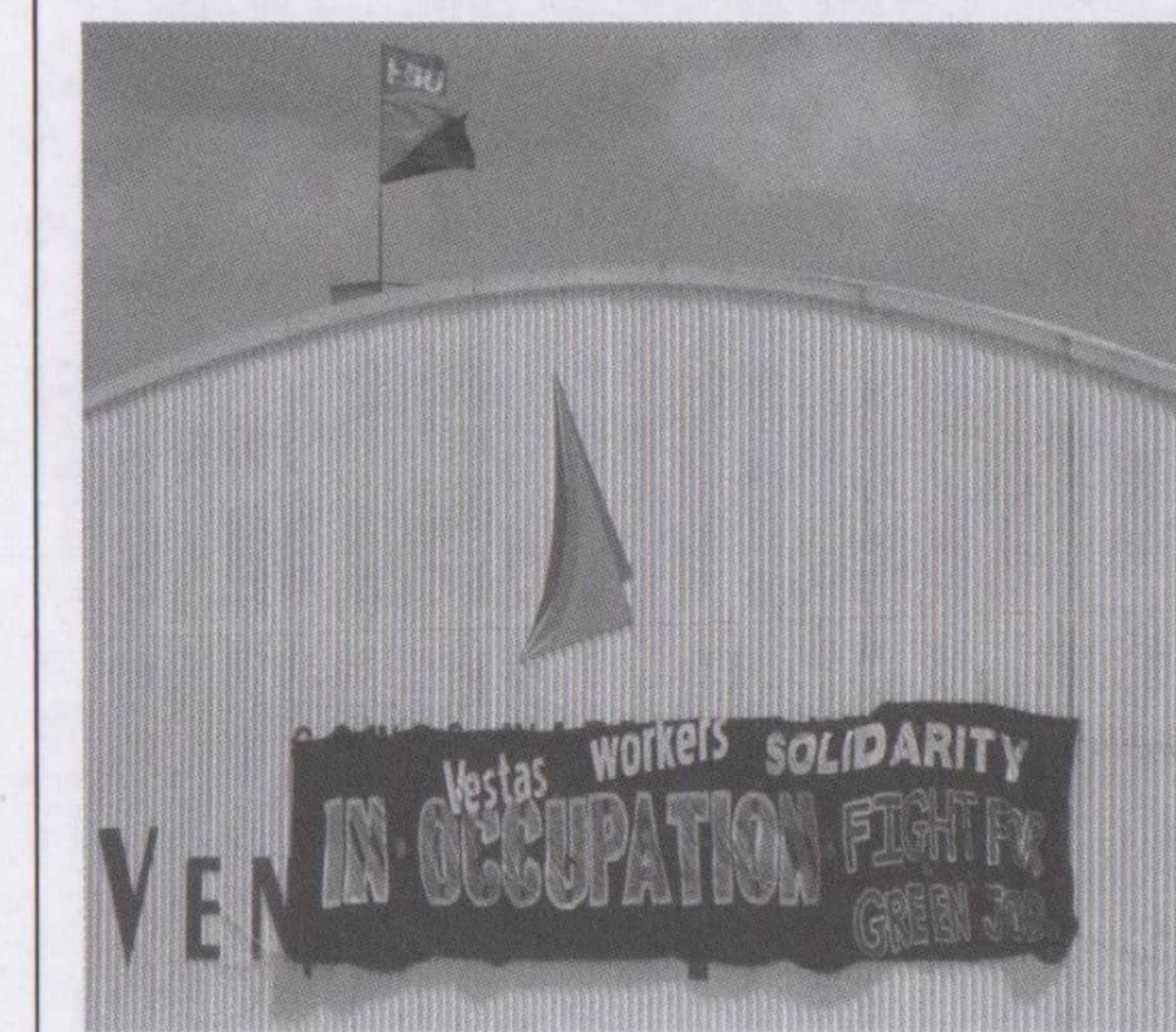
who will be driven from that land? Corporate aquaculture – to feed burgeoning new markets – is driving fishermen from shores and seas they have fished for generations. It is the poorest who must live in the marshes, along low-lying river banks, above fetid lagoons of sewage and who die in their hundreds of thousands from disease, malnutrition, tidal waves and floods.

In contrast, the rich and the powerful hope to escape the effects of climate change by controlling the availability and distribution of water, energy, oil, land and even clean air. More people die of disease when hospitals and clinics are inundated than by the floods themselves. Who will get already rationed healthcare as it comes under increasing pressure from disease, stress, cold- and heat-related illness, violence? The rich of the world are increasingly demanding gated communities, privatised healthcare, physical separation into suburb and ghetto and the right to lifestyles that, in a world of limited resources, can only be granted at someone else’s expense: hence the mad rush to produce biofuels from food-producing land which massively increased grain prices and led to malnutrition and starvation amongst those who could no longer afford bread.

The ruling class has built a monstrous castle of greed out of the world. It hopes to survive by inventing green technologies and exploiting them to perpetuate its position and power and, sadly, many part of the green movement are buying in, literally, to this agenda. But if this fails it plans to send out its soldiers to annex the surrounding lands, drive off its inhabitants except those who are needed to work it, while reserving the right to pull up the drawbridge should an aroused peasantry storm the gates. Yet it is the working class that has the ideas, the means and the labour power to begin putting the planet to rights, creating a stable, fair and sustainable world from the wreckage of the old.

If we have one task, it is this: to prepare for and win the war of resources, the last war, and to take back and fairly share what our planet can sustainably produce.

Anarchist Federation member





## COMMENT

## ABOUT FREEDOM

## ANGEL ALLEY

Huzzah! the scaffolding is now gone and the shiny new pointing revealed in all its stunning glory. Thanks be to Venerable Tony for all his hard work. We are now preparing for the great cleaning weekend of 5th and 6th September when the building will be transformed into a gleaming beacon of anarchism. It's not too late to sign up for this all-singing, all-dancing event ... in fact it will not be too late to turn up on the day, and there will be a booze up after.

Summer is of course the time for everyone to catch up on reading so here's a quick reminder to stock up on big fat expensive books to read, remembering that we can order 'normal' books as well as anarcho ones and they can all be sent out post free.

We have once again benefited from the generosity of those nice people at the Whitechapel Art Gallery who have donated three spare chairs to us. These new chairs are on rollers and swivel, so don't be at all surprised if you find us spinning around or trundling round the shop pretending to be Daleks.

## 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 16, so if your subscription runs out with this issue you'll have 7016 above your name. If the number is 7016 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](mailto:subs@freedompress.org.uk) or you can write to us at 'Subscriptions', Freedom, 84b Whitechapel High Street, London E1 7QX.

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## NEXT ISSUE

The next issue will be dated 12th September 2009 and the last day to get copy to us for that issue will be Thursday 3rd September. You can send your articles to us by email to [copy@freedompress.org.uk](mailto:copy@freedompress.org.uk) or by post addressed to 'The Editors', Freedom, 84b Whitechapel High Street, London E1 7QX.

## A sideways look

by SVARTFROSK

The media regularly bombards us with the message that this is the only possible world. Anarchists assert that other worlds are possible and that capitalism isn't the only way of running things. When it comes to sketching the details out, however, we are often a bit vague about how a post-revolutionary society would look.

In one sense it is true to our politics to say that it will be worked out by that society itself. But I don't think we can leave it all to 'after the revolution'. Not least because we understand that the means shape the ends. A beautiful vision of a free society will not be realised by a one-party Leninist dictatorship, though apparently this history lesson is lost on some who would repeat it.

Probably at least half the people who do paid work today in Britain are doing things that are not productive, or would not be in a free society. From the legions of management, bureaucrats and bankers to domestic servants, advertisers and marketers, there is plenty of socially useless work. A lot of mine is – I work in IT: like a lot of areas of work, a support service is only as worthwhile as the activity it is supporting.

As a corollary, plenty of people do huge amounts of work that is scarcely recognised and rarely paid, but is socially useful. I'd include carers, parents and homeworkers, as well as most volunteers. What some people do as a job, others do as a hobby. It might be because of ability or opportunity, but plenty of jobs, such as music or art or cooking or gardening, are what some people dream of doing. Unless you are very lucky, if you do any of those desirable jobs, you're

doing it for the love of it because the pay is lousy until you hit the very top.

We produce and consume far more than we need, simply because that's the only way that capitalism can continue. It really will consume the planet if we let it. I have a washing machine, television, electric drill and lawnmower at home. We use the washing machine and television daily, but only for a few hours. The electric drill and lawnmower get used a few times a year. I could easily share a laundry room with a handful of neighbours and a drill and a lawnmower with probably my entire street. Instead everyone has these things – where one or two would suffice, we have forty. That one or two could be made to a really high standard and last a lot longer than the forty shoddy ones that are limited to one family's use. Rather than consume the planet we could reorganise our lives so that basic things made sense. Of course it is against what capitalism requires, but it is in our interests. If the factory that makes lawnmowers concentrated on making a few very good ones, it would almost certainly be more rewarding for the workers involved. They could probably scale down to a series of joined up workshops and work for a few hours a day.

The classic capitalist response to anarchism is that it is a great idea, but who'd do the dirty jobs like cleaning the sewers. It's really not that difficult. If I get to spend a few hours a week cleaning sewers and have the rest of the time for things I want to do, I'll clean them. I suspect such a bargain would suit you, or someone like you too. How about it?



## Doing a G20

It would be wonderful to think that recent events in the Square Mile had inspired people all over the country to 'do a G20', as was suggested of Liverpool fans' direct action against RBS (page 4, *Freedom*, 18th July 2009). However, I fear this piece was not without an touch of exaggeration and would rather suggest that those who descended on London on 1st April might take note of tactics in Liverpool and think about 'doing a Scouse'.

Mass action hardly ever takes place without some element of forward planning and therefore, the state's attack dogs in blue have plenty of time to work on demonisation, containment and excuses for later. Their early predictions of violence on 1st April were, well, predictable and as soon as the talk of 'dangerous' anarchists 'coming out of retirement' began, you just knew where this was going.

I saw the RBS being 'opened to the public' and the filth didn't do a thing until the activists were actually inside. Could it be that this was allowed to happen in full knowledge that they were already inside waiting and that the crowd's inevitable surge forward would provide the scant justification needed by the riot police outside?

But this isn't just an issue of what the police did, it's about the seeming failure of direct actionistas to evolve tactics and stay one step ahead. Marches have long been synonymous with the ever-tedious London-centric 'four legs good, two legs bad' affairs organised by the Stop the War Coalition et al, where any hint of spontaneity sends organisers into a frenzy of authoritarianism, but the best direct action has always made much better use of the element of surprise and creativity.

The Liverpool activists didn't descend en masse on a pre-destined target with the specific intention of 'storming the banks'. They carried out three co-ordinated attacks, at night, on RBS branches in their own community and whilst padlocks and posters perhaps didn't hamper business for too long, neither did getting the Square Mile closed off and indulging in over eight hours of 'performance anarchism'.

Imagine the scene across the country if all those who went to London had targeted capitalism in their own communities on 1st April, where it is just as insidious as in its phallic towers in London. It would be so much harder for the regional police to predict our movements when our villages, towns and cities are full of so many potential targets. That way we might also avoid having to endure the middle-class kudos-seekers posing on their knees in front of police lines at the G20 – because the photos will look 'fucking great on the blog'!

I know there are distinct advantages to mass gatherings in terms of sharing ideas, solidarity and (relative) safety in numbers. But as cathartic as standing up en masse to spurious authority and its abuses of power might be for us all, we also have to admit

that this isn't just about whether or not we are prepared to fight with the police every time we want to prove a point. After all, the public were generally a bit annoyed about the police tactics as the G20 but it's hardly proved a 'V for Vendetta moment' since. Is this partly because when mass action persistently turns into a running battle with the police, people don't get any sense of the practical solutions behind our more immediate 'hands on' struggles with capitalism?

Of course, if a few of thousand people want to express their anger at a system that is responsible for poverty, misery, injustice and death on an unimaginable scale, the very act of trying to prevent them is the biggest crime of all – but it's not like the police's behaviour was a surprise; either on previous evidence or from the build-up to this particular action. Perhaps I was naïve in leaving the house on 1st April honestly believing we'd actually get to the Bank of England, but even I didn't share the optimism of the those in London who thought the police were going to lay down their batons and join the 'revolution' in response to gentle reasoning and logical argument, albeit through a megaphone.

Propaganda by the deed has become an

incendiary term in more ways than one but I think it is still at the heart of who we are as anarchists, especially in what we do differently to the rest of the so-called 'revolutionary left'. However, if the deed is a damp squib, isn't the propaganda similarly unappealing? Indeed, if we're going to offer ourselves up for arrest in London (and get a predictable kettling and kicking into the bargain) why not do the same in our own setting by sabotaging capitalism, reclaiming spaces, subverting the system and putting anarchism into action at the grassroots. Yes, fight the police if they're meddling in your local squat, guerrilla garden, social centre or activist collective, but why traipse all the way down to London to fight them just to create a bit of superficial surface damage to capitalism – especially when you could be taking out its local buttresses?

"One can talk for a long time about experiences such as those we lived. The most important thing, though, is not having made the revolution, but having continued the struggle in the years since, each in his or her particular setting, or in many settings at once, without trumpet or drum" – Anna Delso, *Mujeres Libres*.

Rachel  
Shropshire

## DISARM DSEI 2009

12noon 8th September - City of London - Details TBC

**DESTROY THE BANKS!**  
**DESTROY THE INVESTORS!**  
**DESTROY THE ARMS TRADE!**

Defence Systems Equipment International (DSEi) – the world's largest arms fair – is due to take place in East London between 8 and 11 September 2009.

At DSEi 2007, there were 1352 exhibitors from 40 different countries with a total of 26,5000 visitors.

Come to The City with love and rage; music and militancy; desire and determination – together we can show we will no longer tolerate the death and destruction they cause.

w: [dsei.org](http://dsei.org) e: [info@dsei.org](mailto:info@dsei.org)  
twitter: @disarmdsei



## GETTING ACTIVE

### PRISON NEWS

Following hot on the heels of the news that the US federal appeals court ordered California to release 43,000 prisoners from its state prisons over the next two years as overcrowding in its prisons was so severe that it violates prisoners' constitutional rights, came the news on 9th August of an 11-hour riot at the California Institution for Men in Chino, California that most people ascribe directly to the overcrowding problem.

At least 1,300 of the 5,900 men held in a prison designed to hold 3,000 were involved in the riot, despite the facility being on a modified lockdown following gang fight rumours.

Around 250 prisoners were injured with at least 55 taken to hospital, many with head and stab wounds.

One of the dormitory-style barracks was burnt to the ground, others were trashed with windows, toilets and sinks broken, doors ripped from their hinges and beds from their floor bolts.

No staff were hurt despite being heavily outnumbered as they withdrew from the barracks and let the inmates get on with it.

Days later across the border in the federal prison at Gomez Palacio in Mexico's northern Durango state, what is believed to be a drug cartel-related gang fight left 20 prisoners dead and 25 others injured by gunfire and bladed weapons.

The battle, which broke out during visiting hours on 14th August, lasted for four hours and saw inmates battle the tanks and armed police and soldiers that were sent in to quell the riot. Again no prison staff were injured.

Armed fights between cartel-gang members have become common events in recent years as more than 50,000 since President Felipe Calderón came to office in December 2006. For example, last October saw 21 prisoners die in a riots in the state prison in Reynosa and the month before 23 died in two separate riots in Tijuana state facility.

On this side of the Atlantic, on 10th August, reports indicate that Libyan prison guards opened fire on Somali prisoners in Banghazi prison killing at least 20 and wounding 50 others during a mass escape attempt.

#### A cunning disguise

We've all heard of drugs been smuggled into nicks by visitors and screws and the odd package being hidden in tennis balls and thrown over prison walls to be retrieved by the litter picking team. Well here's a new one.

According to the *Scottish Daily Record*, dead seagulls are being stuffed with contraband and lobbed over the walls at the private Kalyx-run Addiewell prison in West Lothian as a new camouflaged form of passive courier service. Though why people should need to go to such lengths when the nick is so understaffed that most of the contraband enters during visiting sessions.



Along with factory and school occupations, public swimming baths are increasingly becoming an effective means of collective action and the focus of community struggles.

- The campaign to **Save Coseley Baths**, started by local residents in the area, has been fighting to keep open the baths in Dudley, Birmingham. Along with holding regular meetings of up to 50 people they staged an angry protest of over 200 people at a council committee meeting to demand the baths remain open to serve the community. The Tory run council decided to shut the baths, due to close permanently on 31st August, after they refused to consider the £2 million repair costs. They are planning to sell off the property to developers.

- Campaigners in another part of Birmingham took a more militant approach by occupying the roof of the **Sparkhill Pool and Fitness Centre**, displaying banners that read "Community Pools First" encouraging local residents to sign petitions to keep Sparkhill Pool open. They also joined **Friends of Moseley Baths** in petitioning Birmingham City Council to re-open the historic grade two listed building of Moseley Baths (pictured above), closed since 2003. As one protestor put it: "The council will only choose what suits them financially. That is not necessarily the best solution for the community".

- Meanwhile over in Somerset residents of Bridgwater organised a campaign to **Save The Splash**, to prevent the closure of their swimming baths by Sedgemoor District council. Protestors marched to the pool with homemade placards appealing to the authorities to reconsider the decision. The council had agreed not to close the pool until a new one had been built, but has since run out of money leaving the residents of Bridgwater without any public swimming facilities, as the new pool is not scheduled to be built until 2012. Ironically the closure is set for the day before the closure of Coseley baths.

- There's something for everyone at this years third **Belfast Anarchist Bookfair** on Saturday 29th August, promoted under the theme of equality. The discussions already advertised cover a range of topics including fighting racism and fascism, women and equality, equality and education, taking on the bosses, equality and Northern Ireland and equality and anarchism. As well as many stalls from the likes of Workers Solidarity Movement, RAG, Solidarity Federation, Anarchist Federation and Antifa Belfast, there will be film showings and live music in the evening as well as an exhibition of Abel Paz's photos from the Spanish revolution.

Email: [organiseireland@yahoo.ie](mailto:organiseireland@yahoo.ie) or visit the website: <http://belfastanarchistbookfair09.blogspot.com/>

# A tour of riot city

As part of the new glasnost of the Metropolitan Police Service, *Freedom* was recently invited to visit the Public Order Training Centre in Gravesend. Okay, not *Freedom* as such, but Police Consultative whatisname ... anyhow, they let us in.

Our little party was taken round by a Public Order Instructor – let's call him Dougal – with six years experience as a trainer and a background in the Territorial Support Group.

Dougal started by explaining the three levels of public order training and what it involved, before leading us into a gym where a group of Level Twos were waiting. One of these helpfully took off his protective gear so we could see how it worked. The full kit is very cumbersome and requires help to get in and out. Dougal also explained its drawbacks, the weight of the helmet leading to whiplash injuries when the head is hit. Hard plastic knee shin and thigh guards have reduced mobility, but were considered necessary after the 2002 Millwall riot where many officers using short shields received leg injuries.

Next we got to handle the shields ourselves. The short shield weighs two kilos and the long shield eight kilos. The other big difference is that the long shield is flexible to help absorb the impact of heavy missile, while the short shield is rigid and can be used offensively. When doing so you should aim at nipple height, Dougal said, to avoid neck and facial injuries.

Even more sweetly, Dougal praised the short shield as it was easier to communicate with people while holding it, whereas the long shield hinders eye contact and is more difficult to hold innocuously by your side.

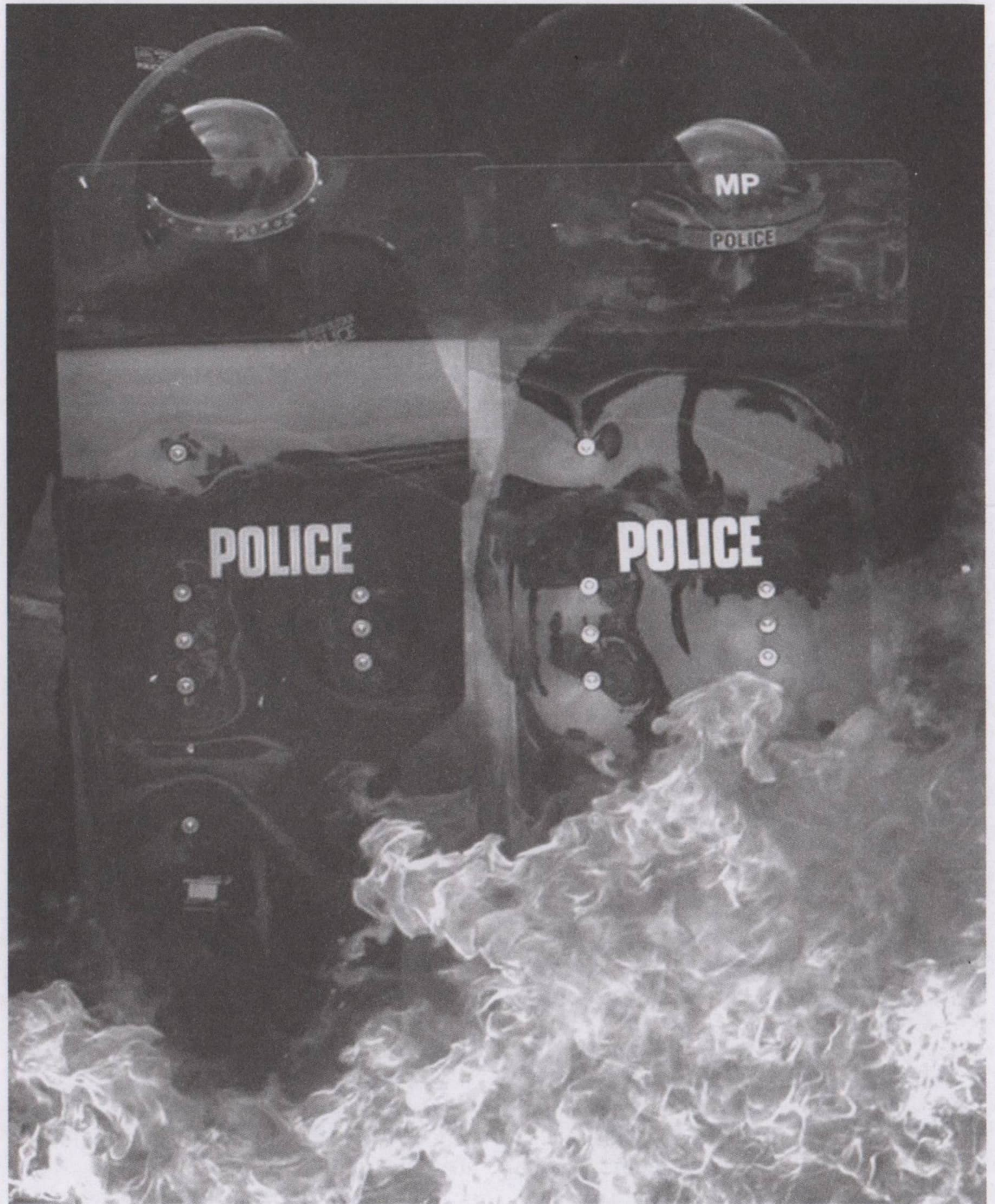
## Turning up the heat

Next we got to visit Lola Court, where the petrol bomb training happens. This little close, with an inner courtyard, features a tunnel entrance to get the experience of fire in an enclosed space and overhead balconies to practice attacks from above à la Broadwater Farm.

For health and safety reasons, only one-third full of petrol milk bottles are used. Dougal worries about this as 'real rioters' could use wine bottles with added polystyrene or rubber for added smoke and fumes.

Another compromise is that half-bricks are simulated by blocks of wood. Dougal explains that the dark blue boiler suits worn are flame retardant but not flameproof. Standing for any length of time in pools of petrol is likely to get you burnt. Or in fact scalded, as the most common cause is heating the sweat that has built up under the protective gear.

Fortunately petrol bombs haven't been used against the Met since the Brixton riot of 1985.



## Tubes and terraces

'Jog on' is apparently the command for real recruits as they are taken round, but we get a leisurely stroll to the mock underground station. They have a tube carriage to practice handling football fans.

Gravesend is also used by the British Transport Police and the City of London as well as nearby county forces. Dougal's key point here is to teach recruits not to stand with their back to the train as they may be pushed onto the track when the train leaves.

Logically the next step is a football ground and there is a bank of seats to practice clearing crowds and extracting troublesome individuals. The best way, says Dougal, is to get into the row behind the person you want, but if that proves difficult you can usually get them at half time when they need a piss.

There is also an gladiators-style block of

hanging punch bags for running through, but sadly it's time to go and, tired but happy, we head for the exit.

On the way out we see our group of Level Twos doing their shield run. They need to manage 500 metres in full kit carrying the long shield in under two minutes 45 seconds to qualify. This, Dougal explains, is not difficult for a healthy person unless you get too nervous beforehand, forget to eat and end up being sick. All the group we watch pass successfully and quite a few seem on the podgy side.

The Level One Territorial Support Group have to do 1,000 metres in six minutes. One of our party asks if there is any other qualification, perhaps to determine psychological or temperamental suitability for the role. Dougal looks pained. Summoning all his patience, he replies in the negative, but his eyes tell us that we really don't understand at all.

## REVIEWS

## WHAT'S ON

## AUGUST

until 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>.

until 2nd September Climate Camp 2009, at a location in London, for more see [climatecamp.org.uk](http://climatecamp.org.uk).

29th A historical walk through the radical Jewish East End with David Rosenberg, for more information see [housmans.com](http://housmans.com) or email [nik@housmans.com](mailto:nik@housmans.com).

29th The Belfast Anarchist Bookfair from 12 noon until 6pm at the Belfast Unemployed Resource Centre, 45-47 Donegal Street, Belfast BT1 2FG, Northern Ireland, see <http://belfastanarchistbookfair09.blogspot.com> for details.

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](http://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](http://geocities.com/bastardsquadcollective/home.html)

## SEPTEMBER

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

8th Disarm DSEi 2009, meet at 12 noon in the City of London, see [dsei.org](http://dsei.org) 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, for more see [bristolanarchistbookfair.org](http://bristolanarchistbookfair.org) or email [bristolanarchistbookfair@riseup.net](mailto:bristolanarchistbookfair@riseup.net).

12th to 16th Working Class Music Festival at The Picket, Jordan Street, Liverpool L1 0BW, with Chumbawamba, Leon Rosselson, Robb Johnson, Attila the Stockbroker and much more, see [workingclassmusic.org.uk](http://workingclassmusic.org.uk) for full details.

## OCTOBER

1st Bath Activist Network meeting from 7.30pm until 9pm downstairs at the Hobgoblin, James Street, Bath, see [myspace.com/bathactivistnetwork](http://myspace.com/bathactivistnetwork) for more or get in touch at [bathactivistnetwork@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:bathactivistnetwork@yahoo.co.uk).

17th and 18th The Great Climate Swoop mass blockade of one of the UK's biggest coal-fired power stations, call 07932 096677 or see [thegreatclimateswoop.org](http://thegreatclimateswoop.org) for further details.

## FILM

## Frozen River

directed by Courtney Hunt

Massena, near the St Regis Iroquois reservation straddling upstate New York and Quebec, where state police have little jurisdiction: part-time convenience-store cashier Ray Eddy (Melissa Leo) approaches bankrupt breaking-point when the deposit to replace their dilapidated trailer with a bigger version to properly accommodate two sons disappears with her compulsive gambler husband. She spots his car driven by local Akwesasne Mohawk Lila Littlewolf (Misty Upham), follows her to reclaim it, and is drawn into perilous but profitable people-trafficking across the eponymous St Lawrence. Lila has her own family issues – her infant was taken by in-laws after his father drowned in a previous smuggling run – so she's also stuck in psychic as well as economic suspended animation. Then the compelling monetary logic of motorised ice-skating with contraband bootfuls at a grand a pop precipitates a series of hair-raising dramas bringing the women closer – initial guarded hostility replaced by tentative mutual respect culminating in generosity and sacrifice inextricably intertwining their lives.

## Borderline Psycho Sis

Director Courtney Hunt (herself hailing from single-parent hard times in Tennessee) took 14 years to incubate *Frozen River*, first fashioning a documentary from meticulous research among the area's populations. The low-budget finished article garnered Grand Jury Sundance prizes and Oscar nominations for her screenwriting and Leo's monumental performance – Quentin Tarantino (hardly gritty social realism's biggest fan) calling it "the most exciting thriller" of the year. Meanwhile Reed Dawson Morano's naturalistic DV captures the austere wintry majesty of an unforgiving landscape, contrasted effectively with the realised script's equally faithful, if considerably less romantic, bleakness of cold lives eked out there. Hunt's superb ensemble sketches a pitch-perfect spectrum of everyday impoverishment's practical and emotional tolls – simultaneously conveying Ray and her family's caring and recklessness, intelligence and ignorance, obstinacy and passivity, while never appearing contrived or stereotypical.

To achieve this, US Indie cinema cliché are mercifully avoided (apart from a guitar-



twanging soundtrack). Instead of patronising the poor as lovably quirky, manipulative plot twists echo the capricious cruelty of fate according to lower-class experience – chiming with our taste for the vulgar generic formulae of thrillers, Westerns or melodramas over depressingly worthy kitchen-sinkery or the exoticising objectification of middle-class charity. Indigenous takes on trade, criminality and ethics then emphasise the cultural and historical ambiguity of borders, laws and sovereignty – though the narrative skew to a white working-class perspective precluded fleshing out fascinating glimpses of tribal community-council justice. Yet the film's integrity is such that the authentic, closely-observed characterisations signal potential for otherwise divided, blighted and alienated communities without its proliferating parallels, metaphors and analogies feeling overly pretentious or preposterous. Thus, corresponding to a disappointingly cursory treatment of illegal immigrants destined for chattel slavery to Snakehead gangs, the casual indifference shown to the Asian aliens itself produces a pivotal intersection of desperate parental measures with which the wretched of all the earth could surely empathise.

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

## QUIZ ANSWERS

1. The Department for Energy and Climate Change. The 'opening windows' plan was scrapped after staff complained about noise.
2. Birdwatching. Though, on reading what he had to say, watching birds is fine. Obsessively travelling thousands of miles to tick a box or crowd a rare vagrant

- might involve rather a lot of travel.
3. Scotland or southern Sweden.
4. The jury in the trial of the Kingsnorth Six, who were on trial for criminal damage after scaling the tower of the Kingsnorth power Station in Kent. It was the opening line of what proved to be a successful defence.

# ¿Dónde están las mujeres?

Rachel Whittaker looks at the forgotten role of women in the Spanish Civil War

Published under the auspices of the Greater Manchester Spanish Civil War Remembrance Group Committee, *A Commemorative Booklet of the Spanish Civil War by Trade Unionists in the North West of England* was originally printed in 2006 to commemorate the 70th anniversary of the Spanish Civil War and is now in its second edition with more than 1,000 copies sold. No mean achievement given that a split in the original project group left those who dared to question the standard Popular Front line with none of the original funding secured for the project.

Indeed, the pamphlet itself appears as a decidedly anarchist take on events, featuring Durruti on the front cover and commemorating not only the victims of Franco but also 70 years since the Barcelona May Days of 1937. What's more, despite being a publication from the north of England, its scope goes beyond this (and the usual focus on the International Brigades) to encompass anarchists and the POUM, with further reference to the Spanish fighters so often sidelined in favour of foreign volunteers but who were most likely to bear the brunt of Franco's subsequent 'purification'. Indeed, the pamphlet's cover states that its main concern lies with "paying homage to the victims of Franco", an element of the conflict that has recently been brought back into international focus by the debate raging in Spain on the excavation of mass graves from the Civil War and its aftermath.

However, despite (or perhaps because of) its efforts to include a diversity of opinion, the pamphlet is not without error and omission. In fact, even a member of the Remembrance Group Committee was prompted to issue a post-publication critique of the first edition entitled *An Anarchist Answers*, in which he doubted its validity as a libertarian overview. Although acknowledging the "enormous amount of research" that characterised the project, Barry Woodling deemed the end result to be "an extraordinary, eclectic mishmash", which attempted to be "all things to all people", even to the point (I would say arguably) of accommodating Stalinism. Whether due to resource and production constraints or a decidedly un-anarchist approach to achieving consensus, none of Barry's suggestions were taken on board in the second edition of July 2008.

Although his 'blink and you'll miss it' overview of the women's collective, *Mujeres Libres*, is included in the pamphlet, Barry was also critical of the wider exclusion of women's role in the Civil War, a criticism



that it is difficult to ignore, or indeed to disagree with. And yet, to see this as symptomatic of contemporary sexism on the part of the editorial team is missing the point.

Barry's piece talks of fruitful collaborations between *Mujeres Libres* and various libertarian groups, including the CNT, but contemporary accounts from women like Mercedes Comaposada often tell a somewhat different story. In fact, when teaching a class sponsored by the CNT in Madrid, Mercedes recalls regularly being reminded by her *compañeros* that "*las mujeres a la cocina y a coser los calcetines*" – women belong in the kitchen or darning socks.

Elsewhere, the use of a Salvador Dali painting appears somewhat incongruous, given the artist's support for Franco, as does the choice of the latter's would-be assassin, Stuart Christie, to provide the introduction – especially when the editor himself published a pamphlet questioning the validity of claims made in Christie's autobiography (see *God Help Them As Need Heroes*, 2005, Northern

Voices). Pragmatism, perhaps, or maybe an attempt to cultivate some of the fleeting 'celebrity anarchist' status conferred on Christie and his granny by *The Grauniad* et al?

There is also a further tendency here to imply that *all* Spaniards are all-round 'good eggs' and stalwarts of a forgotten egalitarianism, despite the ongoing appeal in Spain of a similar nationalist fervour to that which resulted in Franco becoming the most enduring dictator of his period. A myth that is adequately dispelled by Jason Webster's graphic account of a nationalist mob baying for an immigrant's blood in Valencia (see *¡Guerra!*, 2006) or Guillermo del Toro's juxtaposition of the Spaniards' fierce independence with their capacity for subscribing to 'someone's else's truth' in *Pan's Labyrinth*.

Nevertheless, I would say that for all its faults, and even if they had not had limited resources available to them, this pamphlet stands up as a testament to what can be



## Review

◀ page 15

achieved by small groups of committed individuals – as did the exhibition at The Basement in Manchester, which accompanied its original publication. Were it not for such groups over the last seven decades, the story of anarchists in the Spanish Civil War may have been lost in the insidious fog of Stalinist fairytales.

It is, however, let down by the lack of any significant effort to include the role of women in the Spanish Civil War's complex narrative, despite having the chance to rectify this in the second edition. Hopefully, this will be addressed should a third edition emerge and might also encourage debate about the ongoing perception of women as playing

propaganda, domestic or other support roles in revolutionary movements, if their contribution is even acknowledged at all. It's seventy years since the Spanish Civil War ended, so you would think we had moved on from the attitudes of anarchists on the Aragon front who objected to the presence of women lest they 'frighten the mules'.

To get a copy of the pamphlet *A Commemorative Booklet of the Spanish Civil War by Trade Unionists in the North West of England*, please send a cheque for £3 (inc. p&p), made payable to Tameside Trade Union Council, to Greater Manchester 70th Anniversary SCWRG, c/o 46 Kingsland Road, Rochdale, Lancashire OL11 3HQ. Also see: Martha Ackelsburg's *Free Women of Spain: Anarchism and the Struggle for the Emancipation of Women* (2004: AK Press), which is available from Freedom bookshop.

## THE QUIZ

1. Which organisation switched its air conditioning off for three days in an environmentally-friendly move, before switching it back on again three days later?
2. According to Professor Spencer Schaffner of the University of Illinois, which unlikely pastime is not "environmentally friendly"?
3. According to French chefs, where might connoisseurs turn to for fine wines in a climate-changed future?
4. Who was asked "They care about Tuvalu. Do you too?"

Answers on page 14

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