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TERROR LEGISLATION IN TURMOIL

European court rules that the UK stop and search terrorism law is illegal

Two activists have won a landmark victory in the European courts over the UK police's use of the controversial anti-terrorism laws to stop and search political activists. On Tuesday 12th January Pennie Quinton and Kevin Gillan won their case against the Metropolitan Police in the European Court of Human Rights over being stopped and searched under Section 44 of the Terrorism Act (2000) at the DSEi arms fair protest at Docklands, London in 2003.

The court ruled the police had violated Article 8 of the European Convention on Human Rights – the right to respect private life, in stopping and searching the pair who were on their way to the demonstration, as the powers under Section 44 were “neither sufficiently circumscribed nor subject to adequate legal safeguards against abuse”.

The seven judges, including one from the UK, and Section Registrar unanimously agreed that not only did the searches constitute an interference with private life, but were also applied in a manner that meant there was no form of legal protection

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LENS CAP SAVE THE SAVE THE WHALE BOAT



Sea Shepherd trimaran the *Ady Gil* after being rammed by a Japanese whale hunter ... sorry, 'scientific research vessel', *Shonan Maru No. 2*, in an unprovoked attack. Campaigners are now trying to raise money for a new and sturdier boat.

ROYAL MAIL HONOURS ANARCHIST ARTIST

Paul Cannell, the artist responsible for the artwork of Primal Scream's classic 1990s album *Screamadelica*, has had the image commemorated on a new set of Royal Mail stamps. The Post Office has chosen ten album covers as part of a 'design classics' series acknowledging the artistic merit of record sleeves that are as culturally significant as the music they were designed to represent.

Cannell, a one-time milkman with no formal artistic training and described as an anarchist by Primal Scream singer Bobby Gillespie, began designing record sleeves in the early 1990s for such groups as Flowered Up and Manic Street Preachers, working for both Heavenly records and Creation records who gave him studio space in their offices. His unconventional approach to art, using

anything from household undercoat paint to car body filler, along with a love of punk and its aesthetics, abstract art and cubism, made him the ideal artist to encapsulate the post-rave hedonistic culture of the early '90s music scene, mixing child-like menace with exuberant colour.

Tragically Cannell took his own life in July 2005, and never received full recognition from the art establishment for his body of work. As he revealed in an interview “I was at the Royal Academy doing a photo session for a project. Managed to nick an apple pie and cup of coffee from the canteen. I'm quite proud of that, actually ...”

Other stamps feature the cover of the Clash's *London Calling* album and New Order's *Power Corruption and Lies*.

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NEWS

IN BRIEF

FAILURE: M&S boss Stuart Rose has admitted publicly that he's not very good at his job.

In a statement this week, Sir Stuart, the executive chairman of Marks & Spencer, said "There is no doubt about it, we have been bested by Waitrose. It's not a secret."

M&S said its UK food sales, based on stores open at least a year, rose 0.4% in the 13 weeks to 26th December. That compares with like-for-like sales growth of 9% at Waitrose.

Waitrose is the food division of the British retailer and workers' co-operative the John Lewis Partnership, and its boss earns barely one-third of Sir Stuart's £1.76m annual salary.

Just shows co-operation is best but even more could be achieved by cutting the bosses pay even further.

PRISON: Three men have been jailed for their involvement in a £33m drug deal, after the UK's largest ever heroin seizure.

Harminder Chana, 32, was sentenced to 17 years; Abdul Rob, 30, was sentenced to 23 years, and Atif Khan, 34, to 15 and a half years. All were from east London.

Police said the 730lb (330kg) of heroin seized in the case would have supplied more than 8,000 addicts for a year. Thirteen boxes were held at a motorway service station in Kent in April 2008, Kingston Crown Court had heard.

At an earlier hearing Patrick Kuster, 37, from the Netherlands, was jailed for 26 years for conspiracy to supply heroin.

FREE SPEECH: Five Muslim men who protested at a homecoming parade in Luton where soldiers were called murderers have been found guilty of making threats.

The charges related to a march by The Royal Anglian Regiment through the town in March 2009.

The five men, all from Luton, were convicted of using threatening, abusive or insulting words and behaviour likely to cause harassment and distress. Two men were cleared of all charges at Luton Magistrates' Court.

District Judge Carolyn Mellanby said: "I have no doubt it is abusive and insulting to tell soldiers to 'Go to hell' – to call soldiers murderers, rapists and baby killers.

"It is not just insulting to the soldiers but to the citizens of Luton who were out on the streets that day to honour and welcome soldiers home.

"Citizens of Luton are entitled to demonstrate their support for the troops without experiencing insults and abuse."

She went on: "The fact that they say they did not intend their remarks to be insulting does not amount to defence in law.

"They were fully aware that shocking phrases in such circumstances would inevitably cause distress."

LENS CAP A SNOWY NEW YEAR



We hope our readers had a festive holiday season and avoided the perils of over-indulgence adopted by the Wolverine, or Glutton, pictured above.

Whitechapel anarchists ride again

Continuing our support of local anarchist projects, here's a report from our own local area. If you'd like the world to be inspired by what *your* group are doing, then why not send in an article.

WAG (Whitechapel Anarchist Group) are finally returning to the streets after setting out our election strategy last Sunday.

Since the Anarchist Bookfair we're now a grand and a half closer to getting our own printing press and want to get the rest of the money from a celebration of resistance so, on the 3rd April, there'll be a day of anti-election and anti-fascist talks, a special film showing from an award winning director and a benefit from some mainstream musicians (acts and venue to be announced soon).

Until then our campaign kicks off with a new electoral special of our local free sheet, which will deal with the candidates running in elections and offering anarchist alternatives to their crude policies. This will soon be on

the streets of Whitechapel. We'll also be working with other notorious groups such as Class War and the Cambridge Anarchist Group to get a national fight going. WAG are keeping an eye on Barking and Dagenham to help an anarchist group form there in order to counter their BNP infestation and to offer a real alternative to the SWP's Unite Against Fascism 'vote for any master as long as their not a fash' anti-BNP operation.

But the main fight is at home. Every politician will be desperate to get their ideas across, so we have to be in meetings and confronting them on the streets – nobody has the right to govern anyone.

We hope other local groups will join with Whitechapel anarchists in subverting every single piece of propaganda the political class decide to spew on to our streets and put out our own messages of self organisation and revolution.

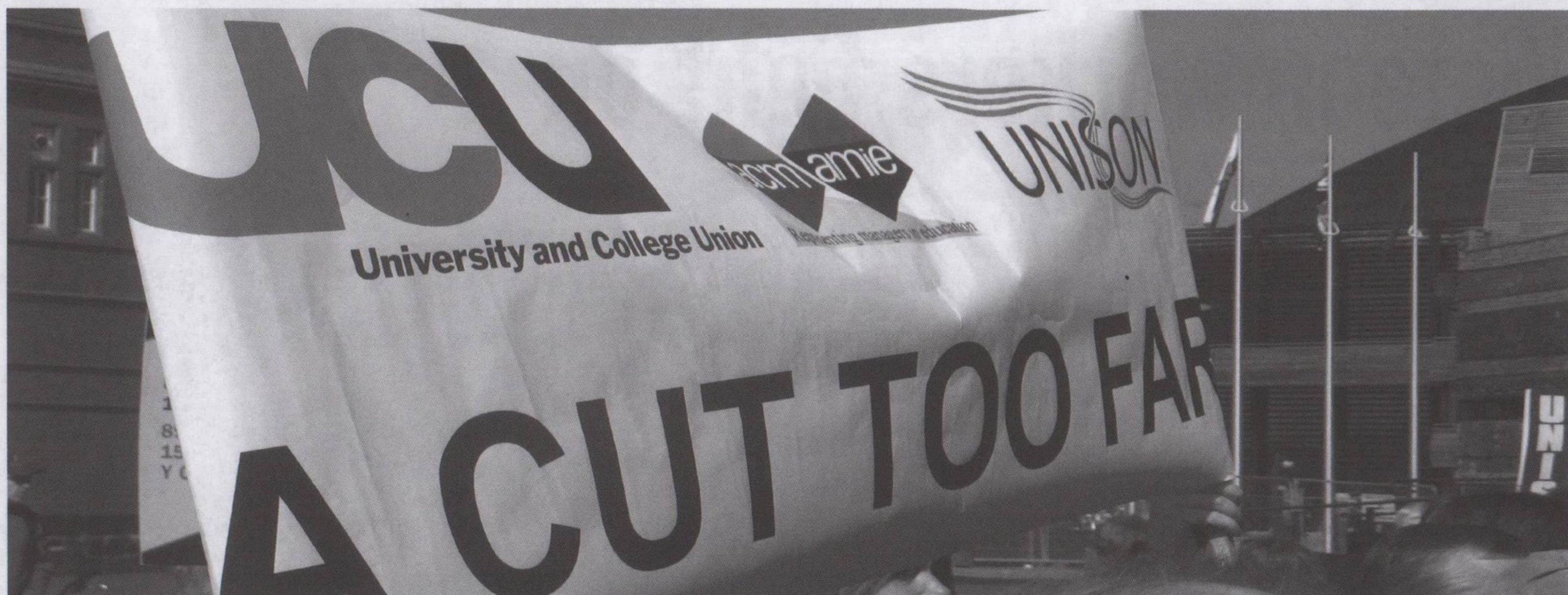
Gawain Williams

ABOUT ANARCHISM

Nicolas Walter with an introduction by Natasha Walter

The case for anarchism as a pragmatic political philosophy is explained in this new edition of the classic work by Nicolas Walter, who was a writer, journalist and active protester against the power of the state. It has often been reprinted and translated into many languages, including French, Spanish, Japanese, Serbo-Croat, Chinese, Polish and Russian.

available at £4.20 (post free) from
Freedom Press, 84b Whitechapel High Street, London E1 7QX



Bad news for students and workers

There has been growing opposition to Peter Mandelson's plans to slash funding for universities. In a letter to the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) late in December, Mandelson, himself a beneficiary of a free Oxford education, announced cuts totalling £398 million. Earlier in the year Mandelson told universities that they would have to find savings of £180 million in their budgets. The result of this has been savage cuts across the industry. Universities such as Sussex, Kings, Leeds and Wolverhampton have announced hundreds of redundancies and decimated course programmes.

The government has insisted that these cutbacks should not affect the quality of education in the UK, but a recent survey suggests a possible 'brain drain' if the plans were introduced. Over a third (35%) of professors polled said they would consider pursuing their academic career abroad if the cutbacks go ahead and over two-thirds (69%) say they opposed the cuts.

In December the University and College Union (UCU) handed in a petition objecting to the planned cutbacks with almost 18,000 signatures that came from the full range of academic disciplines and included six Nobel Prize winners and over 3,000 professors.

Student opposition to the cutbacks is increasing with campaigns in Hull, Leeds, Sheffield, Staffordshire, Newcastle, Cambridge, Manchester Met, Sussex, London Met and elsewhere heating up. In November students at London College of Communications (LCC) occupied their university in protest at the cuts. Student anarchists are currently organising themselves in the Autonomous Students Network (see autonomous-students.net).

Meanwhile, the British Chambers of Commerce's (BCC) warn that workers can expect to endure another tough year in 2010. Their latest Monthly Business Survey reveals that 63% of businesses are planning wage freezes or pay cuts next year, while 18% are considering the removal of benefits, such as bonuses and gym membership. Despite hopes

that the end of the recession may have arrived in the final quarter of 2009, employers plan on persistently squeezing the employee pay packet in 2010.

A very fragile recovery was highlighted in the BCC survey, as a majority of firms (67%) stated that they would operate at the same or reduced capacity levels in the first quarter of 2010.

The Bank of England's regional agents also noted that firms up and down the country had relatively few plans to employ more workers. Apparently, a number of companies are to let headcount drift down by not replacing staff that leave. This will be especially bad news for students who graduate later this year as they will have great difficulty finding work.

Richard Lambert Director-General of the Confederation of British Industries (CBI), the UK's top business lobby organisation, has called on the government to deal with the current crises by focusing relentlessly on flexible labour markets, i.e. lower wages, poorer working conditions and less job security.

Terror legislation in turmoil

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for individuals involved, ruling the searches were "not, therefore, 'in accordance with the law' and it follows that there has been a violation of Article 8 of the Convention."

This is the first time the terrorism laws have been successfully challenged in such a way through the courts and calls into question not only the police's misuse in applying Section 44, but the legislation itself as a breach of human rights and an infringement on civil liberties. The government, who introduced the act as a replacement to the Prevention of Terrorism Act, are now compelled to reassess the application of such a policy.

As the legislation currently stands, the police have the right to stop and search anyone under Section 44 within a defined area over a defined period, authorised by a senior officer, but confirmed by the Home Secretary, for articles which could be used in connection with terrorism. Section 44 does not require the police to have 'reasonable suspicion' that an offence has been committed nor there is any suspicion of wrongdoing by the individual. This gave rise to the application by Quinton and Gillan for a judicial review in the domestic courts and finally, some six years later, recognition in the European courts, who noted in their judgement: "The individual can be stopped

anywhere and at any time, without notice and without any choice as to whether or not to submit to a search."

Sections 44 of the Terrorism Act came into force in February 2001 and has been in permanent use in the capital as part of a rolling programme of successive section 44 authorisations, each covering the whole of the Metropolitan Police district and each for the maximum permissible period, 28 days, have been made and confirmed ever since that time. There were 256,000 stops under the terror law in 2008/09 but just 0.6% resulted in any arrest.

Both Quinton and Gillan were awarded 33,850 euros for costs and expenses.

ANALYSIS

Visteon workers fight on

Workers at the car part manufacturers who won a momentous battle for redundancy payment from Ford motor giants last year are still locked in a bitter dispute with their ex-employers over money owed through the pension fund after the collapse of Visteon UK.

Visteon UK, formerly the main car parts supplier to Ford, went into administration on 31st March 2009, sacking its entire workforce of around 560 people without notice. The workers immediately responded by occupying the three factories in Belfast, Basildon and Enfield, and when evicted mounted a 24 hour-a-day picket to prevent the administrators stripping the plants of machinery, components and finished parts.

After a month of intensive struggle by the sacked workers, supported by anarchists, many of whom were instrumental in organising the Ford-Visteon Workers Support Group in Enfield, Ford bosses capitulated and agreed to honour its obligations with an improved redundancy package, but excluded any provision for the pension fund. A pension action group was established, which now has over 800 members, to continue the fight for what is owed to the workers.

Visteon was created in 2000 by Ford as a 'spin-off' company with the promise of a job for life for all Visteon employees as well as assurances that they would continue to match the terms and conditions of Ford workers, with the same pension provisions.

Steve Sharpe, co-chair of the Visteon Pension Action Group (VPAG), which has coordinated a series of protests to demand their full pension entitlement from Ford said: "It's not unusual to move manufacturing outside of the UK to reduce costs, but



unfortunately they didn't just shut the manufacturing plant down, they shut the whole company down. We're all fighting like crazy because when we split off from Ford we were promised mirrored terms and conditions, including our pension."

The dispute also affects workers from another Ford spin-off company based in Swansea, which was bought out by Linamar in 2007 and is still in operation. In total, some 3,000 former Visteon workers, including 700 from the Swansea plant, face massive cuts to their pensions.

Andy Belch, a Visteon pensioner and former worker at the Basildon plant, said: "I worked for 38 years as a Ford employee and paid into the pension fund every day. I had only three months in Visteon scheme. Now my pension will now reduce by around 42%, without future rises, despite commitments made by Ford to employees and unions at spin off to protect my pension."

The finances are being investigated by the Pensions Regulator and could be taken over by the Government's insurance scheme, the Pension Protection Fund (PPF) which would severely limit pay outs. Currently around 1000 workers are in the process of having their pensions reduced to PPF levels. The PPF was established in 2005 by New Labour after the struggles involving Cardiff steel workers who were left without a pension following the collapse of Allied Steel and Wire in 2002. The fund offers compensation to pension scheme members when a company goes bust and is unable to sustain its financial commitments. Members of the Visteon UK pension scheme are likely to lose more than 40% of their pension because of the funding levels of the scheme and the PPF compensation cap along with £1.23bn financial black hole in the PPF making any future payouts precarious at best.

Supporters of the campaign understand that before Visteon UK went into administration, leaving behind an under-funded pension scheme and a £669m debt, senior executives created another Visteon company, Visteon Engineering Systems, taking with them key management staff and transferring their pensions into a separate new account. The original company was then placed into administration, factories shut down and remaining employees made redundant.

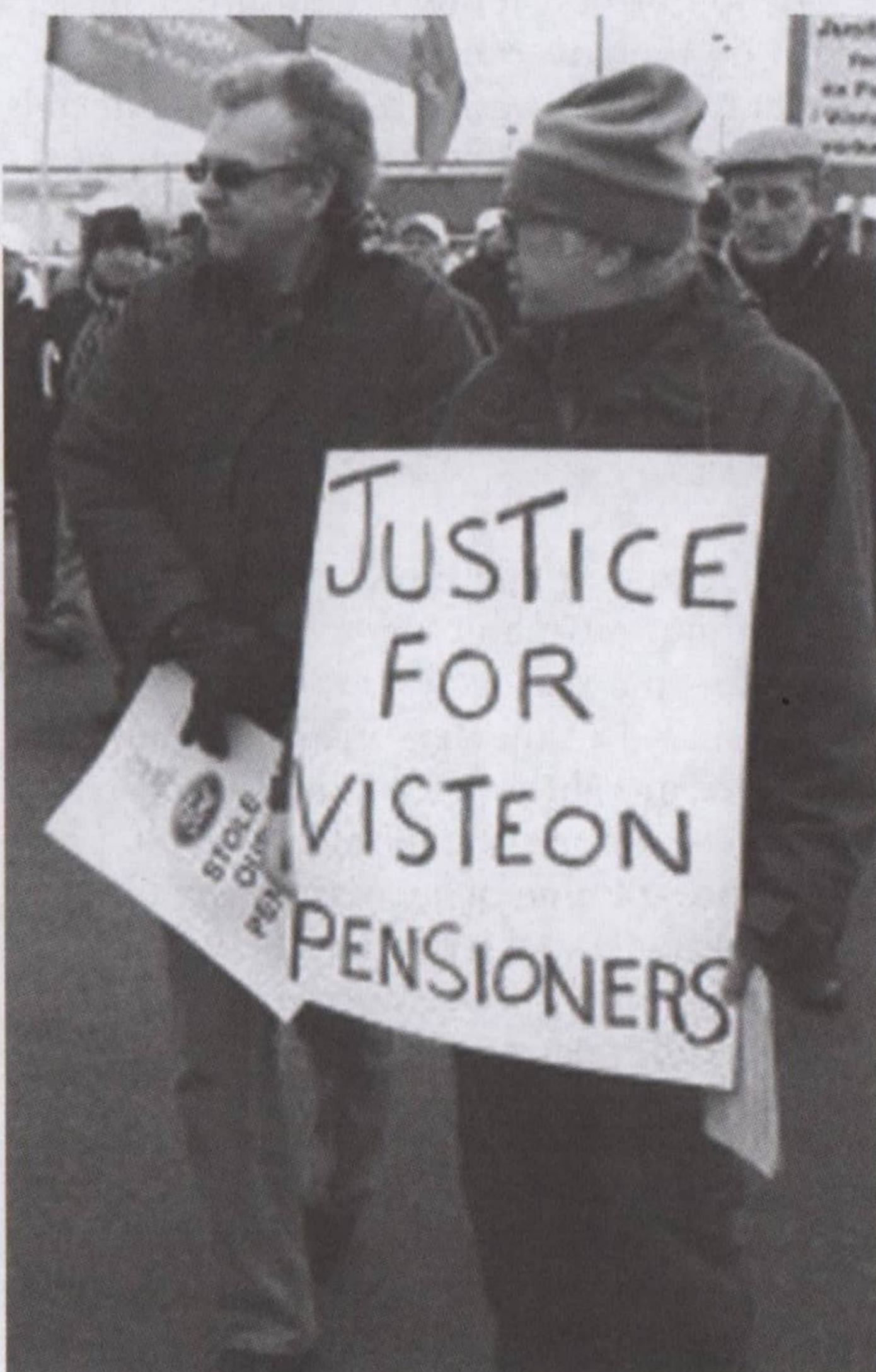
Investigations by VPAG have also uncovered that the Ford pension fund was 120% funded in 2000 at the time of the spin off, but had a £49m shortfall by the final transfer to Visteon. Workers are angered that Ford's business dealings have put the value of their pensions in jeopardy and have staged a number of public meetings and protests to voice their discontent. There is an ongoing protest each Saturday and Sunday between 10am and 4pm outside the Enfield branch of Dagenham Motors

Around 120 workers met in Swansea before Christmas to discuss talks scheduled to take place between members of the VPAG and senior Ford executives in New York on Friday 22nd January. To coincide with this important meeting VPAG have also organised a mass demonstration outside the Welsh Assembly in Cardiff the day before the talks, and people from across the country are encouraged to attend to show their support.

Coaches to the demonstration have been laid on for free and are booked to leave:

- Basildon at 6am from the Sports and Social Club, Gardiners Close.
- Enfield at 6.45am from the Homebase car park just off the A10.

Bring warm clothes, refreshments and something to eat. Visit visteonpensionactiongroup.co.uk for contact information and to book a seat.



IN BRIEF

GLOBAL WARMING: Has it been disproved by the latest set of snow flurries? Was it all a scam? Boringly there's a simple scientific explanation.

The arctic oscillation an atmospheric circulation pattern in which the atmospheric pressure over the polar regions varies in opposition with that over middle latitudes (about 45° N) on time scales ranging from weeks to decades; the oscillation extends through the depth of the troposphere and, from January to March, it extends upward into the stratosphere where it modulates in the strength of the westerly vortex that encircles the arctic polar cap region.

Which is a posh way of saying when it's warm in the arctic it's cold here and vice versa, leading to our regular sea ice update.

ARCTIC: The Nation Snow and Ice Data Centre have published figures for sea ice showing annual average extent for 2009 was 11.18 million square kilometers (4.32 million square miles), 970,000 square kilometers (375,000 square miles) or 8.0% below 1979 to 2000 average and 740,000 square kilometers (286,000 square miles) or 6.2% below the 1979 to 2008 average.

WAR: Sadly there has been no let up for the people of Afghanistan. The 'surge' has not brought a reduction in fighting as it supposedly did in Iraq, although many people think mass bribery did. Already fifteen coalition troops have been killed (up to the 12th January) and doubtless more by the time you read this.

This may appear light compared to the 70-plus a month last summer but the winter usually stops most action and we can expect things to get worse in the spring.

JURY: Or not. Four men have appeared in court in the first Crown Court criminal trial to be held without a jury in England and Wales for more than 350 years.

The case concerns four men accused of a £1.75m armed robbery at a cash depot at Heathrow Airport, west London, in 2004.

Last June, the Lord Chief Justice, Lord Judge, made legal history by allowing the trial to be heard by a judge alone as he feared jury 'tampering'.

FREE SPEECH EXTRA: A radical Islamist group that was planning a march through Wootton Bassett will be banned under counter-terrorism laws, Home Secretary Alan Johnson has said.

Islam4UK had planned the protest at the Wiltshire town to honour Muslims killed in the Afghanistan conflict.

An Islam4UK spokesman said that "What the people will see is if you don't agree with the government and you want to expose their foreign policy, then freedom quickly dissipates and turns into dictatorship."

Disability: a claimant's view

According to a recent OECD report, the UK already has one of the most stringent tests for assessing disability in the world. However, that has not stopped Labour introducing the 'Employment and Support Allowance', yet another 'get-tough' initiative aimed at reducing the 2.6 million claimants currently receiving Incapacity Benefit (IB). Labour have blamed the Tories for this state of affairs, but have achieved little themselves – apart from enraging the disability lobby.

I first got into trouble with my back in 1993, through working in libraries with work stations poorly adapted for computer use. My GP prescribed anti-inflammatory tablets and advised me to carry on working – advice which was subsequently reversed. Then I tried physiotherapy, which made the pain worse, and acupuncture, which achieved little. I had x-ray, MRI and ultrasound scans, all of which showed no problem, but by now rest days were used merely to recover and get my pain down to tolerable levels. The best advice, which did bear some fruit when followed, came from the GP's receptionist(!), when she told me *sotto voce*, "Alan you will get no further with the NHS, you need to see an osteopath". We are now well into 1994.

I worked spasmodically until 1996, then gave up. I still, 13 years later, have pain every day, which gets worse through repeated stooping, sitting on firm chairs, lifting heavy shopping, or even key-boarding for more than, say, 15 minutes. I thought them weird, but it soon became clear that symptoms like mine are not uncommon. Besides my GP, I also saw two Benefit Agency Doctors, and had no trouble claiming long-term benefits. In 1996 Invalidity Benefit, as it was then called, paid just over £100 per week – not bad – until Major's government slashed it to just over £60 per week, made it taxable and renamed it Incapacity Benefit. When Labour took over in 1997, there was talk of reducing IB to the level of Job Seekers Allowance (JSA), but instead dramatically raised Council Tax, which effectively cut *all* benefits and pushed

claimants towards means-testing. I received a flyer inviting me to a 'work-focused interview', but ignored it since there was no mention of a medical input. Nothing has changed, but Labour's propaganda, coupled with my inability to prove that I have real physical problems, makes me feel vulnerable.

Things didn't turn really nasty until 2007, when I was sent a hefty form to fill out. Ominously the word 'pain' did not appear on it – until added by me on each page. Another 'medical' followed, but this time, while I answered his questions, the doctor was typing away on a lap-top. As became clear later, he was trying to put together a case against my claim. I was shocked when told in a letter that I had scored only two points, my benefit was stopped and my P45 enclosed. The offer of a loan followed soon after, an offer I was fortunately able to ignore.

Having decided to appeal against the decision, my GP provided me with a supporting letter. When it came, the appeal was heard by an independent doctor and a lawyer, and took about 40 minutes. I had two witnesses; no one appeared for the DWP, but this, it seems, is normal. The verdict, in my favour, came in writing for me to take away: amazing! The DWP's miserly two points had been increased to 10. I got back all of the benefit which had been stopped, but the whole process took six months, and had done my developing anxiety and depression no good at all.

I had been encouraged to appeal by an ex-DWP employee, who told me that most of the DWP's doctors would never make it in a hospital or general practice.

Six months passed when I was dismayed to receive yet another form, with another follow-on medical, but this time there was no lap-top and no further trouble. But, I was now quite paranoid about receiving any more brown A5 envelopes from Belfast. This is the reality of 'welfare reform'.

A. Claimant



INTERNATIONAL

IN BRIEF

EL SALVADOR: Human rights groups have expressed concern after the killing of two environmental activists and threats against a community radio station in Cabanas after they raised objections to a major new mining operation in the country. Amnesty International reported that Ramiro Rivera was killed on 20th December and Dora Alicia Recinos Sorto, who was eight months pregnant, died on 26th December after campaigning against the new gold mine.

GERMANY: Under controversial new legislation, German employers must now submit data on their workers to a central information storage hub known as ELENA, affecting as many as 40 million people. In addition to data on salaries, the central database will also store information about whether an employee has participated in strike action, and data on worker absenteeism.

INDIA: After eight years in court, unions representing more than 1,200 workers at Nestlé India's factories in Moga, Ponda and Bicholim have signed collective bargaining agreements on wages and benefits for the first time – marking a major achievement in their year-long struggle for the right to wage bargaining. The agreements also include wage scales and wage information that previously were declared 'secret' by management.

ISRAEL: Histadrut, the biggest Israeli trade union federation, has declared that it will be allowing legal migrant workers to become members as early as March 2010. Until now, migrant workers could not join, but three years ago a new trade union federation, Koach La Ovdim, started organising mostly in contract work and temporary employment. This, along with increasingly common militancy among Chinese construction workers, has probably contributed to Histadrut's policy change.

POLAND: Workers from Collar Textil have threatened to escalate a major dispute with the government and managers at their plant in Opatow unless they see six months of unpaid wages and get help from the state. Hundreds of staff became involved in the dispute last month when it became clear that bosses were moving equipment out of the factory and preparing to run off with the remaining funds. After ten days of looting by managers, workers occupied the factory, demanding that it be formally declared bankrupt – the only way in which they can become eligible for state aid.

SERBIA: Over 100 people protested in Belgrade on 3rd January to demand the release of the Belgrade Six. The protest went from the Ministry of 'Justice' to the prison where the six are being held. They have been in custody for four months now, awaiting trial charged with 'international terrorism' in connection with minor vandalism at the Greek Embassy.

LENS CAP SPANISH CENTENARY

The cover of the CNT's monthly publication, 'Gaceta-Sindical', for January 2010. It features the CNT logo, the number '363', and the date 'Enero 2010'. The cover includes a red and black flag with the text '100 Años de Lucha' and a portrait of Rafael Rodríguez. The cover also lists various articles and sections like 'Gaceta sindical y económica', 'Actualidad', and 'Cultura'.

The red and black flag featured on the front of a special edition of the Spanish anarcho-sindicalist union CNT's monthly publication of the same name. The union, which spent decades underground with its leadership operating in exile due to repression by General Franco and experienced a calamitous split in the years immediately after his death, is celebrating its 100th birthday this year.

Green scientists show red fire

Environmental researchers at state-owned group ISPRA were due to finish a rooftop occupation of their labs, as *Freedom* went to press, after negotiations were agreed over the firing of nearly one third of company staff.

Last year saw 200 people sacked, while another 250 on temporary contracts have been put on notice that they could lose their jobs in 2010.

Major cutbacks in the department include work on waste management, air pollution, nuclear waste, marine ecosystems and other departments, which critics say will cripple Italy's ability to monitor environmental issues.

The de-funding of ISPRA was announced by the government earlier this year as part of what is suspected to be a shift towards the use of private companies for monitoring

– which are not subject to the scrutiny rules ISPRA maintains.

Scientists at ISPRA have been outraged by the decision and over the last month have taken part in a number of protests, including the release of a video on YouTube in which they acted out the 'gunning down of science' by suited bureaucrats and the occupation of a ministry building as well as the rooftop vigil.

Twenty-one protestors have stayed on the roof for nearly two months during the dispute, calling for all staff contracts to be renewed and "the revitalisation of the institution which can only come through our professionalism."

The dispute has come amid rising tensions between the scientific community and the government which has led to a call for a national science strike later this month.

Notes from the United States

Despite talk of a recovery from the recession, financial scandals continue: new figures released over the holidays showed that CEOs of the top ten failed or bailed-out Wall Street firms were paid an average US\$28.9 million (£17.9 million) in the years immediately before the recent financial meltdown; that's 575 times the median income for US families. The Obama administration says it will extend the Wall Street bailout program for almost another year.

New American Media has meanwhile reported that loans handed out to struggling

small businesses as part of President Obama's stimulus package have largely shut out minority businesses – especially those owned by African Americans and Latinos.

Over 91% of the special small business loans went to white-owned businesses. Just 3% went to Latino-owned businesses, and only 1.5% to black-owned firms.

In five states (Alabama, Arkansas, New Hampshire, South Dakota, and Wyoming) every single firm that received a loan was white-owned. In eight other states, including

Les celebs join migrants' battle

Famous faces back up picket lines

French celebrities have joined the picket lines of over 6,000 migrant workers who have been downing tools and occupying workplaces for the last three months against their lack of working rights and victimisation as *sans papiers*.

Football legend Lilian Thuram, actress Josiane Balasko, star of *Chocolat* Juliette Binoche, comedian Guy Bedos and Antoine de Caunes – known in Britain as the presenter of Channel 4's *Eurotrash* – were among those sharing a 'cake of kings' in solidarity with the strikers on 6th January.

They are among a growing number of national celebrities who have voiced their support for the migrants' cause, despite a near total blackout of information in the mainstream French media.

Speaking to the left-wing *l'Humanite* newspaper, comic Josiana Balasko said: "We thought it would be nice to share this symbolic cake of kings with these undocumented workers. They have been in France for years, they work here and pay taxes yet their situation is unbelievable! Nobody talks about them."

Director Phillipe Lioret said: "These undocumented workers have been in France for years, their children are educated here. They do not take advantage of the system, it is the system that benefits from them, so it is normal that they should have accompanying rights, such as freedom of movement, without having to hug the walls like shadows."

Notes from the Unites States

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Louisiana and Nevada, all but one loan went to a white-owned firm.

So it's hardly surprising that hundreds of protesters marched on the offices of the banking giant JP Morgan Chase in December to demand better treatment of customers facing foreclosure.

Darren Duarte of the Neighborhood Assistance Corporation of America, NACA, commented on Chase's activities: "...people are being thrown out on the streets, and I think bankers could do more. The President is talking a lot about it, but he's not requiring them or taking action. We want him to take action today."

Although appealing to the state might not be particularly helpful, what is more significant is that – according to the NACA – over 350,000 people have taken part in a dozen cities nationwide as part of the group's Save the Dream tour.

In late December in California, a group of students at San Francisco State University



Antoine de Caunes, Juliette Binoche and other celebrities share la galette des rois

"I am very concerned that the policy of this government instills xenophobic tensions. This populism sickens me..."

The strikes started in October after the French government responded to years of campaigning over the precarious and unfair working conditions undocumented migrants live in with what were derided as 'tokenistic concessions'.

The ruling UMP offered a structure for 'regularising', or making official, the status of migrant workers, but with restrictions so harsh that the vast majority were left no better off than before.

Without official recognition, migrants have few workplace rights and face constant attacks on their conditions with little redress.

Following the government's announcement, militants across France were outraged both by the poor offer and by the response of conservatives in the massive CGT labour union, who attempted to present it as a victory.

A wave of stoppages resulted, spreading outwards from Paris into the rest of country, and temp agencies across the nation were invaded by workers demanding full rights. It is thought that up to 1,800 workplaces have been affected by the strikes so far, mainly in Paris, Oise and Orleans, and 30 workplaces occupied.

The government has responded by threatening to begin the closure of workplaces which employ *sans-papier* workers.

Harsh penalties for Russian roadblocks

Activist groups operating in Russia are set to have the screws turned on them after Russia's parliament began debating new proposals to fine people thousands of pounds and offer lengthy jail terms simply for blocking traffic.

Each individual caught blocking vital roads or railways could face fines worth up to £2,500 and up to two years in jail if the new rules go through.

The current debate is thought to be the direct result of an escalating series of conflicts between workers and Russian business magnates, who have been less and less willing to pay wages on time as the economy continues to stagnate.

Left and right wing protests have also been growing in recent years.

Factories in factory towns have been blocking roads to bring attention to their cause with some success, as Prime Minister Vladimir Putin has been dragged out of Moscow to remonstrate with bosses.

briefly occupied a campus building in support of accessible, affordable education. The protest is the latest in a series of actions against fee hikes and budget cuts at California universities.

- As new figures show the US general prison population has reached an all-time high of 2.3 million people, the Supreme Court has refused to review a lower court's dismissal of a suit against former Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld and other top US military officials for the torture of four former Guantanamo Bay prisoners.

In 2008 the DC Circuit Court ruled that the four have no constitutional rights; they are not persons under the law. The lead attorney in the case, Eric Lewis, said, "The final word on whether these men had a right not to be tortured or a right to practice their religion free from abuse is that they did not. Future prospective torturers can now draw comfort."

Louis Further

FEATURE

2010 International Stay Out Of Jail Year

As many comrades know, 2010 is International Stay Out Of Jail Year. Here at Freedom we are proud to do our part by publishing this short guide to avoiding incarceration.

Globally over nine million people are in prison and not one of them likes it. We can't guarantee anything, but following these simple points will give you a fighting chance to avoid the pokey.

The law is that in England and Wales, so do check up on the legislation if you live elsewhere. Here are three simple points to remember and the four ways of getting off should you be before the bench.

1. Avoiding Getting Caught.

Prevention is better than a cure. The simplest plan is to avoid committing crimes, but in these days of the overarching state and voluminous legislation, combined with the need to live, it's not that easy. While we would certainly not give tips to enable people to commit anti-social crimes, most people who end up in court from demonstrations and political events had no idea they would end up in the cells when they got up that morning. The most important thing when going on any event is to have situational awareness.

2. Don't make it easy for them.

If you have the misfortune to be arrested, don't despair. The cops get a lot of convictions from people admitting to things that they don't have enough evidence to

prove. Some people even admit to things they haven't done.

Thanks to the wonderful liberal democracy in which we live, the cops still have to prove what you've done wrong not make you tell them. Say 'no comment' to all police questions (for full information see *Freedom* vol. 70, no. 21, 7th November 2009 page 13, or on our website at freedompress.opg.uk). You are entitled to a copy of the Police Codes of practice for treating detainees. Read it and, as you do, reflect that these aren't rights that were won lightly – that booklet is in fact distilled rioting

3. Work on your defence.

If you can, get professional legal help. In these days of restricted legal aid you may find it hard enough just to get legal representation. However this doesn't mean that once you've got a lawyer you can sit back and let them get on with it.

By tradition solicitors are 'instructed' by their clients. This is exactly what you should do. Tell them how you want to run your case and let them supply the legal expertise for dealing with the complexities of the system. They will not have the time (or, more accurately, funding) to do everything you want so you and hopefully your mates need to go through the statements and CCTV footage, find witnesses and do all the donkey work so the facts are at your lawyer's fingertips. Treat it as if you are having to defend yourself but with the bonus of a lawyer, which brings us to...

Defending yourself – 'who defends themselves has a fool for a client' goes the old adage. Sometimes you may not get a choice, but occasionally you will want to take on the system yourself.

The advantages are that you will get more leeway to bring political points up and can speak directly to the jury in Crown Court.



However you will be an outsider in a hostile environment and you will need to be better than a trained lawyer to get the same recognition.

You can have a friend (called a MacKenzie Friend, after a case in 1970) to sit with you in court to help with note-taking, etc., but they will not be able to speak on your behalf. If you do get off defending yourself you will have earned it. Good luck

Now to defences. Careful research has shown that there are only four defences to all crimes.

1. It wasn't me.

A cast iron alibi is the best remedy to all manner of fit-ups. For this purpose it is best know what you've been doing so avoid use of those inebriating substances that can cloud the memory, ketamine for example.

Ideally it's best to associate only with ministers of the gospel, but since these folk are very boring make sure the friends you do chose will be an asset in time of trouble. Try this simple test – get your pal so say a simple sentence such as 'I've known Jane/John for 12 years and they've always tried to calm down aggressive situations', and then get them to say the same adding the words 'your Honour' at the end. If they sound convincing, good. If not send them on a witness training course pronto.

2. I didn't do it.

Many people have ended up with convictions for things done by other people, often in crowd situations where the police have inadvertently arrested the wrong person.

Even in this age of CCTV, mistakes are common. Notable was the reign of terror imposed in the early noughties by 'The Phantom Lamper'. This fiend would rush in and hit (or 'lamp') unsuspecting police officers while cunningly disguised as a nearby peaceful protester, thus resulting in their arrest. Fortunately the court were able to distinguish the difference with the help of credible witnesses leading to the innocent parties being acquitted.

3. I did it, but it's not a crime.

The most common reason is acting in self defence or defence of others. English law uses the test of whether force used was

'reasonable in the circumstances' – this is a complicated definition set out in section 76 of the Criminal Justice and Immigration Act 2008. The key element is that the circumstances are as the defendant perceived them, allowance being given for not being able to 'weigh to a nicety the exact measure of any necessary action'.

Much of the reason for the endless moaning by the tabloids about 'innocent householders' getting done for assaulting burglars is that they tell the truth that they have given them a hiding at the first opportunity because they thought they deserved it.

Instead take a leaf out of the cops' book. When they give evidence in court there is not an occasion when they *didn't* fear for their safety, that of their colleagues, passing members of the public, a nearby cat stuck up a tree or even, as in the recent case of

R v Anton & Orton, a middle-aged woman who the cop was truncheoning as she tried to handcuff herself to some railings. In all these circumstances they affirm that 'I've never seen such violence in all my years of policing' and 'it was worse than the Poll Tax/Mayday/G8/that fight outside the chippy last week' (delete according to age and experience).

In front of magistrates this is hard work, but before a jury if you can portray the police as the aggressors then wonders can follow. One comrade was acquitted despite footage of him throwing 11 sticks and two bottles at police because he was 'defending a kettled crowd from cop violence'. Well done!

4. The voices told me to do it (or any other form of mental incapacitation)

This is the very last option. A defence of insanity is only worthwhile if you are facing a very lengthy sentence and have a reasonable hope of persuading the authorities that you have the chance of making a miracle recovery later and being let out. Feigning sickness to get out of jail is a good wheeze, but unfortunately restricted to the ruling class. Witness Ernest Saunders, jailed for corporate fraud but released as he was suffering from the incurable Alzheimer's disease, yet went on to make a miraculous recovery.

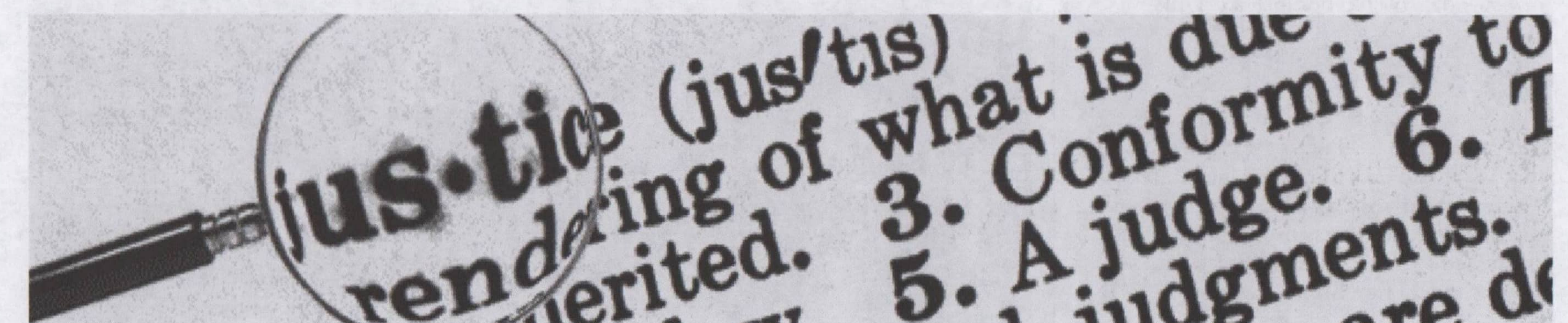
5. I was very, very drunk.

This is not a defence, it's a confession – *don't use it.*

Finally, if you have avoided jail yourself extend solidarity to those less fortunate. Contact the Anarchist Black Cross to find out what you can do.

Mindaugus Lenartavicius was imprisoned for two years under the Criminal Damage Act for his part in the G20 protests last year. He is feeling particularly isolated and would like some support. Mindaugus has also asked for music to be sent in to him – old school non-commercial punk!

• Mindaugus Lenartavicius XT6221, HMP Wandsworth, Heathfield Road, London SW18 3HS.



COMMENT

ABOUT FREEDOM

ANGEL ALLEY

Merry new year to you all. Dramatic progress over the holidays has resulted in the appearance of a hand basin to accompany the toilet in the building. Other results of the new year break are a repainting of the bookshop floor and the servicing of our trusty old boiler to ensure the central heating works throughout the winter.

The bookshop is appealing for second-hand books so if you have any unwanted tomes knocking about (not just anarchist stuff) please drop them in, or if you need them to be collected let us know and we'll try to arrange to come and get them.

With all the inevitable delays of holiday post, we'll be publishing the results of the prize crossword in our next issue so if you haven't already sent us your entry, there's (just) enough time to get those answers in.

Finally just to show the versatility of the building and its new swinging reputation, someone has chosen to hold their 30th birthday party here. So congratulations in advance to Ellenor Adrienne Hutson all we wish all her friends and comrades a fabulous time.

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 71, no 01, so if your subscription runs out with this issue you'll have 7101 above your name. If the number is 7101 or less, then your subscription is now due for renewal. See page 16 for the current rates and a renewal form or, if you don't want to worry in the future about remembering to renew your subscription to *Freedom*, just ask us to send you a standing order form by emailing subs@freedompress.org.uk or you can write to us at 'Subscriptions', Freedom, 84b Whitechapel High Street, London E1 7QX.

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NEXT ISSUE

The next issue will be dated 30th January 2010 and the last day to get copy to us for that issue will be Thursday 21st January. 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

At the back of my mind has been the idea that one day I might write a satire about the Wootton Bassett anti-militarist group, a small but dedicated band swimming against the tide in the town that shuts down in order to line the streets whenever a soldier's body is repatriated.

Annoyingly, my future satire has been trumped by the attention-seeking Anjem Choudary of Islam4UK, with his call for an anti-war march through the town. Predictably, every shade of far-right and respectable opinion was inflamed by this and he has now had his fifteen minutes of fame. Should the march go ahead, it will be opposed by some of the residents, the BNP, the NF, the English Defence League and probably lots of others. Islam4UK and the EDL in particular have a virtually symbiotic relationship – one could not survive without the other. Without the publicity attracted by opponents, I4UK would be a relatively invisible bunch. And the cartoonary caricature of Islam represented by Choudary is a gift to the EDL.

Of course, I doubt that either the march or counter-protest will be permitted by the police. Choudary claims he is bringing the public's attention to deaths in Afghanistan caused by the war. In reality, he just wants attention for himself, and almost the entire spectrum of other Muslim groups have denounced him.

But, aside from the march, we should still look at what goes on in Wootton Bassett with a critical eye. The town's response to the hearses driving through from RAF Lyneham to Oxford, in readiness for the Coroner, began in a low key way, but it soon swelled. It was aided and abetted by the ever-impartial BBC and other media making a big fuss of the dignified way that the townspeople closed shops and stood in silence as the coffins passed.

While I think the dead should be respected, if only because of the effect on the living, I am uncomfortable with the nationalist assumptions implicit in the Wootton Bassett tributes. There seems to be a keen, and understandable, desire among many of the mourners to legitimise the cause for which these young men and women died. Of course, many seek comfort in the thought that their loved one died doing something that had a higher purpose. As time passes, we realise that this is not true: few would say that most twentieth century wars were 'a higher cause' any more, with the obvious exception of the Second World War which retains a mythology of being a great war against fascism.

I don't think that it is accidental that the Wootton Bassett commemorations started to happen as the wars started to become even more unpopular. Even now, most people don't know why Britain is in Afghanistan officially, and the most recently repeated reason, to bring 'democracy', was rather undermined by the fraudulent elections there. Even if people are unsure of what Britain is doing there, supporting the armed forces and showing respect for those who have died make a powerful argument that blurs into supporting the war.

In the first half of 2009, there were 1,012 Afghan civilians killed according to the UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan. Since the invasion in 2001 there have been 1,509 deaths among coalition forces. So, in six months, nearly as many Afghan civilians died as did Coalition troops in the entire eight years of conflict.

Choudary's ambition for Wootton Bassett is provocative. But aside from the obvious grandstanding, there is a point to be made, however uncomfortable it may be for some.



Individualism and collectivism

In the 5th December issue of *Freedom*, notesfrombelow ' (Illegalism and insurrectionary anarchism' on pages 8 and 9) presented individualism and collectivism as two opposing forms of anarchism. While historically this may be true, there is no reason this has to be so.

It should be clear that humans are social creatures, and it follows that we depend not only on our own wellbeing but also that of our fellow bipeds in order to achieve personal happiness and self-fulfilment. In fact, most of us don't really like anyone suffering, be it people or animals, unless they really deserved it. Therefore, collectivism can be seen as the consequence of realising one's true nature as an egoist.

We keep coming up with advanced and complex notions of morality and ethics to make sense of this 'social urge', and these notions can be found pervading every human society. Although morals are traditionally dished out from behind a pulpit, they are in essence inseparable from what it means to be human. Of course we need to define our own morals, and not blindly accept those passed on, mostly as a form of social control, from a corrupt society.

Common wisdom says that money don't make you happy, but doesn't go very far in explaining why. It's because enriching yourself at the expense of others is work suited for sociopaths and misanthropes, the most cynical and most deluded. Unfortunately that's the sort of behaviour our capitalist world encourages. For the rest of us, egoists and collectivists, we can still bring meaning to our lives with solidarity, community, and violently militant direct action.

Anon

UK financial crisis and the UN

Could the financial crisis cost the UK its seat on the UN Security Council? A recent report from the Centre for Economic and Business Research questioned whether the UK would be able to retain its permanent seat on the UN Security Council. Elsewhere the global markets are eyeing the UK and bracketing it along with the likes of Greece, Latvia and Iceland. Credit agencies are muttering that Britain might lose its valuable Triple-A credit rating.

While it may seem to have little to do with anarchism it highlights a trend that is having a huge impact on the world we are active in, both politically and economically. Ironically, the culprit that has struck the death blow to Britain's imperialist outlook has been unalloyed capitalism itself.

There are a number of reasons for this. The global financial crisis has not so much brought down capitalism but exposed it in a more naked form. The likes of China, Brazil and India have realised they are much more

important players than they were before and have stepped up to the table demanding commensurate power. In global capitalism, economic power and position on the world stage are pretty much interchangeable. So as the UK gets sicker, it becomes too weak to push its way to the trough where all the best goodies are kept.

Of course this is all done in a nice way on the surface, so rather drop someone out of the G8 in order to let a more powerful country in, the solution has been to consider instead the G20 which allows the new nations at the top of the food chain to come to the same table.

However, simply being at the same table is not going to satisfy those nations on the way up, who are going to start asking the same questions the CEPR – why should an country unable to afford to spend militarily get a permanent seat on the UN Security Council? The problem for the UK is that with its own resources depleted, this is just the sort of position it needs to keep in order to access those of other nations who needs its favour at the UN.

Financial crisis is far from over in the UK. There is a massive debt crisis being stored up until after the election. But in the meantime we are being sheltered from the worst as the Government continues to borrow like mad. Military might requires economic might to back it up, and as the UK falls further down the debt spiral, the more the rest of the resource rich world will

turn not to Britain but to those who can afford to back up their promises economically and militarily.

It is impossible to predict how any future government will react. There may be expansion of foreign bases on UK territory, or large scale withdrawal from global outposts. The choices between having a force in Afghanistan or building Trident become very real. Or will the government turn in on itself looking for escape-goats to blame for what was really inevitable?

In a way the likelihood that the UK is no longer a global player is good news for the anti-militarists among us. However, it is a change that will come at some social cost, and the question for anarchists is are we ready for that as well?

Donal O'Driscoll

Corrections and cock-ups

As so many readers have pointed out, Anna Mendelson or Mendelssohn, who died on 15th November last year, was aged 61 and not 84 as stated in our last issue (19th December). Apologies to all concerned. A full obituary will appear in the next issue.

Secondly, in the same issue, our headline 'IWA support campaign to stifle Serbian dissent' gave completely the wrong meaning. The IWA, readers will be relieved to know, are supporting the dissenters against the campaign to stifle them. Sorry.

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GETTING ACTIVE

PRISON NEWS

End Of The Line?

The government have been coming in for a deal of criticism for their attempts to combat the use of mobile phones in prisons. Much of it is of course part of the Tory pre-election campaign, such as the 'revelation' that the number of mobiles and SIM cards had trebled in the two years between 2006 and 2008 (except that the Ministry of Justice figures for 2006 were for mobiles only).

So what have Nu Labour actually done about mobiles in prisons? In Madge's speech for the opening of Parliament last November, the government announced a new law criminalising the possession of a mobile phone or SIM card by prisoners. Not that mobile phone possession isn't already a prison disciplinary offence that can earn you 42 days on top of your sentence for each incident, or that being caught 'conveying' a mobile to a prisoner can earn up to two years and/or a £2,000 fine.

There is also the widely publicised use of the £6,500 BOSS (body orifice security scanner) chair, which can detect mobiles and SIMs secreted inside the body. The Ministry of Justice proudly announced last month that they had finally managed to delivered 'at least one chair' to every nick in England and Wales, an effort that has taken two years. Unfortunately many are rarely used or they remain broken for months, as a recent prison inspection report on HMP Wandsworth claimed.

In 2007, the Ministry of Justice also put out tenders for pilot schemes for both detection and blocking systems, the introduction of which the Prisons Inspectorate have been calling for for the last six years. So far they have received no 'compliant bids' for the former, but the first trials of jamming technology will have been completed in April. However, experiences from other countries of such technology have not been too encouraging. Swedish trials were considered a complete failure by their government and in Ireland, where a total ban is operated with the threat of five years' imprisonment and a fine of 10,000 Euros if caught, the three different system trialed are considered to have been only partial successes. Prisoners have also begun to switch to using Skype internet phones and satellite phones, which are not affected by the jamming.

In the end the government's half-hearted efforts should fool nobody. It is clear that they do not really want to upset the present *status quo*, one where there are enough mobiles and drugs available to 'keep the lid on things'. Tackling the mobile issue would mean the prison authorities having to take full responsibility for the problem, rather than blaming it on the cons. The result would be more unrest (in the last month prison riots have occurred in Peru, where two prisoners died, and in India as a direct result of crack-downs on mobile phone possession) and a significant drop in the income of screws, who are largely responsible for the traffic of phones (and drugs) into prisons.



One of the more intriguing aspects of last year's impressive Anarchist Movement Conference was the emerging realisation amongst serious anarchists that there was at last a recognisable potential for building a proper movement.

To that end it inspired a re-assessment of how anarchists choose to organise with each other, how they work together, how they communicate and express their ideas.

Simply arguing a case from entrenched positions is gradually being subsumed by a practical need to work on a collective basis to create a more visibly engaging credible anarchist presence, the significance of which is now becoming a reality.

● One way of strengthening ties between anarchist groups in London has come in the form of the **Red & Black Co-ordination Network**.

It brings together pre-existing anarchist, anarcho-syndicalist and libertarian communist groups to provide more formal strategies of co-operation, share resources and discuss common ground on how anarchists can effectively engage with current social struggles.

Based on a robust delegate system to avoid the pitfalls of individualised and over riding personal opinion it has already forged commitments from both London Solidarity and Anarchist Federations, local Camden, Whitechapel and Walthamstow groups, Autonomy and Solidarity, Queen Mary Autonomous Group and London Anarcha-Feminist Kollektive.

What the network addresses is the need for a wider, combative and more effective means of supporting ongoing social

struggles, pulling together resources, people, passion and focus to get the job done, coupled with ability to respond collectively and decisively to emerging struggles.

● Another proposal from the capital is a **2010 London Conference** set for the summer.

Instigated by the people who were instrumental in organising last year's Movement Conference, its purpose is to continue the momentum by drawing in as many people from the London area who define themselves as anarchists and libertarians to work towards making anarchist politics a real challenge to capitalism and the state.

An initial meeting has been called for 21st January at the Cock Tavern, 23 Phoenix Road, London NW1 1HB to start the process off – check the *Freedom* website at freedompress.org.uk for details.

● Although nothing concrete has yet been established the idea of an **Anti-fascist conference** was raised at last year's Bookfair during the meeting on anti-fascism featuring 43 Group veteran Morris Beckman.

In the light of the BNP's escalating vote and the provocative Give Up Anti-fascism critique of current anti-fascist thinking (that not only sparked debate amongst anti-fascists but charged them with failings both politically and organisationally challenge the dominance of the BNP), it is widely acknowledged a radical rethink is needed to confront the far-right's foothold amongst a disenfranchised and discontented class.

Such a conference would have to be bold in its thinking and merciless in its criticism. *Freedom* readers will be kept informed on its progress.

Coping with Copenhagen

Possibly the most offensive thing about the discussion over Copenhagen is this raging desire for more discussion – there seemed to be little ecological concern for the trees present in the mountain of literature being flung about at the convergence centres and kitchens during the summit. It is offensive because it's all so straightforward: people go to these things and kick off because they find the damage the rule of the rich does is really, really aggravating. A smaller group goes to these things because they find the rule of the rich alone is positively infuriating. As long as there is a radical left that believes change comes from the working class, then it will attend the summits of the rich and oppose them to varying degrees.

And so they should. The obvious photo-call for libertarian socialism that these demonstrations present should be taken. In a straightforward way, it was Denmark's own Libertaere Socialister (no marks for originality) who called a block on the main protest and were joined by Norway's Counterpower and Sweden's Syndicalist Youth Federation (the youth wing of the SAC union), and after our entire block was pre-emptively arrested, good media work was done. With radio, television and newspaper interviews about the illegitimate power of the police, LS seem to be off to a flying start. In a vaguer, slightly whimsical way, it was good that militant dissent did take place. Anyone looking hard enough will know that it was there and that it exists. They won't know its programme or get its message (because collectively, there isn't one) but physical opposition partly legitimises itself just by existing. Put it this way: you don't ask yourself if it's okay to save the planet by torching cop cars if no one is torching cop cars.

In the event, militancy plucked a particularly bitter fruit. What might have been 'Seattle's 10th Birthday' was more like 'G20 Meltdown – The Sequel' as disruption that had-not-even-happened-yet inspired a truly phenomenal police crackdown for a modern European softie state like Denmark.

Cops took great delight in their tourist-guide-meets-nazi routine – one minute they were wishing you a pleasant protest (without a hint of the sarcasm that a British bobby couldn't resist) and the next they were indiscriminately CS-spraying trapped crowds. In a beautiful scene, the whole world witnessed them beating actual delegates in suits as they tried to leave the conference centre.

However the defining image of the summit will be the mass arrest of 900 people on the peaceful demonstration on 12th December. A section of the march was blocked both in front and behind by a sudden police charge. Everyone sat on the floor with their hands cable-tied and denied toilet access. They were then taken to specially built cages and



Those arrested in the heavy-handed response by the Danish police were cuffed and forced to sit in rows for many hours as temperatures dipped below freezing. Many people urinated on themselves after being denied use of toilets.

held for 12 hours before being released without charge.

On the television news reports the head of the operation said they were not detaining the 900 for any actual crimes, but to prevent crimes they might later commit – and to put off other people who were thinking about committing crimes!

Although my Danish friends initially said this would not turn into a scandal as most of the country supported the police action, it cannot become anything but a scandal and a reference point for Danish politics. If there is any debate on the legitimacy of the police and what their role is, then this is perfect ammunition.

It is odd to admit, but on top of a decent enough crack at the whole counter-summit thing, the police action is the biggest and most valuable event of the week. It was just so unhinged.

The trick to having a good experience – even if you were held without charge or savaged by dogs – was to go with honest expectations. Being an outspoken negatron is not needed and will win you few friends: the way to talk about setting up a long-term movement with people in short-term affinity groups is to do it from inside their affinity groups. A good way to explain how voting is a lot easier than 'consensus' is to participate in consensus, then evaluate how it went with others. If you come with the open intention to have a good time but still

get involved with the slightly silly activities, you have the chance to meet people who are willing to take action – an extremely valuable resource as people willing to sleep in a school hall and fight police in Copenhagen are likely to also be willing to stay up all night to fend off bailiffs in the UK. The one sure way to avoid disappointment is to take a walk straight through the reams of material on the Zen of Teargas and the Art of Lock-Ons and accept that thousands of people trying to disrupt capitalism's zenith is a nice enough message on its own.

People on the left with a longer gameplan than a year spent organising One Big Riot, class struggle anarchists particularly, need to accept that actions are clearly still a big draw, and even those that really should know better will turn up. Rather than telling everyone, again, what a waste of time it is, we need to absorb the elements that make the big days out fun into our own projects. There is always a place for disobedient and boisterous demos, for occupations and street theatre (the proper rabble-rousing kind, not the 'dyed my dreads pink and have a drum' kind).

In December 2008, thirty angry Santas from the London Coalition Against Poverty stormed the Royal Bank of Scotland, even getting into one trading floor – exactly the way to move on to the 'old' class struggle whilst keeping the best parts of the 'new'.

Keith Hallack

REVIEWS

WHAT'S ON

JANUARY

Until 17th Peace News Winter Gathering at the Sumac Centre, 245 Gladstone Street, Nottingham NG7 6HX, call 020 7278 3344, email promos@peaceneeds.info or see peaceneeds.info for details.

18th Remember Gaza / Smash EDO demo – for three weeks in January 2009, Israeli bombs rained down on Gaza leaving over 1,400 Palestinians dead, including 314 children. EDO/ITT make parts used by the Israeli war machine, meet at 1pm, wear black, see smashedo.org.uk/remember-gaza.htm for location.

18th Venezeula: an anarchist perspective, Rafael Uzcategui talks about the situation in Venezuela from a critical anarchist perspective, in both Spanish and English, at Housmans Bookshop, 5 Caledonian Road, London N1 9DX from 7pm-9pm, see housmans.com for details.

19th I Bike MCR 2010 Meeting/AGM, to plan a whole host of new events and activities – anyone and everyone is invited to come along and share ideas, skills, time and help to make 2010 the best biking time this city has ever seen, meet at 6.30pm in the Meeting Room at Hulme Library, Stretford Road, Manchester, M15, see ibikemcr.org.uk or email info@ibikemcr.org.uk for details.

21st Amnesty Book Sale at Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London WC1R 4RL from 11am until 3pm offering a wide variety of new and secondhand books all priced at £1 or £2, for details contact 07771 888825 or books@amnesty.org.uk

23rd Life is too short to be controlled: no borders, no nations – a day out of control in London with two anti-border demos. at St Pancras and Piccadilly Circus, see <http://london.noborders.org.uk/node/243>

FEBRUARY

1st J18 and Seattle 1999, reflections and strategies 10 years on - an evening of films and discussion that look back to the global protests of 1999, and consider where next for the movement of movements, and where next for the social revolutionaries, presented by the Bristol Anarchist Bookfair Collective and Bristol Indymedia at the Cube Cinema, 1 Dove Street South, Bristol, BS2 8NQ from 7.30pm, email bristolanarchistbookfair@riseup.net

15th Aldermaston Big Blockade: Bikes not Bombs – cyclists and environmentalists will be blockading one of the gates from 7am at Aldermaston, near Reading, at a crucial time for the future of Trident, for details email info@bikesnotbombs.org.uk, see bikesnotbombs.org.uk or, for more general info, see tridentploughshares.org

22nd Stop the traffic and change the world – create the biggest traffic jam ever, to implement environmental policies and policies that increase social equality, just step outside into your street during the rush hour, for details call 07758668637, email info@stopthetraffic.info or see <http://stopthetraffic.info>

BOOK

Demanding the Impossible

by Peter Marshall

The primary qualification for anyone who would review a book is that they have actually read it. This qualification for anyone who would review the new (2008) updated edition of *Demanding the Impossible* (London: Harper Perennial) by Peter Marshall is onerous. Excluding the 24-page index, the book is 794 pages long. 'A book at bedtime' it is not. Nevertheless it is essential reading. Allow this reviewer to explain why.

The structure of the book is summative, which serves to test the fundamental tenets of anarchism for their validity. The book comprises seven parts and an epilogue. Each part explores anarchism historically from a different perspective. The parts relate to anarchism in theory, forerunners of anarchism, great libertarians, classic anarchist thinkers, anarchism in action, modern anarchism and the legacy of anarchism. In the words of the author, the epilogue brings "anarchism up to date in the twenty-first century" and gives his "own suggestions on the way forward". The whole is a rich tapestry, formally a history of anarchist thought and action. Undoubtedly the library research which the author undertook was prodigious. Also undoubtedly the author encountered many

'rocks and hard places' in deciding how to interpret particular cases of thought and action. A case in point is the thought and action of Michel Foucault, the French philosopher. Few would disagree that they defy easy understanding. Yet Peter Marshall interprets them both intelligently and fairly.

The only quibble which this reviewer has with the book, and if he did not have at least one quibble then this review would not be credible, is that Peter Marshall fails to acknowledge the contemporary construction of anarchism by here-today-gone-tomorrow hedonists and malcontents as 'anything goes'. Against this quibble, however, should be set his enthusiastic endorsement of anarchism, and his acknowledgment (on page 640) of the recognition by anarchism of the famous dictum (written by John Acton, aka 'Lord Acton', during 1887) that power corrupts and absolute power corrupts absolutely, which elevates anarchism above other political philosophies.

Peter Marshall has dignified anarchism with his widespread scholarship and, in doing so, has essentially set the rest of us a challenge of emulating his commitment. If you can afford to buy this book, treat yourself. This reviewer doubts that you'll regret doing so.

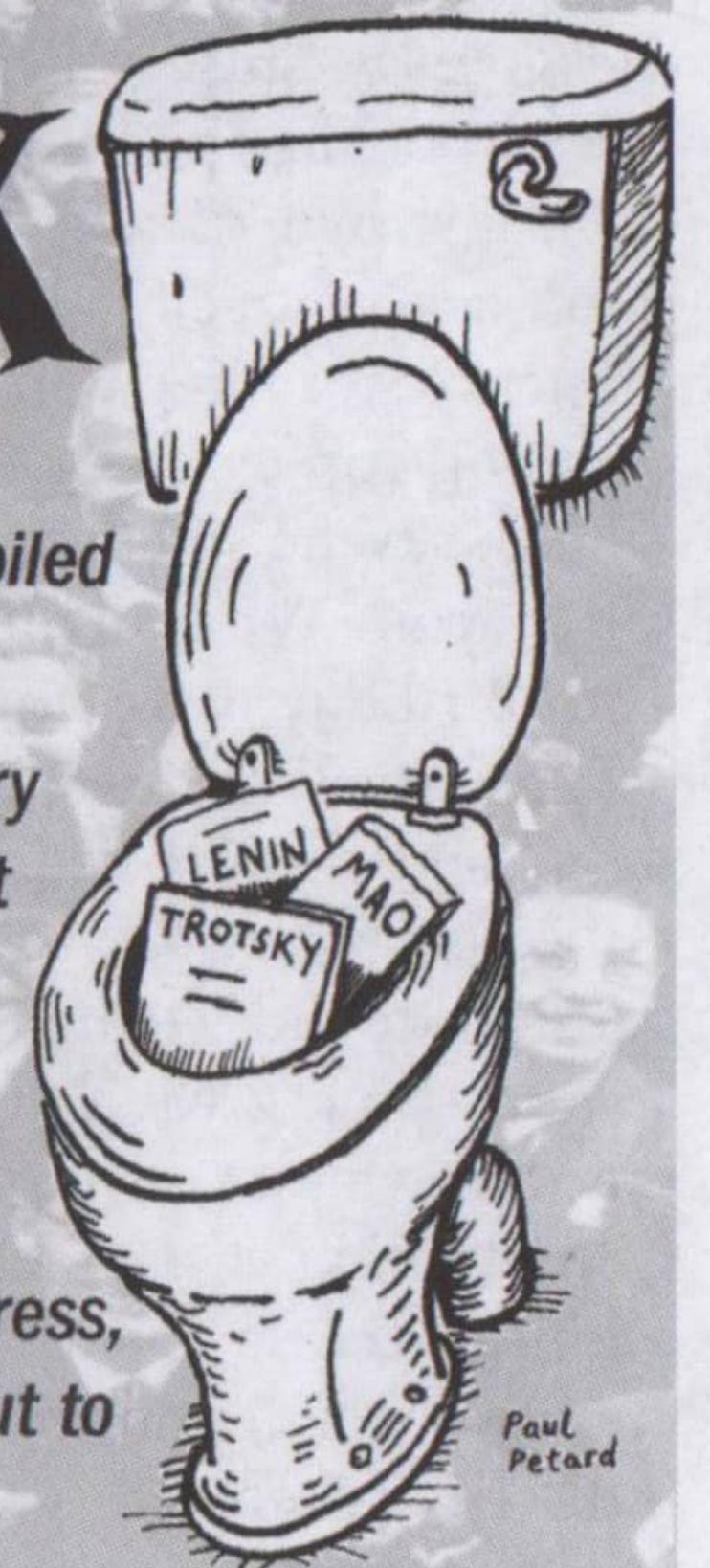
John Desmond

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QUIZ ANSWERS

1. The town of Welling, Kent, in the London suburbs. Choudary was born there and the BNP had their headquarters there from 1989 to 1995.
2. A science fiction story by Philip K. Dick where anarchist agents seek out and destroy the last government.
3. In an episode of *Doctor Who* called 'The Long Game', the anarchist Suki demands to know who is controlling humanity by means of inane television broadcasts. She is then killed by the Mighty Jagraffess, a slug like creature.
4. Carl Einstein.

Generation Kill

This deadpan account of a US Marine company's exploits encapsulates for Tom Jennings the baleful banality of the Iraq war.

After post-WWII hangovers concerning the inhuman insanities and human frailties of war were recuperated in nostalgic sitcoms like *Sergeant Bilko* and *Dad's Army*, the existential chaos, venality, culpable atrocity and horror attending misbegotten military adventures were brought decisively home in 1970 in Mike Nichols' adaptation of Joseph Heller's novel *Catch-22*, set among the USAF in Italy, and Robert Altman's *MASH* about army medics in Korea (spawning the most successful television series of all time). Then, when Hollywood belatedly tackled the Vietnam conflict, a generation of countercultural alumni temporarily institutionalised war-is-hell/SNAFU ('situation normal, all fucked-up') principles in vivid, hysterically overblown blockbuster laments whose 1980s innovations drowned out the patriotic triumphalism of *The Green Berets* (1968) and *Rambo* (1985). Horrified by a massive media failure of jingoism, US rulers decided on stricter disciplining of future coverage of foreign meddling – hence the now familiar tactics of securely 'embedding' tame newsmen inside military units and orchestrating ad-speak press releases and other promotional material to short-circuit critical scrutiny.

Nevertheless, despite their notable paucity, cinema treatments of the 1991 'Gulf War' like *Three Kings* (1998) and *Jarhead* (2005) continued to focus on the traumatisation inherent to the logic of armed conflict conducted by the State and inevitably visited upon enemy populations and 'our boys' alike. A decade later, though varying wildly in tone and technique, the same can be said for Iraq now – whereas the forensic film cataloguing of mistakes, misdemeanours and mayhem borrows extensively from real events at least minimally publicised elsewhere (see my survey in 'The Ill-Health of the State', *Variant* 36, pages 32–35). Refreshingly, while fully honouring the oppositional provenance of *Catch-22* and *MASH*, *Generation Kill* (HBO, 2008) emphasises the everyday routine of relatively unassuming characters and events rather than sensationally blatant cock-ups, giving the army management handlers who arranged the assignment its based on something rather different from the flag-waving boosterism they bargained for.

Screened on Channel 4 last autumn, this seven-part mini-series (directed by Susannah



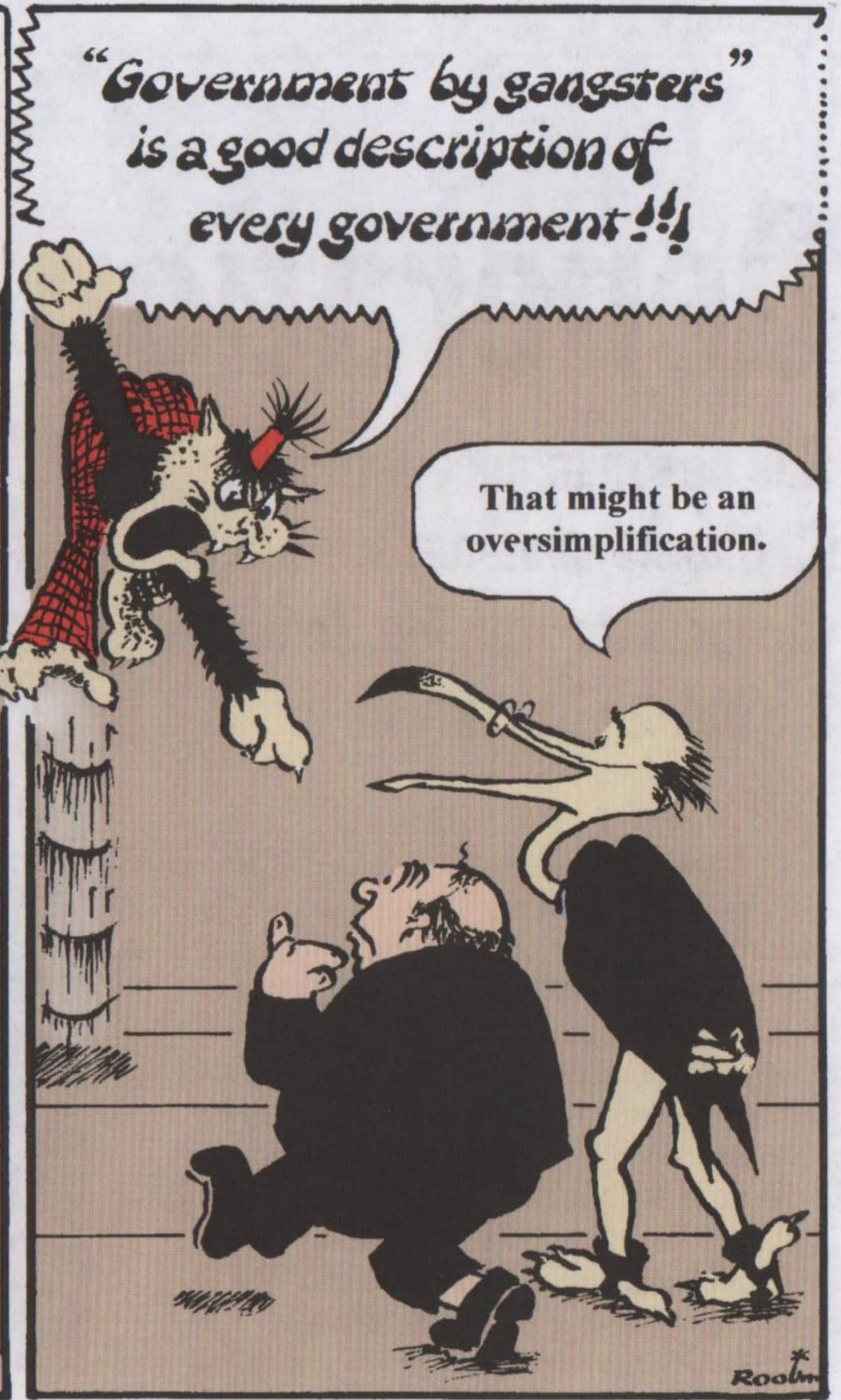
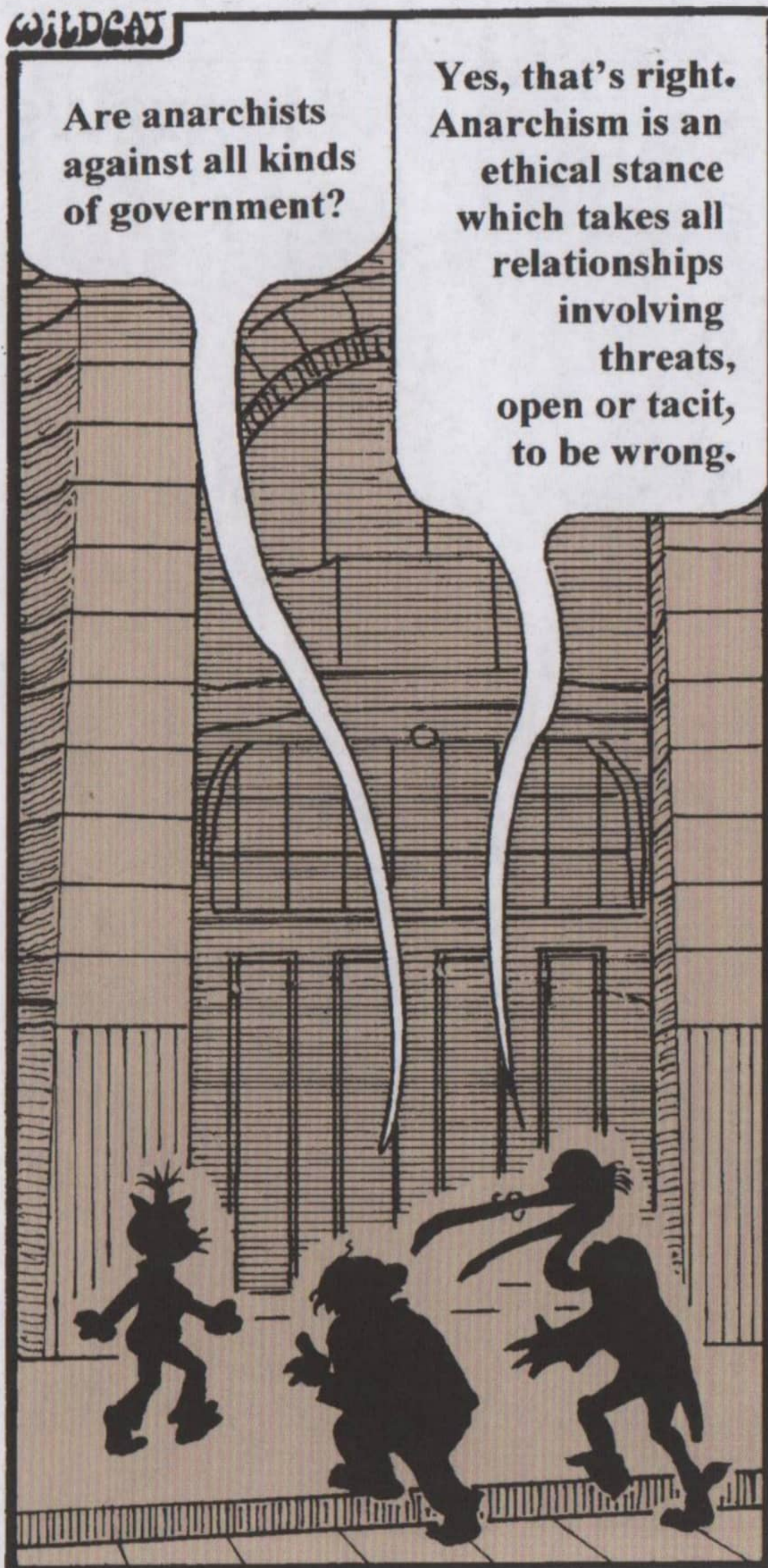
White and Simon Cellan Jones) follows Bravo Company of the elite First Recon Marines up the Euphrates to Baghdad during the 2003 invasion – drawing on *Rolling Stone* reports by journalist Evan Hunter compiled into the bestseller *Generation Kill: Devil Dogs, Iceman, Captain America, and the New Face of American War* (Putnam, 2004). David Simon and Ed Burns' adaptation plumbs the tragicomic depths of modern warfare, its emotional realism capturing the soldiers' *esprit de corps* which sustains them in the face of almost insurmountable difficulties in doing their 'duty' well. The expected superlative script and acting show how their obscene banter allows private anxieties to be obscured while reinforcing the interpersonal bonds necessary to produce the capability to negotiate the claustrophobic conditions and laughably inadequate and inappropriate gear, provisions and deployment. Meanwhile individual investments in military careers – pragmatically combining macho warrior mystiques with frank acknowledgement of the lack of employment alternatives – insulate them from the insurrectionary trajectories visible, say, among their conscripted counterparts in 1970s South East Asia.

The richly convincing and completely un sentimental warts-and-all ensemble characterisations further bear out the platoon's understanding of both the self-obsessed incompetence and careerist manoeuvring of many of their superiors and the impossibly contradictory and wrongheaded orders raining down from higher above. The dawning awareness among the lower ranks of the duplicitous overall situation and their de facto collusion does patchily take to heart managerial bullshit about regard for Iraqi civilians –

whereas contemptuously arbitrary airstrikes leave no doubt about the real agenda, simultaneously reanimating xenophobic amnesia of their own issues. But trying to do the right thing invariably causes trouble, just as proclaimed liberation inexorably achieves its deathly opposite while its bearers wish-fulfillingly celebrate the professionalism which their superiors so casually and capriciously waste. But this cannot possibly offer meaningful solutions to the world's problems in such stupidly opaque instrumental and institutional contexts – begging the question of the wider significance for all concerned of the misfortunes and maliciousnesses in evidence.

Mesopotamian MASH-Up

David Simon and Ed Burns' previous televisual novelisations *Homicide*, *The Corner* and *The Wire* (see review in *Freedom*, 9th May 2009) embroidered their own journalistic embedding in the 'war on drugs' in Baltimore, Maryland – with limitations of perspective, generalisability and participant interpretation analogous to those here. For a start, the particular Humvee-full chosen for the journalist to accompany – led by ultra-professional Sergeant 'Iceman' Colbert and his driver Corporal Ray Person, with their platoon (including real ex-Marine actors) commanded by the exceptionally decent Lieutenant Fick – will have been carefully vetted by top brass hoping for positive PR. It would doubtless have been a very different story if we'd hung out with those suffering 'Captain America', a hysterical fuck-up mortally dangerous to anyone in his vicinity, or Encino Man, a moronic ex-quarterback sucking up with consistently damaging results to the charismatic First



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Recon commander Colonel ('Godfather') Ferrando.

These hidden structural and narrative choices reflect general subtle weaknesses of documentary approaches specifying biased cases to illuminate broader realities – with all of Simon and Burns' work, for example, privileging the misused capabilities of lower-level professionals while leaving unasked issues of the ultimate utility, functions and purposes of their institutional power. However, a pivotal scene here has Godfather contrasting the latitude shown to abysmal officer material with the harsh treatment afforded the more humane and sensible like Fick, marginalised in favour of robotic gung-

ho conformists who don't rock the boat. In effect, if the spot-on detailed questioning of stupid orders and bungled tactics were tolerated, the entire crazy mess of bullshit would topple. Any overall sense of a coherent enterprise depends on maintaining illusions of rational action and leaderships having a handle on the bigger picture. *Generation Kill* succeeds in comprehensively puncturing such pretensions – without ever demonising the inadequacies of even the more admittedly psychopathically infantile, computer-game-reared grunts, let alone the relatively normal and genuinely skilled, well-intentioned footsoldiers.

www.tomjennings.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk
<http://libcom.org/blog/4271>

Generation Kill is out now on DVD.

THE QUIZ

1. Apart from right wing politics, bigotry and a hatred of anyone different, what links Islam4UK leader Anjem Choudary and the British National Party?
2. What is 'The Last of the Masters'?
3. A member of the anarchist Freedom Foundation is killed in which fictional series?
4. Which German art historian and anarchist was involved in the revolutionary upsurge in Brussels and Berlin in 1918, the Durruti Column in Spain and committed suicide after being trapped between invading German forces and Franco's Spain in 1940?

Answers on page 14

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