

FREEDOM

£1 www.freedompress.org.uk

Vol 71 No 17 • 11 SEPTEMBER 2010

OUR FORGOTTEN WARS

Is military conflict still important enough to get angry about?

As Tony Blair hawks his selective memories around the market place under the media glare of a unrepentant millionaire's smile, the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan continue to have an impact far beyond the propaganda of political news stories. Families continue to watch in despair as their sons and daughters go out and fight against civilian populations who have no choice but to bear the burden of military campaigns fought with little consequence as to the damage being done.

The wars in Iraq/Afghanistan have become almost background noise now, punctuated occasionally with a calculated list of the names of the dead given out at Prime Minister's Question Time. There is a generation of young people who are growing up having never known a time when we were *not* involved in conflict in the Middle East and, as the graphic horrors of war are being replaced by the solemn unloading of coffins draped in flags and paraded around market towns, the major criticism now has become the lack of suitable equipment and resources

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LENS CAP STANDING FIRM



Anarchists and radicals joined tube workers on the picket line on 6th and 7th September in support of the RMT strike against job losses on the London Underground. Transport bosses are looking to get rid of 800 workers across the service as part of the cut-backs to bail out the government debt.

NATIONALISTS OPPOSED IN BRIGHTON

Around 30 English Nationalists Alliance (ENA) supporters tried to march in Brighton on 30th August, as a response to what they perceive as 'anti-English' activity by some of Brighton's more rebellious elements – anarchists, anti-war campaigners and students. The ENA, which is a recent formation by elements of the patriotic English nationalist movement, English Defence League (EDL), have been more vocal in their general opposition to anything which isn't deemed as good and proper English subservience to queen and country.

It took police three hours to march the rag-tag of socially excluded, football casuals and moronic chauvinists from Brighton's main-line station to Victoria Gardens, the site of their rally – confronted on several occasions by anti-fascists and anarchists who outnumbered the

ENA three to one. The huge presence by Sussex police, supported by police horses and dogs, led to 14 comrades being arrested, with several injuries due to police action. Many clashes occurred with the police as protesters tried to form barricades along their route.

Brighton is not Stoke, and the cosmopolitan nature of the city still provides a sense of defence against elements like ENA and EDL gaining mass support. This, however, can't be taken for granted as the fears that the ENA/EDL and British fascism in general play on still occur within all social classes, no matter how liberal. Antifascists and anarchists need to follow Brighton's (and others) example – organise, co-ordinate and keep these reactionary elements from reforming themselves on the streets.

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ISSN 0016-0504



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NEWS

IN BRIEF

BANKING: Not content with taking our money and paying its chief executives massive bonuses for not losing it again all in one go, The Royal Bank of Scotland (83% of it owned by the taxpayer) is set to sack a large proportion of its employees. An estimated 3,500 people will be made redundant from its backroom business support and IT centres.

DRINK: After 'derisory' 2% pay offer, workers at Coca-Cola's bottling plant in Edmonton, north London, are to mount a series of one-day strikes in protest. The move follows an 81% vote in favour of strikes by the 110 workers. The company said it was "extremely disappointed" in workers actions, describing the pay offer as "fair" in the current climate.

EDUCATION: Only 32 schools are to be run as academies, as the Tories much-publicised education reforms fails to live up to expectations. The government were expecting at least 200 schools (after more than 2,000 expressed interest) to apply for academy status – independently run schools with the ability to set their own curriculum teachers' pay, amongst other things, outside state control. But despite the rushed through Academies Act, interest in privately-run state-funded schooling seems to have stalled.

HEALTH: The government plans to scrap NHS Direct, risking the health of countless people who rely on the service. The medical telephone helpline which provides essential advice to 27,000 people a day is to be replaced by a non-emergency information service in a bid to save money. The phone line is currently staffed by trained medical professionals who can offer direct advice as well as acting as support for patients with long term medical conditions.

NEW LABOUR: Tony Blair came within seconds of ordering the RAF to shoot down a passenger jet over London in the aftermath of 9/11, his memoirs disclose. The airliner had breached emergency restrictions imposed on British airspace immediately after the attacks on the World Trade Centre and was heading for London. Mr Blair disclosed that he had put a senior RAF commander on alert to await his order and a fighter jet was airborne in readiness to shoot down the airliner.

POLICING: A Freedom of Information request by the BBC has revealed that London's Metropolitan Police force had the most complaints made against it in England over that last year. A total of 273 officers in the capital had three or more complaints made against them last year – the second highest number nationally. More than 2,000 police officers had at least three complaints made against them by members of the public over the past year. The Police Force of Northern Ireland had the highest number of officers with three or more complaints, at 376.

LENS CAP WAR CRIMINAL'S MEMOIRS



There were angry scenes in Dublin as protestors pelted the former prime minister Tony Blair at his first book signing. Looking perplexed the millionaire ex-politician, who has never apologised for sending troops, with the backing of the Labour Party, to kill and been killed in Iraq and Afghanistan, was in Dublin to hawk his autobiography. Irish comrades echoed the sentiments of many by throwing eggs and shoes at the war criminal.

Anger at police custody deaths

Friends and family of Sean Rigg, the 40 year old musician killed by police, stormed Brixton police station on the second anniversary of his death to demand justice and seek answers surrounding the circumstances of his demise.

Over a hundred people converged on the station on 21st August to commemorate the memory of Sean, who was arrested in 2008 and taken to Brixton police station where he died some time later. No formal explanation has ever been given over his death.

The vigil, opposite Brixton police station, was organised by the Sean Rigg Justice and Change Campaign, who are still waiting the results of the IPCC (Independent Police Complaints Commission) inquiry which ended in February but have yet to be made public. Speakers on the day included family members of victims of police brutality, including Sean Rigg's sister Samantha, a tireless campaigner for justice on behalf of those who fall victim to police violence. Protestors enrolled a giant list with all the names of the 2,500 people who have died in police custody since 1969 in front of the station entrance.

Rigg was arrested by police in August 2008, 'restrained' and transported to Brixton police station in the back of a van. He was removed from the van in a collapsed state and died a short while afterwards whilst in the station yard. He never entered the custody suite door.

According to a preliminary post-mortem examination by a Home Office pathologist, there was no obvious sign of injuries which could have caused the death.

However the family are convinced the events leading to his death are suspicious and raise many unanswered questions. Although suffering from schizophrenia, Sean was fit and healthy with no illicit drugs or alcohol found in his body at the time of his death.

The vigil was followed by a two-hour public meeting for the community on how to bring this disturbing trend – which, according to statistics, is on the increase – to an end. Legal representatives and relatives of Christopher Alder, Brian Douglas, Roger Sylvester, Ian Tomlinson, Blair Peach and Jean Charles de Menezes were among the panel members who spoke movingly about their experiences in losing loved ones.

The recent high profile cases of both Ian Tomlinson and Jean Charles de Menezes have brought to the forefront institutionalised criminal police behaviour that still goes unpunished. The latest official figures show there were 113 deaths following contact with police in the last three years alone, fifty of which were deaths in police custody. No police officer had ever been charged and found guilty of murder in a British criminal court.



Photo courtesy: discarded unit production

Local London news

A round up recent anarchist activity in and around London

This year's prestigious Portobello Film Festival was opened with a full-length feature film by local anarchist troublemaker and creative genius, Greg Hall. Entitled *SSDD: Same Shit Different Day*, its overt political message played to a packed house of filmgoers in west London in a makeshift cinema beneath the Westway flyover. Evoking the ghost of Joe Strummer the venue was an ideal setting and served as an excellent platform for a truly remarkable film – not least because it was made on a zero budget. The great and the good of the London anarchist scene came out to support Greg, who is a member of the Whitechapel Anarchist Group, and witness the world premiere of his third feature, a film of growing maturity and brilliant technical execution. Set in the East End it follows the paths of several likely lads as they drift through their day in a world of

little hope and no opportunities all eventually coming together for the final electric scenes in a grim backstreet pub where scores are settled, soapboxes are climbed on and fragile romances emerge. As anarchist propaganda it excelled, as a moving tribute the working class of downtrodden London it beats with a tender heart.

Radical London, the network of local groups covering the Greater London area, met for its last organising meeting before the annual London anarchist bookfair. The idea of Radical London is to co-ordinate the activities of locally based anarchist groups, building solid community bases to support ongoing local initiatives from a radical perspective.

One such initiative is the campaign to save Wanstead flats from being taken over as part of the 2012 Olympics development. There was a mass community picnic on Saturday 5th September to galvanise local support and highlight the issues. Local residents living near Wanstead Flats have

been demanding answers about plans by the City of London Corporation to allow the Metropolitan Police to base its Olympics operational centre on the Flats. There has been no consultation – even though the plans involve locating a fenced, high security compound with buildings, parking areas, stables and apparently even police holding cells – for at least 120 days and so close to residential neighbourhoods.

Another initiative recently started is a London strike support group. Tentatively called Practical Solidarity, it seeks to establish links between anarchists and the workers movement by offering practical support during times of conflict, i.e. strikes, occupations, etc. They organised people to attend picket lines for the recent tube workers' strike.

- *Same Shit Different Day*, see <http://www.brokebutmakingfilms.blogspot.com/>
- Save Wanstead Flats, see <http://www.savewansteadflats.org.uk/>
- Radical London, see <http://www.radicallondon.net/>

Our forgotten wars

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to 'do the job', rather than questioning the very job they were sent out to do.

The purpose of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan have almost lost their meaning. What was once seen as a show of strength to bolster the egos of failing politicians in an attempt to secure a volatile and unsupportive region on behalf of capitalist interests, with the added frisson of religious extremism, has now turned into a ceaseless campaign of benign terror where invading forces are still unable to subdue a native population. These conflicts which became benchmarks in Neo-con and New Labour political posturing have become routine, accepted and unchallenged despite destroying the lives of thousands and

ripping apart the fragile social fabric of the region.

So what continues to be the human cost of the wars in Iraq/Afghanistan? Official figures put the total deaths of British troops at 513 in both conflicts. The civilian deaths have never formally been documented but informed estimates put the casualties in Iraq at over 100,000, with figures from United Nations Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) putting Afghani civilian deaths between 2007 and 2010 at 4,982. None of these figures are able to usually represent the day to day struggles of ordinary people trying to survive in a war zone. The estimated combined financial cost so far of the wars in

Iraq/Afghanistan was put at £18bn by Gordon Brown, all paid for out of the public purse.

The anti-war movement, for what it was, having captured the imagination of a concerned public became a megaphone for the far left barking out instructions as a means of reinforcing their own brand of political ideology. As we took to the streets, in silence, in deference, in complete subjugation to the message of its leadership, the anarchist movement had no adequate response, and as such failed to register itself as a legitimate voice. The demonstrations now against Blair's book signings are almost an afterthought. This it seems is our legacy.

ANALYSIS

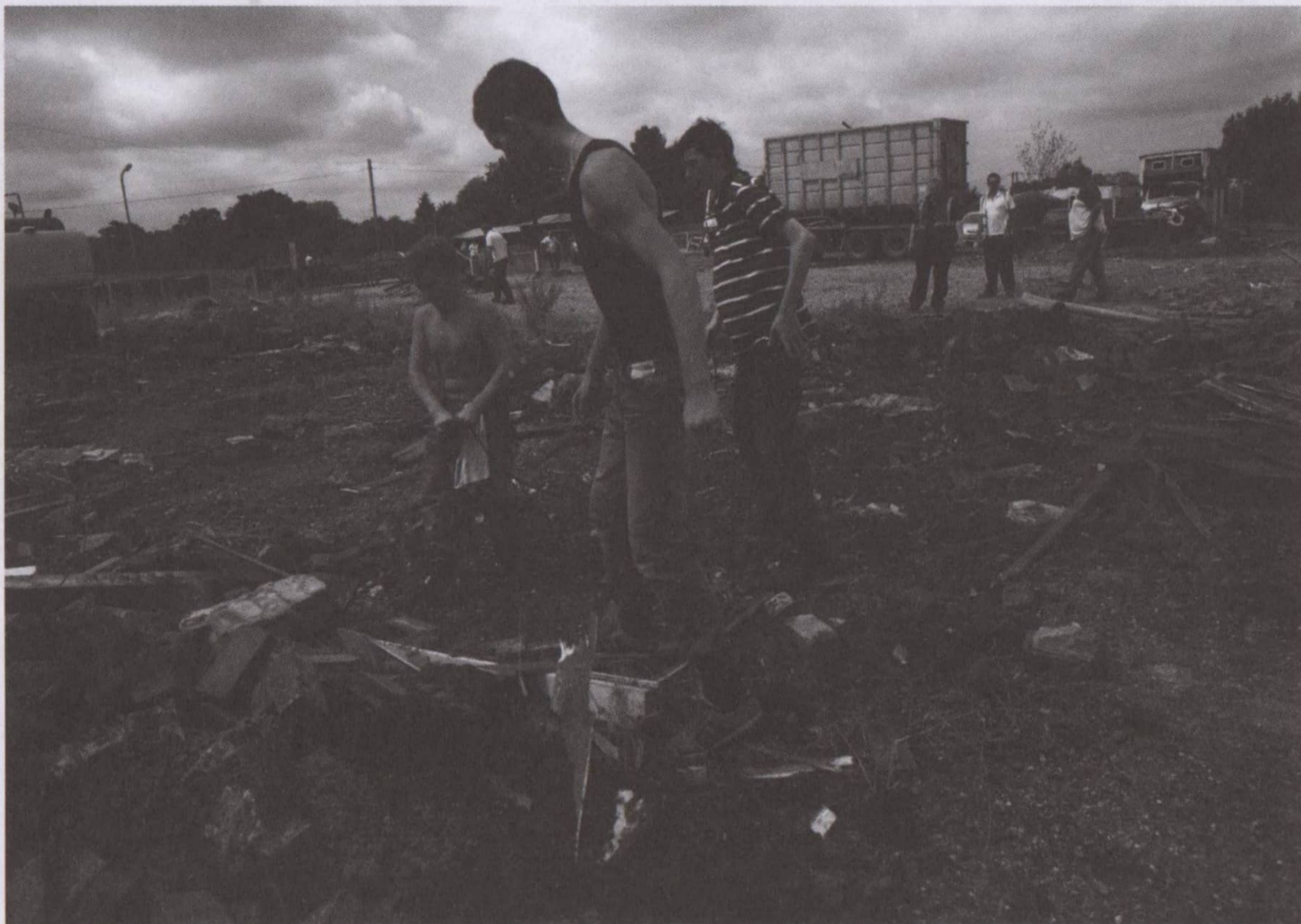
Traveller evictions at Hovefields

Romani and Traveller families have been attacked by council-paid bailiffs at Hovefields, Essex, in what is being billed as the 'dry run' for a mass expulsion at nearby Dale Farm

More than 50 people have been resisting around 50 bailiffs and vanloads of police as *Freedom* goes to press, just days after half a dozen other homes were destroyed at Five Acres Farm and water supplies cut.

'Traveller eviction specialists' Constant and Co, who are currently under investigation over the previous round of destruction for alleged health and safety breaches, are looking to evict and then make the land unusable for homes.

Dale Farm resident Richard Sheriden said: "Family members there include two with learning difficulties, and several sick and elderly. No alternative for caravans and mobile-homes has been offered.



Observer George Nightingale said that "People have been getting injured with bruises and scratches as they were dragged off the road.

"Loads of people on site are not in a fit state to travel, especially as this is being done so late in the season – elderly people and children are being thrown on the road-sides just as winter is approaching with nowhere to go."

Basildon has already laid aside over £1.5 million over and above its Hovefield eviction funds to oust hundreds of people from Dale Farm, Britain's biggest traveller site, in attempt to effectively bar as many from the county as possible.

One little girl in the path of this policy is 12-year-old Kathleen, who was to begin secondary school this term. Instead she's making banners to protest against the Constant evictions.

"I have my school clothes bought," says Kathleen. "I'm so angry that the council, the government, none of them will let me get an education. This is all wrong."

Basildon, which extends for 50 square kilometres, claims it has no land to offer.

Yet a government agency has told the council it can use any of several sites it owns for a mobile-home park. All have been rejected.

Contact: dale.farm@btinternet.com

The Arctic meltdown

This year we've been following the annual melt of Arctic Sea Ice. The extent of ice peaks each year in March and reaches a nadir around the autumn equinox in late September.

At a time when climate change sceptics have been very successful in undermining public belief in global warming, we feel that looking in a little detail at some hard data of one critical aspect is a useful exercise.

Of course, there are lies, damned lies and statistics, and if there really is a worldwide conspiracy to fake the whole concept then it is beyond the ability of even *Freedom's* tireless bloodhounds to uncover it. For what it's worth, here the facts as far as we can find them on the internetweb.

The two principle sites we have been looking at are Cryosphere Today and The National Snow and Ice Data Centre (NSIDC).

They use different measurements of sea ice, both derived from satellite images.

The NSIDC emphasises a model that measures the areas with at least 15% ice cover. Although they give a graph showing daily changes, they also have monthly averages going back to 1979.

In August this year 6.0 million sq km of sea had 15% ice cover. By looking at the concentration levels, they calculate this as representing 3.5 million sq km ice in total. Sceptics will be quick to point out that this is more than in 2007, the year of record melting, when the figures were 5.4 million sq km and 3.1 million sq km respectively, or about the same as 2008 (6.0 and 3.4).

However if you have the patience to go back through the charts to 1979, you will find that this year has less ice than any year before 2006 and that any year since 2005

has lower sea ice than the 20 recorded years in the twentieth century.

Cryosphere Today gives daily figures for the total area covered by sea ice, and a daily figure of the difference between it and the average between picture. They also have charts going back to 1980 showing the ice area and the anomaly. One again you can find points where there was less ice at this time of year and times where the anomaly was greater, but the trend remains downwards.

Of course we all see what we want to see, or perhaps, more importantly, what we expect to see, so we invite our readers to be sceptical in the true sense of the word and look at the evidence for themselves.

- Cryosphere Today
<http://arctic.atmos.uiuc.edu/cryosphere/>
- The National Snow and Ice Data Centre
<http://nsidc.org/arcticseaicenews/index.html>

London's Feminist Library

Discover the treasure trove that is the Feminist Library

On a busy road in south London, there is a large and rather decrepit looking building. Occupying five small rooms on the first floor is the little known, but much loved, Aladdin's cave of feminist writing and activism, the Feminist Library.

The Feminist Library was set up in 1975 during the height of the second wave of the women's liberation movement, a period when many women were becoming actively involved in the struggle against sexist oppression and exploitation. Radical feminism informed a perspective whereby the totality of patriarchal oppression in women's lives was recognised and more women than ever began organising around sexism. The Feminist Library was very much part of this process of self-organisation and resistance.

Formerly known as the Women's Research and Resources Centre, the library was set up by feminists to record and document the women's liberation movement, safeguard its history and further the aims of the movement. It provided a place where women could network and educate themselves, and became a central contact point for feminists locally, nationally and internationally.

As well as running courses and seminars and collecting materials that women were writing, it evolved and developed, alongside the movement out of which the library grew, to become an information and library service for all women, with an active drive for inclusion and accessibility.

Containing approximately 10,000 books,

700 complete and partial sets of periodicals, 1,200 articles, over 2,000 pamphlets and ephemera, including many original posters, 600 unpublished papers and a small but important collection of archives from the women's liberation movement, the Feminist Library is recognised as the most significant collection of contemporary feminist material in England.

The collection includes both fiction and non-fiction, and also a large collection of feminist poetry. It ranges across all aspects of women's lives and issues from education, politics and the law, to health, travel and sport. Many of the items are unique to the library, such as a transcript of the first Women's Liberation Conference, held in 1970 at Ruskin College, Oxford.

The library specialises in literature about the second wave women's movement and, particularly in the area of periodicals and pamphlets, includes many publications from around the world, which help to place what was happening in the UK women's movement in its international context.

One of the strengths of the collection is that it has tried to represent all the strands and groups present in the women's movement, so the collection includes books on/by working class women, black women, women of colour, Irish women, Jewish women, lesbians, older women and women with disabilities, as well as material from the different political strands within the women's liberation movement, such as, socialist feminism, radical feminism, revolutionary feminism and even anarcho-feminism.

Another strength, from the viewpoint of those who appreciate the breadth of its representation of feminist literature, is the

fact that a significant proportion of the library's books and pamphlets are fiction and poetry which has always been an important (but often unrecognised) vehicle for the transmission of women's liberation politics.

The classification scheme used by the library is unique and is in itself a significant work of feminist scholarship and activism. It was compiled by a feminist librarian in the era before computerised cataloguing systems, and was the first to take issues of concern to women as its central organising principle.

The Feminist Library, like many feminist enterprises, is completely unfunded and has faced more than its fair share of crises and uncertainties. It has been unable to afford paid workers for many years. Run by and for its users, the library is run entirely by volunteers who have kept it going, adding to its collection, putting out a newsletter, and organising opening times and events within their capacity. The Feminist Library has been sustained for 35 years by the goodwill, passion and commitment of many individual women and can be seen perhaps as a microcosm of the women's liberation movement: still here, still struggling and with no intention of going away.

Visit the Feminist Library, its well worth it. The passion and commitment reflected in the material crammed into those five small rooms is palpable, and it really does inspire and awe.

london anarcho feminist kolektiv

The Feminist Library can be found at 5a Westminster Bridge Road, London SE1 7XW. For more details or to get involved in helping keep this amazing resource open see www.feministlibrary.co.uk



INTERNATIONAL

IN BRIEF

AUSTRALIA: A group of 82 Afghan men broke out of Darwin's detention centre in northern Australia in protest at their treatment and the long delays in processing their refugee applications. The group crashed through two electrified fences before staging a peaceful protest on the roadside for almost eight hours outside the facility. The detainees sat peacefully in blazing temperatures holding makeshift banners reading 'We need protection, not detention' and 'Australia is known by its humanity, don't discriminate refugees', whilst they were encircled by about Northern Territory police.

GREECE: The campaign against the upmarket Banquet restaurant, Thessaloniki, continues, despite police repression and the arrests of workers demonstrating outside the premises. Protests outside the restaurant have taken place almost on a daily basis throughout the summer against the sacking of workers, and poor working conditions and low pay suffered by those employed there. Riot police have been used to defend the bosses against the protests.

INDONESIA: Several hundred locals in the Buol district attacked a police station with rocks and Molotov cocktails after the police tortured to death a motorist detained in a traffic accident. Officers opened fire on the angry protestors, killing six and injuring dozens more. Later eleven police officers were arrested for their involvement in the killings. Police officers and their families had to be evacuated from the town for their own safety, amid reports that gangs of angry locals were roaming the streets attacking officers' houses and vehicles.

IRELAND: Prison officers the country's biggest jail held a 'wildcat' strike over the return of a violent inmate.

Almost 650 inmates were locked in their cells in Mountjoy Prison, Dublin, as a result of the unofficial industrial action by members of the Prison Officers Association (POA), sparked off by the return to Mountjoy of Leroy Dumbrell, who was previously transferred to Castlerea Prison after allegedly being involved in a near-riot in which eight prisoners and four officers were injured in December last year. Last week, the High Court ruled that Dumbrell, had been held in unlawful solitary confinement at Castlerea for over five months.

USA: The city of Minneapolis is to pay more than £100,000 compensation to seven students who were arrested for dressing up as zombies. They sued the attorney's office after being arrested and jailed for two days, but never charged with any crime. They said they wore white face powder, fake blood and dark eye make-up in downtown Minneapolis to protest 'mindless' consumerism. One of the seven people is donating a portion of his settlement to other anarchists who are fighting legal charges.

LENS CAP FRANCE'S ETHNIC CLEANSING



The French state continues its policy of forced expulsion of Roma gypsies from its country despite massive protests against the deportations. Anti-racist groups organised 128 planned mass protests throughout France against president Sarkozy's overt racist agenda. Over 11,000 Roma were deported last year, along with the high profile destruction of Roma camps, as part of official government policy.

Global unemployed hits all time high

New figures published by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the International Labour Organisation (ILO), paints a grim picture of the current global employment situation, revealing worldwide unemployment has risen by 30 million since the beginning of the economic crisis in 2007, putting the world jobless figure at 210 million, the highest level in history, with little sign of an early decline.

According to the damning report, to be presented at the IMF-ILO conference in Oslo on 13th September, 80% of the global population do not have any access to social protection and "despite impressive gains in recent years, approximately 1.2 billion women and men, or 40% of the world's labour force, did not earn enough to keep themselves and their families above the \$2 a

day poverty level." It goes on to state that three quarters of the increase in the number of unemployed people has occurred in the "advanced" economies and the remainder among emerging market economies.

The IMF, which has long been the standard bearer of integrated global capitalism and the target of mass anti-capitalist demonstrations in the early 2000s, is now issuing stark warnings about the consequences of rampant globalisation on the world economy.

It concedes that "the cost to those who become unemployed could be a persistent loss in earnings, reduced life expectancy, and lower academic achievement and earnings for their children. And unemployment is likely to affect attitudes in a manner that reduces social cohesion, a cost that all will bear."

Notes from the US

Military officials in the US are aggressively pushing for a delayed withdrawal from Afghanistan.

Although the target date is July 2011, David Petraeus is now calling "a rapid withdrawal unwise."

He was reported as saying in mid-August, "While we've been in Afghanistan for nine years, only in the past twelve months or so have we started doing this right, and we need to give it some time and think about what our long-term presence in Afghanistan should look like."

Meanwhile top US puppet Lieutenant General Babakir Zebari told Agence France-Presse around the same time that he wants US troops to stay in Iraq for the next decade.

In mid-August, in fact, the US officially 'withdrew' its last designated combat brigade from Iraq. Of course that's not the whole story: most of the remaining 56,000 troops are trained in combat and will continue to carry out armed attacks. What's more, the Obama administration is to

Kashmir: a second Palestine?

Social and political tensions are rising throughout the region of Kashmir over the continued repression by state security forces

Since June of this year Kashmir valley in the north of India has been racked by protests and the worst kind of state violence seen in that region in quite a while. Since 11th June, 66 people, mostly young men and including two children, have been killed in firing by the security forces (Central Reserve Police Force – CRPF). Curfews and restrictions have been imposed on and off in both the southern and northern parts of Kashmir, especially in the valley capital, Srinagar, which has so far been the hub of people's resistance.

The unrest dates back to the end of April when three young men, unemployed villagers, were murdered by the security forces in a staged encounter, whom they tried to pass off as terrorists. The three men, Riyaz Ahmad Lone, Shahzad Ahmad Khan and Muhammad Shafi Lone, all in their twenties, were initially lured by a stool pigeon with the promise of paid labour in the army camp, and were then set up to be shot. Unfortunately for the men in fatigues, the victims were identified as innocent villagers.

This time all hell broke loose. Fed up with almost sixty years of military occupation, young men took to the streets pelting the security forces with stones, burning tyres, attacking police vehicles, even torching police stations and public offices. Enraged protesters



Photograph from from The Hindu

even blocked the Jammu-Srinagar highway by felling trees and erecting stone barricades. In their anger people also torched railway stations and damaged railway tracks.

The security forces, true to their nature, used tear gas and batons to quell the protesters, and when the latter refused to budge, resorted to firing in 'self defence'. In such indiscriminate firing, two children aged eight and eleven were killed on different days. For nearly three months now, Kashmiris have been facing dire problems accessing essential commodities, including medicines, because of the curfews.

The government has also been assiduously banning protest marches called by separatists (those who demand secession from India). Separatist leaders of the Hurriyat Conference, Syed Ali Shah Geelani and Mirwaiz Umer Farooq, were once taken into custody and

put under house arrest respectively.

A suspended cop who threw a shoe at the chief minister has been charged with sedition and tortured in custody. Curfews and shooting seem to be the government's panacea for all political unrest in Kashmir.

Heedless, the youth of the valley have been breaching curfews, pelting stones and shouting anti-India slogans. The Muslim majority area is making fresh demands for independence. The situation remains tense as of September 5th even as the liberal and right-wing politicians in India haggle with each other over how best to preserve India's territorial 'integrity' and how not to lose face before Pakistan.

Information sources: *Tehelka Magazine*, www.indiaserver.com, and *The Hindu*

Notes from the US

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double its private military force in Iraq to an estimated 7,000 contractors. Expert on the area, Jeremy Scahill, commented, "What is essentially unfolding here is a downsized and rebranded occupation, Obama-style, that is going to necessitate a surge in private forces. The State Department is asking for MRAP vehicles, armoured vehicles, for Black Hawk helicopters and for these paramilitary forces. So, yes, you can say that officially combat has ended, but in reality you're continuing it through the back door by bringing in these paramilitary forces and classifying them as diplomatic security, which was Bush's game from the very beginning."

A report which came out at about the same time from the group Health Care for America Now, revealed that the country's five largest insurance companies paid their top executives nearly US\$200 million (£128 million) in 2009. And the Institute for Policy

Studies published a report at the very end of August showing that the CEOs who sacked the most workers during this economic recession earned the most. The CEOs of the 50 corporations responsible for the worst lay-offs were paid an average US\$12 million (£7.7 million), 42% more than the average for those of the Standard & Poor's 500 from November 2008 to April of this year.

Indeed, poverty is as rampant as ever in the United States. New figures reveal that one-in-six Americans are now enrolled in projects of one sort or another to deal with poverty. The number Medicaid has risen to over 50 million, an increase of more than 17% since December 2007. More than 40 million people receive food stamps – an increase of nearly 50% since the start of the recession. Almost ten million receive unemployment insurance, which is just under four times the number in 2007. Meanwhile, around the same time, a

crowd of 30,000 gathered at an East Point shopping mall in Georgia hoping to be placed on a waiting list for government-subsidised housing. So disorganised was the procedure, so hot was it, and so desperate for assistance were many in the queues, that fights broke out amongst those waiting and with the police. Sixty-two people were injured.

In the same week, the Democrats agreed to cut US\$12 billion (£7.7 billion) in funding for food stamps to the poor and the most needy. Critics say that the impact will be significant and affect 40 million people when they take effect in 2014. This appears to have been a concession on congress members' parts in order to advance Obama's US\$26 billion (£16.6 billion) measure which it's claimed will 'save the jobs' of 300,000 public sector workers, around half of them teachers.

Marxism's anarchist theory of exploitation

Is Marx's analysis of capitalism still valid? Ian McKay responds to Jonny Ball

Jonny Ball asks whether Marx's analysis of capitalism is still valid. He argues that in "Marxist theory, the profit of the bourgeoisie is based on the theft of surplus value from the proletariat" and so antagonism "creates inequality and class antagonisms since the working classes are paid less than what they produce, and the rest is appropriated by the capitalist class" (page 8, *Freedom*, 19th June 2010).

Of course this is still valid. Yet why is this considered uniquely *Marxist* when it was first expounded by anarchist Pierre-Joseph Proudhon? Yes, it was Proudhon, not Marx, who first unlocked how exploitation happened in capitalism, namely in production as a consequence of *wage-labour*, of workers selling their labour (liberty) to a boss.

Marx argued that "the worker bows to the command, direction and the supervision of the capitalist ... the capitalist forces the workers to extend the duration of the labour process as far as possible beyond the limits of the labour-time needed to reproduce the amount paid in wages, since it is just this excess labour that supplies him with the *surplus-value*" (*Capital*, Penguin Books, 1976, vol 1, pages 1010–11). In a footnote he decides to lambast Proudhon, quoting from his *Système des Contradictions Économiques* (*Oeuvres Complètes*, Lacroix, 1867, volumes IV and V) on "the principle that all labour should leave an excess", and states:

"I have shown that M. Proudhon has not the slightest idea what this 'excédent du travail'

is, namely the *surplus product* in which the surplus labour or unpaid labour of the worker becomes manifest. Since he finds that all labour in fact produces such an 'excédent' in capitalist production he attempts to explain this fact by reference to some mysterious natural attribute of labour" (pages 1011–12).

Proudhon does not use the term 'excédent du travail' in the chapter Marx quotes, but he does in volume 2 in the chapter on property:

"I have proven ... that every labour must leave a surplus; ... that in usurping the consumption of the labourer to be always the same, his labour should create, on top of his subsistence, a capital always greater. Under the regime of property, the surplus of labour, essentially collective, passes entirely, like the revenue, to the proprietor: now, between that disguised appropriation and the fraudulent usurpation of a communal good, where is the difference?"

"The consequence of that usurpation is that the labourer, whose share of the collective product is constantly confiscated by the entrepreneur, is always on his uppers, while the capitalist is always in profit ... and that political economy, that upholds and advocates that regime, is the theory of theft, as property, the respect of which maintains a similar state of things, is the religion of force" (pages 246–47).

According to Marx the secret of capitalist exploitation was that "property turns out to be the right, on the part of the capitalist, to appropriate the unpaid labour of others or its product" and so "the value of the labour-power ... is less than the value created by its use during that time" and that "the product belongs to the capitalist and not to the worker" (pages 730–31). As Proudhon put it in 1840:

"Whoever labours becomes a proprietor – this is an inevitable deduction from the principles of political economy and jurisprudence. And when I say proprietor, I do not mean simply (as do our hypocritical economists) proprietor of his allowance, his salary, his wages, – I mean proprietor of the value he creates, and by which the master alone profits ... *The labourer retains, even after he has received his wages, a natural right in the thing he was produced*" (*What is Property?*, William Reeves Bookseller Ltd., 1966, pages 123–24).

Moreover, Proudhon was well aware of workplace hierarchy:

"Thus, property, which should make us free, makes us prisoners. What am I saying? I degrade us, by making us servants and tyrants to one another.

"Do you know what it is to be a wage-worker? To judge under a master, watchful of his prejudices even more than of his orders ... Not to have any thought of your own, to study without ceasing the thought of others, to know no stimulus except your



Above, Pierre-Joseph Proudhon with his children; below left, Karl Marx

daily bread, and the fear of losing your job!

"The wage-worker is a man to whom the proprietor who hires his services gives this speech: What you have to do does not concern you at all: you do not control it, you do not answer for it. Every observation is forbidden to you; there is no profit for you to hope for except from your wage, no risk to run, no blame to fear" (*Système des Contradictions Économiques*, Vol 2, pages 230–31).

In short, workers "have sold their arms and parted with their liberty without knowing the import of the contract" (Vol 1, page 243). Property "violates equality by the rights of exclusion and increase, and freedom by despotism." It has "perfect identity with robbery" and the worker "has sold and surrendered his liberty" to the proprietor. Thus "property is despotism" as

well as exploitative (Proudhon, *What is Property?*, page 251, page 130, page 259).

What of the charge that Proudhon explains exploitation "by reference to some mysterious natural attribute of labour"? Marx asserts that the capitalist "must be lucky enough to find in the sphere of circulation, on the market, a commodity whose use-value possesses the peculiar property of being a source of value ... the capacity for labour, in other words labour-power" (page 270). So Proudhon is mocked for raising a "mysterious natural attribute of labour" while Marx postulates a "peculiar property" of labour! Moreover, as Marx admits:

"Capital did not invent surplus labour. Wherever a part of society possesses the monopoly of the means of production, the worker, free or unfree, must add to the

labour-time necessary for his own maintenance an extra quantity of labour time in order to produce the means of subsistence for the owner of the means of production" (page 344).

So "surplus labour" has existed in all class societies. In short, to "live as a proprietor, or to consume without producing, it is necessary, then, to live upon the labour of another" (*What is Property?*, page 293).

What about non-class societies? Marx discusses when "the workers are themselves in possession of their respective means of production and exchange their commodities with one another. These commodities would not be products of capital." These workers "have created ... new values, i.e., the working day added to the means of production. This would comprise their wages plus surplus-value, the surplus labour over and above

their necessary requirements, though the result of this would belong to themselves" (*Capital*, Penguin Books, 1981, vol. 3, page 276).

Rest assured, though, in spite of labour producing a surplus throughout history and in co-operatives "in no case would his surplus product arise from some innate, occult quality of human labour"! (*Capital*, vol. 1, page 651). This assertion, of course followed on from the usual dismissive comment against Proudhon. At other times, though, Marx was more forthcoming: "A level of productivity of agricultural labour which goes beyond the individual needs of the worker is the basis of all society" (*Capital*, vol. 3, page 921).

So if, as Marx suggested, the "two characteristic phenomena" of capitalism is that the worker "works under the control of the capitalist to whom his labour belongs" and "the product is the property of the capitalist and not that of the worker, its immediate producer" (*Capital*, vol. 1, pages 291–92) then this had been recognised by Proudhon decades previously. Thus "a labourer, without property, without capital, without work, is hired by [the capitalist], who gives him employment and takes his product" and so the workers each "produced during the year ten, and have consumed only nine" (*Oeuvres Complètes*, Lacroix, 1871, vol. XIX, page 295, page 296). In short, the "free worker produces ten; for me, thinks the proprietor, he will produce twelve" and so to "satisfy property, the labourer must first produce beyond his needs." Property, in other words, "is the right to enjoy and dispose at will of another's goods – the fruit of another's industry and labour" (*What is Property?*, pages 184–85, page 171).

Unsurprisingly, seeing exploitation occurring in production as a result of wage-labour, Proudhon sought a solution there. Workers co-operatives and socio-economic federation would abolish wage-labour and its exploitation and oppression.

In conclusion, the evidence is clear that the Marxist analysis of exploitation within capitalism was first postulated by Proudhon in 1840 and expanded upon in 1846. Marx simply built upon these foundations while disparaging Proudhon at every turn. Yes, the key to analysing capitalism is to understand that it is exploitative ("property is theft") and oppressive ("property is despotism"). As such, yes, we anarchists can agree with much of Marx's analysis of capitalism – for he developed Proudhon's insights!

Ian McKay

Ian McKay has compiled a new anthology of Pierre Joseph Proudhon's written work entitled *Property Is Theft*, published by AK Press, available from November. Excerpts can be viewed at: <http://www.property-is-theft.org>



COMMENT

ABOUT FREEDOM

ANGEL ALLEY

As usual we've been busy in the Alley – there was the launch for Penny Quinton's 'Tadamon' exhibition of photographs from Palestine, which goes on all this month. Then on Sunday 12th we will have a visit from Clive Bloom promoting his book *Violent London*, not that anarchism has anything to do with violence... oh no!

At long last the highly controversial story of Anti-Fascist Action, *Beating the Fascists*, has been completed and sent off to the printers. We now have to keep our fingers crossed that it's back in time for the Anarchist Bookfair on the 23rd October.

Demand for Bookfair stalls is higher than ever (we know as we're the c/o mailing address for them), so unfortunately our stand will not be as big this year. However we will be having our usual post-Bookfair party at the shop afterwards so you can still pick up the obscure titles we couldn't be bothered to lug up to Mile End.

Meanwhile we've been busy putting more titles on the website and have reached issue 15 of *The Raven* as I write, and hopefully all 43 by the time you read this. Next we will be putting up some old issues of *Anarchy* magazine and continue working our way through with other titles as and when we can. And hopefully we will soon learn how to put pretty pictures up on the site as well.

SUBSCRIPTIONS

This issue is vol 71 no 16, so if the number above your name on the address label is 7116 or less, then your subscription is now due for renewal. There's a renewal form on page 16 of this issue or you can now subscribe online at freedompress.org.uk/news/subscribe 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.

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NEXT ISSUE

The next issue will be dated 25th September 2010 and the last day to get copy to us for that issue will be Thursday 16th September. 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

President Obama has announced that the US will withdraw from Afghanistan in a year. British leaders are making similar noises. Alongside them are the siren voices of the military and glorifiers of Empire, which warn of dire consequences if the Afghan forces aren't ready, the country is insufficiently 'democratic', the Taliban aren't fully defeated, etc.

I recently read Zinn's *People's History of the United States*, and was struck in the chapter on Vietnam how similar the two campaigns are (and for that matter there are a lot of convergences with Iraq, too). And we all know what happened when the US stopped propping up the corrupt government in South Vietnam – the North Vietnamese troops swept in and overran Saigon within months.

After US President Johnson refused to send more troops to Vietnam in 1968, the US elections were won by Richard Nixon promising an end to the war. He meant nothing of the sort of course, but he did announce a policy of 'Vietnamisation', whereby Vietnamese forces would take over from the US and its allies (South Korea, Australia, New Zealand, the Philippines and Taiwan). In practice this policy was a disaster, but was accelerated in 1973, so that US forces were out by 1975.

Throughout the course of the war, new offensives were tried, the war was extended to the neighbouring countries of Laos and Cambodia in an attempt to halt the national Liberation Front. The ongoing war also broke the morale of much of the US forces – mainly poor conscripts, who began to actively resist military discipline and speak out when they returned from the war.

The US client state of South Vietnam was ridiculously corrupt. The elections, due in 1955, were cancelled by the prime minister Ngô Đình Diêm. He later held a referendum

about the country's future where he got 98% overall, rising to 133% in Saigon!

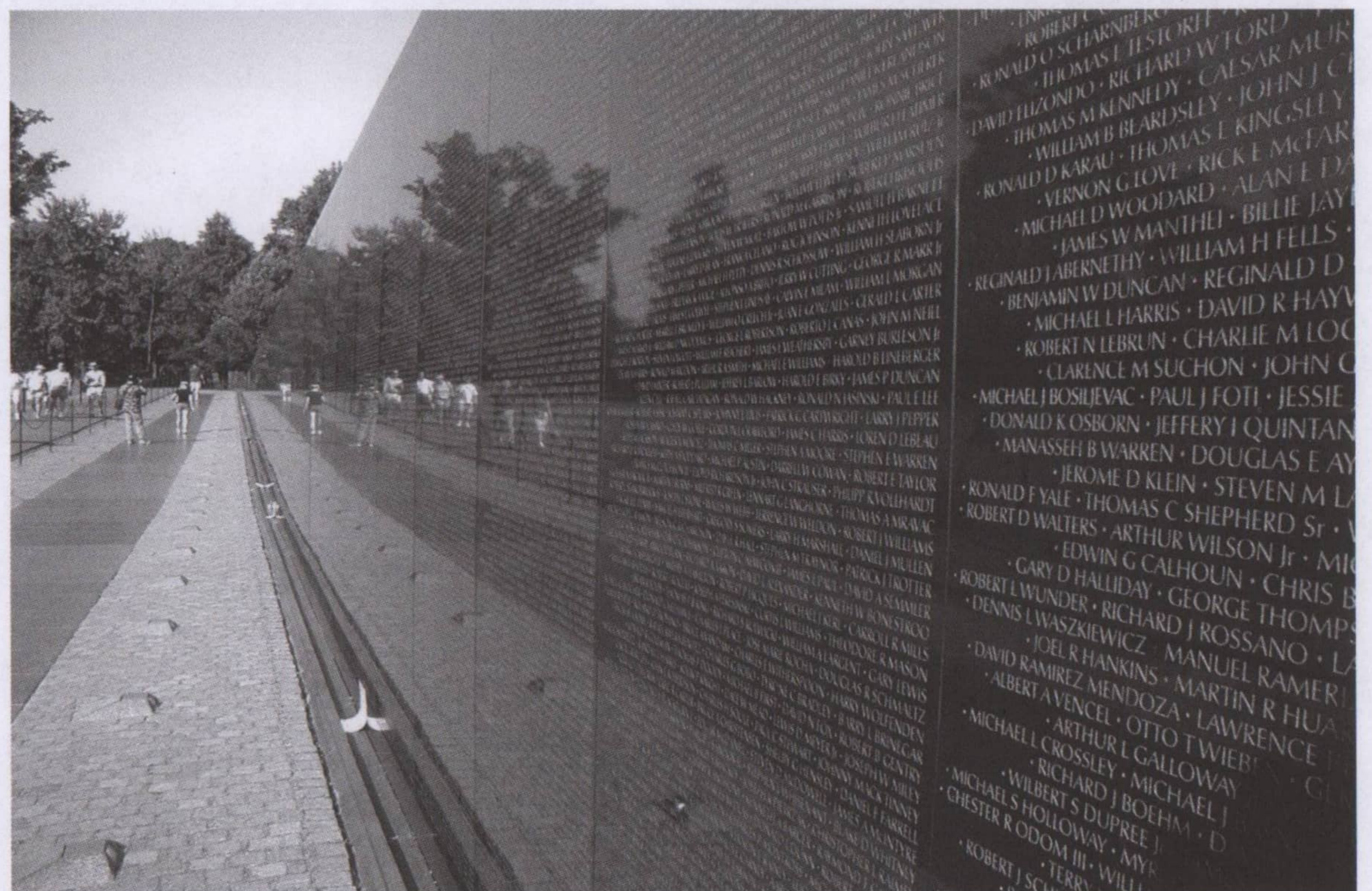
So, an unwinnable war; regular cross border attacks into a supposedly uninvolved neighbour; a corrupt client government with disputed elections; an overstretched military with serious morale problems, with veterans speaking out against America's ongoing imperial ambitions.

If this sounds familiar, it should. I'm not at all clear what the US's aims in Afghanistan are any more, beyond the general one of war being good for business, and the need for revenge after September 11th.

Already, some commentators have floated the unthinkable – that the US should talk to the Taliban, with a view to a settlement. The Taliban have said no, because they don't need to talk, only wait.

The liberal pro-war media have been full of how NATO's forces in Afghanistan are helping girls go to school and stopping the brutal treatment of women, and building infrastructure. Certainly for many Afghans, the thought of the Taliban coming back is anathema; but equally, for those who've had relatives killed at such subversive gatherings as wedding parties by NATO's 'smart' bombs, having NATO there isn't exactly fun either. If the British media and state truly cared about the humanitarian side of this war, Afghan refugees would be welcomed with open arms and there would be serious support put into the sort of projects in the country that would win hearts and minds. The humanitarian concerns are real, but are being used as a mask for the cynical continuation of a destructive war that serves no purpose.

The other obvious question that arises from the inescapable conclusion that it is only a matter of time before NATO pulls out of Afghanistan with its tail between its legs, is why are British forces still there, killing and dying, effectively for nothing?



Part of the memorial wall to the victims of the Vietnam War in Washington DC.

What's in the suggestion box?

If you have been short of a good laugh recently, then we recommend that you visit a new comedy page at the Treasury website. On it you can see all the entries to George Osborne's 'Spending Challenge', answering the question 'How can we re-think government to deliver more for less?'

And a right bunch of ignorant, illiterate and reactionary fuckwits the respondents turn out to be. Take the Prisons section. Reading the suggestions clearly illustrates how little the general public know about what goes on in prisons, with many stating that prisoners should be forced to work. They already are. Other suggest the return of hard labour, breaking rocks, and that migrant prisoners should all be deported, whatever the offence. Another common theme can be looked on as the 'Sheriff Joe Arapino option', which is captured succinctly in the phrase "Make our prisons more like Alcatraz, and less like a Holiday Inn."

Amongst the more bizarre are "Close Young Offenders Institutions and Send Offenders to Eton," pace Ken Clarke's comment; introduce "pay per view gladiator contests in prisons"; outsource prisoners to India or Afghanistan; reintroduce the treadmill and connect it to the National Grid – the people who suggested this clearly didn't pass their Physics GCSEs; and, last but not least, "3 strikes and you're dead."

Bra

See <http://spendingchallenge.hm-treasury.gov.uk/>

Some reasons for voting

I was raising my hand to vote, at a trade union branch meeting, when a colleague told me "You shouldn't be voting, Anarchists don't vote."

An unfortunate misunderstanding of anarchist 'Don't Vote' slogans at election times. Anarchists generally prefer decisions by consensus, but do not oppose voting as a method. What they oppose is voting for bosses.

Consider the implications. Voting implies approval of the institution in which the vote takes place. When I voted at the trade union meeting, this showed that I approved of the group as constituted, that I saw myself as part of the group, and that I would accede to the majority vote as the group decision, even if I voted the other way. If I vote for a Member of Parliament, this implies that I approve of the voting system, and will accept the winner of the vote as my MP, even if I voted for a different candidate. It also implies that I give my MP the right to vote on my behalf in Parliament, and that when my MP votes for or against a proposal, or abstains, I accede to the decision of my MP to accede to the decision of the Parliamentary majority. Even if it decides in favour of war being declared, and

myself being conscripted into the army. During the first year of Harold Wilson's Labour government some members of the Conservative Party wore badges saying 'Don't blame me, I voted Conservative'. They were mistaken. By voting at all, they voted for whoever got most votes. There are some who say that they vote out of respect for past heroes who fought for the vote. An old, near-anarchist friend of mine gives as her reason for voting, "My mother couldn't vote until she was 35." A generation earlier, women couldn't vote at all. Earlier than that men couldn't vote unless they owned land, and more recently, I couldn't have voted (had I so wished) before I was twenty-one.

Let us honour the memory of those who fought to increase the opportunities of ordinary people, by securing voting rights for landless men, women or whoever. But let us not insult their memory by supposing that when they won the right for people in the mass to choose among rival bosses, they were content that they had freed people from bosses. 'I vote in memory of those who fought for the vote' is very similar to 'I vote because it is my duty as a citizen'.

But anarchism is not just a utopian doctrine, which rejects anything less than complete freedom from institutional intimidation. We accept little freedoms, and there are pragmatic reasons for voting in Parliamentary or local council elections. The anarchist slogan: 'Don't vote: it only encourages them' may be reversed to: 'Vote for so-and-so who has no chance of getting elected but deserves a little encouragement'. The late Nicolas Walter once voted for a Socialist Party of Great Britain candidate (who got 41 votes in total), saying "Voting for the SPGB is the most creative way of registering a non-vote," and several comrades voted for no-hope Green Party candidates, with much the same objective, in 2010.

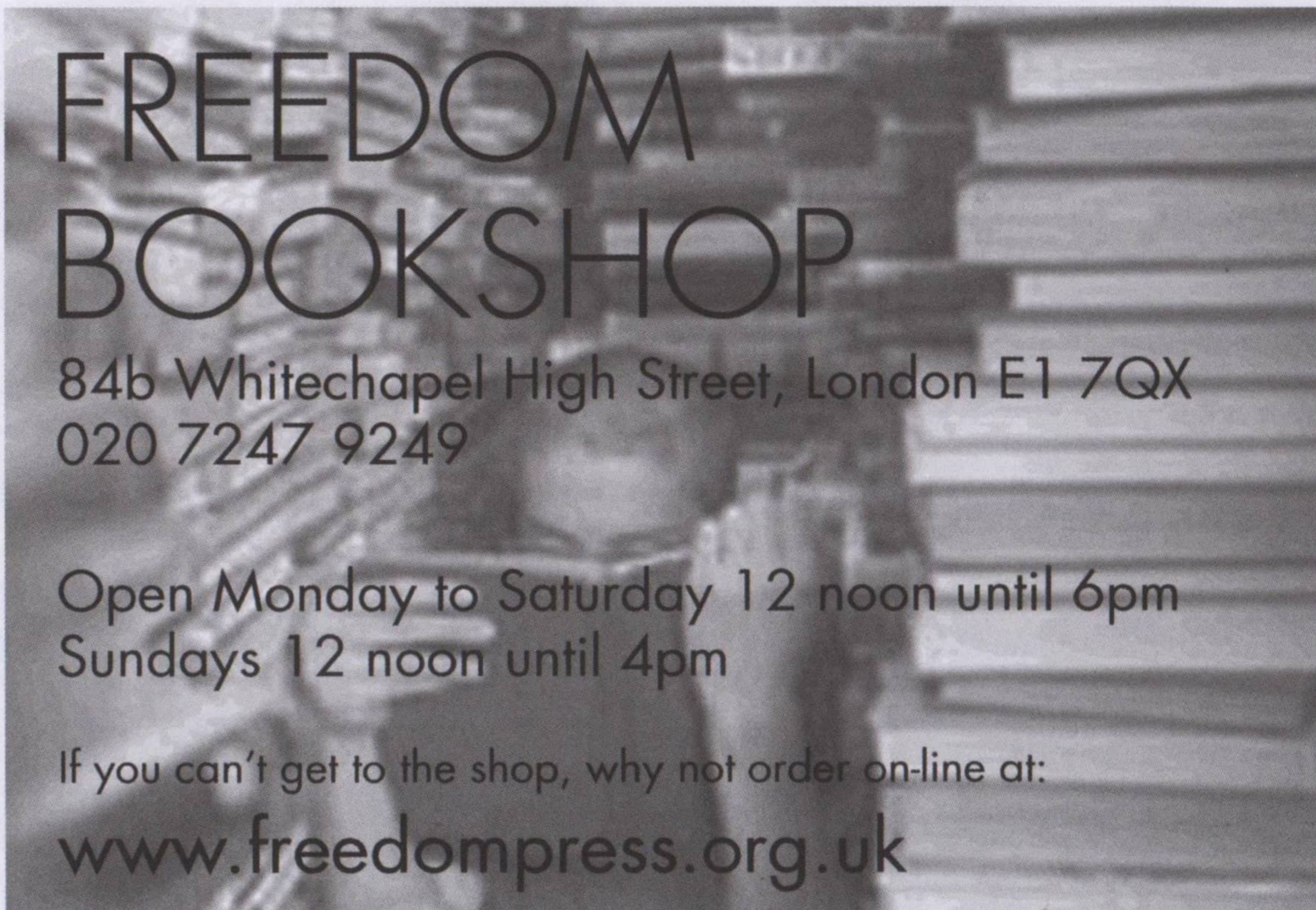
Published reports of electoral turnouts do not distinguish between principled refusal to vote and sluggardly failure to vote. Anarchists,

in broadcast interviews at election times, have been introduced as 'advocates of apathy'. Some governments, alarmed by poor turnouts, have passed laws making voting compulsory, but without much discernible difference to turnout. An Australian comrade was imprisoned for a few days for refusing to vote, but he lived in Northern Territory, which appears to be a political backwater. In the same year, anarchists who campaigned against voting in Sydney and Melbourne were ignored by the authorities. Prosecuting them would only have given publicity to anarchist ideas.

In some council elections, turnout is so small anyway that it may be worth voting, not to put a candidate into office so much as to keep a candidate out. BNP members were elected to local councils in east London, in one case with a majority of only 20. Next election they were voted out by voters who, for all we know, knew nothing about the other candidates, but knew who they did *not* want.

It is worth noticing that parliamentarians do not just vote on laws. It is also part of their job to protect the interests of constituents, and some do this very conscientiously, regardless of parties. In the Soviet Union, members of parliament were elected from a single list, and voters showed their approval of the system without making choices, while MPs voted unanimously for whatever the Politbureau decided. But there were notable instances of MPs dealing with constituency cases. I read in a book on Soviet case law, of a peasant who complained to a local magistrate, that his collective farm chairman was taking more than his legal entitlement to farm profits. The peasant was sent to Siberia, and wrote from there to his MP, who took up the case, which ended with the collective farm chairman, the local magistrate, and another official, the director of the machine tractor station, executed for corruption. This might be a reason to vote for a 'good constituency MP', but not for any Party.

Donald Room



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GETTING ACTIVE

PRISON NEWS

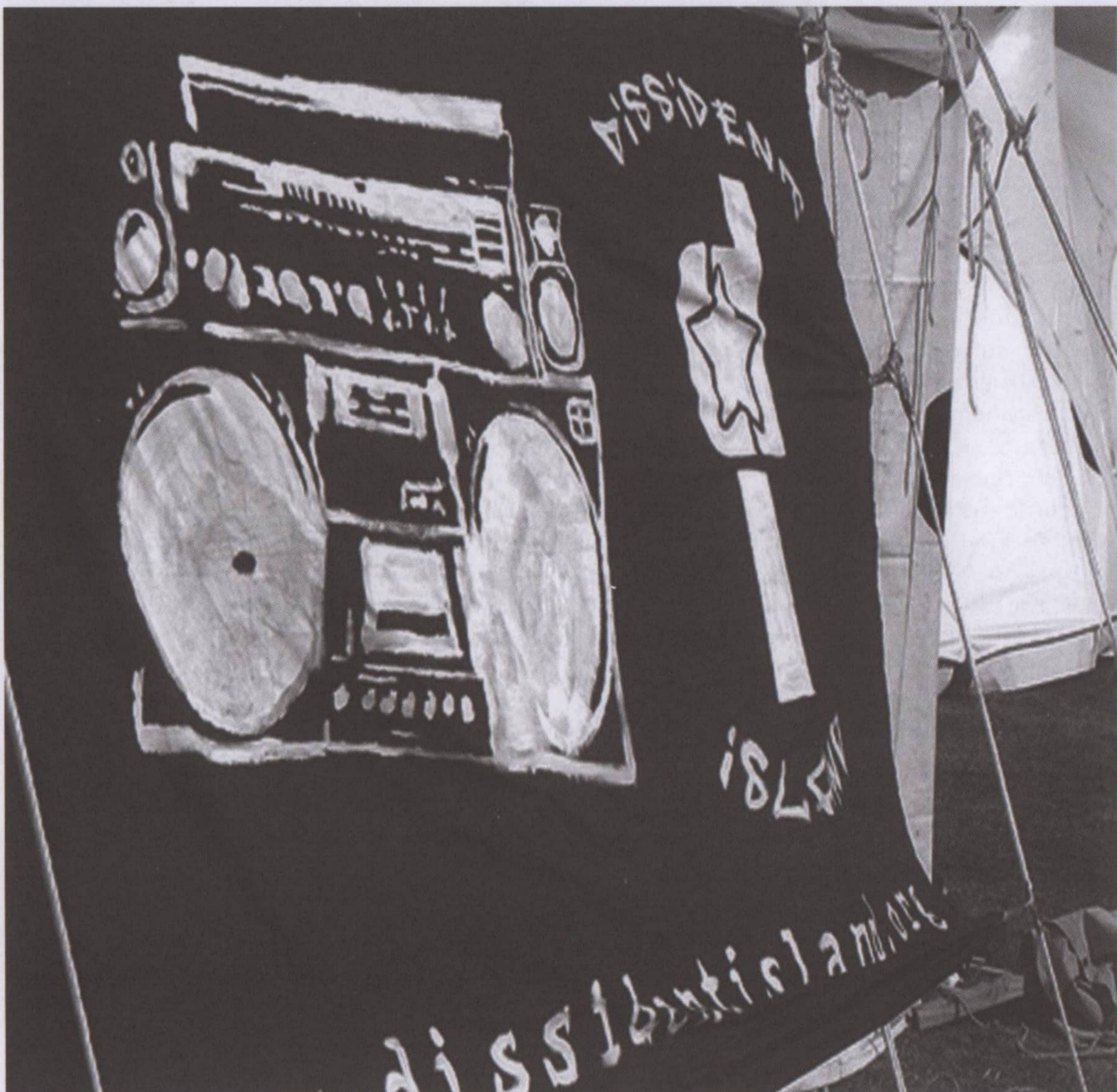
Whilst we continue to await the outcome of the LibCon spending review, due to be revealed later this autumn, and the massive cuts in the justice department and prisons budget resulting from Ken Clarke's 'Rehabilitation Revolution', the 'hang 'em, flog 'em' brigade, in the guise of the so-called think-tank Civitas (think glorified but extremely well-funded Tory pressure group), have come to the defence of the Right's 'Prison Works' ideology.

Unsurprisingly, the 'Prison, Community Sentencing and Crime' paper by Ken Pease, was seized upon by a Tory press eager for ammunition to use against what they see as a betrayal of core Conservative principles. Yet, what appears to be a rather hastily cobbled together effort, mixing old data from disparate years (one calculation even uses figures for prison releases from the first quarter of 2008 and data for the attrition rate from offence to conviction from a 1999 publication), is neither their claimed proof that *prison really does work*, nor does it refute Clarke's claim that cutting short sentences will reduce crime and save money.

Instead, what Pease argues is that there is no proof that the long-held belief that increased numbers of police, more punitive sentencing and higher numbers of people in prison produced the falls in crime witnessed in many industrial countries since the 1990s. In fact, the only factor that he rightly gives any credence to as a key driver of the crime drop is the "change in the quantity and quality of security, particularly of cars." So no fillip for his 'Prison Works' co-religionists there then.

In fact, the only pro-'Prison Works' position put forward by Pease is the argument that when a 'criminal' is in prison s/he is not free to 'offend' against the 'law abiding' amongst us, whereas those serving community sentences certainly are. This basically amounts to a defence of internment or preventable detention, and he even comes up with a rough back-of-a-fag-packet figure for the number of crimes that could be 'prevented' if prisoners were sentenced to an additional month: nearly 14,000. He also calculates the break-even point for such a policy, where the cost of the prevention of 'additional' crime outweighs the cost of keeping someone in prison: 5.9 crimes 'prevented'.

Part of this rather dubious argument is based on his claim that there is no difference between the reconviction rates for those sentenced to prison or community punishments and that a much better 'predictor' of whether someone will 'reoffend' is their criminal history. Interestingly, the latest reconviction statistics from Scotland bear out the latter contention to an extent, with 73% of people with more than 10 previous convictions reconvicted within two years of release but only 25% of those with no previous conviction. However, 73% of all prisoners were reconvicted within two years but only 42% on community sentences, giving Ken Clarke some more ammunition.



Dissident Island broadcasting from last year's Climate Camp at Blackheath.

In the current recession-hit times political media, especially in the form of the printed word, becomes an essential tool in the armoury of the radical both in communicating ideas and engaging with people generally. Below is a roundup of the latest editions of some of the more regular radical papers.

- With verve and enthusiasm, the new issue of the *Hereford Heckler* hits the news-stand running with a belligerent as ever headline, 'Bring on The Class War'.

Styling itself as Hereford's favourite muck-spreading news-digger, it retains a committed and professional edge usually associated with national radical groups, with articles on the public sector cuts, Ian Tomlinson, history of the 1914 teachers strike, and even a sports backpage featuring a report back on the Anti-racism World Cup held in Belfast. <http://herefordheckler.wordpress.com/>

- Tight and compact, the *Bath Bomb*, like its namesake, is an explosion of anger and ideas, an unapologetic offering from the dark underbelly of proud, proud Bath.

As a monthly(ish) news sheet, it's intended to keep the people of the South West informed of all the local news, scandal and rioting!

It covers all aspects of the radical movement from a defiantly anarchist/anti-authoritarian perspective, a hefty piece of propaganda which is free to boot.

As Bath's premier radical scandal rag, it shifts over 400 copies a month, relying

entirely on donations, and fundraisers. <http://thebathbomb.blogspot.com/>

- Although not officially out yet, there is much talk and anticipation surrounding this new free-of-charge anti-authoritarian newspaper for south London.

The first edition of *Beautiful South* is promised in a couple of weeks and will contain various articles about south London from a radical perspective, including housing, cycling and gentrification.

There was also a successful fundraiser for the paper at the Windmill in Brixton on Wednesday 18th August, featuring such a line up of folk-soul, acoustic pop and blues and indie-folk singers.

To find out more or to get involved e-mail beautifulsouth@riseup.net

- Although technically not a newspaper, *Dissident Island* has nonetheless been informing and entertaining the good folk of London for the past three years netcasting a live radio show every other Friday and reporting for three years now on all the major, and minor political activities in the city, and beyond.

With its mix of interviews with anarchists and radicals, eclectic music shows and general troublemaking, *Freedom* wish them every success for the next three years.

Their special birthday edition featured an exclusive interview with members of the Belgrade Six on their acquittal. Inspired broadcasting.

<http://www.dissidentisland.org/>

Police brutality in Paris, 1962

On the 8th February 1962 thousands of radicals took to the streets of Paris to protest at the far right armed insurrectionary group Secret Army Organisation (OAS) which had instigated a campaign of bombings, sabotage and attempted assassinations in opposition to France granting independence to Algeria. Below is a report at the time by *Freedom* of the volatile mass demonstration that ended in tragedy.

We salute the workers and students of Paris

The anti-OAS [Organisation de l'armée Secrète] demonstration in Paris last Thursday week – organised by the Communist and Catholic led Trade Unions and by Teachers' groups, but boycotted by the Socialists – took place in spite of the longstanding government ban on all demonstrations and the additional warning by the authorities that such a demonstration would be illegal and would be dealt with accordingly.

In spite of the warning, and in spite of elaborate police preparations, thousands of people assembled in groups in the streets and boulevards in the vicinity of the Place de la Bastille at the appointed hour. Two main columns formed in the Boulevard Beaumarchais and Boulevard Voltaire – official estimates put the numbers at 10,000, the communist daily *L'Humanite* put the figure at 60,000 – and as their advance was opposed by police, groups detached themselves from the main columns to reform in the numerous streets leading of the main boulevards. For more than three hours first one column, then another and another sought to break through the police cordons, with violence mounting on both sides. The government accuses the demonstrators of having started the violence, by attacking the police with stones and any other objects they found on the roadside. The Trade Unions deny this, a spokesman of the CFTC (the Catholic Trades Union) declaring that but for “the unbelievable savagery of



the police repression” the demonstration would have been pacific. The tragic balance sheet of the night of 8th February was eight killed, of whom three died in hospital, and probably more than 100 seriously injured. The Ministry of the Interior stated that 140 police were injured, ten of them seriously.

One of the examples of police brutality which has most shocked opinion, took place when in fact the demonstration was about to disband. The vice-president of the Paris section of the Catholic Unions recounts that no sooner had a statement been read out to the demonstrators, which ended with an order to disband, than the police launched an attack with their batons. The crowd made its way into the Boulevard Voltaire, and a number of them sought refuge in the metro of Charonne, which was open. The surge of people down the stairs was such that those in front were overwhelmed by the crush of people behind. The police charge in the main continued along the Boulevard Voltaire but a number of police, seeing the crush of people at the metro entrance, assaulted them with

their batons. They then picked up the unconscious victims and proceeded to throw them onto the mass of jammed humanity on the steps leading to the metro. Not content with this they hurled iron gratings from around the base of trees onto them as well. The bodies of three women were recovered.

In spite of the government's denial of responsibility and its counter-charge that the demonstration was a thoroughly organised Communist plot, it seems clear that very few people have been taken in. On the day following the tragic demonstration, 2,000 students held a demonstration in the Sorbonne, supported by their professors; on Monday morning Paris responded to a man to a call for a half-hour general strike and in the evening more than 12,000 people took part in an impressive silent demonstration. More than 30,000 gendarmes and republican Security Guards were available; large forces of police blocked the approaches to the Place de la Republique and the demonstrators did not attempt to penetrate the road-blocks. There was no violence and no arrests, in spite of the fact that this demonstration, too, was illegal. As we go to press, it is announced that the government had authorised a public procession for last Wednesday to follow the coffins of the eight who died on 8th February. According to the *Guardian*, other decisions were that: “There will be no newspapers tomorrow morning by union decision. Only recorded music will be put out by the state radio. Long-distance trains will be halted for four hours by decisions of the railwaymen's union. Schools will be closed by decision of the teacher's union; the students' union has called a strike for the day and the CGT unions (Communist-led), with the support of important sections of the CFTC (Catholic-led) have called for strike action in most French industries.”

We salute the Paris demonstrators, the factory workers, the teachers, the students, the housewives, all who took part in these demonstrations of human solidarity and human dignity!



REVIEWS

WHAT'S ON
SEPTEMBER

Until 5th October Tadamon, images of solidarity and strength in Palestine, photo exhibition by British activist Penny Quinton at Freedom Gallery, above the bookshop in Angel Alley, 84b Whitechapel High Street, London E1 7QX, see <http://penniequinton.org> or freedompress.org.uk for details and opening times.

18th Merseyside Trades Union Council have called for a demonstration against the Lib Dem conference in Liverpool, so join the Radical Workers' Bloc and look for the red & black flags and the Liverpool Solidarity Federation banner, at Echo Arena, The Strand, Liverpool, L2, see <http://liverpoolsolved.wordpress.com> for details.

23rd Climate Action film night at London Action Resource Centre, 62 Fieldgate Street, E1 1ES at 7.30pm, for details call 07708 794665 or see londonrisingtide.org.uk

25th Demonstration at the site of proposed new palm-oil burning, agrofuel power station at Portland in Dorset (coach from London, and maybe from other places, contact stopagrofuels@campaigncc.org to book a place) for more information email info@campaigncc.org or see campaigncc.org

27th until 3rd October No Border Camp in Brussels, a free space for sharing info, experience or expertise for actions aimed at smashing the borders that divide us all. There will be a big demonstration on Saturday 2nd October, for more details email nobordercamp@vluchteling.be or see <http://nobordersbxl.noblogs.org>

OCTOBER

2nd Manchester Anarchist Bookfair from 11am until 5pm at The Dancehouse Theatre, 10a Oxford Road, Manchester M1 5QA, for details see bookfair.org.uk, email manchester@bookfair.org.uk or twitter.com/abookfair.

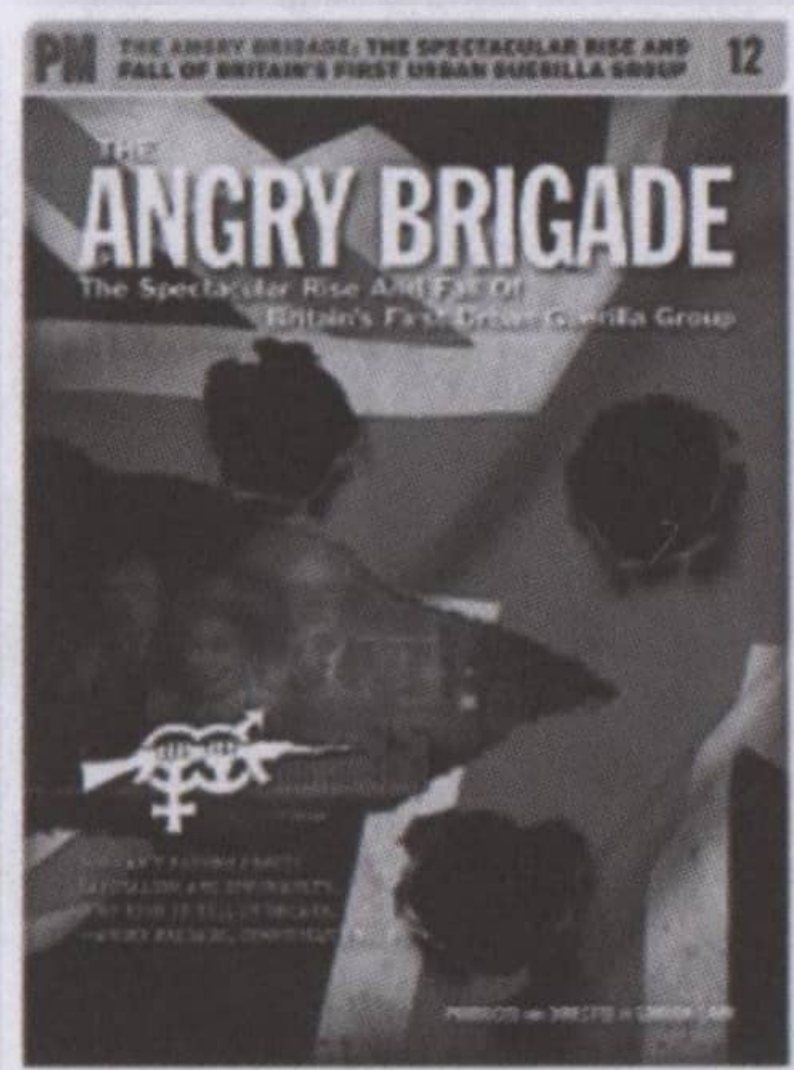
2nd As part of a week of international protest, the Campaign for the Accountability of American Bases (CAAB) is organising something at the American base at Menwith Hill in North Yorkshire, more details nearer the time, contact 01423 884076, mail@caab.corner.org.uk or see caab.org.uk

3rd Protest against the Tories cuts at the International Convention Centre, Broad Street, Birmingham B1 2EA, from 12 noon until 5pm, see <http://iww.org.uk> or <http://righttowork.org.uk>

13th A mass siege of EDO MBM/ITT – despite the victory of the Decommissioners, EDO still produces weapons parts at Home Farm Road, Brighton, and protests continue (please arrive on the 12th as there will be convergence space available), siege starts at 10am at a venue to be announced, call 07538093930, email smashedo@riseup.net or see smashedo.org.uk/hammertime.htm

16th No Borders South Wales benefit gig at Stow Hill, Newport NP20 1JB from 7.30pm, £5, email noborderswales@riseup.net or see <http://noborderswales.org.uk/2010/07/22/benefit-gig-on-16th-october/>

FILM



The Angry Brigade: The spectacular fall and rise of Britain's First Urban Guerilla Group
PM Press

One of the difficulties of fully chronicling the anarchist movement in the last few decades lies in the problem of disappearing work.

A huge amount of writing and film-making has been lost over the years from short print runs and poor distribution – for example, the other day I came across a long and fascinating interview with famed theoretician Murray Bookchin in a random old magazine from the 1970s which is unlikely to have more than a dozen copies still in existence today.

So a new offering from PM Press on the background and impact of the Angry Brigade

which reproduces original documentary work from 1973 is a welcome resurrection for the work of BBC reporter Gordon Carr.

Among the interviewees are *Black Flag* founders Albert Meltzer and Stuart Christie (who was investigated as a possible accomplice during the bombing campaign) in what has to be a near-unique piece of film archiving on the two.

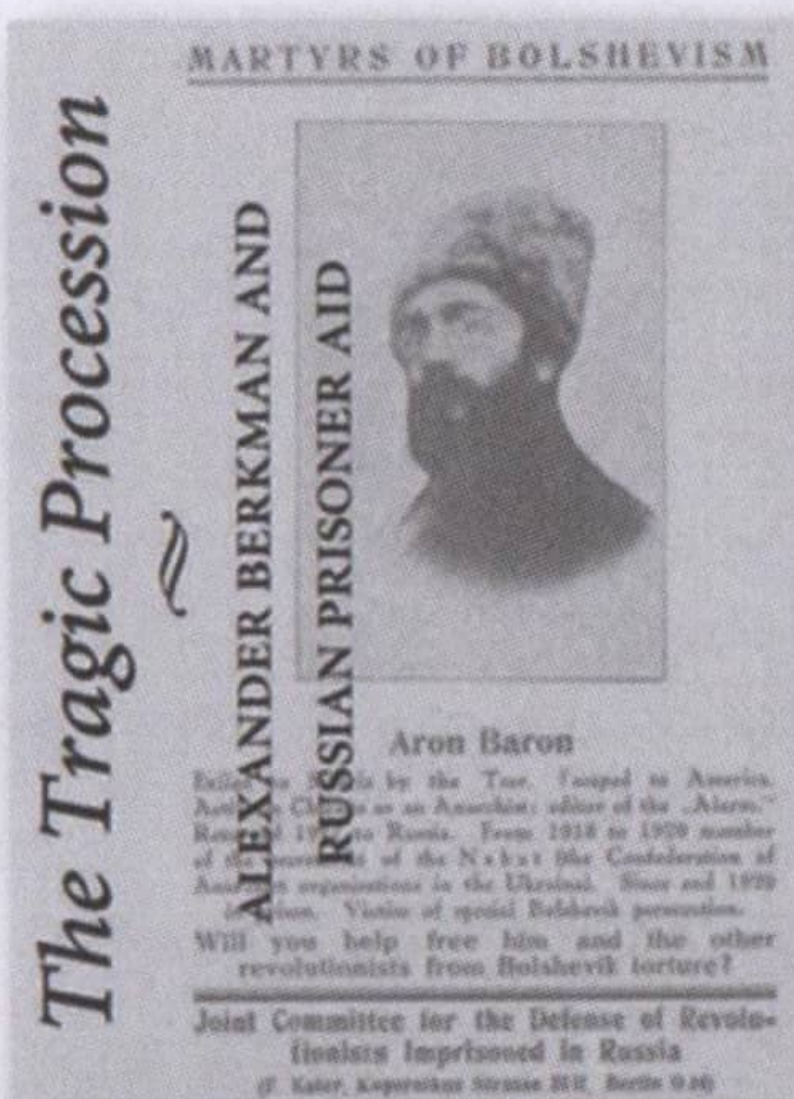
Police sources from around the time are also interviewed, allowing a glimpse into the thinking of the cops who surveilled and harassed anyone thought to be an anarchist linked to clandestine activities.

A voiceover from Stuart Christie opens the DVD which is also a welcome sight, given his focus in recent years on launching his film archive and publishing works for Cienfuegos Press.

If there is one criticism to be made it would lie in *The Angry Brigade's* poor production values. While some effort has been gone in to livening up the sleeve, the entire package could have benefited from some tidying up of the documentary – and frankly it was weird watching Christie doing his entire introduction side on to the camera.

Rob Ray

PAMPHLET



The Tragic Procession: Alexander Berkman and Russian Prisoner Aid
Kate Sharpley Library, £8

This is a beautiful document, showing real care and devotion to anarchist history. It is a well-produced facsimile of the bulletins of the anarchist aid organisations after the

Russian revolution and Bolshevik repression, between 1923 and 1931. The indefatigable spirit of Alexander Berkman runs through the bulletins and we can see the efforts made by the relief committees in the statements of accounts at the back of each one.

It won't win any converts, but a useful historical document.

Martin H.

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QUIZ ANSWERS

1. Aldous Huxley.
2. Of the main players in the US administration, those found guilty were pardoned by President George Bush the First. Peace activist Bill Breeden stole a street sign in his home town commemorating one of the conspirators, Admiral John Poindexter, and "held it to ransom". He spent a few days in jail as a result.
3. The effect of sanctions on Iraq. She later

admitted that this was an erroneous response, but still thought sanctions worked well. So well that less than five years later her government decided to invade Iraq with even greater loss of life.

4. The Women's International Terrorist Conspiracy from Hell, formed by radical women in New York in 1968 to do guerrilla theatre. By 1970, the group had ceased to operate.

The politics of crime

Tom Jennings is disappointed with two films which purport to illuminate and critique violence against women

PART ONE: THE KILLER INSIDE ME

The Killer Inside Me adapts a 1952 story by Jim Thompson, the 'dime-store Dostoyevsky' widely lauded as the best second-wave noir novelist. Director Michael Winterbottom's continuing exploration of film genre was intended here to respect the source despite the difficulty of transforming dark literary interior monologue into equivalently complex visual portrayal – rather than, say, superficial shock-horror or simplistic cheap melodrama. So Casey Affleck's impeccable, affably dim demeanour conceals Deep-South Deputy Sheriff Lou Ford's raw hatred nurtured in a miserable middle-class background – ever-ready with a battery of good ol' boy clichés bolstering exaggerated gallantry bogus in its sheer overkill, gleefully deployed to discursively bludgeon those who've known him all his life and believe they know who he is. If 'manners maketh the man', his pretence of concern for others only thinly veils narcissistic self-pity which readily evaporates in the face of imagined slights to the grandiose personal mythology typical of borderline syndromes – in this case murderously asserted to the point of self-annihilation. Professional then personal entanglement with prostitute Joyce (Jessica Alba) punctures his character armour to unleash suppressed hostility – undermining a bland façade of carefully constructed but fatally fragile boundaries represented most poignantly in childhood sweetheart Amy (Kate Hudson), for whom he reserves fiercest contempt.

Now, although the twisted social niceties emanating from Ford's pathological orientation are compellingly and convincingly drawn, its supposed origin in troubled childhood with sadistic, domineering father is surely a sub-Hitchcockian McGuffin – as if flagellation-tinged premature sexualisation must yield maniacal brutality (or, more generally, abuse inevitably beget abusiveness). While it functions to contextualise Ford's sexual proclivities and later modus operandi, Winterbottom treats this cod-Freudian red-herring as the tale's moral core. Consequently the passage from first-person narrative to fully realised small town milieu expunges from the screenplay much of the pungent socio-political commentary that the author so skilfully wove in. For example, here's the anti-hero's rejoinder to one of his patsies dubbing him fair and honest, "a square Joe":



"We're living in a funny world, kid, a peculiar civilization. The police are playing crooks in it, and the crooks are doing police duty. The politicians are preachers, and the preachers are politicians ... The Bad People want us to have more dough, and the Good People are fighting to keep it from us. It's not good for us ... If we all had all we wanted to eat, we'd crap too much. We'd have inflation in the toilet paper industry ... That's about the size of some of the arguments I've heard" (Orion Books edition, 2002, page 105).

Ford adds that most avoid awareness of how screwed up things are by internalising the rules of respectability and scapegoating those who don't conform. Thompson thus plausibly accounts for particular horrors and hypocrisies entirely from the perspective of a homicidal sociopath, yet ascribing equal weight to both the biographical genesis of madness and the central role of conventional social structures and institutions in nurturing such outcomes irrespective of specific human weakness.

The film surrenders such sophistication in a vividly kitsch realisation of 1950s West Texas – meticulously designed visuals and soundtrack supplanting, rather than supplementing, the main character's stream-of-consciousness. The book's strong sense of alienated perception is lost along with focus on what Ford 'chooses' to attend to. The latter now appears as transparent reality – good-natured, well-meaning naifs assuming the best in others, allowing evil in by the back door (the usual conservative conclusion, implicitly soliciting more draconian protection). However, the spectacularisation of extreme symptoms and transgressions ignores Thompson's disquieting insistence on the inherently collusive nature of main-

stream morality, postulating continuity between exploitative societal hierarchy and individual monstrosity. Winterbottom instead emphasises lurid exceptions masquerading among comforting norms, thereby ironically parroting the psychotic logic of detached compulsion which drives 'freaks' like Ford as well as other exemplary embodiments of capitalism's congenital antisociality.

Crimes and Mr Manners

The most painfully serious casualties of *The Killer Inside Me's* cinematic gaze are its twinned femmes fatales, whose batterings to death are anatomised with morbid fascination by the camera but merit mere workmanlike paragraphs in the book. This utterly skews their role illustrating the classic macho stereotype of femininity – the madonna/whore dichotomy dissolved by dangerous autonomous passion: Joyce risking expulsion by polite society which craves her, seeking the covert endorsement of power; Amy demanding its overt affirmation to avoid the former's fate. Their killer's conduct stands for patriarchal relations generally, where the sadomasochistic perversities characterising domination are officially reinforced through denial – desire being fatal because it must be repressed and displaced into necessarily partial, static, rigid pathways destined always to frustrate and escalate. But, objectifying Ford's viewpoint, Winterbottom obscures more nuanced interpretations of what the characters signify, explaining the women's passive complicity as personality defects complementing his protagonist's. Articulating as fact what Thompson questioned, the film materialises masculine control as natural order – mirroring

Jean Charles de Menezes was the victim of a tragic accident. He was mistakenly identified as a suicide bomber. Ian Tomlinson was another unfortunate accident victim. He was mistaken for a cheeky peaceful demonstrator.



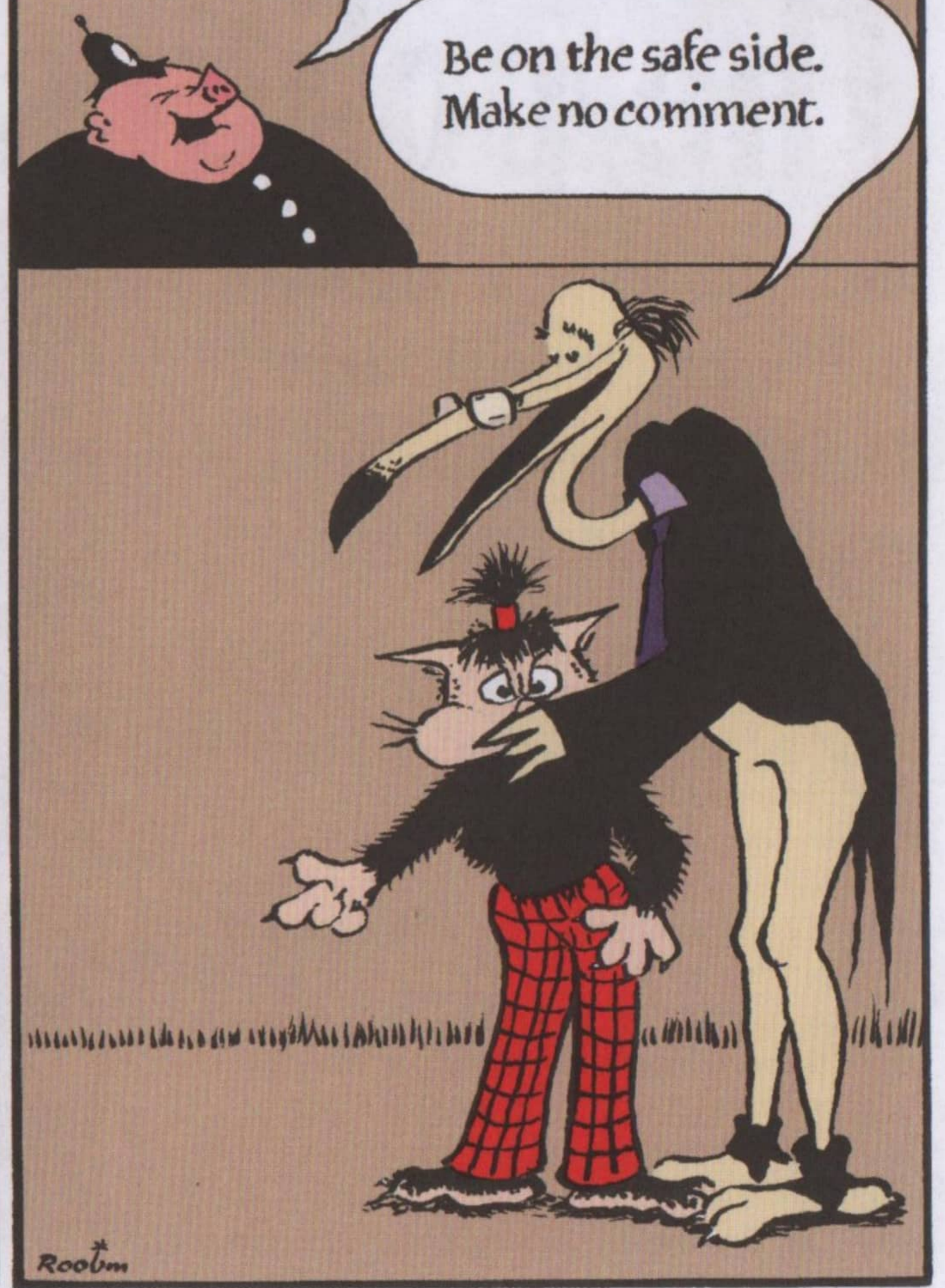
So what about...??

Blair Peach??
No accident there. He really was a cheeky peaceful demonstrator.



People feel safe when they see police on the streets.

Be on the safe side. Make no comment.



Review

◀ page 15

the psychological purpose of a fetish and rewarding feminist complaints that the misogyny the director claims to be moralising about is, effectively, reproduced or even glorified.

But Ford also serves as model for the camouflage of false self as constitutive of sexuality and identity in class stratification, where offences to pious propriety refuse to stay swept under the carpet and directly or indirectly jeopardise the interests of the powerful. Then sickness is treated by re-establishing the conditions which precipitated it in the first place, reinstating the illusion or simulation of health (entirely appropriate, then, that his father was a General

Practitioner). Closing the gap between his warped appreciation of his lovers (projecting desires onto them which may only awkwardly fit) and their own potential agendas (which the book left open by omission), the film achieves the seemingly overwhelming hopelessness and misanthropy Thompson is alternately despised and admired for. Whereas his pessimism and disgust equally (if more subtly) pinpoint the incapacity of bourgeois society ever to benefit those men and women at the bottom of its heap – a conclusion foreclosed here by the director and critics alike.

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<http://libcom.org/blog/4271>

The Killer Inside Me is released on DVD on 27th September. Part 2, in the next issue of *Freedom*, reviews *The Girl With the Dragon Tattoo*.

THE QUIZ

1. Who said "Liberties aren't given, they are taken"?
2. Who was the only person to be jailed as a result of the Iran-Contra affair, where the US state sold arms to Iran and used the profits to fund the right-wing death squads in Nicaragua?
3. For Madeleine Albright, US ambassador to the UN in 1996, what was worth half a million dead children?
4. What was WITCH?

Answers on page 14

The Anarchist Quiz Book compiled by Martin Howard with illustrations by Paul Petard, is available at £5 (post free) from Freedom Press, to order see freedompress.org.uk.

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FREEDOM fortnightly ISSN 0016 0504

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