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TOMLINSON'S KILLER?

PC Harwood takes the stand at inquest into G20 death

The officer who struck Ian Tomlinson took the stand on the third day of the inquest into his death just over two years ago by police, to answer questions publicly for the first time about the incident.

PC Simon Harwood, who is a member of the violent and largely unaccountable Territorial Support Group (TSG), was questioned about what he did on 1st April 2009 during the anti-G20 protests. He was also questioned extensively about his recollections and motivations for attacking people during the demonstration.

Over the three days, footage was shown to the jury of Harwood dragging a protester at speed into the door of an opened riot van, pulling to the ground a BBC cameraman who was filming an arrest and also pushing a protestor with both hands, all minutes before coming into contact with Ian Tomlinson.

Harwood, the driver of a TSG van parked just round the corner to kettled protesters at the Bank of England, was supposed to remain with his carrier, but instead he "engaged" with a number of protesters leading to the events in Royal Exchange passage, where Ian Tomlinson, a newspaper vendor unconnected

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LENS CAP WE SALUTE THEIR INDEFATIGABILITY



The Black bloc evade police attention on the TUC demonstration Saturday 26th March by being faster, cleverer and more self-aware than the dated public order policing. The day was marked by extensive property damage to symbols of wealth and privilege, including the Ritz Hotel, Vodaphone and other tax avoiding businesses.

Photo: Pennie Quinton

WORK PROVIDER CUTS JOBS

The beginning of April saw the government announce new contracts to run back to work scheme with at least one provider already issuing redundancy notices. Working Links, one of the successful contractors of the new work programme, is sending redundancy letters to almost 600 of its 2,000 workforce, with the threat that more could follow if staff numbers for the new contracts are lower than existing levels.

The company is part funded by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) and has won bids to run the scheme in Scotland, Wales and south-west England. Fears similar redundancies from other providers could follow. Employers, who will be paid billions of pounds in taxpayers' money to operate the contracts, are only offering statutory minimum redundancy pay and have failed to operate any

redundancy avoidance measures.

Work and pensions minister Chris Grayling has said redundancies are premature, and urged providers to look at redeploying staff – although he has refused to take on staff delivering services for people who are disabled and on long-term sickness when his department resumes responsibility for this work at the end of April.

The announcement comes days after the DWP announced it was cutting more than 5,000 jobs from its corporate offices in Sheffield, Leeds and London, as part of wider cuts across the department including from jobcentres.

Other private jobs brokers – including A4E, G4S and Serco – have been named preferred bidders to deliver the Work Programme. In total there are 40 contracts worth between £3 billion and £5 billion.

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NEWS

NEWS IN BRIEF

POLICE: A massive operation involving eight officers and a helicopter was launched after two 'salvagers' were caught taking scrap from a tip. Having helped themselves to an old video games console and an electric drill that had been dumped at their local recycling centre in Gloucester, the salvagers were amazed when the officers, backed by the helicopter, swooped on them as they walked home. One was later fined £20 and the other released without charge. The cost of the arrest operation was said to be £20,000 and that the scrap value of the old electrical goods was 47p.

POLITICIANS: Another MP has been jailed for making fraudulent expenses claim. New Labour MP Jim Devine was jailed for 16 months after falsely claiming £8,385 on cleaning and maintenance work. He was found guilty of submitting false invoices, after the expenses scandal had already broke in the news. In jailing the fraudster the judge said he had "lied in significant parts of the evidence he gave," adding he "set about defrauding the public purse in a calculated and deliberate way." Devine is the third New Labour MP to be jailed for fiddling his expenses.

PROTEST: In a time when everything solid is definitely melting into air, a group of activists have decided to hold a demonstration in favour of the cuts. The odd assortment of liberals, young Tories and media reactionaries are promoting Rally Against Debt on 14th May, which is being organised by the Taxpayers' Alliance, a group which is backed by Tory donors. Annabelle Fuller, a former adviser to the Ukip leader, Nigel Farage, is a leading spokesperson. Institute of Economic Affairs and a number of Conservative and Liberal Democrat party members have all threatened to follow the party line.

RETAIL: Another major high street name is heading for the rocks as HMV issued its third profit warning in as many months. It has just two weeks to agree a deal to sell Waterstone's to the Russian billionaire Alexander Mamut as it looks for ways to cut its bank debt and put itself on a firmer financial footing. While HMV appears to have suffered more than most from a downturn in consumer spending this year, it is not alone. Dixons, who own Currys and PC World, also warned on profits last week.

WORKPLACE: A bank worker got the sack after she criticised her boss's £4,000-an-hour salary on Facebook. Stephanie Bon, from Colchester, Essex, was working as a £7-an-hour HR assistant for Lloyds Banking Group when she heard about her new chief executive's mammoth salary. She went on Facebook and posted "LBG's new CEO gets £4,000 an hour. I get £7. That's fair." But after her bosses heard about the comment she was marched from the offices and fired.

LENS CAP ON YER BIKE!



Image courtesy Doug

Critical Mass celebrated its seventeenth birthday in the UK with a larger than normal turn out at the beginning of April. Hundreds of cyclists, skateboarders and rollerbladers took to the streets of London to celebrate car-free traffic in what has become a recognised institution in the capital.

Common Place social centre to close

On 21st March 2011, radical, autonomous social centre The Common Place in Leeds announced that it would be closing after a final party weekend on 22nd to 24th April. This will be felt by many as a great loss.

From its beginnings six years ago as hub to mobilise for the G8, The Common Place has evolved to be a truly valuable independent community space; it's well-loved and continues to be well-used by lots of different groups. It has provided a non-commercial space in the city centre for local and national groups and collectives to meet and organise, and is a popular and unique venue for DIY gigs and club nights in Leeds. It has been more open and welcoming to a broader cross-section of groups, communities and individuals than might have otherwise been the case.

So why is it closing? There are a whole load of reasons, and this is an attempt to explain some of them. One simple but key reason is that it's just unworkable; the funding model is unsustainable and relying on volunteers is often expecting too much from a small number of people. The building itself has faced a lot of criticism because it's not an ideal space, and renting it has meant a reluctance to put money and energy into making any improvements. They have £15,000 in court costs hanging over their head, which they can't afford to pay.

The costs resulted from having their

license revoked following a period which saw an unwarranted degree of police scrutiny, particularly given that there had not been a single complaint made against The Common Place by a member of public, nor has there been since. In addition, recent revelations of long running disruptive undercover police infiltration have through no fault of their own undermined their ability to continue as a legal entity - one of their founding directors was not who they claimed to be and was in fact a member of the National Public Order Intelligence Unit (NPOIU).

At a well attended special AGM in January 2010 the negative feelings about the building were clear; it was described as a dark, unfriendly space. It was agreed to keep everything running so groups could have stability, but the time has finally run out. The Common Place aims to finish on a high with a final party to show that there is energy for a social centre, reason to use one and that it will be sorely missed.

There is to be a "what's next" discussion for people who want to be involved in creating a future space in Leeds, but this is the end of the Common Place. The idea is to put people in contact with each other so groups can go off and start planning whatever they are interested in.

For more info: <http://www.thecommonplace.org.uk/>



Photos: M

When anarchists dare

A report back from Whitechapel Anarchist Group on the events of 26th March

For many of us, 26th March was set to be the big one. The anger and spontaneity of the student movement, but joined by other people from all walks of life whose very survival is being threatened by the cuts. We wanted to join the dots and link our various struggles in an all out class war against those who now can't even be bothered to give us the crumbs from their table.

At the very least, we did succeed in joining up all the various anarchists across London that day who had come from every corner of the country and beyond. Once the bloc converged and headed to its intended target there was no stopping it, and police were either overpowered or outmanoeuvred every time they attempted a challenge. Paint bombs and smoke grenades obstructed the work of various FIT teams who tailed the bloc, which had swelled until it made up a sea of red and black flags.

The mob roamed the streets from Soho to Mayfair and built momentum as it went, leaving graffiti, toppled cops, bewildered tourists and smashed windows in its wake. From HSBC, Santander and Lloyds, to jewellers, luxury auto dealers and even Ann Summers, countless targets along the improvised route were trashed. But it was on Piccadilly where it was presented the opportunity to unleash its anger upon the ruling class themselves, rather than their symbolic representations. The crowd acknowledged this, and as we approached the building a chant went up – *'The Ritz, The Ritz, we gotta get rid of The Ritz.'*

They didn't, of course. But for anyone who witnessed the daring assault on The Ritz Hotel, no doubt remains as to whether they would have succeeded in thoroughly scaring the shit out of any rich scum who were contained within. The Porsche Centre in Mayfair was the last to fall, then as the mob reached Hyde Park it was finally confronted by large numbers of knuckle-dragging TSG, drooling at the prospect of not having to engage asymmetrically, on unfavourable territory filled with by-

standers. The terrible wave of black-masked militants finally broke and scattered in every direction.

While some of the details and what will become of the movement are still uncertain, one thing is not. All afternoon the West End was ours. And by nightfall when the totality of the days events were revealed, we were witness to scenes unheard of for years as barricades burned in central London.

This is not to fall into the same self-congratulatory trap as morons on the left who would hold hands, sing the Internationale in Hyde Park and call it a day, pretending they've struck a critical blow at the very heart of the system. Hundreds of people were arrested or brutalised in Trafalgar Square. Some sad misguided individuals are still deluded enough to think they can engage with the police on a human level, which the occupation of Fortnum & Mason has shown us can only end in betrayal. The anarchist movement certainly delivered, but there is still much work to be done. We may have shaken the enclaves of the wealthy to their foundations but we have not dealt them their final hand.

Tomlinson's killer?

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to the demonstration, was trying to go home.

Being led through his testimony by the coroners barrister, Harwood remained adamant that his actions towards Tomlinson were "necessary, proportionate and reasonable," much to the anger and dismay of the Tomlinson family members present who were forced to watch as Harwood, in full riot gear, struck Mr Tomlinson on the leg as he was walking away from police lines with his hands in his pockets and then immediately charged into him sending him violently to the ground where it is believed he sustained the injuries that led to his death some minutes later.

Paul King, Tomlinson's elder son, walked

out in disgust as Harwood took to the stand and say that "he only wanted to help the family". Previously Harwood had made three prepared statements to the IPCC and refused to answer their questions during interview. Eventually he admitted on the stand that Mr Tomlinson posed no threat to himself or any other officer, that he was walking away from police lines.

The atmosphere in the inquest was tense and emotional, and several times family members had to leave looking distressed. Harwood spoke in a slow quiet tone throughout and often refused to answer questions, exclaiming he didn't understand what the barrister was trying to say.

The inquest is expected to go on for another five weeks and will include medical testimony from the discredited Dr Freddy Patel who did the first post mortem on Mr Tomlinson, declaring that he died of natural causes, which led to the decision by the Director of Public Prosecutions not to prosecute PC Harwood for criminal liability, even though two subsequent independent post mortems say Mr Tomlinson died from internal bleeding, consistent with receiving a heavy blow.

Freedom has been present at the inquest on a daily basis and will continue to report about the day's proceedings on our website, freedompress.org.uk.

ANALYSIS

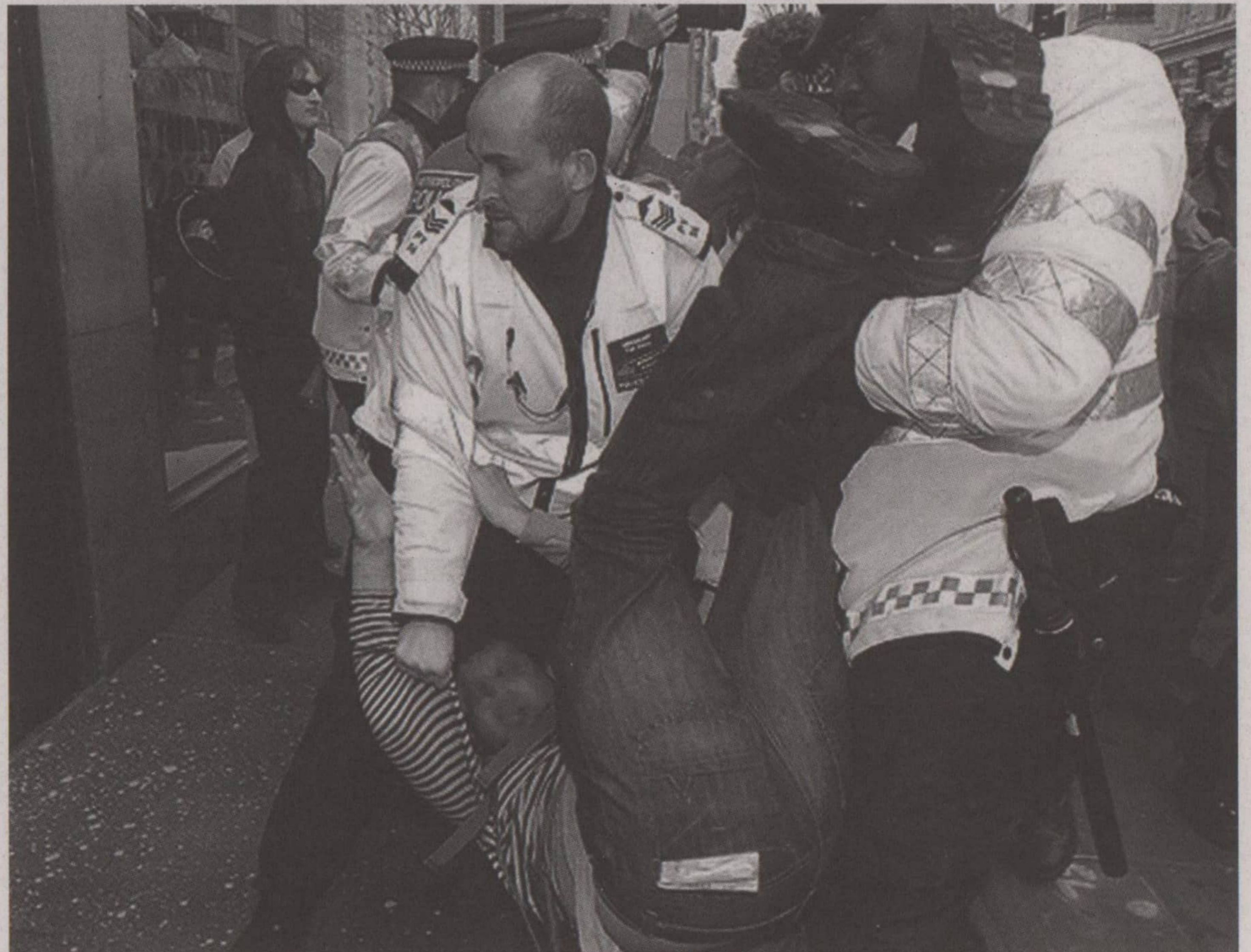
Cop tsunami in the offing

As we go to press, the cops have put out the first 'rogues gallery' for 26th March. By the time you read this we expect the total of arrests to have risen sharply from the 201 on the day. Operation Brontide is headed by Detective Chief Superintendent Matthew Horne who is also heading Operation Malone, the investigation into the student demonstrations at the end of last year. It is also noteworthy that the photographs are numbered between 1 and 30, suggesting at least 12 other people are already known to the investigation.

Of those arrested on the day, 145 are connected to the Fortnum & Mason's occupation, 138 are charged with aggravated trespass and seven on police bail. Those charged with aggravated trespass are a mixture of section 68 of the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994, namely intentionally disrupting lawful activity while trespassing, and section 69, refusing to leave when ordered by a constable who reasonably believes you are committing section 68.

The 56 arrests elsewhere break down to 40 on police bail, two released without charge, three people accepted cautions for Criminal Damage. Eleven people have been charged, mostly with minor offences, but one charged with violent disorder and admitting to assaulting a PC was sentenced to four weeks and released on 8th April. Over 100 people attended the defendants meeting a week later and a defence campaign is being planned.

There is also a case from Friday 25th March related to the anti-cuts march under the Explosive Substances Act 1883. Knowledgeable comrades will recall that this Act was brought in on the back of anti-anarchist hysteria in the press. The Attorney General has now given consent for the prosecution to go ahead. Without the full details we can't say much, but it's not likely



A protester is removed from Oxford Street on 26th March.

to be the second coming of the angry brigade. As the old joke goes, "No one was hurt, nothing got damaged and responsibility was claimed by a moderate group."

Now for the tsunami alert. When the sea suddenly goes away it's time to head for higher ground. On the 26th the cops stood back and let a lot of stuff happen. They have not been strategically bamboozled by innovative new activist tactics and they were not at full stretch at any point in the day. They are playing politics. So after the vibrant and dynamic demonstration on 26th March we can guess that Tim Godwin, the Acting Commissioner, and Bob Broadhurst,

head of Public Order, have been to see the Home Secretary. After watching a few video clips together, perchance the flaming barricades on Jermyn Street and Haymarket and, if audio is available, the rousing chants of 'fuck the royal wedding' from so many of 'Er Maj's erstwhile loyal subjects, the question will be, 'Well Ma'am, for 29th April more softly softly laid-back, hands off, facilitate the right to protest policing?' You have been warned.

Stop press: By 9th April two people have handed themselves in and been charged with violent disorder.

Class war on the streets of London

On 26th March, people assembled to protest and take direct action against the government. Most were marching quite simply because their jobs, their services, and their livelihoods are under attack. This included those of us in anarchist blocs, though we also argued for



a much broader perspective and recognition that capitalism itself was the issue, not just the current 'ConDem cuts'.

It needs to be recognised that whilst the aim of local protests is to draw people in to a movement as something to build from, national protests need to be built to. The sheer weight of effort required to build up numbers that means something needs to come out of them other than a passive march. Break-away marches and direct action as an expression of class anger are more than justified in that respect. But they mean and accomplish nothing if that is the end of it. If anarchists went to London for a riot and that's that, there was no point. However, if we are able to push the momentum of the direct action into a broader movement of active resistance,

then it becomes a genuinely pivotal event.

What has to follow next is to build from attacks upon the economy in the middle of London to attacks upon the economy as a whole. We are already active on the picket lines of striking workers, fighting our own bosses and showing solidarity with the struggles of others. There have also been occupations of closing services, and moderate examples of economic blockades which could be far more effective if fired with militancy. The point now is to turn them from outstanding events into the norm, not as part of an 'argument', but as a tactic. If we want the government to back down, the cuts must become the more expensive option. We have to make the country ungovernable.

Solidarity Federation

NEWS IN BRIEF

EDUCATION: With utter predictability the UK's elite universities have applied *en masse* to charge the maximum £9,000 tuition fees for new students. So far 25 top universities have made a mockery of the education ministers' assertion that they would only charge the maximum in 'exceptional circumstances' by raising tuition fees to the maximum level of £9,000 per year.

FINANCE: Marx must be turning in his grave as the *Financial Times* reports on the fund management industry destroying \$1,300bn of value annually, according to an unpublished draft report conducted by IBM. The wide-ranging report, *Financial Markets 2020*, is based on a survey of more than 2,600 industry participants and government officials across 84 countries by the IBM Institute for Business Value. In an unrelated matter The Office for Budget Responsibility has raised its prediction of total household debt in 2015 to £2,126bn. Average household debt is forecast to rise to £77,309 by 2015.

MILITARY: Royal Navy medic Michael Lyons has appeared before a court martial on a charge of wilful disobedience for refusing to deploy to Afghanistan. The 24-year-old said he could not serve on moral grounds after reading about the conflict on the Wikileaks website. He appeared before Advisory Committee on Conscientious Objectors (ACCO) and told them he "couldn't serve on a moral ground and I couldn't see any political reason for being there," adding "If more people in my position stood up, there would be a lot less innocent lives lost around the world." ACCO rejected his claim.

POLICE: Seeing the need to improve their image in terms of community relations, the Met police have decided to set up a permanent mini police station in Sainsbury's supermarket just round the corner from *Freedom*. The store has converted a room just behind the check-outs to be used by officers from the Whitechapel Safer Neighbourhoods Team and any other police officers that happen to be in the vicinity. What the room is to be used for has not been disclosed. UK Uncut activists have been checking the tax receipts of the Lord Sainsbury and his family.

UNEMPLOYMENT: One aspect of the cuts is the qualitative shift in which the way the state treats the most needy. A job centre insider has blown the whistle on the new instructions issued to staff to limit payments by tricking people out of the benefits they are entitled to. Staff at job centres have been given a target of three people a week to refer for sanctions, a policy where benefits are stopped for up to six months if the claimant doesn't adhere to the pre-agreed terms of their Jobseeker contract, i.e. being late for interviews, not applying for suitable vacancies, etc.

Against the cuts, against the state

The red and black flags flying at the big anti-cuts demo on 26th March have prompted that question again. Why are anarchists – who are against the state – taking to the streets against cuts in public spending and state provision? I've been hearing this from potentially sympathetic folk, so it's a question worth answering again.

Tories, New Labourites and others moot the 'freedom' of the 'open' market against the bureaucratic state, but class struggle anarchists regard both as sources of exploitation. The market is expanding into every area of life with an authority far more oppressive than any old-fashioned autocracy. The ruling classes want us to work more for less, to tug our forelocks and obey. Wages stagnate or go down, and we face longer working hours, fewer liberties and employment rights, less job security or security of any kind. This insecurity has nothing to do with freedom, and everything to do with labour discipline. As our conditions get worse, their profits soar.

By refusing to submit to austerity we resist the attack of state and capital on our living standards. When the public sector is cut and privatised, we face an enclosure of resources that were formerly held in common. 'Enclosure' was originally used to describe the private take-over of common land in the earlier years of capitalism, yet enclosures happen continuously as the ruling classes strive to increase profits and roll back past working class victories.

Of course, nowadays we're not defending grazing rights for our pigs on ye olde commons but services and resources badly managed by the state. Yet there's a rich history of people opposing cutbacks and challenging the way these resources are controlled – for example,

hospital occupations in the 1970s and 80s such as Hounslow and the South London Hospital for Women. Staff and local residents took over hospitals slated for closure. The occupations became centres for general resistance, with debate and action on what healthcare could look like in a human community based on freedom and cooperation. There were also campaigns waged by benefit claimants to counter cuts in welfare, resist state snoopers and disrupt earlier versions of workfare. More recently, student occupations have featured 'teach-ins' with a curriculum based on struggle and self-education.

But too often anti-cuts activism has been lumbered with a dour tradition of dullness and worthiness. Many of us have sat far too often in draughty halls listening to droning lefties and trade union officials. Or stood in front of town halls listening to the same, wondering why we're there. In the end we know it's because we're dealing with life-and-death questions: health, education, housing, social welfare. But why did action on these issues have to be so devoid of imagination? Where was the combativeness, spirit, confrontation of the root problem?

Then the student and EMA demonstrations last year moved things in a much more vibrant direction, with initiatives like Arts Against the Cuts or Queer Resistance springing up. And now we're occupying town halls and taking the streets. During last December's student demo when the Treasury was attacked, schoolgirls chanted 'we want our money' rather than 'tax the rich'. Perhaps that partly expresses our approach, though ultimately we want much more than money. We aim to reclaim social wealth, and we don't trust politicians to do it for us.

LM



Hounslow Hospital in west London was one of many occupied in the 1970s.

INTERNATIONAL

IN BRIEF

AZERBAIJAN: Apparently inspired by the North African uprisings, opposition leaders called a rather poorly attended demonstration in Baku in this Muslim-majority ex-Soviet country, against the long and authoritarian rule of the West-supported Ilham Aliyev. There were over 200 arrests and protesters were attacked by riot police with tear gas, batons and bare fists. More demonstrations have been scheduled.

BAHRAIN: Violent and intimidatory tactics by the state, such as night raids, beatings, 'disappearances' etc have caused a lull in the popular protests in this west-supported monarchy. The widely read opposition newspaper *Al Wasat* has been shut down. Six people had died from gunshot wounds and hundreds were injured on the day of the big demonstration on 16th March when tens of thousands of people took to the streets. There is a continual police and military presence in the streets. Hundreds have been arrested.

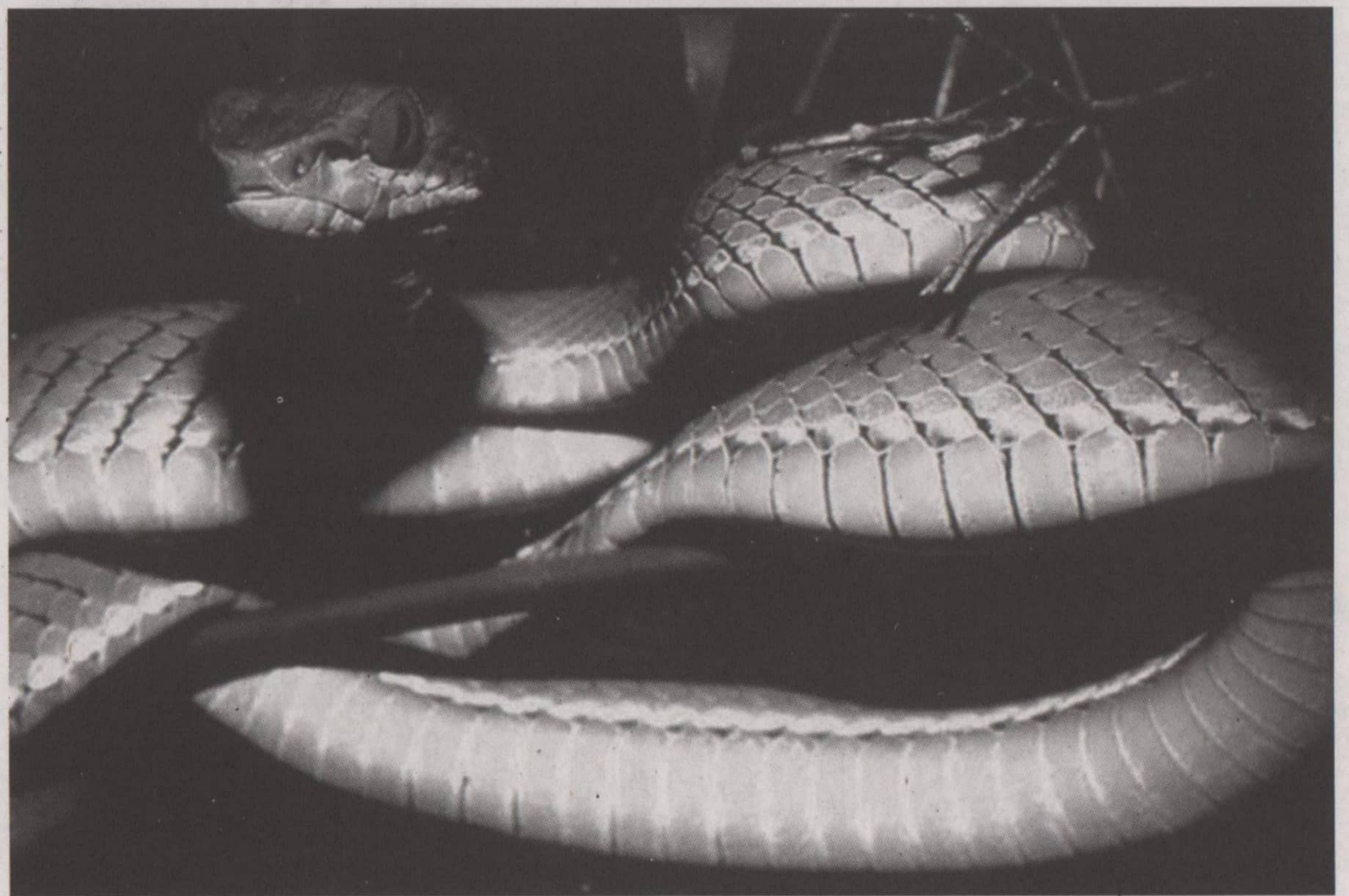
GERMANY: On 2nd April around 250,000 people marched in the four major cities of the country against nuclear power production. Berlin alone is supposed to have attracted more than a 100,000. It was the largest anti-nuclear demonstration Germany has seen. Demonstrators demanded the immediate shutting off of the 17 reactors in the country, some of which had already been closed down due to safety issues post Fukushima.

GREECE: North African migrant workers on hunger strike in Greek prisons ended their strike on 30th March after 44 days on a 'deal' by the Interior Minister that grants them a six-month 'grace period' to live and work in the country. However, the government has made no promises to provide the workers with residence permits, and has said that they will not be prevented from re-entering the country, hinting at what exactly the government plans to do.

HONDURAS: This central American nation is embroiled in a month-long teachers strike against educational 'reform' that they see as privatisation. Their protests have been severely attacked by tear gas, beatings and water cannon, and the government has declared their strike illegal. Five thousand teachers have been suspended for three months, and the government threatens to sack and suspend more. The US is condemning the protests here saying they are 'violent' and unjustified.

SYRIA: In more than two weeks of furious protests against the government of Bashar al-Assad, around 70 people have been killed by security forces. Last Friday, dubbed Martyrs' Day, thousands took to the streets to demand civil liberties. Syria suffers the same economic hardships as those that triggered the uprisings in Tunisia, Algeria and Egypt. Protesting people here are being suppressed in much the same way as in Yemen and Bahrain.

LENS CAP SERPENTINE DISCOVERY



A new species of snake, named the ruby-eyed green pit viper after its striking red eyes, was discovered recently in South-east Asia, especially in the regions of Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia. Biologists are yet to determine its characteristics. A new yellow-eyed species of the same genus was also found along with it.

Middle East rage continues

While protests were raging in Egypt and Libya, the people of Yemen were taking to the streets too.

The repression of the Yemenis has been even worse than that of Libyans. In protests and demonstrations held in the last two months more than 120 people have been shot and killed by security forces and gunmen in civilian clothes, and around 5,000 have been injured. Violent protests are continuing to take place in Yemen even as this article is written.

Most of these murders have taken place in Taiz, a southern city where thousands marched down to a protest camp towards Freedom Square on 4th April. The crowd became furious when their path was blocked by security forces near the headquarters of the governor, causing people to attack the office

and the forces with stones. In response gunmen fired live rounds randomly from rooftops, causing panic and stampedes.

Demonstrators were attacked again on 5th April by police, security forces and gunmen with tear-gas, daggers and bats as well as with live ammunition.

Yemen's President, Ali Abdullah Saleh, has been in power for 32 years and the people, emboldened by the uprisings elsewhere in the region, are demanding his removal and the right to democratic participation.

The US, which has been a long-time ally in the war against terror and a weapons supplier to Yemen has now done a U-turn and is looking to 'ease' him out of power, as long as the interim vice president-led government allows CIA-led bombings in Yemen against al-Qaeda to continue.

Notes from the US

Bigotry

As the US leads the killing in Libya, more and more statistics about US support for the regime there emerge: over the past few years, in fact, Libya actually strengthened its (commercial) ties to the United States and many European nations. For instance, a couple of years ago the US firm General Dynamics signed a US\$165 (£103) million contract to arm the Libyan Armed Forces' elite second brigade. Then Halliburton, Shell, Raytheon, Dow Chemical and Chevron are all members

of the US-Libya Business Association. In 2009, it was revealed that British terrorists were training Libyan special forces in counterterrorism techniques.

As well as this foul hypocrisy ("We're bombing Libya to save its citizens"), pure, petty-minded, bigotry is blazing away across the United States at the moment. In late March the governor of Maine, Paul LePage ordered that a 36-foot long mural which portrays the state's labour history be removed

Insurrectionary anarchism?

Three countries in Europe – Italy, Switzerland and Greece – have been hit with bomb attacks which have been claimed by the insurrectionary group Informal Anarchist Federation, based in Italy. One letter-bomb exploded on 31st March in the headquarters of Swissnuclear, a nuclear industry and lobby group in the city of Olten, Switzerland, injuring two people. The measure was carried out in solidarity with three green anarchists imprisoned in Switzerland for allegedly attempting to blow up the headquarters of the IBM nanotechnology research centre in Zurich.

Another letter-bomb sent to the Korydallos high security prison in Greece on 31st March was defused. The bomb was sent in solidarity with five of the suspected members of Fire Cells Conspiracy who were arrested on 14th March this year and have been incarcerated in different high security prisons across Greece and the Greek Islands. Conspiracy of Cells of Fire, based in Greece, have been carrying out fire bomb attacks in Athens and Greece against corporate targets and in solidarity with jailed anarchists elsewhere.

The letter from the prisoners, dated 1st April, declares: “Our decision to be organised in the Conspiracy Cells of Fire is the decision to stop seeing the life that was imposed on us with the eyes of a passive spectator and become perpetrators of our history. Transfer the revolution to first person, fight for ourselves, without inhibitions and postponements and to exist in the here and now of the new urban guerrilla warfare.”

The letter also declares solidarity with the International Revolutionary Front-Informal Anarchist Federation (FAI); The Conspiracy members are currently awaiting trial to be



Police approach the entrance of Swissnuclear in Olten on 31st March where two people were injured when a letter bomb exploded.

held within Korydallos prison. Demonstrations in solidarity with the comrades have been held in Greece.

The letter also declares solidarity with 14 Chilean anarchists on an indefinite hunger strike in a maximum security prison in Santiago. They were arrested in August 2010 after their residences and social centres were raided in an operation called Salamander that was launched to crack down on a spate of bombings targeting banks, foreign companies, embassies, churches and police stations. They were charged with illicit terrorist association and transportation or placing of

explosive devices. Many of them did not even know each other prior to the arrest. They have been under ‘preventive detention’ since. The prosecutor is demanding ten years to life. Seven of them began a hunger strike on 21st February; joined by two more on the 23rd. Solidarity demonstrations have been held.

FAI has carried out bomb attacks in the embassies of Chile, Switzerland and Greece in Rome, including the offices of Angela Merkel and Silvio Berlusconi. On 31st March a letter-bomb exploded in the hands of an Italian army official, injuring him. Their letters have not been released to the media.

Notes from the US

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from the lobby – not of a justice or commerce department; but from... the Department of Labour. The mural was put up three years ago after being selected by a jury working for the Maine Arts Commission and a federal grant.

The artist, Judy Taylor, said that her piece was never meant to be political, simply a depiction of Maine’s labour history. In 11 panels, it shows nothing more subversive than moments from the state’s workers’ past – including a strike in 1937 at the Auburn and Lewiston shoe mill, ‘Rosie the Riveter’ at Bath Iron Works, and the paper mill workers’ strike of 1986 in Jay.

Then a group of legislators in the House of Representatives is stealthily working on a bill (House Resolution 1135) which would cut off state aid (food stamps) to all the members of a home where one of its members takes strike action against any employer. At

press time the Ohio House of Representatives voted on a measure to remove collective bargaining rights for state employees – and make strikes illegal; the same state’s senate passed a harsher version of the bill earlier last month.

Still there are always the courts: in March, Obama signed a fresh executive order which sets up formal apparatus which will keep indefinitely and without trial any number of prisoners in Guantánamo Bay, Cuba. The White House also plans to resume new military commission trials at the base.

As Lawrence Korb, senior fellow at the Center For American Progress, says, “Basically it means that Guantánamo Bay is going to be open for as far as we can see because, if in fact you can transfer the prisoners, you do try them, then you’ll have to put them some place if you convict them.”

Louis Further

Ivory Coast

First Libya, now Ivory Coast. Could it be that the right-wing governments across the West are getting bolder in their ability to defy popular opinion and wage wars wherever their interests lie? Jon Swaine, writing for the *Telegraph*, certainly thinks so: “the west’s appetite for military action has recovered robustly from the diplomatic trauma of the Iraq war.”

Ex-master France has increased its ground troops in the country from 1,100 to 1,400, who are helping UN peacekeeping forces to attack Gbagbo. The ‘civil war’ has led to the death of around 1,500 people already. Because of economic sanctions cocoa prices have dropped further which might lead to starvation-like conditions for the vast majority of farmers dependent on its exports.

Amidst deaths, refugees, bombs and starvation, there are reports that Gbagbo will surrender.

CRISES AND COVER-UPS

The capitalist chickens have come home to roost...

The current economic crisis that started in 2007, with the collapse of the housing bubble in the US, and has hence hit the world in a rising tidal wave is only now revealing its full consequences. The capitalist chickens have come home to roost. Before, anti-capitalists' frantic warnings were lost in the wilderness of sudden economic boom, proliferation of plush McDonalds and of cheap credit that allowed you to buy everything that's worthless in the market. Now we are saddled with the enormous burden of paying it all back – with our lives. Never mind the islands of jaw-dropping wealth that has been made – and continues to be made – on the backs of everybody else.

Debt and deficit

Why rant? All we have to do is look at the figures and statistics that are already out there. Let's begin by demystifying current establishment propaganda that 'austerity' is necessary in order to reduce budget deficit. Budget deficit is the latest fall guy, and not the banks which governments all over the world pumped with public money in order to keep them afloat. In a way they are right, if you look at the fact that the New Labour government carried out incremental privatisation in their 13 years of power when there was significant 'prosperity' or 'economic growth'.

What they won't tell you, of course, is that this kind of quick growth and easy wealth through private trade and industry, especially in abstract finance, does not sit well with the 'welfare state' because the latter is all about redistribution of wealth, of nourishing the public sector and indigenous industries which private corporations and global multinationals capable of raking in big money for the exchequer (and even more for themselves) are sworn enemies of. So a combination of factors like borrowing in order to promote this kind of 'growth', subsidising big corporations, increasing military and bureaucratic expenditures, etc., led to the deficit piling up. According to World Bank estimates, the total national debt owed by UK in 2008 (the early stages of the crisis) was 57.3% of GDP (gross domestic product). At the same time the United States owed 54.6%, Ireland 47.6%, Germany 42.6%, France 72.2%, India 54.9%, Spain 34%, Singapore 96.6%, Portugal 75.9%, Greece a whopping 114.8% and Italy a similarly frightening 106.6%. Other countries with negative GDP in 2010 include Latvia, Romania, Croatia and Montenegro. They couldn't have piled up all this debt overnight. The crisis just helped reveal this big black hole in national financing which has been

making debtors of us all.

Now politicians need to make up for all the money they simply gave away to banks, because folding these banks and their gambling habits would cost the economy and roll back all the illusion of prosperity so far sustained. Besides, accusing the banks of wrong-doing is to admit to their own complicity.

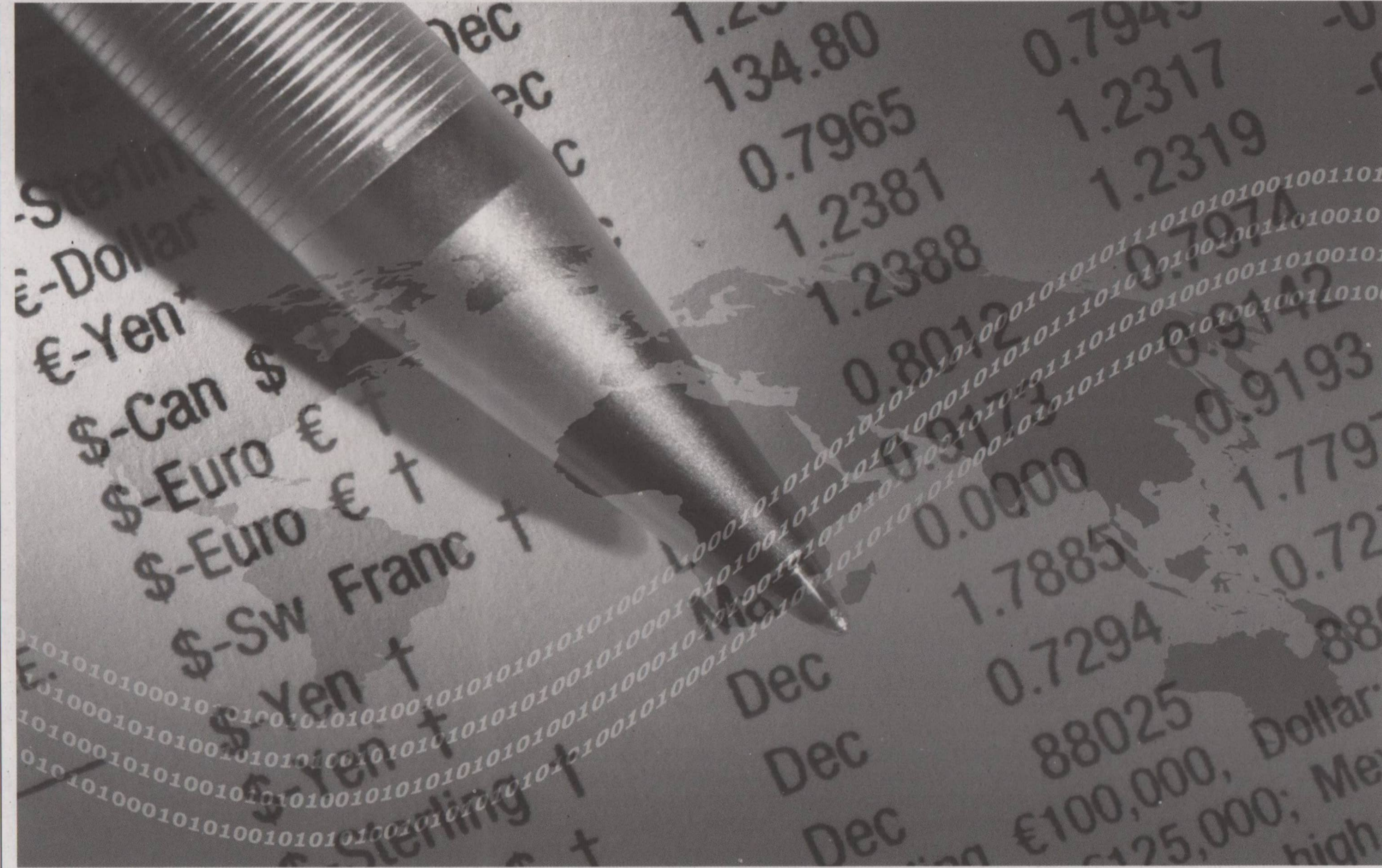
The cliché of rich-poor gap

It is not just a burgeoning debt problem that the pre-crisis economy concealed, but also proportionally growing income and regional inequalities. The Vienna Institute for International Economic Studies reports that income gap between eastern and western Europe has increased in the recent years and will keep increasing for the next seven to ten years. Here in Britain the Institute for Public Policy Research (IPPR) reports, "...the top 20% of wage earners have increased their earnings by double the rate compared to the bottom 20% during the monitoring period 1998-2006." This should be read in the context of a recent World Bank report saying that the world's 10% of the population owns 83% of the world's wealth.

The IPPR report reveals that the south-east, along with and especially London, are the most unequal in UK in terms of wealth disparities. Full time male wage gap between the top 20% and the bottom 20% in London is £686. An unrelated global study on income and regional inequalities conducted by *The Economist* and reported on 10th March 2011 adds, "Britain has the widest disparities, with average GDP per head in London more than nine times larger than in parts of Wales."

According to a study conducted by the Campaign to End Child Poverty, a network of 150 charities in UK, London has the largest number of children in poverty in the whole of England with the borough of Tower Hamlets leading the charge. Of the children here, 57% live in poverty, followed by Islington with 46%. Hackney's share is right up there with 44%. According to the Poverty in Scotland report, 2011, around one in five people, and one in four children, live in poverty in Scotland. According to a UNICEF report quoted by the BBC in February this year, not less than 50 million children in rich nations live in poverty, and this number is only increasing.

The *Economist* report also says, "...the district of Columbia [US] is five times as rich as Mississippi. Italy and Germany have the smallest regional spread, yet incomes in their most affluent areas are still almost three times those of the poorest." Continuing, "In France, too, the income gap has widened: during the recession real GDP per head fell by twice as much in the five poorest states as in the Ile-de-France region around Paris," it goes on, "China's most prosperous districts, Shanghai and



Beijing, have been growing even faster than the economy as a whole." In Indonesia, thanks to the current price hikes in food products, people are spending nearly 50% of their earnings on food.

The website Left Foot Forward quoting the IPPR report said, "Analysis carried out indicates that more unequal cities appear to have less community cohesion and a weaker sense of belonging." We don't need experts to tell us that.

Musing on this aspect of the economy, a reporter, Paul Donovan, in *The Jakarta Post* (10th March 2011) says, "...the boom years disguised a growing problem in a number of economies – developed and emerging ... this income inequality was not necessarily apparent because credit allowed consumers to ignore its presence."

The jargon of austerity

This does not mean that austerity is merely a revelation of a sorry state of affairs. Recalling colonial and neo-colonial history, it is only repetitive to say that every crisis is also an opportunity. It allows those in power – Left or Right – to use the crisis as an excuse to forcefully push through toxic neoliberal policies that a weakened and confused public

2009 (figure given by Office for National Statistics and quoted in a BBC news report titled "Underemployed make jobless figures 'deceptively good'"). Also according to 2011 census, there have been 40,000 more job vacancies than in the end of last year, but most of them are temp jobs with only 8,000 being long-term or permanent.

Nations are selling themselves as much as individuals. Desperate Portugal recently sold its bonds worth one billion Euros, which will mature in 2013, at a cruel interest rate of 5.99% in order to avoid grovelling before the EU for a bailout and drowning itself in even more debt like Greece and Ireland have done. It is also, perhaps above all, a question of preserving its sovereignty. As a result of this crisis new economic superpowers are emerging, such as China. But in the Eurozone, already existing superpowers are tightening their stranglehold on hapless governments.

That's what the IMF-backed EU (or more simply German) bailout of Greece with a huge 750 billion Euros was all about. Ireland received 67.5 billion pounds at an interest rate of 5.8% which it is looking to reduce by haggling with the EU. But the country's new Prime Minister Enda Kenny is dead set on not raising the corporate tax from the current 12.5%. The reason is predictable: attracting foreign investment to boost the economy which will then provide 'jobs'. There's only one winner in all this – Germany, which accounts for around 30% of the euro bloc's GDP already. No wonder then that when the Basel committee on Banking Supervision attempting an "overhaul of bank capital and liquidity standards designed to prevent a repeat of the financial crisis" (Bloomberg, 11th March 2011) proposed to bring a rule for European banks to reveal from 2015 onwards their lending policies, and to implement a ceiling on lending, Germany and France, followed by Greece and Austria furiously opposed the proposal.

Tragically for all of us, it appears once again that the real criminals will walk free unscathed, as the BBC *Panorama* episode 'Carry On Banking!' made abundantly clear. It is also clear that there will be no top-down purging of the system to make sure that the 2007–08 crisis cannot recur. Nor is there any serious debate even in unabashed, critical television programmes like *10 O'Clock Live* about the structural problems that has repeatedly caused crisis after crisis in various parts of the world. That is why it is incumbent upon us anarchists, in my personal view, that we organise seriously and methodically no matter what happens on 26th March, because we know that the Left will not bother to address these issues; and also because this is not a problem that is going to end here. It is a long-term problem that needs long-term attention and long-term solutions.

of it under the age of 35. Sri Lanka has 20.7% unemployed. Iraq, the new puppet democracy, has a scary 30% of workforce unemployed, with 17% of women (chronically more than male workers) unable to find work. At the time Tunisia, Algeria and Egypt erupted, it will come as no surprise, all these countries had a structural unemployment rate of not less than 20%, and quite frequently, around 30%, with most of them being the youth workforce. In Egypt nearly 40% of the population border the poverty line.

Unemployment in US is also running at around 9%, but economists say that structural unemployment in US will run at around 7% rather than the previously predicted rate of around 5%. What this means is that when politicians tell you that 'the economy is picking up' or that 'the stock exchange gained so many points' and other arcane stuff, that 7% of the (accounted-for) population is screwed nevertheless.

We all know the unemployment rate here in Britain is around two and a half million, with half of them at least being the youth. What they don't harp on as often is the fact that underemployment (meaning doing shit jobs for which one is over-qualified) went up to 2.8 million in 2010 from 2.1 million in

find difficult to perceive and therefore to oppose. This is somewhat difficult to achieve in a welfare state like Britain, but a matter of sleight of hand in new and emerging countries like India or the African states.

Thus we see historic job cuts and the slicing and dicing of the public sector. The establishment logic is that the vacuum will be filled by employment opportunities provided by the newly expanded private sector. Let's see how well that logic holds up against the unemployment and underemployment figures reported from around the world. (Though these are post-crisis figures aggravated by the crisis, structural unemployment, and especially underemployment has been a leitmotif of all 'prosperous' and growing economies.) And we also have to remember that these are only the numbers of people looking for work. No one can even count the number of people who have given up trying, or those that were excluded by the system a long time ago.

Unemployment in Greece is running at around 14%, give or take, with 712,065 persons out of jobs during late 2010. In Spain it is more than 20%. Portugal, characterised as west Europe's poorest country, has a current unemployed populace of 11.2%, half

COMMENT

ABOUT FREEDOM

ANGEL ALLEY

More busy times in the Alley. It was great to see so many comrades out on 26th March. We hope you enjoyed yourselves as much as we did and you all got home safe and sound. We did an extra 1,000 copies of the paper for the march, which were given out on the feeder marches and someone even managed to sell some on the TUC official route. Everyone around the Alley was participating on the day in a variety of roles, and indeed since with both court monitoring and defendant support.

We've also been doing some small scale media whoring on Resonance Radio, thanks to Ian for inviting us on his show.

Obviously it would be wonderful if we could find more people to distribute the paper. It would also be good if more comrades sold the paper generally, and you do get to keep half the cash if you're hard up. So if you're interested, please give us a ring or email subs@freedompress.org.uk.

Our troubles with the website have now been sorted out, so it's possible to subscribe and order books again – but not to make donations, which is what caused the problem in the first place. We will be working on a solution to this when we've fixed loads of other things on our very lengthy 'to do' list.

SUBSCRIPTIONS

This issue is vol 72 no 07, so if the number above your name on the address label is 7207 or less, then your subscription is now due for renewal. There's a renewal form on page 16 of this issue or you can subscribe online at freedompress.org.uk/news/subscribe or, if you don't want to worry in the future about remembering to renew, ask us to send you a standing order form by emailing subs@freedompress.org.uk or write to us at 'Subscriptions', Freedom, 84b Whitechapel High Street, London E1 7QX. Unfortunately our sub rates have to increase, so this will be your last chance to renew at the old rates.

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NEXT ISSUE

The next issue will be dated 23rd April 2011 and the last day to get copy to us for that issue will be Thursday 14th April. 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

I went on the long demo on 26th March and on the South London feeder march that went from Kennington Park. It was much smaller and a lot more lively and creative. The police had at one point said that there was no permission, but determination from the organisers and the difficulty of banning something widely advertised among the awkward squad meant they gave in.

One of the good things the lefties who called it did was to refuse to invite local Labour MPs. While they may not enjoy making cuts as much as the Tories, there's nothing they can do to stop them and their presence changes the tone of a rally or demo from being about class interests to mere opposition to the government of the day on behalf of a rival faction.

Full marks should also go to all the brilliant behind the scenes work, such as the bust cards handed out on the day or posted up on billboards and signs along the route. It was awesome to cross a park and see a sea of red and black flags on the other side. Later on, I had to keep reminding a comrade roughly my age that just because someone looked like an anarchist, we were long past the days where we would know them all.

The controversies of the day naturally enough concern the alleged violence. I didn't personally see any and have seen very little in footage. There has been a lot of property destruction, but it's not the same thing, though I accept there can be a blurring line, particularly if there are people on the other side of a window you're trying to smash. As someone said to me later, they compared it to hooliganism, but hooliganism breaks every window – this was targeted against certain windows only.

The fallout has been predictable, with the *Daily Mail* and *Telegraph* leading to try and identify and attack protesters. It's also telling how much was made of how the tame trade union march had been 'hijacked' by anarchists. Yes, we know that the TUC are concerned with observing all legalities, but do they really imagine an A to B march will persuade the government when quite sensible lobbying by concerned groups has failed? Is it the Aaron Porter strategy – lose everything but still get a safe Labour seat?

The cuts are just one part of the enhanced class war the government is promising. If we don't make it two-sided, they will win. But what does 'fighting the class war' actually mean? It can be a whole load of things, but it entails getting people to see where their interests lie and then fight for them. This can be at work, where you live, where you study, New Deal 'training', anywhere there is a class relationship. This can be daunting, particularly if you've no experience of organising among people who you don't necessarily agree with. (And let's face it, most of us don't, if only because of the crushing of the labour movement in the 1980s.)

There's been an upsurge of interest in anarchism in the weeks following 26th March. There are plenty of groups, both formal and informal, anarchist or practical, who have experience. That experience can be used for practical organising projects, like the New Deal provider who won't let pregnant women have time off for scans, or the agency that doesn't pay its workers. As long as our nuisance value outweighs their patience, we can win things like this. And winning is a habit that we, both as anarchists and as a class, need to acquire.



Police keep an eye on the South London feeder march assembling at the start point in Kennington Park on 26th March.

LETTERS AND COMMENT

Anti-cuts protest

After all the euphoria, disappointment, anger or shocked disbelief (delete as appropriate) following the 'events' of 26th, I haven't noticed any mention so far of the excellent demo special that *Freedom* distributed for the occasion. We hear a lot of talk about the need to get our ideas out to people beyond the anarchist milieu, well here was a practical example of how it can be done. Good readable down to earth stuff with no mention of any dead Russians.

Me and *Freedom* go back a bit. At various times I have been a subscriber, occasional reader, lapsed reader, regular reader... I was even a street seller back in the day. My opinion of the paper has swung between thinking it wet and boring to being the best thing since sliced bread. The old rag has had its ups and downs and no mistake, but it has kept the ideas alive through thick and thin. The anti-cuts protest special (26th March) was *Freedom* at its best.

Ray Hulm

I had hoped to see some *Freedom* sellers on the march on the 26th, at least at the end of it when it entered Hyde Park, but I didn't spot one – what a pity (and yes, I could have got in touch before the day but the last time I contacted *Freedom* to sell some papers at the Burston Rally I got no response).

I have to say that I was quite saddened by the overall experience the public will now have of the anarchist movement, i.e. a bunch of people in masks (shades of state assassins?) going round smashing windows and throwing paint at policeman. Great! Why bother trying to convince people that we have an alternative vision of how the country might work, lets just go around in our masks smashing up things!! UKUncut did try to do things non-violently I think, but in the main the image people will have of anarchists will be a bad one in my view. It's all very sad.

Bill Wells
(38 years an anarch)

In defence of 'Liberty'

Your comment in *Freedom* (12th March) "Oh Liberty, what crimes are committed in thy name", berates the National Council for Civil Liberties (NCCL, now called Liberty) for not being an anti-police organisation. But Liberty does not claim, and has never claimed, to be anti-police. Its purpose at demonstrations is to defend demonstrators against police

actions which appear to be illegal or improper, "encroaching on the liberty of the citizen", and it could be argued that this polite, legal activity does more for the anarchist revolution than all the riots and punch-ups. This consideration was enough for an anarchist, the late Tony Smythe, to take on the job of General Secretary of the NCCL in the 1970s.

To cite an example, in 1963 eight people were charged by police with carrying an offensive weapons (pieces of brick for throwing) at a peaceful demonstration. None of the eight charged was so armed; four of them were not even demonstrators but passers-by. The police object was not to prevent violence, but simply to disgrace the demo. I was one of the eight, and it so happened that the chap who nicked me made a stupid mistake in planting the evidence. I doubt whether I would have been heard had I just said so, but luckily I was then (as I am now) a member of the NCCL, who supplied a solicitor, who engaged a freelance forensic scientist to expose the fault in the police case, and a barrister of sufficient standing to make the magistrate listen to the defence. My solicitor subsequently became a junior minister and then a member of the House of Lords, nothing like a revolutionary, but the case made magistrates and jury members discontinue the custom of simply believing police evidence, and so made society a bit freer than it might have been.

The NCCL was founded in 1934, by a bunch of MPs, lawyers, and other establishment figures, appalled by police attacks on 'hunger marchers'. It is true that in 1945, when the editors of *Freedom* (then called *War Commentary* for anarchism) were charged with inciting members of His Majesty's Forces to disaffection, the NCCL was against them, but this was because at the time, the NCCL had become, temporarily, a Communist Party (CP) front.

Then as now, there were those who thought of anarchists and CP members as allies, in a revolutionary movement riven by sectarian differences. But the CP was in fact every bit as authoritarian as the fascists, with a policy of supporting the USSR come what may. Later in 1939 Hitler and Stalin signed a non aggression pact, and the CP switched from pro-war anti-war. In 1940 they organised an anti-war meeting, and the NCCL supplied legal help against attempts to prevent it. CP membership of the NCCL then increased until they were able to take over its Council, so in 1941, when Hitler suddenly reneged on his pact with Stalin and the CP suddenly switched back to being pro-war, the NCCL followed.

The Freedom Press Defence Committee was formed by NCCL members, ex-members, and sympathisers, and carried on (as the Freedom Defence Committee), doing the work of the NCCL until it resumed its original function.

Donald Room

A fuller account of Donald's experience in 1963 is given in Philip Sansom's introduction to *Wildcat Anarchist Comics* by Donald Room, published by Freedom Press, £3.

Editors: In an update on this, the Liberty legal observers have handed their notes over to the police.

Visibly organising?

In issue 72 05 (12th March) on page 5 you state: "The Anarchist Federation has issued a statement in support of a radical workers bloc, although it falls short of committing itself to organising one." May I refer you to our letter in the same issue in response to similar observations in issue 72 04 (26th February).

Do you really think that the bloc needs us to organise it? We're bemused at being criticised again for failing to lead the working class and genuinely surprised at *Freedom's* careless undermining of the core anarchist principle of self-organisation.

In the special issue you are producing for the demo itself, which will end up in the hands of exactly the type of people we all want to influence with our ideas, could the editors please not include material sniping at other anarchists?

No gods, no masters, no leninism!

Laura Norder

Anarchist Federation (personal capacity)

Mutual aid

Due to inflation and a lower income, I regret that I have to cancel my sub to *Freedom*. Thank you for many years stimulating and alternative views.

HF

Editors: Comrades are reminded that not only do we send free copies to prisoners on request but we are also very understanding to comrades who cannot afford their subs after many years of service to the movement. We are only able to do this because of the generosity of many of our comrades who take out our 'supporter subscriptions' (see subscription rates on page 16) and also to those who send us donations.

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GETTING ACTIVE

PRISON NEWS

With the events in Libya and Japan and the protest over the cuts at home continuing to hog the headlines, events in prisons across the world have largely escaped the media's attentions. Here is a rundown of a few key events in the past fortnight:

15th March: Iraqi state media claimed that 14 prisoners died and 33 were injured during an escape attempt at Ghezel Hesar prison in Karaj, the largest prison in Iraq with 20,000 prisoners. In fact, prison guards opening fire on prisoners protesting plans to execute 10 inmates, left nearly 80 dead or seriously injured, and 70 more with less serious gunshot wounds. The prison subsequently went into lockdown, with news of widespread abuse and torture of those who had taken part in the protests. Attempts to limit information escaping meant that injured prisoners were not transferred to outside hospitals, though some were moved to clinical facilities at Rajai Shahr Prison. Hundreds of prisoners' families that gathered outside the prison were denied access or news of family members.

The same day more than 280 prisoners began a hunger strike in Dubai Central prison.

16th March: Prisoners set fire to the main jail in Tikrit, Iraq.

24th March: Riot in the Rusafa temporary detention centre in Baghdad.

25th March: Around 80% of the total population of 10,000 prisoners in all 11 penal colonies and six pre-trial detention centres in Kyrgyzstan began a hunger strike against 'unbearable conditions of detention'. Unlike the *de facto* mainstream media blackout surrounding the recent Georgia prisons strike, the Kyrgyz government were forced to depict this protest as a strike in support of the local Mafia and against the government's recently proclaimed 'war on organised crime'. Prisoners' family members also organised pickets in front of jails, fearing violent crackdowns on the protests by state authorities. Protests ended after five days with the authorities agreeing to improve conditions and grant an amnesty freeing large numbers of women, young and elderly prisoners. At least two prisoners died during the hunger strike from one of the many virulent strains of TB that are rife in the region's prisons

Other news of note included the arrest of three Chilean prison guards on charges of negligent homicide of 66 of the 81 inmates who died in a fire at San Miguel prison last December. Five senior officers have also been charged with manslaughter over an alleged delay in calling the fire services. And finally, news continues to filter out of America about the aftermath of December's Georgia prison strike, where prisoners injured in widespread retaliatory attacks by guards are still not being given access to medical care months after receiving their injuries. So far only seven Georgia prison guards have been arrested over the beatings.

Big fat gypsy racism



The Theft of the Commons is one of those times in history when many of us think, 'wish we could've stopped that'. It was an episode marking out capitalism as an emerging force. Along with the many other side effects, homelessness and the first vagrancy laws came about. Many people tried to find new, creative ways to live independently of the manor.

While this was happening, the Roma were beginning to be a visible group on the British Isles. They had lived for some time on the continent, fleeing persecution consecutively from Punjab, to Eastern Europe, to Western Europe.

Some former peasants found the Roma way of life a possible alternative in difficult times and modelled themselves after this nomadic self-sufficiency. Laws were placed on the books alongside the Vagrancy Acts to outlaw those who followed a gypsy way of life. Death was the punishment. But many people from what is now the UK and Ireland continued to follow this pattern and have now become a recognised separate ethnic group – the Travellers.

Fast forwarding, we find ourselves now watching Traveller site after Traveller site being evicted. Watching families go through that day of losing their plot on a site, being thrown out onto the road with nowhere stop and sleep, parents with sorrow in their faces as they look upon their children – that's a painful sight. After giving into the pressure to stop travelling, Traveller groups put money together and bought land to live on. This is what they were expressly told to do by the government. Yet, after doing that, they were then told – 'you can't live here'.

Right here in the UK, in the middle of Essex, lies Dale Farm, the largest Traveller site in the country. The Tory-controlled

Basildon council is requesting £10 million from Theresa May. Meanwhile, on the 14th March, the council approved the eviction with a minimum budget of £8 million of their own money – that is one-third of the council's entire budget for the year... and the eviction, as they themselves admit, is likely to cost more than that. Yet, for all of that waste, only half of the site will be cleared. A large portion of Dale Farm is and has been 'legal' for many years. So, they are spending a massive amount of money that will unsettle dozens of Traveller families and have no impact on the local residents who don't want Travellers there. The impact that locals will feel is in the loss of many vital services.

Basildon, like the rest of the country, is facing cuts in all the likely areas – education, healthcare, arts, disabilities support – the things that protect the most vulnerable parts of the population. At the same time they are spending millions on evicting part of a self-sufficient, contented community. This is a racist, malicious, assimilating agenda. It is really that simple.

The camp to defend Dale Farm, Camp Constant, will begin towards the end of the 28-day notice residents are to be given. We expect that notice is imminent. Camp Constant will remain there until the bailiffs and police arrive and will be there until after the bailiffs and police have gone. Please help show solidarity by joining us. We need to keep a presence there every night. We also need supplies and support. Anything you can provide will be greatly appreciated by the residents.

For more information, visit us at <http://dalefarm.wordpress.com/>, search 'Dale Farm Solidarity' on facebook and follow us on twitter @letdalefarmlive.

The red flag of anarchy

As discussed in 'The Symbols of Anarchy' in *An Anarchist FAQ* (AK Press, 2008), anarchists at first used the red flag as their symbol of choice, with the black flag slowly replacing it over a period of many decades from the 1880s. Both flags, however, had their roots in working class struggle and protest, both were anti-capitalist symbols raised by working class people in revolt against exploitation and oppression. As the person who first raised the black flag as an explicitly anarchist symbol in Paris on 9th March 1883, Louise Michel put it that the "black flag is the flag of strikes and the flag of those who are hungry" (*The Red Virgin: Memoirs of Louise Michel*, The University of Alabama Press, 1981, page 168).

Given that the black flag only became the preferred anarchist symbol in the twentieth century, it comes as no surprise to see that both Proudhon and Bakunin praised the use of the red flag. Bakunin wrote of "the flag of theoretical materialism, the red flag of economic equality and social justice, is raised by the practical idealism of the oppressed and famishing masses, tending to realise the greatest liberty and the human right of each in the fraternity of all men on the earth" (*God and the State*, Dover, 1970, page 47). Proudhon wrote in his notebooks that the red flag was "the federal standard of humanity, the symbol of universal fraternity" signifying the "Abolition of the proletariat and of servitude" and "Equality of political rights: universal suffrage" (*Carnets*, Marcel Riviere, 1968, vol. 3, page 289).

Publically he proclaimed: "The Revolution, one cannot deny it, has been made by the red flag: the provisional Government, however, has decided to keep the tricolour ... To deny the red flag, the crimson! – but it is the social question you are getting rid of. Every time the People, defeated by suffering, wanted to express its wishes and its complaints outside the law that kills it, it has walked under a red banner ... Poor red flag. Everyone is

abandoning you! Me, I embrace you; I clutch you to my breast. Long live fraternity!

"Let us keep, if you wish, the tricolour, symbol of our nationality. But remember that the red flag is the sign of a revolution that will be the last. The red flag! It is the federal standard of humanity" (*Property is Theft!*, AK Press, 2011, pages 257–8).

So, as historian Jack Hayward notes, a few weeks after helping to build barricades in Paris at the start of the 1848 Revolution "predicted in March 1848 the internationalism of the Red Flag." Originally, as Hayward reports, the red flag was flown from the Paris town hall "to signal the proclamation of martial law to deal with food riots in 1789 and in July 1791 it was used at the massacre of anti-royalist demonstrators. In 1792, the republican revolutionaries turned it into a symbol of defiance by inscribing on red flags: 'Martial law of the sovereign people against the rebellion of the executive power.'" After that "the Red Flag went into eclipse. The tricolore carried all before it for the rest of the Revolution and under Napoleon, being readopted at the 1830 Revolution as the emblem of the July Monarchy. The Left sought an alternative and at first it was the Black Flag symbolising a fight to the death that appeared in the 1831 Lyons riots, with its slogan: 'Work or Death'" (*After the French Revolution*, Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1991, pages 245–6).

So the black flag was a recognised symbol of the Left, so it was unsurprising that when the red flag became too associated with Marxist social democracy in France, the likes of Louise Michel urged anarchists to raise the Black Flag in the 1880s and onwards.

Yet both are symbols of working class protest, both are flags raised by striking workers:

"The red banner, which has always stood for liberty, frightens the executioners because it is so red with our blood. The black flag, with layers of blood upon it from those who

wanted to live by working or die by fighting, frightens those who want to live off the work of others. Those red and black banners wave over us mourning our dead and wave over our hopes for the dawn that is breaking." (Michel, pages 193–4)

Michel, it must be noted, is referring to a workers revolt in Lyon in 1831 when "Vivre en travaillant ou mourir en combattant!" ("Live working or die by fighting!") was painted onto a black flag carried by protesters. Interestingly, Proudhon stayed in Lyon in the early 1840s was deeply influenced by these workers, going so far as to call his own ideas *mutuelisme* after the word they used to describe their associative socialism.

Why did the red flag become the symbol of choice for the socialist movement, Proudhon and Bakunin included? For this, we need to look at the 1848 Revolution in France and, in particular, the activities of that perennial state-communist revolutionary, Louis Auguste Blanqui. It was in February 1848 that the red flag "appeared during the insurrection for the first time as a workers' banner on a large scale, alongside the tricolore. It symbolised their wish for break with the Orleanist past." Blanqui's first symbolic act of that revolt was to issue a manifesto "deploring the decision to retain the tricolore as the national flag instead of replacing it with the Red Flag." The 25th February saw a demonstration of armed citizens carrying red flags. (Hayward, page 245)

As with the use of the black flag by anarchists, the use of the red flag by socialists of all tendencies spread from France. In Britain, the red flag was adopted as a Chartist symbol on 31st December, 1849. On 10th November 1850, European Socialists in exile in London adopted it in place of their national flags, "a prelude to it becoming the emblem of the First International in 1866." (Hayward, page 246) Its adoption by the International Workers Association should come as no surprise given the key role the French followers of Proudhon played in setting it up.

It comes, therefore, as no surprise that the newspapers in the nineteenth century denounced "the Red Flag of anarchy", given that anarchists (like others in the revolutionary workers movement) raised it in their struggles and revolts. Both Proudhon and Bakunin associated themselves with that symbol, just as they both proclaimed themselves socialists. However, after their deaths state socialism came to dominate most labour movements in the world and the red flag became associated with Marxian social democracy and anarchists sought other symbols. With Communard and indefatigable revolutionary Louise Michel taking the initiative, that other flag of French working class revolt, the black flag, was taken up as a replacement.

Iain McKay

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REVIEWS

WHAT'S ON

APRIL

■ **9th** Guerrilla Gardening with speaker Richard Reynolds (the founder of guerrillagardening.org), a News From Nowhere Club event at The Epicentre, West Street, Leytonstone, London E11 4LJ, 7.30pm buffet, 8pm talk and discussion, for details call 020 8555 5248 or see newsfromnowhereclub.org.

■ **11th** *Emma Goldman, An American Experience*, for over three decades, she taunted mainstream America with her outspoken attacks on government, big business and war, feared as a sponsor of anarchy and revolution, she was vilified in the press as 'Red Emma', 'Queen of the Anarchists' and 'the most dangerous woman in America', from 7.30pm at Pogo Café, 76a Clarence Road, London E5 8HB, call 020 8533 1214 or see www.pogocafe.co.uk for details.

■ **14th** Day of protest against benefit cuts, support, publicity and solidarity all needed at various locations countrywide, see <http://benefitclaimantsfightback.wordpress.com/> for details.

■ **17th** A Past Tense radical history walk around Spitalfields/Brick Lane, meet outside The Rag Factory, 16-18 Heneage Street, London E1 5LJ at 3pm to learn about this area's long and rebellious past ... and much more, email pasttense@alphabetthreat.co.uk for further details.

■ **17th** Standing up to surveillance, a conference exploring the impact of police surveillance on protest, political activity and communities, at Rich Mix, 35-37 Bethnal Green Road, London E1 6LA from 10.30am to 5pm, £5/£10 donation, registration essential, see standinguptosurveillance.wordpress.com for details.

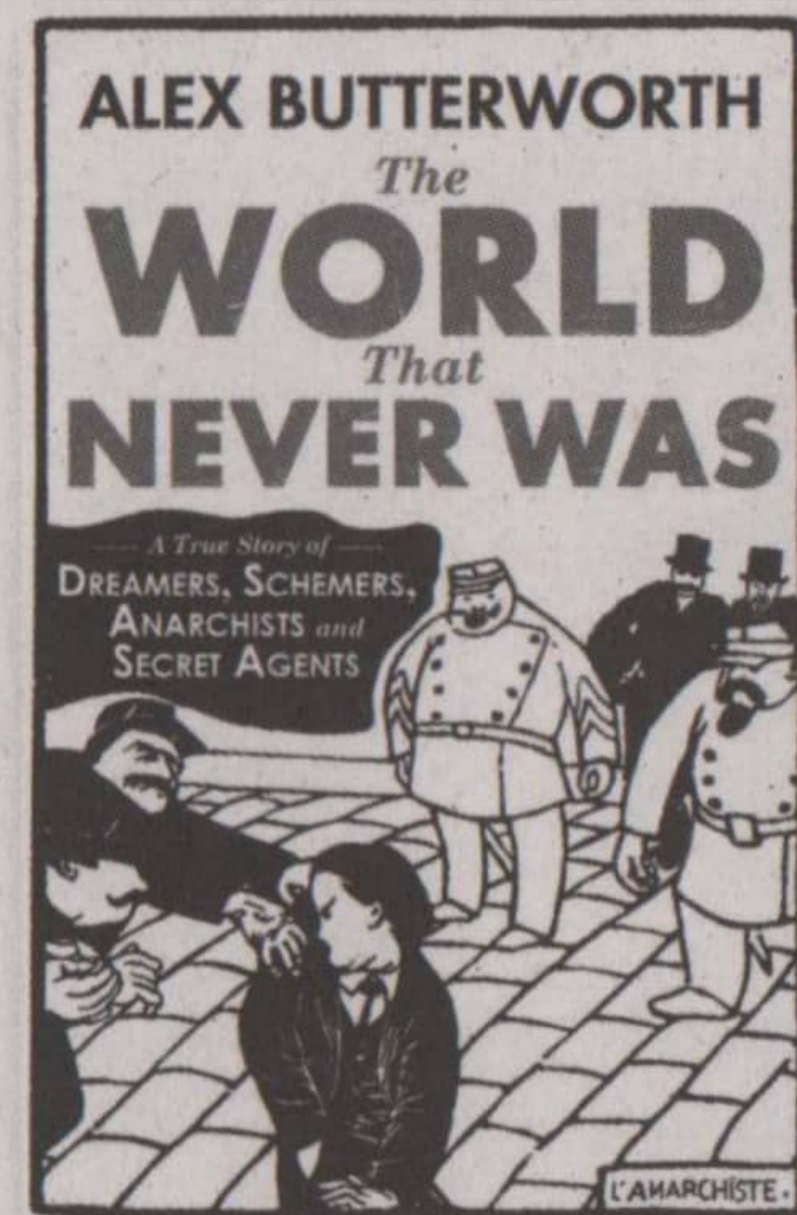
■ **18th** *In The Land of the Free*, Herman Wallace, Albert Woodfox and Robert King spent almost a century between them in solitary confinement in Angola, the Louisiana State penitentiary. Known as the Angola 3, two of them are still in solitary confinement after 37 years. This documentary feature narrated by Samuel L. Jackson looks at the story of these extraordinary men, from 7.30pm at Pogo Café, 76a Clarence Road, London E5 8HB, call 020 8533 1214 or see www.pogocafe.co.uk for details.

MAY

■ **2nd** The road to Haymarket, May Day and its relevance today, from 7.30 to 10.30pm at The Cube Cinema, Dove Street South, Bristol BS2 8JD, £3/4 donation, films and discussion on the origins of May Day and its relevance to struggles today, see bristolanarchistbookfair.org for details.

■ **4th** *Viva Mexico* from 7.30 to 10.30pm Hamilton House, 80 Stokes Croft, Bristol BS1 3QY, donation, brilliant new film *Viva Mexico* about the Zapatistas is now touring the UK, with talk by the director, hosted by Bristol-Zapatista solidarity group, Kiptik, for more information see kiptik.org or vivamexicofilm.com/eng.html

BOOKS



The World That Never Was

Alex Butterworth

"When compared with the suppression of anarchy, every other question sinks into insignificance," said Theodore Roosevelt. Well, he should know: he obtained his position due to the assassination of his predecessor.

Butterworth's hardback tome, neatly summed up by the subtitle, *A True Story of Dreamers, Schemers, Anarchists and Secret Agents* has just been released in paperback. It covers radical movements from the mid-nineteenth to the early twentieth centuries in Western Europe, Russia and America. In the earlier times, these were more amorphous. Later, divisions grew between centralists and grass-roots activists (personified by Marx versus Bakunin) and in the debates over the use of terror. (Few doubted the inevitability of violence. The fate of the Paris Commune illuminated that. The French establishment, whether masquerading as republic or empire, never forgot nor forgave that scare.)

Out of all this emerged our well loved stereotype. Only recently has the hat and smoking bomb given ground to the 'Islamist'. Yet, even then, the most spectacular events, probably Alexander II and Franz Ferdinand, were nothing to do with anarchists. To say nothing of the events perpetrated by nation states.

The book is racily and colourfully written, if the cast of thousands can begin to spin. Here are all the well-known names. Kropotkin gets due attention with even some discussion of ideas amongst the melodrama. Louise Michel pops up continually, as she did. As did Kravchinsky (perhaps better known by his underground/activist pseudonym, Stepniak) and Malatesta. William Morris gets

a fair hearing, although he could never quite bring himself to ally with the anarchism which was close to his views.

A continual sub-plot concerns the activities of the secret police (another topical reference, front paged in *Freedom* on 29th January). Some of these were hard-working and resourceful individuals, busily extracting funding from several governments (often at the same time) in order to run their own underground organisations, *agents provocateur* and turned 'assets'. Russia, as prime target of radical (and liberal) loathing was particularly active. They were so exasperated by the inefficiency of the French Sûreté, that their agents set up what was, in effect, a Paris Branch of the Okhrana. All this is, perhaps, best summarised in *The Secret Agent*. It is still unclear how much inside information Conrad, the author, had.

This aspect had its own spectacular event, when Azef, the head of the Russian Social Revolutionary Combat Unit was revealed as a police spy. The shock was such that the person responsible for the unmasking after years of patient inquiry, Burtsev, was summoned before a tribunal of the international underground organisations. Here was Kropotkin, the supposed quietist, acting as what can only be called a 'judge', sitting on a panel which delivered a death sentence. (He seems to be the only panellist who argued for the benefit of the doubt. Burtsev was vindicated and continued his underground investigations, from a variety of political perspectives.)

An intriguing side figure is Jogand-Pages (and various aliases), who carried out large scale hoaxes, often exploiting the embarrassment of the French government over the corruption surrounding the Panama project.

The book has a number of obvious omissions, presumably justified by not being intended to be a history of anarchism. Ukraine cannot be missed entirely but there is no discussion of the wider movement there. There is no mention of Makhno. Similarly, no Mexico. Syndicalism is touched on, then skated over. In general, the book is recommended.

David Peers

The World That Never Was by Alex Butterworth (Bodley Head, hardback, £25), now available as a paperback published by Vintage at £8.99.

QUIZ ANSWERS

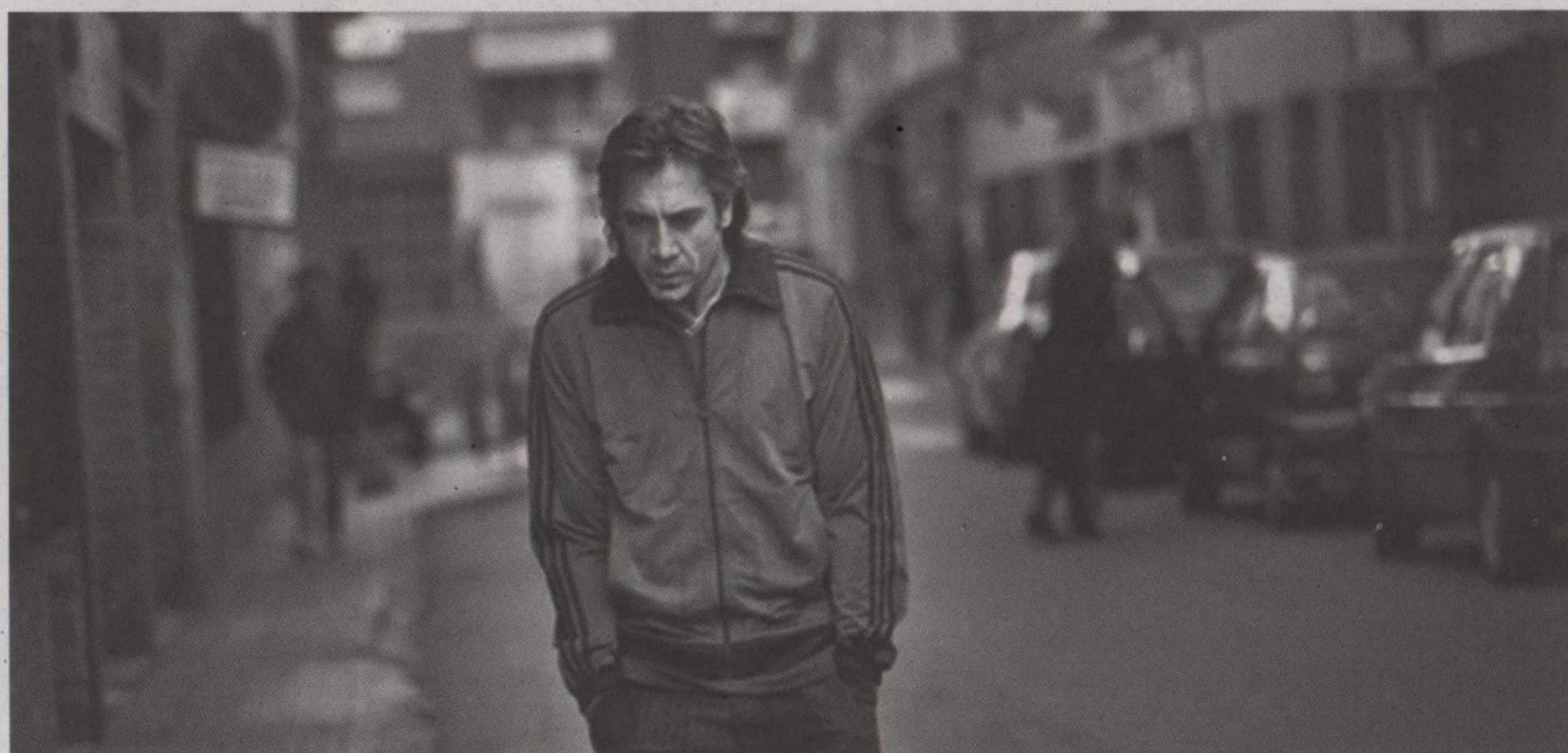
1. The first was childbirth and the second cookery. Their skirts caught on the open fires of the hearth. Women's deaths were dramatically reduced by the invention of the closed range by George Bodley in 1802.
2. By making a loud, breaking-wind noise through its spiracles, which scares the birds off.
3. A plan by scientists at Kinki University in Japan to clone mammoths from specimens found in the Siberian permafrost.
4. He staged a rally where burqa-clad women watched a load of men speak about the importance of marital obedience. At the end the men feasted and the women had to wait outside in the cold for some of their leftovers.

Faded film and failed ambition

Funny how film fictions aspiring to profound philosophical insight often fall so flat. Tom Jennings compares two very different current incarnations

Never Let Me Go's dull pastels and slow painterly cinematography extrapolate plot and atmospheric essentials from Kazuo Ishiguro's 2005 novel, following into young adulthood a tragic love-triangle featuring the cream of twenty-something Brit actors performing various shades of depressed resignation among an impeccable ensemble of grim guardians and companions. Economically-established conservative English costume drama conventions are immediately undercut, however, as captions introduce an alternate-reality 1980s where decisive medical advances occurred decades earlier. Lower-posh boarding school children take for granted somewhat sinister routines and rituals whereupon they gradually glimpse their 'special' status as clones bred for organs, subsequently graduating to lodgings at remote rural farms until, after full physical maturity, successive donations at transplant centres leave exhausted bodies 'complete'. Carefully-inculcated ascetically stoical dispositions console themselves and each other with half-hearted theories about their 'originals', fears of the outside world, and fantasies about relationships, but acceptance of stultification prompts nary a complaint, scarcely any ethical curiosity, and certainly no active rebellion – and, unlike the usual science-fictional suspects, this tale examines precisely such passivity.

Director Mark Romanek's bland pop video sensibility echoes the source's restraint, but avoids both its pomposity and the technological determinism and individualist grandstanding of Hollywood's hermetically-sealed dystopias. Yet conceptually we are light years from far superior forerunners in, for example, Philip K. Dick's visionary speculation (as in *Blade Runner*, among others) or John Wyndham's middlebrow postwar melancholia (or, with perverse slip showing, early J.G. Ballard), let alone Huxley and Orwell's literary templates. Jazz vocalist Jane Monheit's retro torch song is a perfect titular anthem given this film's desperate nostalgia for genuine passion simulated by those constitu-



Above, Uxbal (Javier Bardem) in *Biutiful*; below, *Never Let Me Go*.

tionally unable to recognise it – reminiscent also of sundry Cool Britannia crossovers like novelists Ian McEwan, Alex Garland (providing most of Danny Boyle's recent cinematic trivial pursuits before scripting *Never Let Me Go*) and Ishiguro. Across genres and media, pale imitations plundering the cultural body-politic back-catalogue seem all cutting-edge commercial po-mo hipness can manage nowadays.

This particular tepid, timid, subprime derivative squanders countless imaginative flourishes gesturing at twentieth-century socio-political governance passing from traditional aristocratic condescension to brutally psychotic consumerism. All spirit and spunk is squeezed out along with any productive possibilities for citizens apart from merely existing and, by virtue of being 'special', destined to be used up for the 'greater good'. With viewers thereby left vaguely sentimentally unsettled while satisfyingly detached, our replicant's closing voiceover wonders if regular folks are really that different – dying without understanding what happened to them during their lives. But every sketched dimension of the characters, premise, socio-economic context and narrative thrust is thoroughly unconvincing, and this anticlimax compounds complete failure to explore tantalising questions tentatively raised about the meaning of (middle-class) life. The potentially crucial corollary, considering whether institutionally cocooned creativity 'reveals the soul', or just anaesthetises and inoculates against inconvenient visceral and collective intelligence, furthermore fades inexorably to grey – both in its sadsack fatalists and, tellingly, the story itself.

Longevity and Platitude

Mexican director Alejandro González Iñárritu's protagonists never meekly submit to fate or lack gumption, in gut-wrenching depictions of complex materialist spirituality which only fitfully overcome bombastic hubristic pretension. So in *Biutiful*, a single-father scrapes a precarious crust in crumbling proletarian Barcelona co-ordinating illegals –

African street pedlars hustling drugs while flogging shoddy knick-knacks knocked-up by Chinese families slaving in a clandestine factory and freezing at night crowded into the basement. Mutual respect and empathy – his forebears having migrated from impoverished southern Spain – prompt Uxbal's constant efforts on their behalf while safeguarding his cut. Ducking and diving amongst endemic traitorous corruption in local police, construction, gangmaster and nightlife networks, however, fails to stave off – and sometimes contributes to – regular mortal disasters. Faring scarcely better with family, he does capably parent young kids troubled by separation from their good-time-girl mother with whom he also tries – and fails – to accomplish rapprochement upon diagnosis with imminently terminal prostate cancer.

The film's hyperkinaesthetic style and superb cast benefit from longtime production collaboration – especially Rodrigo Prieto's virtuoso cinematography; though no longer Guillermo Arriago's ambitious multilayered ensemble scripting (as in *Babel*, reviewed in *Freedom*, 21st April 2007). Instead of collective resonances of morality, mortality and agency among randomly intersecting circumstances and characters buffeted by capricious coincidence, this fable focuses on outrageous misfortune bearing down mercilessly on Javier Bardem's world-weary fixer – habitually struggling to do the right thing in conditions overwhelmingly worse than wrong, except now with time painfully running out like the blood in his diseased piss. An apparently more traditional trajectory toward redemption is itself then thoroughly subverted. The overkill of tragic consequences utterly outflanks bungled, dutifully pragmatic individualism – in ruined African and Chinese lives (fully confronting the baleful wages of global neoliberalism's specific marginalisations) as well as multivalent irredeemable dysfunctions in Uxbal's own masculine physicality, sociality, kith and kin.

His orientation to catastrophe is inflected

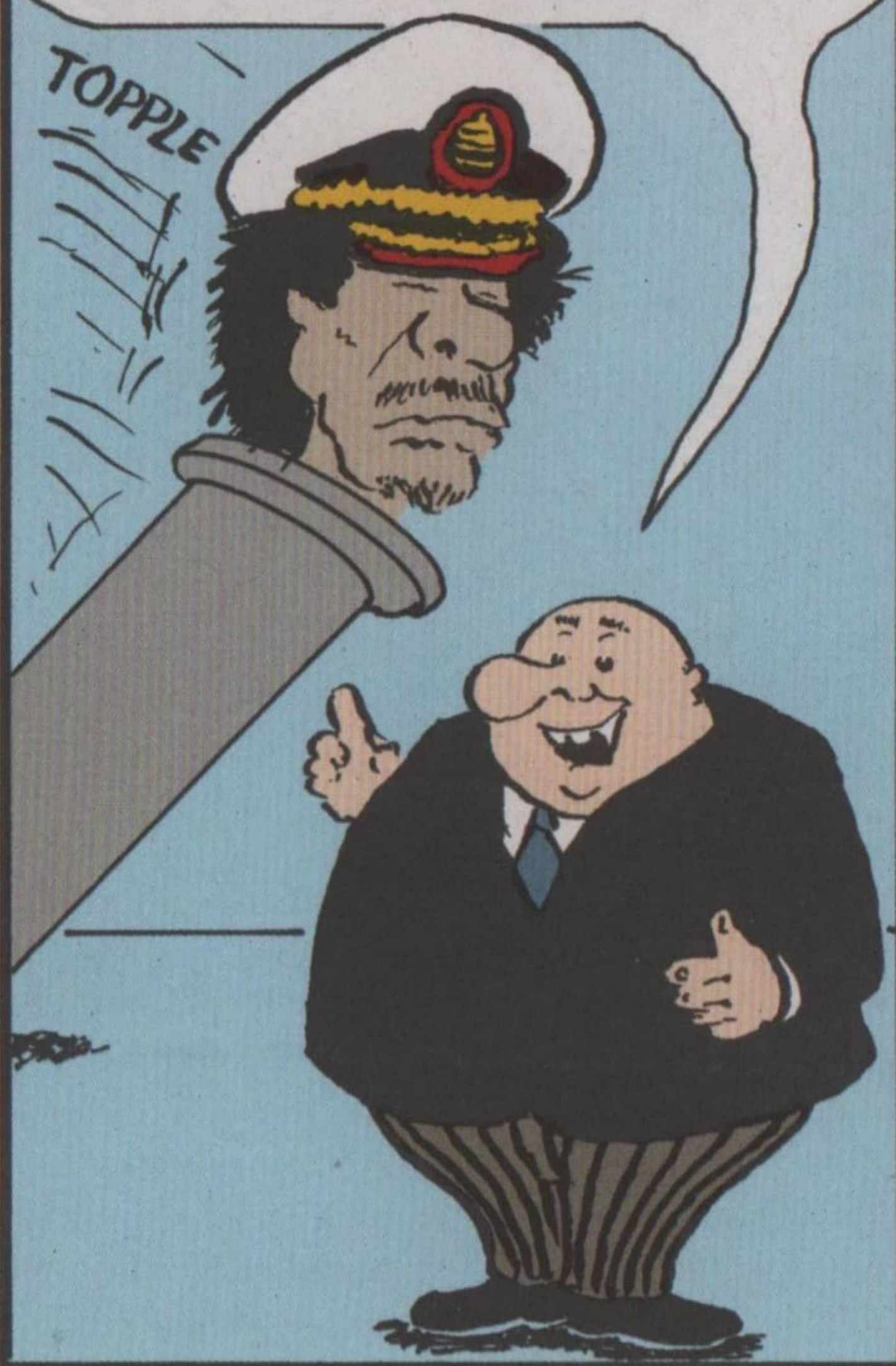
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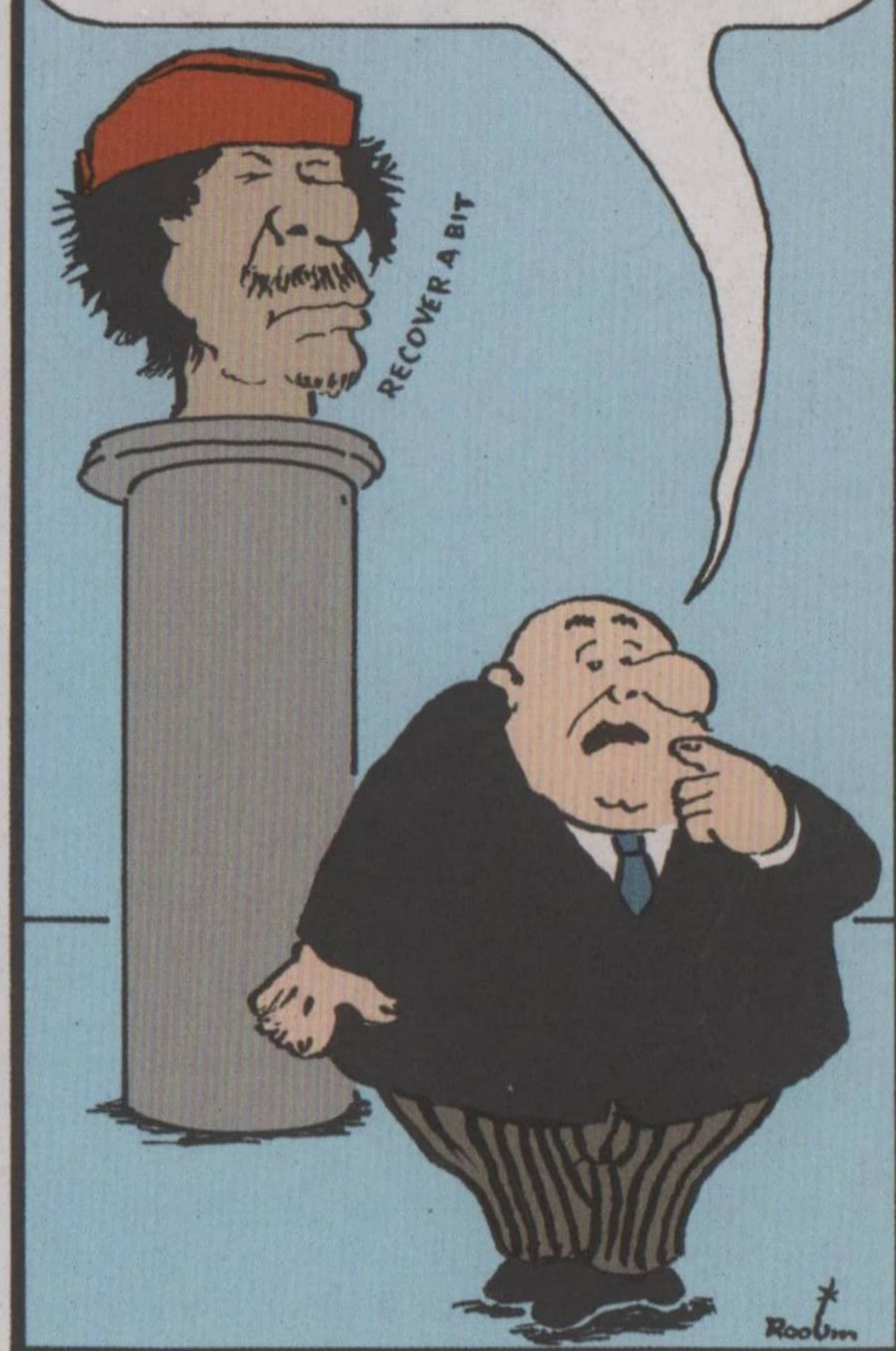
Less dangerous when he wants to be friendly. His fees and donations support British education, and his weapons purchases provide British jobs.



Whoopee!! Popular rebellion!! Soon we'll be selling weapons to a new lot, perhaps a democratically elected lot.



We might have been too hasty!! He might keep the power after all. In which case, we hope he'll keep on buying weapons.



Review

◀ page 15

by a locally renowned gift for psychically divining dead children – a heretical working-class spiritualism worlds apart from official elite religious doctrine, imbricated in Catholicism but infused with the communal pagan folklore that evangelists always parasitised and poisoned. Neither its practitioners nor supplicants burdened with rationalisations of supernatural pantheons, paradises or forces their hazy glimpses of restless souls – which are readily intelligible as unconscious projections misread as emanations from others whose motivations can thus be discerned. But such deep emotional connective tissue may underpin human solidarity, love and commitment as much as mere consolation and mass

opiate sedation. Sidestepping Manichean judgments of sin or saintliness, Iñárritu hints at its utility when negotiating past and future unfinished business – which is only possible given a genuinely mutual recognition of needs. So, while often obnoxious, gratuitous and ridiculous, *Biutiful's* black-magical realism somehow convincingly juxtaposes similarly surreal registers of memory, fantasy and imagination mingling with visions of the obscenities generated in the real world by modern minds, bodies and institutions – and, moreover, unearths hard-earned hopefulness amidst the horror.

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

Biutiful and *Never Let Me Go* are released on DVD on 16th May and 27th June respectively.

THE QUIZ

1. Until 1800, what were the two commonest causes of death among women?
2. How does the caterpillar of the walnut sphinx moth defend itself from predators?
3. What scientific plan prompted Peter Singer, professor of bioethics, to say "We should not risk causing suffering just because it would be curious and entertaining" and call it ethically dubious?
4. How did Musa Khan, governor of Ghazni province in Afghanistan, mark International Women's Day on 8th March?

Answers on page 14

The Anarchist Quiz Book compiled by Martin Howard, with illustrations by Paul Petard, £5 (post free) from freedompress.org.uk.

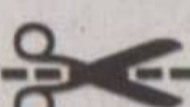
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