

FREEDOM

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FREEDOM IS MOVING ONLINE!

This will be the final monthly printed copy of *Freedom*. The members of the Freedom Collective explain why they took this decision and how they plan to operate moving forwards...

Since *Freedom: A Journal of Anarchist Socialism* first appeared in 1886 it has been in the form of a newspaper to be sold. Now the Freedom Collective has decided that we shall move content online accompanied by a freesheet, with this being the final regular print issue of the paper.

We have come to realise that a sold hardcopy newspaper is no longer a viable means of promoting the anarchist message. Despite a huge publicity boost to *Freedom* following the firebomb attack last year (shop sales rose 50%) there has not been a corresponding increase in distribution of the paper. Only 29 shops, social centres and individuals now sell it and the number of paying subscribers has fallen considerably.

As a result annual losses now amount to £3,500, an unsustainable level for our shoestring budget.

Readers will have noticed that the paper has struggled to come out on time for some while. An underlying problem has been a lack of capacity to sustain it. We had hoped that *Freedom* would be adopted as *the* paper of the anarchist movement. Despite a great deal of goodwill from anarchist groups and

page 3 ►►

LENS CAP TUBE STRIKE CALLED OFF



A second planned tube strike over the closure of ticket offices was called off in mid February, after discussions between union leaders and tube bosses.

BANKERS SIDESTEP CAP

Banks are offering ludicrous sums to senior staff despite huge losses – and a new EU ruling which advertises itself as an attempt to curb bonuses.

Devious fat cats are finding ingenious ways to get round a new EU ruling which limits bankers' bonuses to 100% of a basic salary... except in 'special circumstances', such as if shareholders approve a 'maximum' 200% cap for an individual.

HSBC boss Stuart Gulliver is set to take home £1.7m in 'fixed pay allowances' on top of his existing £1.2m salary – a salary which is set to increase by 140%.

Virgin Money boss Richard Branson is being very cheerfully open about his intention to take advantage of the 'special circumstances' clause. In addition to the increased 200% cap allowed in cases where

shareholder approval is met, the EU legislation also mentions the possibility of exceptions in the case of the very highest earners. Those earning more than £410,330 per annum can apply to their home regulators for exemption from the cap. Those on over £1m per annum will be able to apply to the EBA (European Banking Authority) for exclusion from the cap.

The subterfuge doesn't end there. Barclays, Lloyds, HSBC and RBS are all also set to hand out shares to their top dogs as another way of bypassing the bonus restrictions. This, despite the current financial climate: with RBS reporting recent losses of a whopping £8bn and Barclays suffering a massive 32% fall in profits.

It just doesn't add up.

Charlotte Dingle

INSIDE ►►

Skipping for joy page 3

Transport clashes in Brazil page 9

Svartfrosk page 16

Getting active page 18

Reviews pages 20 and 21

Arts pages 22 and 23

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NEWS

FREEDOM STOCKISTS

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LENS CAP BOB CROW DIES



Rail, Maritime and Transport Union General Secretary Bob Crow died on 11th March at the age of 52.

New anti-gay laws in Uganda

Ugandan leader Yoweri Museveni has brought in harsh legislation which condemns 'repeat offenders' found engaging in homosexual behaviour to life in prison.

Male homosexuality is already illegal in Uganda – but new laws will impose much harsher punishments for both male and female gay and bisexual Ugandans.

The Ugandan Homosexuality Act 2014 was passed by the Parliament of Uganda on 20th December 2013 and signed into law by President Museveni on 24th February 2014. There were originally proposals to introduce a death penalty for homosexuality, with the act widely referred to as the "Kill the Gays Bill."

The new laws will send 'first-time offenders' to prison for 14 years, while those caught engaging in same-sex acts more than once will be destined for a life sentence. "Attempting to commit homosexuality" – however that is defined! – will result in a seven-year jail term. Failure to report a suspected gay or bisexual neighbour will also result in prosecution. The new legislation even prohibits the 'recognition'

of homosexuality. Which, frankly, seems a bit of a *non sequitur*.

The day after the act was signed into law, Ugandan tabloid *Red Pepper* (which, rather awkwardly, shares a title with a well-known British liberal/lefty magazine) published a list of the 'Top 200 homosexuals' featuring their names and, in many cases, photos. Another tabloid, *Rolling Stone* (which is no longer in print) published a similar list in 2011, calling for the execution of those who engage in homosexual acts. This list is widely believed to have been responsible for the death of prominent LGBT activist David Kato, who was beaten to death with a hammer in broad daylight shortly after its publication.

The UK government cut all direct budget support to the Ugandan government last year after a corruption scandal was exposed. Following the introduction of the new laws, plans have been announced to divert the remaining £97.9m ringfenced for Uganda in the UK's budget to entities such as international aid agencies which reach the UK's human rights standards. Norway and Denmark have both adopted an even more rigid stance, entirely withholding \$8m and \$9m respectively from Uganda. The US says it is still 'reviewing' its aid contributions to the country. There are concerns that a withdrawal of funds will hit the poorest Ugandans hardest. Supporters of aid withdrawal have countered this by questioning just how much aid ever went to poor and vulnerable Ugandans in the first place.

In the short-term, it seems the most vital way we can help oppressed Ugandans is to ensure that our borders are open to them when they need us.

Charlotte Dingle





Skipping for joy

Following a recent much-publicised case which saw three men arrested for taking unwanted food from outside a branch of Iceland, Gyorgy Furiosa takes a look at the fine art of skip-diving

You scale the wall under cover of darkness, past the barbed wire and weird razor defences that seem inordinately vicious to protect what has been thrown away. Dropping into the yard, you scurry to the containers and heave them open one by one revealing the gourmet pantry within. Life is like a Waitrose garbage bin – you never know what you're going to get.

Filling up the backpacks and baskets and

the bike-trailer with armfuls of baguettes, sacks of potatoes, an entire field of broccoli, mango fruit yogurt with crumble, prawn vodka mousse, duck a l'orange, eggs, milk, cakes and packs and packs of steak, sausage and mince, you wheel home through the night ready to prepare a victory feast, smug in the knowledge that it all cost nothing and would have ended up in a landfill had you not intervened.

Yet of course, all of this is a crime.

Recently three friends of ours were arrested and detained for 18 hours after being found in an enclosed area much like the one described above round the back of a large supermarket chainstore. They were charged under the Vagrancy Act of 1824 – a piece of legislation designed for the punishment of “idle and disorderly Persons, Rogues and Vagabonds”. The charges were later dropped.

The Dickensian wording conjures colourful characters straight out of Hogarth's etchings: “Every petty chapman or pedlar wandering abroad, and trading without being duly licensed, or otherwise authorised by law;

every common prostitute wandering in the public streets or public highways, or in any place of public resort, and behaving in a riotous or indecent manner; and every person wandering abroad, or placing himself or herself in any public place, street, highway, court, or passage, to beg or gather alms, or causing or procuring or encouraging any child or children so to do; shall be deemed an idle and disorderly person.”

It is legislation designed for one thing only – the continued persecution of poor people and those who choose to live an alternative lifestyle. The real crime is in the shocking waste and exploitation of market forces by the supermarkets, agro-business and government itself. The idle and disorderly should also pay attention, as the act can also be applied to those being found in derelict buildings or even “failing to give a good account of themselves”. This act could be increasingly used to oppress and harass the most vulnerable elements of our society and those taking direct action against the rampant wasteful excesses of capitalism.

Freedom is moving online!

◀ page 1

individuals over the years, sadly this has not been the case.

Although Freedom Press has changed from a political group with a particular point of view to a resource for anarchism as a whole, we have not managed to shake the legacy of the past and get different groups to back it as a collective project. We hope an online version and freesheet will make that possible.

Subscribers will be offered a refund or book in lieu but we are happy to accept donations towards the costs of the new project.

Charlotte Dingle will remain as editor and of course the shop, publishing and book distribution will continue as normal. As will the use of Angel Alley for meetings, events, offices, postal address and drop-in protest advice.

The print version could not have continued so long without the generosity of Aldgate Press, currently amounting to a subsidy of nearly £10,000 a year. They have very kindly agreed to print a regular freesheet/news compilation to enable us to keep in touch with our readers who don't have the internet, and a special final edition,

which will be released for the London Anarchist Bookfair in October.

Don't forget that we are, as ever, always on the lookout for new writers and photographers to help us bring varied and informative content to our readers from across the anarchist scene spectrum. And what better time to get involved than now, as we move into this exciting new phase in Freedom's history? If you would like to volunteer, please email the editor at copy@freedompress.org.uk with examples of your work and pitches.

The Freedom Collective

THE BIG PICTURE



First published in 'The Heckler – Radical News and Views from Thurrock and Basildon', this photo shows fascist football stickers found dotted around the area (<http://southessexheckler.wordpress.com/>).

We're all terrorists now

Gyorgy Furiosa on the arrest of civil rights campaigner Andrej Holm

Smash down the door, six in the morning comes the Law, to protect you from your wicked ways, pin you to the floor. The sound of your front-door splintering on its hinges as the battering ram hits it is a singularly significant moment. Especially if you live with your partner and children. The invasion of armed, black clad riot police screaming orders and brutally throwing you and your loved ones face down on the ground at gunpoint means you've done something the State is not best pleased about.

When it happens to a respected university lecturer and civil rights campaigner, we assume it means we are talking pure history. The invasion must have been perpetrated by the KGB in Communist Russia during a purge of intellectual dissidents, or perhaps by the Gestapo raiding members of the resistance in occupied Europe during the Second World War.

But, no. This is what happened to sociologist Andrej Holm, in progressive champion of democracy and civil liberties Germany, on 31st July, 2007. He was accused of being a member of a left-wing terrorist organisation – die Militant Gruppe – and would spend the next three years of his life attempting to clear his name and stay out of prison.

The most shocking elements of this story are the reasons for his targeting by security forces. Essentially, the police Googled the words 'gentrification' and 'precariousness', and up popped his name, the Prime Suspect. Andrej Holm is a respected academic with a history of political affiliation and involvement with left-wing groups, having published papers on the divisive nature of globalised urban centres and the inherent oppression caused by gentrifying neighborhoods and driving poor people out of their communities in the name of development.

His connection with three men accused of attempted arson on military vehicles confirms his guilt, in the eyes of the State, for he met them without a mobile phone, and organised these meetings through encrypted messages sent from internet cafes. Any such attempts at privacy are deemed 'conspiratorial' in the eyes of authority.

But really, the significance of Andrej Holm's arrest and persecution is far more sinister. Selected with all the randomness of Google – which is to say, not randomly at all – he became the excuse for the Polizei to launch a multi-million Euro investigation and surveillance operation involving thousands of hours of manpower with him at the centre. This illegal police operation built documents on literally thousands of people connected with left-wing political organisations. Data on thousands of people, their emails, interactions and affiliations, have been compiled and processed in a webbed network orbiting around Holm. His arrest was the official culmination of this

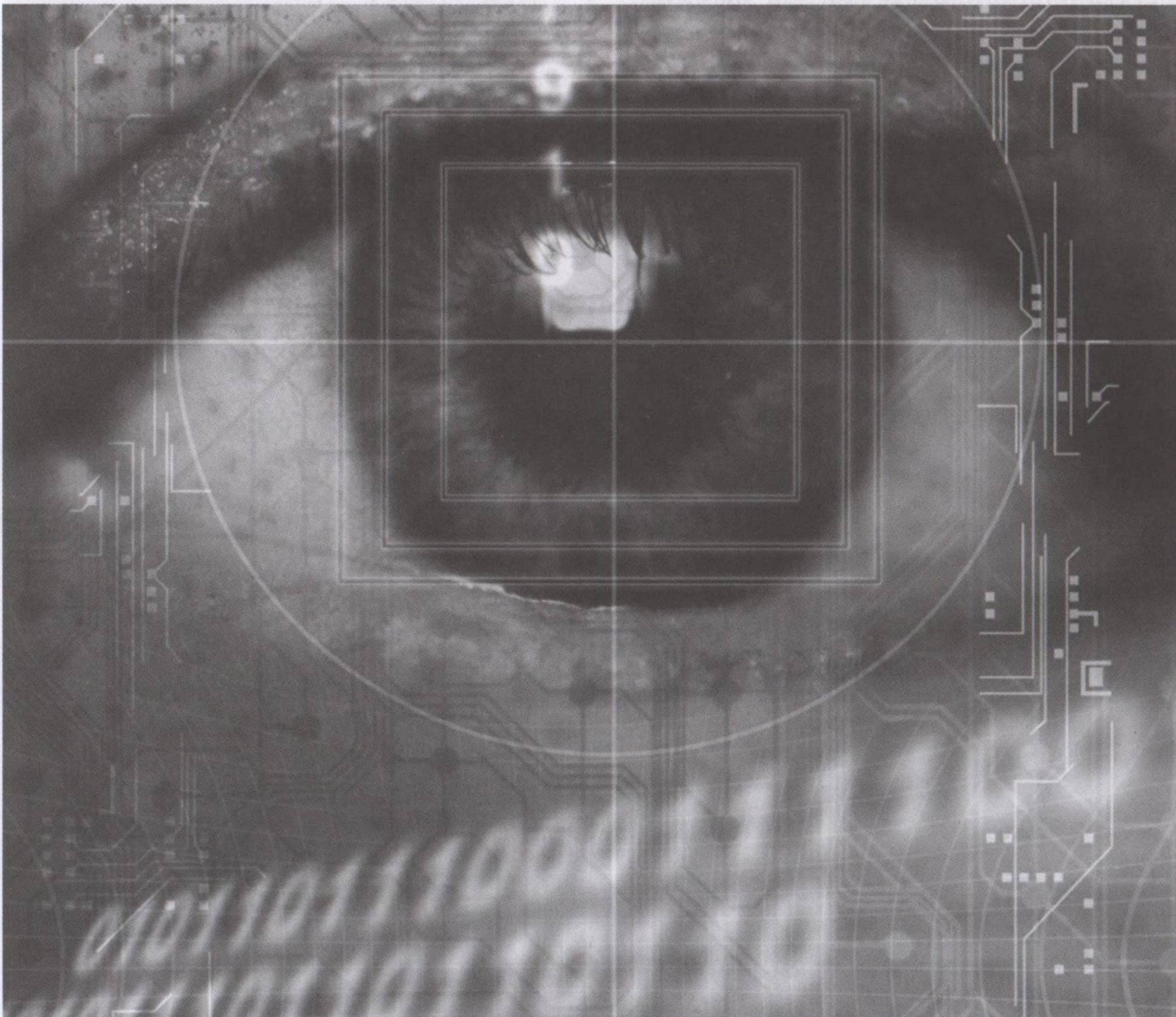
operation, but of course, all that data will remain on file and for use in future efforts by the Polizei.

The point being that the age of Prism, ubiquitous broad-spectrum surveillance and the death of privacy, has its roots in the very existence of a State. By its very nature, the State intrudes in every aspect of civilian life and mercilessly collates data to crush opposition. As in Russia, as in Nazi Germany, Franco's Spain, Mussolini's Italy, the modern State is no benign presence, no harmless and benevolent faction of bureaucrats, but a ruthless authority that brooks no genuine or implied challenge to its monopoly on violence and control.

Recently in the UK the House of Lords rejected the first draft of the Bill that would introduce IPNAs – Injunctions on Public Nuisance and Annoyance. This incredibly broad term could feasibly extend to carol singers, buskers, children playing noisily, and in fact, anyone. It would give police sweeping powers to criminalise people for being a pest, for arguing, for objecting. At the moment, they are discussing unlimited powers to enact IPNAs on people, with an unlimited time of effectiveness. Ostensibly being introduced to replace Anti-Social Behaviour Orders (ASBOs), in fact the IPNAs are the legal straw-man police and politicians need in order to mask their ongoing extension of repression of any challenge to their powers. It is mortifying to think what a debt we owe to the House of Lords for rejecting this first draft, but as with most laws it will be watered down ever so slightly, then bunged with clauses at the last minute that slip their way through and change the game. For examples, see the tacking of a ban on residential squatting on to a Bill about legal aid in 2011.

If you have read this, then the State is watching you. It seems prudent to assume they are watching me too, documenting every email exchange, blog post and web click, monitoring every phone call. We cannot pretend that by hiding behind decency, fair play, honesty, openness that we will be spared the indignity of oppression, that the jackboot of the State will land elsewhere. We cannot pretend that we will be alright if we "have nothing to hide". The definition of what should be kept secret is continuously changing and becoming defined by paranoid megalomaniacs in fear of losing their position and prestige in society. For the State and its' machinations, we are all illegal, we are all guilty, we are all terrorists.

The State is not there to protect us, but to exploit us, to keep the minority of the opulent sitting high and dry whilst the plebs drown in the refuse and ecocide the rich produce. Once we accept this, we can begin to see that it is the State that is illegal, the State that is guilty, and the State that is the real terrorist, and from that a hopeful, joyous defiance can be born.



ANALYSIS

Bricked up

Grayson Bailey looks at how urban structure limits basic autonomy

Historically, the exertion of control over populations via urban design has been both overt and subtle. The Parisian reconstruction by Baron Haussmann under the rule of Napoleon III, creating a network of axes that responded to monumental projects, demonstrates both tactics. Overtly, the reconstruction placed obvious priority on architectural works that projected the specific political messages of the regime, widening the tightly knit streets into extended boulevards to increase the radius of views to each. The application of these boulevard networks also posed a distinctly martial consideration, the new breadth of primary corridors allowing the march of the state military through sections of the city which had routinely been locations of insurrection, insurgency, and revolution in the century prior. Subtly, the Parisian renovation intentionally led to the rise of property valuation along the newly created arterial boulevards, leading to the import of bourgeois classes which increased the tax base of the city. From this economic restructuring of the city, the functional separation of classes and programs followed, leading to higher amounts of single-use blocks and a more socio-economically segregated population.¹

The control of populations through implemented urban design can specifically be indexed through three types of device: monumentality, organised separation, and politicisation of infrastructure.

Monumentality can be evidenced in the priority of the political buildings in any city, their heights or view corridors often determining urban code for the built environment around them. More recently, there has been a lessened emphasis on the political building, but this is only because the monumentality of the city is now defined by the architecture of capitalist projection.² Rather than the steeples of the church, as was the definition of the city for a millennia, or the domes and pillars of the government project, the privatised corporate development now takes the form of urban identity. The skyline, a composite of iconic proliferation, is celebrated as the character of the urban core, while the streets, alleys, and corridors which contain the rich complexity of interaction and responsive culture within the city are washed over by the simple principle of projects like the Gherkin, the Shard and the Cheesegrater.

Organised separation rose from the pragmatic response to the conditions of the nineteenth century industrial city, whose inhumane density and pollution led to functional zoning practices that now striate the

function of parts of the city.³ The simplicity with which the idea was conceived during the modernist era, through urban visions by the great architects of the time, reached global implementation in the second half of the twentieth century, the effects of which are now beginning to fully show themselves. The separation of function directly leads to the separation of populations and to the division of economic and social classes.

The politicisation of infrastructure, the control of energy, water, agricultural, and information distribution by a centralised powers, holds the access of these amenities in collateral to the subordination of the publics that they support. The manipulation of these infrastructures have been specifically used in the Arab Spring revolutions, as well as more recently in Istanbul, to quell demonstrations and protests. Furthermore, these centralised infrastructural systems are inherently inefficient, extending their distributional networks beyond the limits to which they can serve. Major global cities, such as London, New York, Tokyo and Paris rely on extreme sheds of importation to support the populations they contain, and the control of infrastructures that handle this importation and the distribution of resources inherently hold power, whether they are operated through governmental or corporate organisations.

The distrust of urban planners and the control devices that they implement is not new by any means. Colin Ward in *Anarchy in Action* describes the natural friction between populations and the bureaucracies and corporations that design and augment urban space as responding to the inherent distance between the priorities of each.⁴ When urban fabric is applied through political agenda, the considerations of those it is supposed to support will be lost and the message of those in control will be prioritised.

These circumstances have not changed since Ward noted the contention in 1974, and will only change with a paradigm shift of how cities are designed. To this point, Michael Sorkin's letter to the incoming New York City mayor, covering the ineffectiveness of the development of Hudson Yards through a public-private partnership, describes the processes being enacted as a "form of urban stop and frisk falling disproportionately on minorities".⁵

To fight these control devices of urban structures (monumentality, organised separation and politicised infrastructure) cities must begin to be developed outside of centralised and decentralised organisations. Rather than applying urban design techniques that feed into the response of many back to the whole, urban development should transition to an emphasis on the locality of organisation, complexity and production. The city must become more aligned with ecological conditions, in which production and consumption are balanced on both localised and comprehensive scales. The urban fabric cannot continue to be defined by monuments, projecting an equalising logic that responds to it, but focus on architectural and spatial practices that are supportive of the communities that fill them.

1. Philippe Panerai *et al*, *Urban Forms: The Death and Life of the Urban Block* (Oxford: Architectural Press, 2004) page 3.
2. Ellen Dunham-Jones, 'Rem Koolhaas and the 1990s', *Architecture and Capitalism: 1845 to the Present* (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1999) page 163.
3. Leon Krier, *Houses, Palaces, Cities* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1985) page 235.
4. Colin Ward, *Anarchy in Action* (London: Freedom Press, 1982) page 60.
5. Michael Sorkin, 'Bridge Over Troubled Waters' in *Architectural Record* 202 (2013), page 35.



Photograph © Jayne Clementson

SPOOKED OUT

A measure of how authoritarian a state might be is how much its agencies value their power in relation to citizens' lives and general welfare. A main agent of the State, Government, talks of 'the economy' and 'the national interest' as if there was some fairness in distributions of wealth and privilege. These powerful cultural images hide much deception. An example is seen in looking at road accident figures and the millions spent on Britain's secret services, MI5 and MI6.

The Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (ROSPA) reports that some 14,000 are killed each year on our roads.¹ Anarchists and others would like to have free public transport for personal and environmental reasons. Instead, we have the chaos reflected in that sad statistic. Wealth could be used by federations of co-operating communities to ease that problem. Readers new to our ideas might find such 'co-operation' impossible, until they think of the towns nearest to them and the many ways they work together for mutual benefit.

Instead of an anarchist kind of order, the State spends millions on security. In recent months the media have show some details about this subject with little attention to the actual positive results of spying on citizens. Howard Jacobson even questions why people are making so much fuss about it, almost suggesting "the more the merrier".²

Spooks claim that they have stopped various incidents but they are only accountable to themselves to tell the truth. I make no attempt to underestimate the fear and misery caused by 7/7 London bombings, evoking memories of IRA attacks and the Blitz of WW2. But AGE UK have reported that some 24,000 elderly people risk dying of hypothermia, unable to keep warm and properly feed themselves. Again, a frightening chaos is seen in such preventable deaths.

Activists are now very cautious about their contacts, with so much spying on us it's hard to know who and when to trust. Offering us much hope we heard about the bigger-than-ever Hackers Fair in Germany. As the tools of the State get increasingly refined for spying on us, in some quarters we are equal to the challenge.

ROSPA, in spite of its royal handle, is only a charity, needing to raise funds like the others including AGE UK. They should really be able to prevent accidents and help look after all the vulnerable elderly. It would be good to order things differently, making stuff happen so that spooks had to have flag days and car boot sales to finance James Bond instead of the vast resources they currently enjoy.

martin s. gilbert

1. rospa.com/

2. *The Independent*, 28th December 2013, page 41.

Sky is the limit!

Daniel Johnson asks why we are continuously brainwashed with TV news in public places

In Ray Bradbury's dystopian masterpiece *Fahrenheit 451*, inquisitive teenage heroine Clarisse McClellan muses: "I sometimes think drivers don't know what grass is, or flowers, because they never see them slowly. If you showed a driver a green blur, Oh yes! he'd say, that's grass! A pink blur! That's a rose garden! White blurs are houses. Brown blurs are cows. My uncle drove slowly on a highway once. He drove forty miles per hour and they jailed him for two days. Isn't that funny, and sad, too?"

Pondering on the beauty of the British countryside might not get you banged up in Belmarsh, but the ever further encroachment of the apparatus of mind control into our public sphere makes leading an examined life increasingly strange and difficult.

The sudden ubiquitousness of television news in public spaces – broadcast on gargantuan plasma screens in shopping centres, transport interchanges and doctors' waiting rooms is particularly troubling and should be the cause of grave concern for freedom-loving people everywhere. I have lost count of the amount of times I have been subjected against my will to either Sky or BBC News while out and about. Victoria Train Station London, Grey's Monument Newcastle, the Bridges Shopping Centre Sunderland, Morpeth Bus Station Northumberland! The list goes on and on.

Can you imagine what the liberal head-scratching classes would make of the same

phenomenon occurring in Iran, China or North Korea? Why has this issue failed to generate more of an outcry among the general public? Just why are Sky and the BBC determined that Saturday afternoon shoppers consume to a soundtrack of state approved scare mongering? Not only have these questions not been answered, they have hardly been asked!

Perhaps a silent tsunami of rage is forming in the hacker community, waiting to be unleashed Luddite-like against this insidious incursion on the nation's freedom to think. Perhaps a lone crazy, driven to distraction by the omnipresent propaganda, will bring the issue to light by putting his fist through Adam Boulton's pixelated mush in Dudley High Street. Then again, perhaps a population desensitised to 24-hour rolling news views graphic footage of mass murder and reports on bowel cancer as being an appropriate accompaniment to a quick Greggs pasty between La Senza and Waterstones.

In *Fahrenheit 451* a malevolent television style device called the 'Parlour Wall' is used by the state to pacify a sad and confused population. Mind control motifs common (and once confined) to science fiction literature and movies are now a mundane fact of life.

Unless the British public vociferously rejects the destruction of their quiet time and demands the right to shop, catch a bus or sit in a local beauty spot without being forced extreme violence and political partisanship a la News Corporation, even the most outlandish prophecies of *Fahrenheit 451* and other works of dystopic fiction are in danger of being realised.

Follow Daniel Johnson on Twitter: @DanJohnJohnson



INTERNATIONAL

NEWS IN BRIEF

ARGENTINA: More than a dozen people were injured as police opened fire on a group of indigenous protesters in the Gran Chaco region.

The demonstrators had set up a roadblock in response to the local state government's failure to provide running water to their communities. They had been promised deliveries of water via tankers as a temporary measure, however, when the government refused to pay the drivers, they withdrew their labour – leaving parts of the population without access to water.

GREECE: Over 170 inmates in Greece's only prison hospital are refusing food and medication in a protest against severe overcrowding and inhumane prison conditions.

The hospital wing at Korydallos prison in Athens has beds for 60 men, but currently houses over 200. Most of the prisoners have communicable diseases, such as, tuberculosis, hepatitis, and scabies.

Pictures have emerged online of prisoners forced to sleep two and three to a bed and of prisoners with intravenous drips hanging from mop handles due to a lack of equipment. Chronically overcrowded, Greek prisons have suffered an increase in inmate numbers and decrease in staff and funding over the past few years, exacerbated by the country's severe financial crisis.

MACEDONIA: Hundreds of workers have clashed with police during a protest over unpaid wages. The protest, outside the labour ministry, was called following several state-run companies being allowed to go bankrupt, and not pay their employees their wages or bonuses.

Tempers understandably flared when the protesters and their supporters received word that the government would not come out and talk to them. As the police moved in to snatch militant union leaders from the crowd, protesters surged forward through police lines in an attempt to gain entry to the labour ministry.

In a country that already has an unemployment level of 30%, the bankruptcy of the three state-run companies has left 7,000 workers and their families in absolute poverty.

SOUTH AFRICA: Residents from an informal settlement in Cape Town claim to have had 'flashbacks of apartheid' when they were awoken by the police kicking in their doors and windows, and arresting people without cause.

There were several reports of police officers shouting racist abuse at people, dragging people naked from their homes, and the brutal assault of parents in front of their children. The police raids were part of a programme to root out so-called militants who had been campaigning for voter rights for local residents.

Following the raids, people from the settlements fought running battles with security forces.

LENS CAP BRAZIL



Thousands of protesters have taken to the streets on the Brazilian city São Paulo, to protest against the billions being spent on this summer's football world cup. What started as a peaceful protest quickly escalated due to a heavy handed approach by the police. Over two hundred people were reported to have been arrested – including many journalists, attempting to photograph police brutality.

Whales, dolphins and imperialism

Recently, US diplomat to Japan, Caroline Kennedy, expressed 'deep concerns' over the Taiji dolphin and whale hunt taking place. The Japanese government responded by pointing the finger at US factory farming practices, though it should be clear to anyone that one wrong doesn't justify another. The talk about what is humane is Orwellian double-speak to make us focus on the question over which sort of death is the best, rather than ask why they should die at all?

Ms Kennedy conveniently ignores the fact a significant proportion of US early industrial wealth came from driving whales to near extinction in vast hunts across the North Atlantic, and later the Pacific, as a source of valuable oils and fats. US criticism only extends to the killing of dolphins and pilot whales for flesh at Taiji, and not to the profitable appropriation of live dolphins for aquariums, where dolphins are also incarcerated in the US. Kennedy is merely representing the views

and practices of various animal welfare campaigns and their supporters in the West, unable to see that one culture's humane can be rightfully condemned by another as brutality.

When the practices of another culture are criticised without looking at our own first, it opens the door to the accusation of cultural imperialism. That a member of one of the US's political dynasties is doing this, is of no surprise, but we as anarchists should be aware of playing into this hypocritical racism by supporting campaigns that perpetuate this perspective without the necessary context. For many campaigning organisations the mere suggestion of abstaining from a bacon sandwich is anathema regarding fundraising and self-promotion, carrying a risk of upsetting their core supporters, though when considering the rights and wrongs of eating dolphin or pig meat, it may well be reasonable to not eat either.

Kieran O'Malley

Notes from the US

Spying

Evidence for the extent of the use of technology by the US to dominate the world continues to grow. New revelations by Jeremy Scahill and Glenn Greenwald show that the National Security Agency (NSA) uses complex, but flawed, analysis of electronic surveillance – not human intelligence – to locate targets for lethal drone strikes. Drone missile attacks are increasingly launched to destroy

everything within 10 yards of the SIM card and/or handset of cellphones believed to belong to those who are thought to interfere with American interests.

Then, using documents made available by Edward Snowden, the *New York Times* reported in mid-January that the NSA has "implanted software in nearly 100,000 computers around the world" which enable

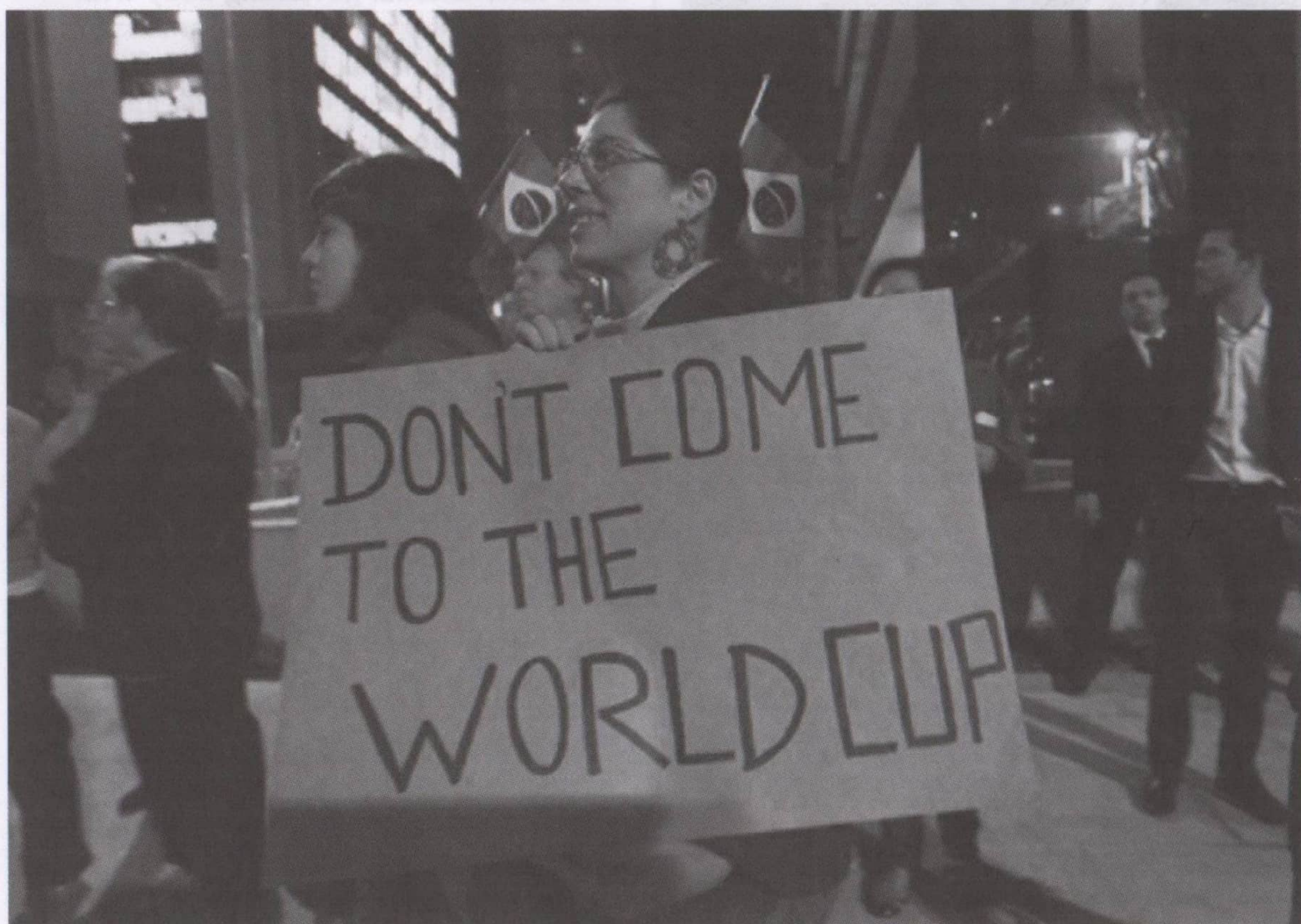
page 9 ►►

Brazil: fight against transport

Thousands of commuters have been successful in their occupation of the main bus and train hub of the Brazilian city, Rio de Janeiro. The mayor, Eduardo Paes failed to take into account how hard pressed the monthly pay packet of the ordinary worker already is and has proposed raising the transport prices. From February it will be raised from 2.75 reais (£0.70) to 3 reais, the equivalent of 77p.

This may not seem much, but when a large proportion often have to commute daily the costs can soon add up, amounting to a significant amount of money being spent on travel. Such expenditure can have a devastating effect in a country where the average monthly wage is a lowly 724 reais (£185.32). In an effort to quell and suppress the protests, the police were geared up as if they were ready for war, taking a heavy-handed approach. An approach which resulted in the use of tear gas and stun grenades designed to extinguish the flames of protest.

However taking such an approach will not prevent protests – only two courses of action



will suffice. The first of these would be a dramatic improvement in the train and bus services, which at present are often overcrowded, dirty and lacking basic air conditioning. How can such an increase be justified for such an inadequate service? The second course of action which should be taken is the subsidy of travel or, even better, free travel for commuters.

Billions spent on football stadiums could have been better spent on not only improving infrastructure but providing affordable travel for millions of impoverished citizens. Those in the corridors of power must go back to the drawing board and reverse their current stance putting workers before callous profiteering.

Romulus

Notes from the US

◀ page 8

it to spy on and with devices not even connected to the internet by using radio signals.

Environment

In early January West Virginia Governor, Earl Ray Tomblin, had to declare a state of emergency after a toxic chemical leak at a coal plant along the Elk River. Tons of 4-Methylcyclohexane Methanol seeped into the drinking water for nine counties and hundreds of thousands of people. They were advised neither to drink nor clean their teeth; not even to shower. Later in January, it emerged that the spill also included PPH, a chemical that contains the dangerous glycol ethers, which had not been previously disclosed. The crisis lasted throughout the

month with the company responsible, Freedom Industries, gaining at least a temporary reprieve from lawsuits by declaring bankruptcy. This lets the company's owner, J. Clifford Forrest, retain control of his assets. When called to a congressional hearing on 10th February, they failed to attend.

Racism

A study published in January in the peer-reviewed journal *Crime & Delinquency* revealed that nearly half (48%) of all African-American men will be arrested before reaching the age of 23. Over a ten year period (between 1997 to 2008) 7,000 black males were surveyed to produce the finding.

In mid-January, even the Pentagon felt it necessary to open a probe after graphic photo-

graphs were published which show marines burning dead people in Iraq – apparently in 2004, in Fallujah. Gasoline was being poured on the bodies of the victims and US soldiers posed with skulls beside charred bodies.

The state of Texas executed a Mexican national in late January despite objections from the US State Department, the Mexican government, and the World Court. Edgar Arias Tamayo was convicted of killing a Houston police officer in 1994. But he should have had his case reviewed for various technical reasons; and did not. International law was thus flouted.

Louis Further

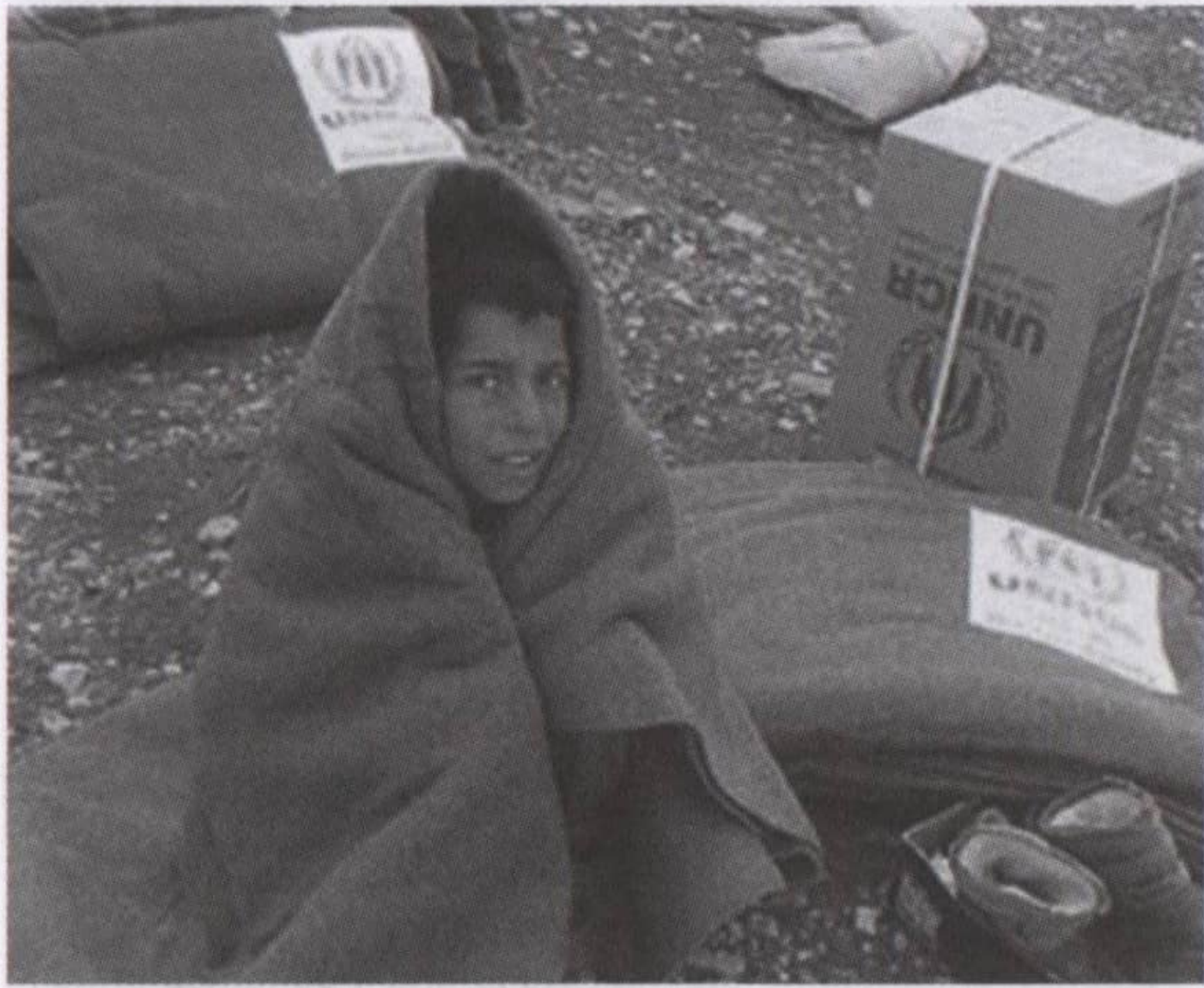
Climate Parents: www.climateparents.org

Crime & Delinquency: <http://cad.sagepub.com>

The New America Foundation: www.newamerica.net

ANALYSIS

Secrets in Syria



It is often only after the dust has settled from a conflict that the full atrocities committed during the haze of war become apparent

A document formally entitled “A report into the credibility of certain evidence with regard to torture and execution of persons incarcerated by the current Syrian regime” was recently commissioned by the government of Qatar. The report is unequivocal in its conclusion that evidence of torture and murder is trustworthy. The 11,000 estimated corpses photographed by ‘Caesar’ are from one photographer in one area. It can be inferred from ‘Caesar’s’ testament that this number is a small part of a wider program of torture, starvation and execution.

What can be done about the present situation is very little indeed. The fate that will befall Assad and his regime is inevitable, and the precarious political tightrope being walked by the UN at present, exemplified by the Iran invitation fiasco, makes meaningful intervention unlikely (if it was ever wise).

What can be done about the future is different. It is doubtful that industrial torturers and mass-murderers will cease to be unearthed by conflict. Civil war seems particularly adept at demonstrating the monstrosity of man. This is a fact that must be fully embraced in the creation of some tool by which one can restrict any states ability to apply bureaucratic practices to medieval brutality. It is unclear what this entails, but the alternative is a repeat of Germany in the 1940s, Indonesia in the 1960s, Cambodia in the 1980s, much of Africa throughout the 1990s, and Syria today. Obviously stamping out that part of man which makes us so hospitable to sadistic and unnecessary violence is out of the question. So it is specifically the systematic kind of murder that can only be implemented by the modern nation state which must be the focus of concern.

So what is to be done? The introduction

of an international governing body with coercive powers and limitless jurisdiction has been done. It has not worked. The UN does very little when it is needed, and even less to make up for that absence once the conflict is over. What it does do is take up valuable space in terms of international law. As the highest court of appeal, as it seems to be deemed, the UN as a body occupies the end of all avenues of potential recourse for persecuted peoples, making these avenues resplendent with rhetoric and the best of intentions, but leaving them decidedly closed to real, long term solutions.

It has indeed intervened in several conflicts for humanitarian reasons. Yet it has intervened late, and with insufficient force. The break-up of Eastern-Europe led to the deaths of thousands of innocent people for political and ethno-social reasons. The sluggish response was in many cases hampered by the delicate political situation at the time. The few successful interventions simply serve to highlight the UN’s major problem of inconsistency by giving greater contrast to the conflicts which should have been stopped but which were not. The wiping out of half the population of Cambodia in the 1980s and the enslavement of the rest is a good enough example. What is the point of a supranational governing body with limitless jurisdiction when it comes to humanitarian crises if it only intervenes sometimes? Especially when this ‘sometimes’ seems to be dictated by context – what value the region has for the security council, who the current leaders are and their political leanings, or the remaining military budget of the security council members.

Like any government’s involvement in the economy, the UN provides only a facade of stability while creating biases and inconsistencies, which in turn affect the actions of agents. Governments do not act like other

agents in a market. They do not respond to context in the same way, which creates imperfections in said market – black ice on an otherwise efficiently running road.

Much more effective would be the devolution of the UN duties to private bodies, with room for the UN as an international, co-operative regulatory body. This would remove the turbulent effects of sporadic and legally porous UN initiatives, allowing room for more stable institutions to grow in scope and ability. These companies could be legal or security focused, but they would all fall under the regulatory framework as dictated by the UN. The difference would be the far greater interest these private entities would have in becoming involved in breaches of human and civil rights. Their responses would be quicker, unadulterated by domestic politics, and with greater emphasis on legal principles. The UN is more likely to uphold international law if it doesn’t have to get its hands dirty. Greater consideration would be given to post-conflict results also; how else will anybody get paid. Of course there has to be some agreements governing these bodies, but managing this would be infinitely easier for the UN than managing conflict or legal battles itself. One should not shy away from private involvement in such matters: it is already more insidious than one might think. These sort of arrangements work for other aspects of global governance, such as health, so there is at least some precedent in giving private enterprises a chance and trimming the fat of global government.

All this said, the simplest argument is that the present situation is untenable. Looking back regretfully on genocidal massacres is only excusable in the short term – to do so for any longer is in itself an atrocity. What alternatives exist remains unclear, but the unsuitability of the UN for the task is crystal.

Jack Cowell



Leave those kids alone

Education and the need for a pedagogy of freedom

“We must break the habit of thinking that culture is encyclopedic knowledge whereby man is viewed as a mere container in which to pour and conserve empirical data or brute disconnected facts... this form of culture is truly harmful, especially to the proletariat.”

Antonio Gramsci¹

The American educator E.D. Hirsch claims that his conservative methods of teaching, much celebrated by Michael Gove, Secretary of State for Education, are necessary for: “the oppressed classes to learn how to read, write, and communicate – and to gain enough traditional knowledge to understand the worlds of nature and culture surrounding them”.² On initial reading it may seem that Hirsch’s view of education is highly supportive and effective for the so-called oppressed classes. This may explain why Hirsch is Gove’s go-to educationalist, and why his ‘cultural literacy’ is much lauded in many US states such as Massachusetts, and is now finding its way into UK education.

The pedagogy promoted by Hirsch becomes reduced to a transmission model of teaching which instills a culture of conformity and passive absorption of knowledge. It creates institutionalised mannequins devoid of critical thought. Schools continuously ultimately produce isolated subordinate robots ready to become economic fodder for a capitalist society.

The methodology and obsession of knowledge and intellectual rigour that is plaguing the UK education system, separates facts from values, learning from understanding and emotion from intellect. Schools are unconsciously churning out disengaged spectators who have their ‘part to play’ in the neoliberal modern society of the UK.

Gove and many conservative educators, argue that the enemy of student learning is its failure to endorse rote learning, a core curriculum and uniform teaching. Hirsch’s (and any others who follow his lead or see him as a voice that needs to be heard in today’s educational world) need for information accumulation and apparent disregard of culture and power of our students, forces these subaltern groups (a group of people who are socially and politically outside of the dominant social group or hegemony) to master the dominant culture as a way of reproducing and maintaining the social order. Allowing the curricular knowledge in our schools that only represents the white middle class cultural capital is blatantly wrong. As Henry A. Giroux, a US educator and cultural critic, argues: “Hirsch wants to save underprivileged kids by stripping them of their identities and histories.”³



The compilation of knowledge, referred to as the ‘common core’, is produced for and by the white middle class and fails to consider the values and beliefs of particular racial, class and gendered interests of our young people. Students that enter the educational system are therefore at a disadvantage by virtue of their race, income or gender. If schools are to offer the knowledge and skills necessary for working class students and other subaltern groups to succeed, they cannot and should not turn themselves into “boot camps for the intellectually malleable”.⁴

Instead we need a ‘pedagogy of freedom’, a term first used by Brazilian educator Paulo Freire, where students are taught: “an intimate connection between knowledge considered basic to any school curriculum and knowledge that is the fruit of the lived experience of these students as individuals”.⁵ Only through a critical educational culture, or ‘critical pedagogy’ can students learn how to become individuals and social agents, undertaking “a course of intellectual self-defence to protect themselves from manipulation and control”.⁶

We must afford all of our students regardless of their class, race or gender the: “opportunity to read, write, and learn from a position of agency and to engage in a culture of questioning that demands far more than mere competency in rote learning”.⁷ School leaders have to recognise their duty in harnessing purposeful learning, which is a complex and multifaceted process that goes far beyond drill-oriented, stimulus-and-response methodologies. Teachers should never ignore matters of contexts and must not eradicate elements of the culture, histories, and meanings that all of their students bring to their school.

Schools in the UK must stimulate and

educate their students to achieve a critical awareness of what is actually happening in their own world and energise young people to do something differently in their moment in time. We need educators that are prepared to embrace a Critical Pedagogy and believe that each academic institute should be: “A school of freedom and free initiative, not a school of slavery and mechanical precision. The children of proletarians too should have all possibilities open to them; they should be able to develop their own individuality in the optimal way, and hence in the most productive way for both themselves and society”.⁸

Our students, all of them, need an education that prepares them with the knowledge, and the skills to act on that knowledge, which allows them to connect with the problems and conflicts of their life. Schools must develop a commitment of civic courage and responsibility which enable young people to make a positive change for themselves and for their future. Education has the power to shift and change the social inequality that we live in today.

Tait Coles

1. *Socialism and Culture*, Antonio Gramsci, 1916.
2. *The Schools We Need: And Why We Don't Have Them*, E.D.Hirsch Jnr., 1996.
3. *On Critical Pedagogy*, Henry A. Giroux, 2011.
4. *Rethinking Cultural Politics and Radical Pedagogy in the work of Antonio Gramsci*, Henry A. Giroux, 1999.
5. *Pedagogy of Freedom: Ethics, Democracy and Civic Courage*, Paulo Freire, 1998.
6. *Necessary Illusions: Thought Control in Democratic Societies*, Noam Chomsky, 1989.
7. *Rethinking Cultural Politics and Radical Pedagogy in the work of Antonio Gramsci*, Henry A. Giroux, 1999.
8. *Men or Machines?*, Antonio Gramsci, 1916.

FEATURE

LIBERTY, EQUALITY

Brian Morris looks at evolutionary naturalism and social anarchism, with a focus on the radical legacy of the eighteenth century Enlightenment

As with Charles Darwin and Karl Marx, and all progressive thinkers throughout the nineteenth century, Kropotkin, Reclus [pictured below] and the social anarchists embraced some of the key tenets of the eighteenth century Enlightenment – or at least they re-affirmed its radical libertarian aspects. The social anarchists embraced the following three theses or principles that essentially derive from the Enlightenment.

Firstly, they stressed the fundamental importance of human reason, while at the same time critiquing the ultra-rationalism of Cartesian philosophy, which posited a rational disembodied ego outside of both nature and society, as well as tending to downplay the importance of the emotions and the human imagination. Kropotkin and the social anarchists not only affirmed the salience of the emotions and the creative imagination, but emphasised also the importance of history and empirical knowledge – the latter being based on

observation, experiment and the analysis of factual data. Universal knowledge for the social anarchists implied therefore a combination of reason and empiricism, and they recognised, as critical realists, that the natural world existed independently of human cognition and representation. They thus acknowledged, as Ernst Cassirer put it, that the Enlightenment had historicised reason, bringing it down to earth. They were aware, of course, that knowledge was always socially and historically situated, but this did not imply the repudiation of the correspondence theory of truth. The notion that there is “no mind-independent reality” and no universal knowledge (knowledge, that is, as a cartographic representation of a reality existing outside the text) – continually trumpeted by so-called postanarchists – are, of course, quite facile notions. They are the latest version of Neo-Kantian subjective (or cultural) idealism that social anarchists like Bakunin [pictured right] and Reclus – both philosophical materialists – always repudiated.

But importantly, the social anarchists, again following the Enlightenment, recognised and affirmed the historicity not only of nature, but of human beings and of human social life and culture in general. They therefore advocated a form of understanding that combined history and science. This entailed uniting two contrasting philosophical tendencies, humanism and naturalism. Hence the social anarchists can be legitimately described as historical materialists or evolutionary naturalists.

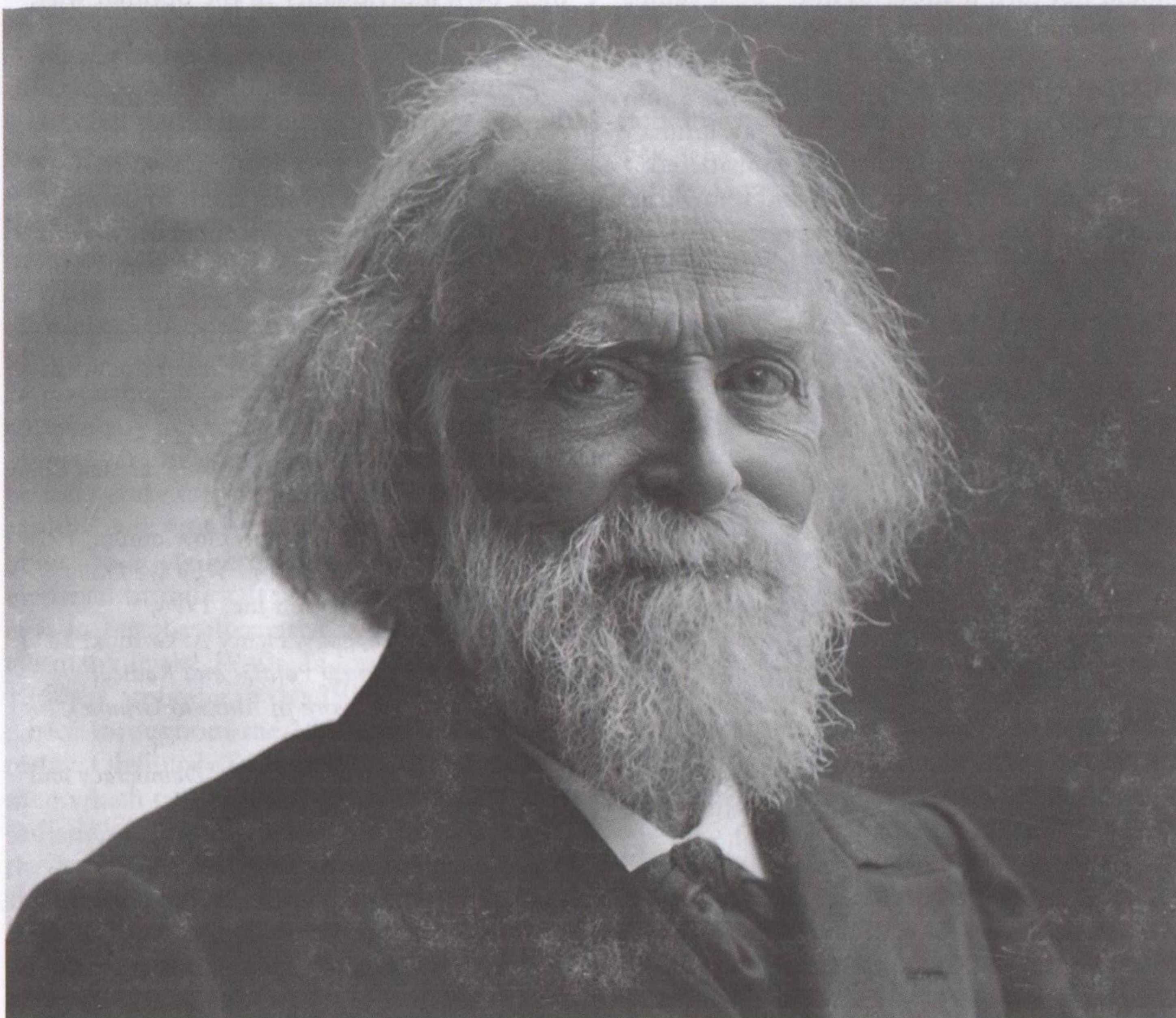
Emphasising the importance of both critical reason and empirical science, the social anarchists, again following the Enlightenment, repudiated any form of knowledge based on mystical intuition, religious revelation, idealist metaphysics or political authority. They did so because they sensed that these systems of thought inhibited the freedom of the individual. In contrast, and contrary to their post-anarchist critics, the social anarchists highlighted the importance of the scientific imagination as an open system of thought. But they were not advocates of either positivism (in its philosophical guise) or scientism. Bakunin, for example, was a firm advocate of the value of empirical science, particularly to counter the abstractions of theology and idealist metaphysics – currently being propagated by Hakim Bey, Paul Cudenec and many of the postanarchists. But he was always against the domination of life by science.

Secondly, the social anarchists adopted from the Enlightenment a complex understanding of the human subject in terms of a triadic ontology. In 1795, at the age of seventy-four, the German Enlightenment philosopher Immanuel Kant published a seminal work entitled *Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View*. Kant suggested that there were three distinct ways of understanding the human subject. These were as a universal species-being (*mensch*) – on which Kant’s own work was mainly focussed; as an individual with a unique self (*selbst*) and as people, as a member of a particular social group (*volk*). This, of course, accords with our common sense understanding of the human subject, as reflected in all human cultures.

To illustrate this triadic ontology of the human subject we can perhaps turn to the American anthropologist Clyde Kluckhohn, the talented ethnographer of the Navaho. Kluckhohn once suggested, like Kant, that there were three distinctive ways of conceiving the human subject. Firstly, that in some respects every person is like every other human being – firstly, as a universal species-being; secondly, that they are like no other human being in having a unique personality (or self); and, finally, that they have affinities with some other humans in being social and cultural beings.

These three aspects of the human subject, which are intrinsically inter-related, are an essential expression of the fact that humans are always embedded in three historical processes: namely the phylogenetic, pertaining to the evolution of humans as a biological species-being (humanity); the ontogenetic, which relates to the individual as a unique, embodied and psychological being (self); and, finally, the sociohistorical, which situates the human individual as a person in a specific historical and ecological context.

Like Kant and Marx, the social anarchists recognised that human beings had, always



AND FRATERNITY!



and simultaneously, three distinct ‘natures’ – a) as a species-being, a human nature (or identity) with essential needs, powers, capacities and a history; b) as an individual being, a self with a unique personality and subjective and moral agency; and, finally, c) as a social being – an “ensemble of social relations” as Marx famously expressed it – a person who enacts specific social roles (expressed in diverse social identities which, in all cultures, are multiple, shifting, and relational).

The social anarchists, like the later libertarian socialists Marcel Mauss and Erich Fromm, always stressed that the human subject was a living, psychological and social being. They therefore completely repudiated the Cartesian notion of the subject as a disembodied rational ego radically separate from nature and social life. Reclus and Kropotkin in particular, who were both pioneer ecologists, emphasised that humans were an intrinsic part of nature, and that the human mind, the thinking faculty, was deeply embodied, the property of a living organism. The suggestion, by postanarchist devotees of Lacan, that an earlier generation of anarchists were Cartesian dualists is thus completely fallacious.

Equally facile is the notion, advanced by many postanarchists, and even by Stirner and Emma Goldman that humanity does not exist: it is simply a ‘spook’ or ‘abstraction’, for only individual organisms are alleged to exist. Even more perverse is the idea that the

subject (or ego) is a ‘void’. The social anarchists, especially Bakunin, would certainly have dismissed such nihilism as pure philosophical idealism. For what the social anarchists argued was that humanity (as a generic concept) was a ‘material being’, the product of a long evolutionary process. Thus, as a species-being, humanity had, like elephants, frogs and cockroaches, as much reality as the individual organism; the species simply exists on a different geo-temporal scale than the organism, as evolutionary biologists have long been telling us.

Likewise, the notion that the subject or ego is a ‘void’ is equally misplaced. If by ‘void’ is simply meant the idea that humans do not have a fixed or unchanging essence or identity, but are unique human beings with social agency. Social anarchists would certainly have affirmed such an obvious anthropological truism.

Humanity, Bakunin wrote, is so much a social animal that it is almost impossible to think of an individual human being “apart from society” (Maximoff, 1953: 159). In stressing the fundamental social nature of the human subject the social anarchists, therefore, like Marx, came also to repudiate the ‘abstract’ or ‘rugged’ individual of bourgeois social theory – specifically the asocial, possessive, power – seeking individual of Hobbesian theory and much economic science.

Nor did this imply, for the social anarchists, that there was no human nature, and that

the human mind was simply a ‘blank slate’ – on which culture wrote its script, as Fromm graphically expressed it. For unlike extreme culture theorists and the postanarchists, Kropotkin and the social anarchists never espoused extreme cultural relativism. In that they recognised that humans were not only social mammals but also natural (biological) beings, as well as unique individuals with social agency, and their own specific needs, interests and sensibilities – as Malatesta stressed. The subject was not therefore simply an ‘effect’ of culture, power, discourses or ideology.

Finally, the social anarchists also derived from the Enlightenment the fundamental emphasis that the Enlightenment placed on the freedom of the individual. For Enlightenment thinkers of the eighteenth century stressed popular sovereignty and the natural rights of the individual, condemned chattel slavery in terms of its ‘inhumanity’, and were highly critical of aristocratic rule, particularly the divine right of kings. They were also opposed to the authority of the Catholic Church.

The essence of Enlightenment politics was expressed in the rallying call of the French Revolution: liberty, equality, and fraternity (social solidarity). What social anarchists sought was to make these universal political values a social reality. What happened during the era of modernity was that these radical universal values expressed by the Enlightenment were re-aligned or re-defined.

This is an edited excerpt from a speech given to the Anarchist Federation

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INTERVIEW

A not-so-teenage riot

Tom Forster talks to Hanin Elias about her new band Fantome and life after Atari Teenage Riot

At the end of January Fantome, formed of Hanin Elias and Marcel Zurcher, gave their first live performance in a Berlin club. Tom Forster stopped Hanin for a post-gig chat...

Tom: Can you explain how Fantome came about?

Hanin: Yeah, Marcel and I met and we were both from these very hard bands. We wanted to do something we had never done before, that we secretly always loved but had had to hide. After a while being in a hard band is just the same stuff over and over again, you still mean what you say of course but you have another side of you that is never expressed and I think it takes a lot of courage (to express that). Today it was really hard for me to stand there and sing something from my heart, not having a shell of "I'm so hardcore!". This time I really opened my heart and felt really vulnerable and was so scared that people would scream "Play some Atari!"

Would you say the album is autobiographical?
Yeah, I write all the lyrics and the next album will be different because now the album is out I don't feel that way any more. The love-sickness, the sadness about things is out. It's been cathartic. We will still be a band and do another album, we will continue making music and writing about how our lives go and people will get the information in the lyrics one year later... or maybe five years. It takes so long to record an album!

In your musical journey you've moved from a preoccupation with the external, structures, politics and struggle to also exploring relationships and the emotional life. Was that a deliberate thing, a natural progression or did you feel that you had exhausted that preoccupation?

I think I had said everything I had to say about the external. And if I still write in that direction I don't have to write it in the manner of ATR, I can still write it a bit more subtly. When we were doing it in the '90s I loved it and was totally passionate about it, but it is not me now. As an artist you want to progress and develop, to go somewhere else and see where your limits are.

I noticed on youtube that you did some stuff at Occupy Oakland a couple of years or so ago, how did that come about?

We were touring with a band called Violent Vickie and most of the band members' friends were participating in Occupy Oakland, so they asked if I'd like to play there. But when



we got there it was really boring! There was a discussion and a panel and then a speech and then another discussion... When we went on it was all improvised, we did it on the street, but I think it gave them back the energy that had got lost for a moment. There were 30 people trying to reach a united conclusion – it was so difficult and it took for ever but in the end they did it!

Your video for 'Love' is fairytale-like with you doing a magic thing, your daughter and her friends as pixies and Marcel as a forest creature...

Well, it's a metaphoric thing, I wanted to show that this person's life is something like a black hole so he is living in a black hut and he is totally black inside the hut. You only see his eyes when he looks out of the window, he is chewing on the bones of his own hate and rage. It was very difficult to put that into something (visual) and lots of people misunderstood.

Yeah, I read someone accusing you of being racist... what does it feel like as an artist when you put something in the public realm and it's misinterpreted?

It's horrible, it's frustrating. There were these people from the same group writing to me accusing me of 'black facing' and I was trying to explain to them that Marcel was not meant to represent a black person at all, we meant something totally different. It was

an amusing love story about two freaks in love. The guy lives by himself, he is totally distant and the girl is trying everything. She loves him but everything she gives him in a positive manner he turns into something negative in his mind – and there are people like that. But we only had cheap ways of expressing what we meant and that made it very difficult. We never thought that anyone would misunderstand it as racist because we don't think like that.

Do you feel that what you and Marcel are doing with Fantome has a continuity with what you have done before or is a new direction?

For me I can't just cut off from the past so it has a continuity but it shows people that you change. In the '90s it was cool that we sent people the messages that we did with Atari because there wasn't so much access to the information but now the information is out everywhere... and there are people who were influenced and inspired by Atari Teenage Riot and it continues... I'm free to discover other territories. I have a normal job like most people to make a living and invest in my expensive hobby, making music. I don't have to do what people tell me as I'm not dependent on them.

ExBerliner, www.exberliner.com, 'Sex riots! Hanin Elias and Electrosexual', Mihret Yohannes, 14th January 2013.

NEWS IN BRIEF

● On 7th January, oral arguments were heard in the 5th Circuit Court of Appeals, as the State of Louisiana sought to challenge the 2013 decision by US District Court Judge James Brady to overturn Albert Woodfox's conviction for the 1972 murder of prison guard Brent Miller for a third time. Both Albert and his fellow Angola Three member Herman Wallace (who sadly died at the beginning of last October, just hours after having been freed from prison) had been convicted for the same murder – something they both always stalwartly denied. Now Albert is left on his own to carry on fight to exonerate them both, as well as seeking to gain his own freedom, after decades spent in solitary confinement. The decision of the court is expected in the next few months.

● Wrexham County Borough Council planners have granted outline planning permission for a new £250m Category C prison to be built on former Firestone site on the Wrexham Industrial Estate. Consisting of three 60ft high four-storey blocks, it will hold over 2,000 prisoners but 85% of cells at the new super-prison will be shared, running counter to United Nations and Council of Europe guidelines. The prison will have 850 workshop places, 381 classroom places, 168 houseblock and catering jobs, 134 'skills area' places, 74 kitchen jobs and 20 sports area places. Construction is due to begin next summer, with completion scheduled for 2017 but Labour and Plaid Cymru are already agitating for G4S not to be considered for the contract to manage the prison.

At the same time, the Minister of Justice, Chris Grayling, whose baby the Wrexham prison is – and who still claims that HMP Oakwood is the best-run prison in England and Wales (mainly because the price per prison place is so cheap compared to other state-run nicks) – had launched a feasibility study into a second 2,000 plus inmates prison. The site, which will probably be in London, the North West or North Wales (again), will have to be large enough to accommodate four additional mini-prisons, with an extra 1,000 places in total, to be built over the next following couple of years as smaller and more expensive jails are closed across the country.

● The latest budget for the National Tactical Response Group (NTRG), who co-ordinate and equip the Tornado 'tactical intervention squads' that are used to break up prison disturbances, shows that it had decrease by 25.8% from 2011/12 to 2013/14, while its workload has increased. NTRG staff responded to 113 call-outs in the first six months of 2013/14 compared with 137 during the whole of 2012/13 and 130 in 2011/12, and they attended call-outs at 45% of all the prisons (both the public and private sector) in England and Wales in the past 12 months.

Grayling's flagship

Since its opening in April 2012, HMP Oakwood in the West Midlands has rarely been out of the news (and this column), and it not simply because the prison or G4S (who manage it) are the latest media-chosen target of controversy. We've had the planning problems (built too high), opening problems (faulty kitchens and showers, etc.). Then there was the critical prison inspection report that found that "you can get drugs easier than soap", with nearly 20% of prisoners testing positive for drugs or refusing to take the test and one in seven admitting to having developed their drug problem behind bars. Inexperienced prison staff were also said to be "passive and compliant, almost to the point of collusion", and there were unexpectedly high levels of violence and self-harm at the jail. A 'retrieval plan' was urgently needed and inspectors warned that there were "real risks if matters were allowed to drift".

G4S' response was to blithely claim that launching a new prison was a "complex and challenging operation" and that all these issues were mere 'teething problems'. They then brought in their own hardman, John McLaughlin, who had previously run HMP Altcourse, in February last year. This may or may not be connected to the fact that the use of force to restrain prisoners in Oakwood was revealed to be twice as high as at similar jails, with 241 incidents for the first six months of 2013.

February also saw the death of Edward Ham, 54, at the prison. In October 2013 a report from the prison ombudsman strongly criticised the standard health care provision there. The following months saw a number of rooftop protests, including a five-hour stand-off in October from three prisoners and a seven-hour protest in November from six (mostly Welsh) prisoners. November also saw a bout of 'concerted ill discipline', when

the Tornado squad was sent in to tackle 18 prisoners, who were said to be drunk (prison-brewed hooch being widely available) and armed with pool cues, threatening screws and lighting fires. The week after that, there were five other outbreaks of violence in which staff or prisoners were attacked, many of these connected to the imposition of the changes in the administration of the Incentives and Earned Privileges Scheme (IEPS) introduced on 1st November last year (see *Freedom*, December 2013).

Which brings us to the latest headlines and the 5th January 'riot', when 20 prisoners barricaded themselves into Cedar Wing, threatening officers and damaging cells and prison property. The nine-hour stand-off (G4S originally claimed that it was only five hours) between staff and inmates was eventually 'resolved peacefully', though one prisoner suffered minor injuries. The prison went on to lockdown for most of Monday, with prisoners being moved to other wings or prisons. The media, needless to say, had a field day, with the *Star* claiming "Big Mac jail riot: Lags hold two guards hostage". G4S also denied that any screws were taken hostage.

Instead of demanding Happy Meals (sic), what prisoners are protesting about are issues around the lack of activity (a third of them locked up in their cells during the working day); problems with family access and visiting, with prisoners from Wales and London leading on this issue, taking to the roof and at the forefront of the January protest; poor food, the 'trigger' for the latest disturbance; and the way that the IEPS changes are being implemented, with prison staff clearly under pressure to have more people on Basic to save G4S money. These are not 'teething problems', they are basic structural problems within the prison system, both publicly run and private.



Blackmail fail

'Blackmail' ('AR activists face trial', *Freedom*, issue 1, 2014) is not defined in law as anything which involves 'demanding', as in any campaigning group.

It means demanding with threats of harm if the demands are not met.

Influencing behaviour by means of threats – coercion, intimidation – is what distinguishes government from other forms of social organisation,

Anarchism may be defined as opposition to coercion. Of course we often have to take sides in conflicts between coercive forces, for instance rapist gangs against people trying to prevent rape, but we should not pretend that threats are not threats, if we happen to approve of them.

Donald Room

Unfairly branded

I was quite flabbergasted when I read Richard Parry's toadying letter [*Freedom*, issue 1, 2014] about Russell Brand. I initially assumed there must have been a typo, or that perhaps it was destined for *FHM*, but had got lost in the post.

Richard seemed to suggest that focusing on Russell Brand's open sexism and homophobia was 'a little unfair', because he has ideas that are at the least, 'anarchic'. I for one generally struggle to even get to the point of listening to somebody's views, if the first thing I hear are sexist or homophobic slurs.

If an individual came along to a protest, or asked to join a group that I was a member of, and he was spouting sexist or homophobic remarks, then he would be sent packing – as I could not give a damn whether he had 'anarchic' views or not. In fact how can a sexist or a homophobe be deemed to have 'anarchic' views... isn't it an oxymoron?

Richard then claimed that Brand is 'just a working class lad made good'... Apart from

being a phrase that usually has me reaching for a revolver or a sick bucket, what does it actually mean? Does it mean we can excuse a person's revolting behaviour because of their class origins?

Would Richard Parry be licking the boots of Russell Brand if he was an open racist? I suspect that he wouldn't. So why is sexism or homophobia more acceptable? What makes the letter even more unbelievable is that Richard Parry makes no attempt to dispute any of Brand's unpleasant behaviours, but suggests that perhaps we should look beyond them...

When he then suggested that Brand could be asked to 'guest edit' an issue of *Freedom*, or that he be invited to the London Bookfair, I thought that I had misjudged the letter, and that it was actually an elaborate spoof.

For the record, the day that Russell Brand is asked to guest edit *Freedom* is the day that I no longer write for, or indeed purchase it. I would also apply the same sentiment to my participation in the wider anarchist movement.

Luther Blissett

Poly-culture

Creativity which confirms or conforms to racial and religious stereotypes is sometimes celebrated (see Boris Johnson at the Notting Hill Carnival), but the immeasurable influence of Britain's immigrants on every facet of the cultural milieu has been wilfully ignored by a mainstream media obsessed with fundamentalist Muslims and thieving Gypsies. Telangietactic Councillors, fumbling MPs and trendy Vicars might earnestly sing the praises of samosas and salsa dancing at interfaith love-ins, but examples of artistic genius among Britain's black and minority ethnic population which have not been sufficiently acknowledged abound.

The Somali community, for instance, is yet to receive due credit for spawning one of punk rock's brightest stars – Poly Styrene of

X-Ray Spex.

Poly was born Marianne Elliot-Said in 1957 to a White British mother and Somali father. Like many Blighty-bound men from Southern Arabia and the Horn of Africa, Poly's father arrived courtesy of the British Merchant Navy.

Growing up in Brixton, Poly became a hippy before experiencing her Punk Rock epiphany in 1976 watching the Sex Pistols perform at Hastings Pier. Inspired by Malcolm McLaren's designer louts to form her own band, she teamed up with saxophonist Lora Logic to create one of punk's most original acts, and the singles Oh Bondage Up Yours, Art-I-Ficial, Identity, and The Day the World Turned Day-Glo became some of the most recognisable anthems of the punk/new wave genres.

The unappreciated additions to British culture brought by immigration are in no way confined to music. Film, fashion, food, poetry, the performance arts: all genres contain hidden gems of artistic enrichment with origins outside of the UK. Akram Khan MBE is rightly recognised as one of the most important figures in choreography, but he is by no means a lone brown face in contemporary dance. Benjamin Zephaniah was offered an OBE (which he famously turned down), but a thriving and decidedly multiracial UK Slam Poetry scene has yet to attract significant attention from the bourgeois intelligentsia. We all know Zain Malik is half Pakistani, but did you know Jade from Little Minx is a quarter Yemeni?!

Those keen to advance the cause of multiculturalism should expand the discourse to include not only the tired, oft-quoted examples of multicultural success stories (Chicken Tikka Masala, Chinese New Year, etc.), but also the countless, invaluable and overlooked contributions of minority communities to the character of modern Britain.

Daniel Johnson

Twitter: @DanJohnJohnson

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GETTING ACTIVE

WHAT'S ON

MARCH

■ **10th** Luddites200 talk on 'Toxics and Nanotechnology' from 7pm at Fairly Square café, 51 Red Lion Street, London, WC1R 4PF, email luddites200@yahoo.co.uk for details.

■ **11th** Radical Anthropology talks, *Dance, play, laugh: What capitalism can't do* with Morna Finnegan at the May Day Rooms, 88 Fleet Street, London EC4 1DH from 6.15pm to 9pm, for details see www.radicalanthropologygroup.org or Twitter: @radicalanthro.

■ **15th** Occupy London Tours, City of London tour from 2pm until 4pm, see <http://occupytours.org/> for details.

■ **18th** Radical Anthropology talks, *Introducing Claude Lévi-Strauss: the science of mythology* with Chris Knight at the May Day Rooms, 88 Fleet Street, London EC4 1DH from 6.15 to 9pm, see www.radicalanthropologygroup.org or Twitter: @radicalanthro.

■ **20th** Occupy London Tours, the Canary Wharf tour will be from 7pm until 9pm, see <http://occupytours.org/> for details.

■ **22nd** Rob Evans will talk about his book *Undercover: The True Story of Britain's Secret Police* at Five Leaves Bookshop, 14a Long Row, Nottingham NG1 2DH, from 7pm until 8.30pm, for details see <http://fiveleavesbookshop.co.uk/> or call 0115 8373097.

■ **25th** Radical Anthropology talks, *A Plains Indian myth: 'The wives of the sun and moon'* with Chris Knight at the May Day Rooms, 88 Fleet Street, London EC4 1DH from 6.15 to 9pm, for more details see www.radicalanthropologygroup.org or Twitter: @radicalanthro.

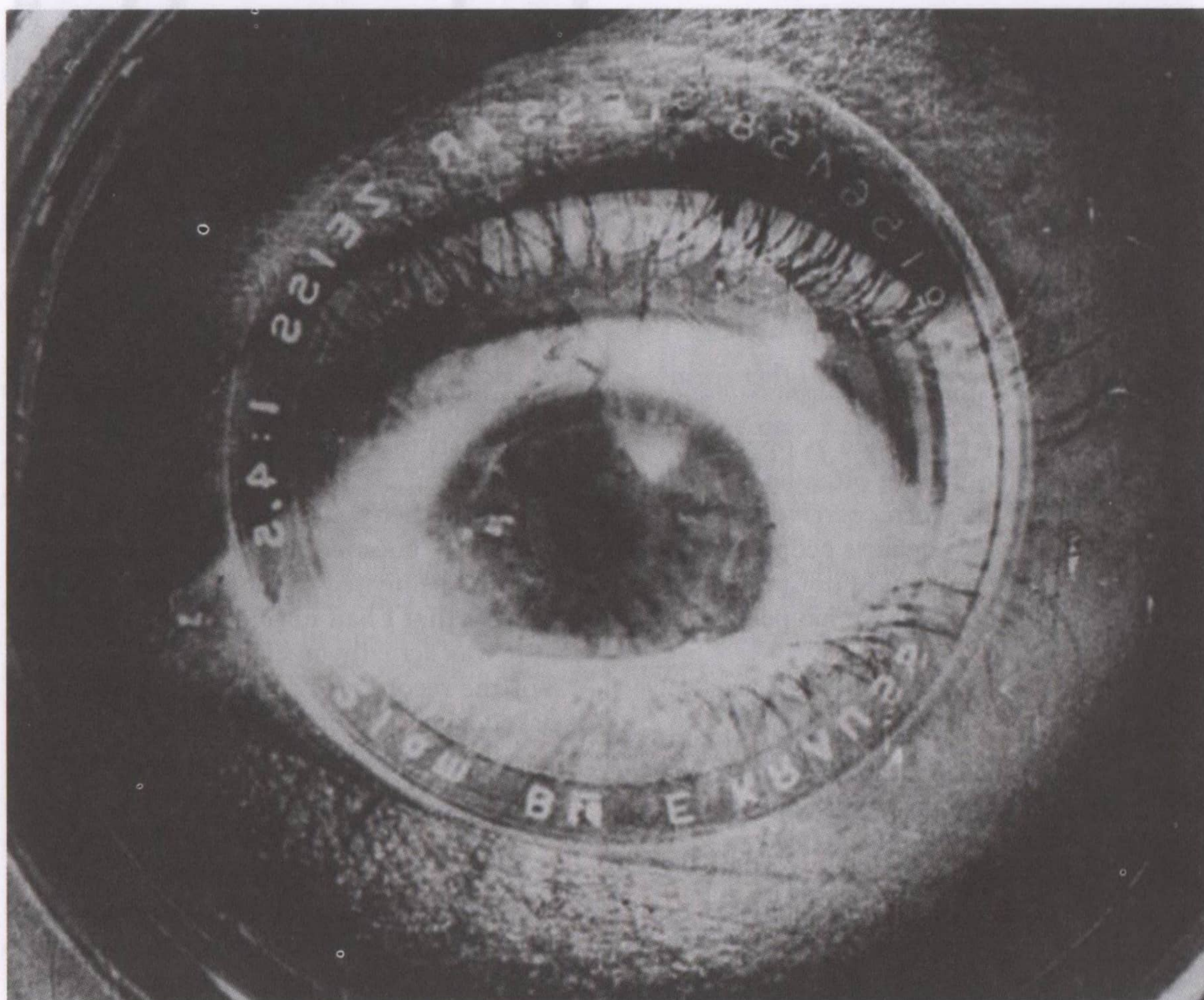
APRIL

■ **1st** Radical Anthropology talks, *The trickster: core of hunter-gatherer religion* with Camilla Power at the May Day Rooms, 88 Fleet Street, London EC4 1DH from 6.15 to 9pm, for more details see www.radicalanthropologygroup.org or Twitter: @radicalanthro.

■ **5th** Occupy London Tours, the Mayfair tour will be from 2pm until 4pm, see <http://occupytours.org/> for details.

■ **8th** Radical Anthropology talks, *An Amazonian myth: 'The hunter Monmanéki and his wives'* with Chris Knight at the May Day Rooms, 88 Fleet Street, London EC4 1DH from 6.15 to 9pm, see www.radicalanthropologygroup.org or Twitter: @radicalanthro.

■ **14th** Luddites200 talk on 'Mental Health', Big Pharma and the New Eugenics from 7pm at Fairly Square cafe, 51 Red Lion Street, London, WC1R 4PF, email luddites200@yahoo.co.uk for details.



● **Bristol Radical Film Festival** kicked off on Monday 3rd March and culminated in a headline weekend on Saturday (8th March) and Sunday (9th March)... We spoke to Steve Presence, one of the organisers, about this year's festival.

How long has the festival been going?

Only three years, but it's expanded a lot since the first festival... We've really seen it grow.

Can you tell us about some of the highlights of this year's festival?

All of it! For me, though, one of the highlights was the (bike-powered!) Wednesday night showing of *Man with a Movie Camera* at Roll for the Soul community bike cafe (www.rollforthesoul.org)... Roll for the Soul only started up last year so it's nice to be able to support them.

On Friday night I'm really excited to have Iranian actress and filmmaker Mania Akbari showing the British premieres of her films *Dancing Mania* and *From Tehran to London*. She'll be doing a Q&A after the screening.

On Saturday night we have an incredible documentary piece, *The Spanish Earth* and *To Die in Madrid*, about workers' occupation in 2009 in Milan. It's a really good mix of quite militant class conscious theory combined with the excitement of the action.

How did the festival first come about?

It was initially set up to showcase some of the work I'd been doing for my PhD, which I started in 2009 and finished last year. I was researching the history of political/radical documentary in Britain and halfway through that research process I started to realise how much of what I was studying wasn't been

shown in public. I teach Film Studies and some of my colleagues were interested too, so we set up the festival and it's grown from there.

I remember going to Hay-on-Wye Film Festival and the most political film they showed was Lindsay Anderson's 1968 film *If...* – which is a brilliant film, but it's a shame it was the only remotely radical screening there.

As well as running the festival I'm also trying to set up the UK Radical Film Network, which again comes out of some of the research I was doing for my PhD. I looked at some of the groups involved in making radical films in the UK at the moment and there are loads of people up and down the country running similar festivals, but we aren't really properly keeping in touch with each other. If anyone is involved in putting stuff on and wants to know more about the network, drop us a line at bristolradicalfilmfestival@gmail.com

Bristol is a pretty radical place, so ideal for this festival, really...

Definitely – there's a lot of counter-cultural stuff going on. In fact we've tried to make sure we don't just focus on the films themselves but also using the screenings to draw attention to the other progressive stuff that's going on in the city centre.

There's a really healthy film culture in Bristol, too. The Cube Cinema is a community cinema run by volunteers which shows all sorts of films, from Hollywood fare to the most avant garde stuff you can imagine (www.cubecinema.com).

The festival is 'radical' in a wide sense so draws in a lot of different visions of a more equitable, sustainable society.

Visit bristolradicalfilmfestival.org.uk for more information.

British pastoral... groan?

Matthew Shaw plus Elodie

(Andrew Chalk & Timo Van Luijk) with special guests Tom James Scott and Jean-Noel Rebilly at Cafe OTO in partnership with Miles of Smiles, 18th January 2014

There can be few combinations of words in the English language less promising for music than 'British pastoral drone'. And yet, despite all of this, the actual music on offer had a vitality and a depth to it which belied its ominous categorisation. Well, half of it.

Elodie, the also now-famous (famous in the world of British pastoral drone seers) were that half, and their expanded quartet (they are usually a duet) of players made music for a drifting but compulsive listen.

But we began with Matthew Shaw, who seemed to have set out, in an almost deliberate manner, to fulfil all of the most dire possibilities

of our three sinister words (yes, he even wore tweed). We were graced with fully 40 minutes of undifferentiated music for analogue synthesisers, some birdsong, the occasional hint of bass and a bit of mumbling/singing bathed in reverb.

Elodie were a huge improvement. Their clarinet, piano, assorted strings and electronics sustained an ever-changing tapestry of muted and occasionally incandescent sounds which moved glacially, always just slightly too slow and slightly too quiet to grasp hold of, but with enough dynamism to keep us immersed and not stupefied.

Although one could accuse the music of being pedestrian at times, intense focus on what was happening moment to moment always proved fascinating. Shifting layers of sound moved across one another, and even in moments of apparent repetition, pulling yourself back to the music revealed that in

fact, even across the shortest spans, the subtleties of each surface had changed beyond recognition.

What this music does, at its most interesting – and Elodie are absolutely at the peak of their genre – is create ambiguous spaces between ambience and events, between sounds and sound source, and between individual audience member and their identity as a crowd. At these moments, something exhilarating is made, although the sense of communal unity doesn't last a second beyond the closing applause.

This is not obviously intense or exciting music, and, despite its potential to be used as background, is not really music for reflection either. But when it's at its most sophisticated, that's because it aims for something more subtle and fresh than either. Elodie come highly recommended. Matthew Shaw? Not so much.

Richard Hames

Burns, baby, Burns!

◀ page 24

I've seen Mogwai about 10 times since I was 18 – probably the band I've seen the most and one that has really shaped my music tastes. Mogwai somehow took me from jazz and blues via post-rock to techno. The first time I saw them was in Brighton in 2002 and I couldn't hear for two days afterwards. I remember them vividly at Glastonbury 2003 when they ended with their epic 2001 track *My Father, My King* which is over 20mins long and described as "two parts serenity and one part death metal".

This time they played some classics that really define them – *Travel is Dangerous*, *May Nothing But Happiness Come Through Your Door*, *You Don't Know Jesus*, *Auto Rock*,

Mogwai Fear Satan, *Helicon 1* and *We're No Here*. And some more recent tracks that already seem classic like *How to be a Werewolf* from 2011. There was a good balance of tracks from most of their albums, with tracks from *The Rave Tapes* interspersed well. It felt more sedate than previous Mogwai gigs, but that could've been the comfy chair and the smoking!

But the new songs didn't generally stand up, even after hearing them live, which is usually when you tend to get them if you're ever going to get them. I found myself waiting for their old songs, apart from when they played *Remurdered*, but even that was very much in the shadow of the 16min *Mogwai Fear Satan* from their 1997 *Mogwai Young*

Team and *Helicon 1* from *Ten Rapid*, both of which they played shortly after.

Throughout the show I was secretly waiting for the classic moment in any post-rock gig when unsuspecting newcomers jump in the air when the music's been really quiet and gentle for ages and suddenly becomes deafening. It was chilled until eight tracks in with *You Don't Know Jesus* from the 2001 album *Rock Action*, but then thankfully it picked up and I did get my moment of fun when everyone in the row in front leapt in the air! It wasn't a belter of a gig compared to previous shows but Mogwai are unquestionably quality.

Helen

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REVIEWS **ACTIVE**

FICTION

Good neighbours

After a week Sandra was more or less settled back in; there was a toddlers' group in the community hall on Wednesdays and she'd met a couple of old school friends at the shops. For the last few years she'd have felt she had nothing in common with them, but here she was, living on the same estate, with a toddler in tow, trying to cope. She'd also been along to the dole office and been given a hard time there. Her Dad was happily covering all the costs at the moment, but she didn't feel comfortable about not being able to contribute. She was helping him with the cleaning and cooking, but his pension wasn't going to stretch to nappies and wipes for very long.

On the Thursday, a fortnight after returning, she was in the kitchen, making up a batch of apricot mush to feed to Carlo, who was happily colouring in. The doorbell rang and her Dad brought a young man through to the kitchen.

"This is Chris," he said. "He's been helping me out a lot. Chris, this is Sandra, my daughter, and Carlo, my grandson." He wore grey jogging bottoms, trainers and a hoodie. He was average height, clean shaven, with short mousey hair.

"Hello, Chris, my Dad's been saying how helpful you've been," said Sandra.

"Oh, it's not much really."

"Oh it is," weighed in her Dad. "He's done the gardening, cleaned up, got my shopping, loads. It might seem like little things, but it all adds up."

"We have to look after our older generation," smiled Chris.

"What do you do, then, Chris?" asked Sandra.

"Oh, I'm a plumber's mate, but things have been quiet recently. Keep on losing out to work to the Eastern Europeans." Sandra steeled herself for what was to come, but was surprised that it didn't.

"Is it a big problem?" she heard herself asking, regretting not changing the subject. She didn't want a row with this man who'd been very kind to her Dad the first time she met him.

"Oh, I don't blame them," said Chris.

"They're only trying their best for their own. It's just a shame we don't look after our own as much, eh Mr Taylor?" Les was entertaining Carlo; he nodded.

"Anyway, I just popped round to see if you needed anything done, but it looks like you've got it covered," added Chris.

"Oh yes, fine for now."

"Alright then, I'll be off. There's plenty of folks need a hand round here. Be seeing you!"

Martin H.

BOOK

Colin Ward: Life, Times and Thought

edited by Carl Levy (Lawrence and Wishart, £12.99)

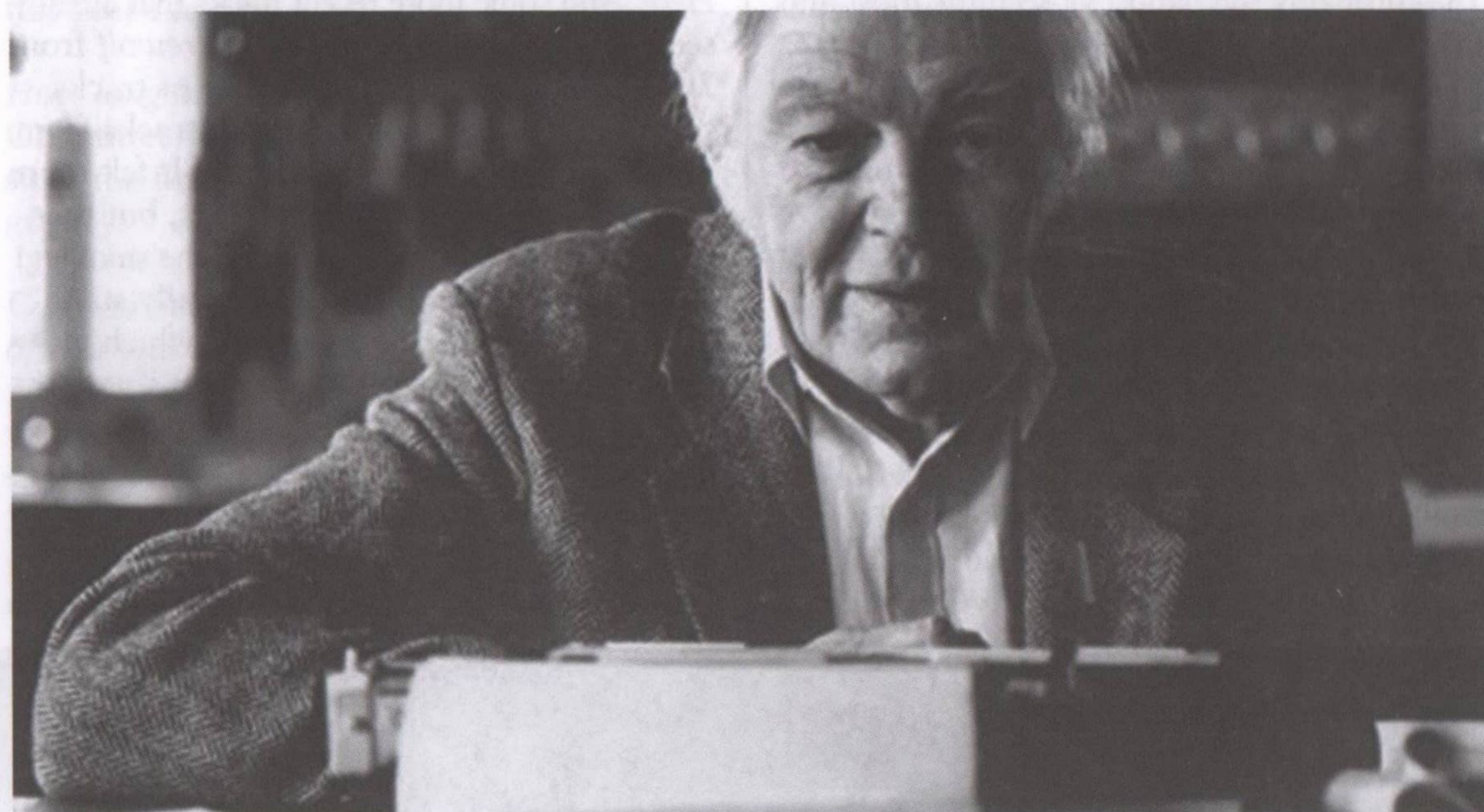
Colin Ward: Life, Times and Thought is both a biography and a celebration of Ward's impact on the anarchist movement, on British social history and post-war social policy, as well as the influence as a writer for *Freedom*. For those who primarily associate Colin Ward's name with pamphlets from a radical book fair, back issues of *Freedom*'s '60s heyday or the footnotes of an undergraduate essay, it is an opportunity to see political perspectives espoused with a portrait of the man; the conscientious boy that read Kropotkin at fourteen that grew into one of the towering figures of the New Left.

As the book is a collection of separate essays on Ward, originally published in the journal *Anarchist Studies*, each chapter is independently authored and self-contained. This is both a strength and a weakness; it allows for a breadth of commentary on Ward's thoughts on a variety of topics, including his relationship with *Freedom* Press, his views on the welfare state, and the extent to which Kropotkin influenced his work (he described his most famous book, *Anarchy in Action*, as extended footnotes to

Mutual Aid). However, it also means there is occasional overlap. Several chapters offer similar biographical contexts and his thought is neither chronologically structured nor is it represented as distinctly thematic.

Nevertheless, it offers an excellent overview of Colin Ward's anarchist perspective, often through the eyes of modern anarchist academics directly influenced by his work. This allows for an enthusiastic and refreshing analysis of Ward's views. That said, this is very much a book written for anarchists by anarchists; it may be an overview, but it is an overview that can only be read leisurely by those familiar with 'temporary autonomous zones', 'confederations of confederations' and the conceptual return of the 'economic man'. As such, this is a book suited principally for anarchists who are familiar with the name, but not necessarily the life or the work. For readers who really want to be introduced to Colin Ward for the first time in the best possible way, I would personally recommend picking up a copy of his very own *Anarchy in Action* – and in fairness to the book's contributors, they would all suggest the same. To conclude, a well-written collection of homages to a thinker that in an age of free market fundamentalism and 'Big Society' conservatism, is as essential reading as ever.

Jamie Ranger



QUIZ ANSWERS

1. In 1640. It was signed by 15,000 Londoners; it is known as the 'Root and Branch petition' because it was aimed at the abolition of the "roots and branches" of governance of the Church of England, meaning bishops and archbishops. It was rejected by Parliament in 1641, though Parliament did exclude Bishops in the same year.
2. He was sentenced to 20 years in prison, but the British authorities decided to declare him insane just before he was due to be released. He died in Broadmoor in 1941.
3. To save money. The Council has a contract with Capita which deals with many of its services, including its call centre. Every call to the council costs between £2.50 and £4. These must be the 'efficiencies' the former Tory-LibDem council were looking for...
4. Liberals in California moaning about the rich. Yes, seriously, he wrote to the *Wall Street Journal* comparing the sufferings of the very rich to the mass murder of the Jews, calling his letter "Progressive Kristallnacht Coming?" Sadly, there has been very little violence aimed at parasites like him.

Baleariac battles

Joe Herbert reads a collection of essays by Menorcan anarchist Florià Cardona Pons

A book caught my eye on a visit to Menorca this autumn. The title, *Episodis de la Menorca Llibertària*, translates as 'Episodes from Libertarian Life on Menorca'. As Sonya Torres Planells explains in the introduction, it gathers together five previously unpublished articles by the Menorcan anarchist Florià Cardona Pons (1910-2003).

Anarchism and anarcho-syndicalism were major political and trade union forces in Spain in the first half of the twentieth century. When General Franco launched a military coup against the government of the Spanish Republic in 1936, armed workers come on to the streets of Barcelona in support of social revolution. The most powerful force is the anarchist trade union federation, the CNT. Within a short space of time, 70% of industries in Catalonia, including Barcelona trams and buses, were controlled by their branch of the CNT, as well as many rural estates taken over and run collectively by farm labourers.

The anarchist leader Buenaventura Durruti died at the front in 1936. Before that he wrote: "We are not afraid of ruins, we are going to inherit the earth. The bourgeoisie may blast and ruin their world before they leave the stage of history. But we carry a new world in our hearts." The question was how to give form to that new world. For many libertarians, it was a matter of making basic social organisations such as factories, schools and hospitals work as autonomous, self-regulating collectives. But there was a vicious war being waged by Franco and his



Photograph from the Sonya Torres Planells Archive

Above: Joan Sintes and other Menorcan libertarian comrades during the civil war; below left, Florià Cardona Pons in 2002.

fascist allies in Germany and Italy against the freely elected republican government.

The Republic's only international support came from the Soviet Union, but Stalin was determined this should be on his terms. The events of May 1937, which Orwell described in *Homage to Catalonia*, were the most obvious expression of Stalin's policy. Orwell had gone out to fight with the Trotskyite POUM militias. The Communists destroyed POUM as a proxy for the anarchist CNT, which was too powerful to attack directly. A main outcome was the fall of Largo Caballero as Prime Minister and an end to the unique experiment of anarchists (Juan García Oliver and Federica Montseny) holding ministerial office.

Menorca stayed loyal to the republic, unlike Mallorca which became an important base for the Italian air-force, especially in launching bombing raids on the mainland. Ibiza came out initially for the republic, but was overrun by the Nationalists who brutally rounded up and slaughtered up to 400 republican supporters.

As Sonya Torres Planells makes clear in her introduction to this book, Florià Cardona Pons was part of a wider libertarian scene on the island, which preceded the Civil War but which did not survive it. There was the CNT, of course. But in addition, there was a 'rationalist' (i.e. secular) free school in Alaior and a libertarian workers' institute (the Ateneu) in the island capital, Mahon. Libertarianism was a way of life as well as a

political doctrine. In an article he wrote in 1990, Florià stated: "The reason anyone stops being an anarchist is because he wasn't one in the first place."

All this came to an abrupt end in 1939. Unlike other republicans who fled to France, Florià and many of his comrades remained in Menorca. Most holidaymakers on Menorca do the boat trip round Mahon harbour. But the tour guides never tell you about the imprisonment in the forts around the harbour of republicans at the end of the Civil War. Florià was just one of a large number rounded up and held there in brutal conditions.

The main body of the text is given over to five brief essays written by Florià towards the end of his life. The first one relates to the life of Joan Mir, who died in 1930. Mir was a fervent supporter of anarchism, especially through the columns of the newspaper *El Porvenir Obrero* (The Workers' Future). His view that the social revolution must begin inside people's minds explains the importance of educational and journalistic work on the island.

The second article deals with the imprisonment of a number of Barcelona CNT activists in the La Mola fortress in 1920 at the height of open warfare on the streets of Barcelona between the CNT and armed gangs paid for by the factory owners. One of the prisoners was Lluís Companys, lawyer to the farm labourers' branch of CNT, President of the

THE ARTS

CCTV



Photograph © Max Reeves

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You'll be caught on camera
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Will follow your every move.
Star on State TV!!!

Do you know yourself?
Other people think that they
Know all about you

Review

◀ page 21

Generalitat, Catalonia's autonomous government, in the 1930s, and executed in 1940 by the Franco regime in the castle of Montjuïc, overlooking Barcelona harbour. Florià writes: "Many families did their washing for them every week and sent them food parcels into the prison. They also sent the moral support and the warmth of working-class comradeship."

Later, when they were allowed visitors, working-class families in Mahon opened

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Banks of cameras
Are logging all your movements:
'Here, follow that one.'

Invisible sneaks
And electronic tell-tales
Exchange your data:

their doors to the families and comrades arriving on the ferry from Barcelona.

The third and the fourth essays concern some of the educational and journalistic work of the libertarian movement on Menorca in the 1920s and 1930s. The fifth and final piece deals specifically with CNT activities during the Civil War. Florià describes the CNT as a militant organisation well aware of the contradictions of capitalism and committed to the slogan of the First Inter-

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Twenty-four seven –

Forcing money's rule
Over the regulated
Lab-rats in their maze:

national: "The emancipation of the working class will be the work of the workers themselves." Torres Planells and her comrades have done Menorca and the libertarian movement more widely a service in reminding people of a long and inspiring life of political and trade union activity.

Episodis de la Menorca Llibertària by Florià Cardona Pons, published by Atenu Llibertari Estel Negre. Available at various prices from www.abebooks.co.uk

THE ARTS



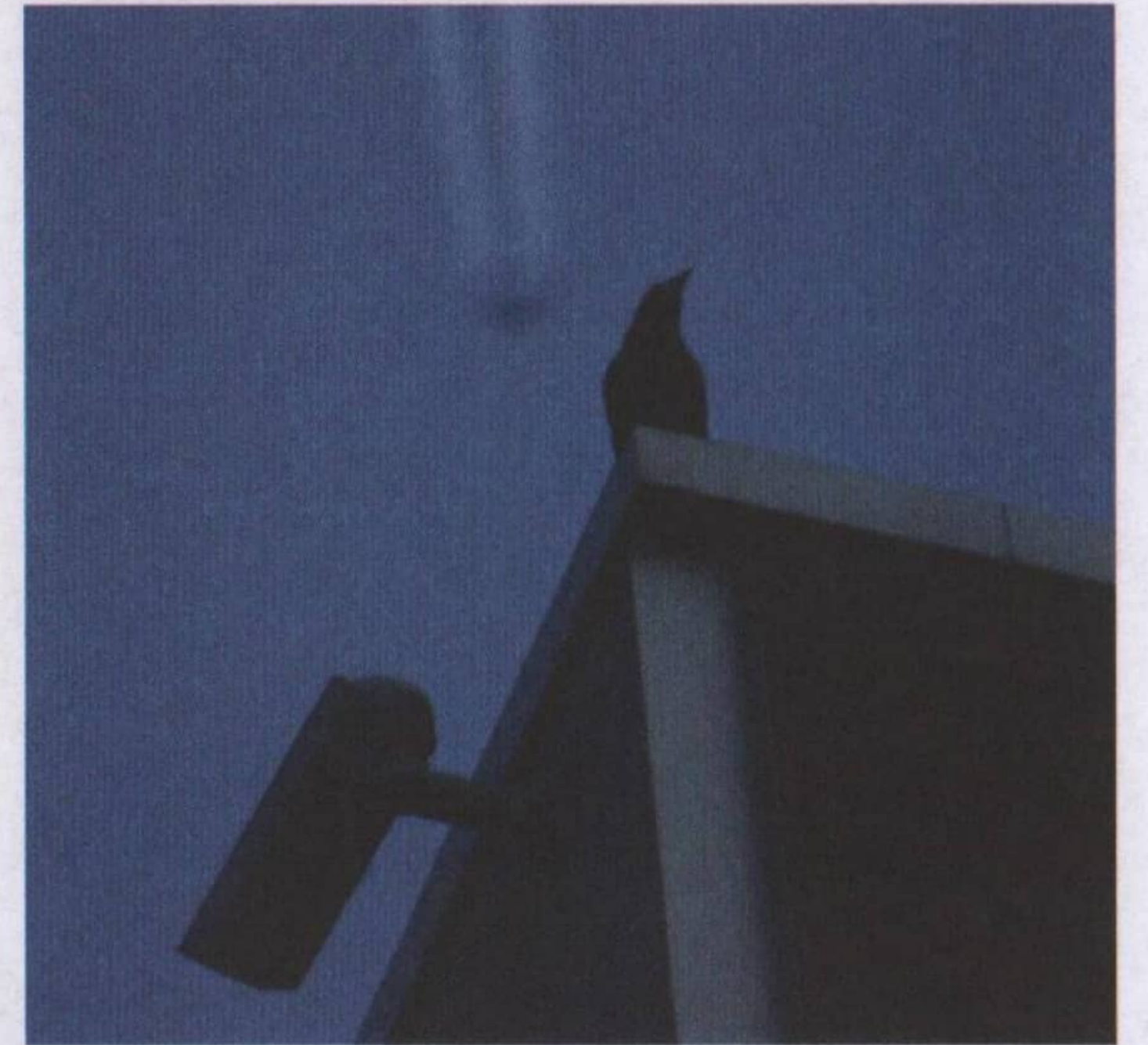
'Don't step out of line,
Interfere with the traffic
Or look suspicious –

For uniformed goblins
Can appear out of nowhere
To freeze-frame your life.

Yet you can subvert
All this high-tech surveillance
With a low-tech mask.

Real terrorists,
In any case, hide behind
Banks and governments.

Heathcote Williams



MUSIC

Burns, baby, Burns!



Mogwai
at Royal Festival Hall, 25th January 2014

Seeing Mogwai 'from Glasgow, Scotland' on Burns Night was magic – although the Royal Festival Hall felt wrong for Mogwai. Everyone was behaving well in their seats

rather than starting a post rock mosh pit. On the plus side, the Festival Hall's good for sneaking into. I once walked straight in past the ticket checkers with a friend to see Yo La Tengo and we managed to sit in the only pair of unclaimed seats. Win!

So, the band: eight studio albums, two

soundtracks, 10 EPs, their own label (Rock Action Records), the masters of post rock and into the People's Republic of Scotland. Regardless of the classy venue and tidy people taking it all very seriously, the music made me feel like it was the Rave after the Thatcher Death Party (check out the song *George Square Thatcher Death Party*).

page 19 ►►

THE QUIZ

1. When was Parliament petitioned with the request "that said government, with all its dependencies, roots and branches, may be abolished"?
2. In 1894, Italian anarchist Giuseppe Fornara was arrested in Stratford for possession of explosives. What happened to him?
3. Why do Birmingham City Council recommend residents contact them via their website rather than phoning?
4. What did billionaire parasite Thomas Perkins compare to the treatment of the Jews in Nazi Germany?

Answers on page 20

The Anarchist Quiz Book by Martin Howard, illustrated by Paul Petard, is available for £5 post free.

