

Wot anarchists fink - Organisation

"The Iraqi capital has descended into anarchy and chaos" BBC News 10th April

A common misconception about anarchism is that it's about disorganisation and chaos. Let's get one thing straight: anarchists take organisation and order extremely seriously. It is the Capitalist system that causes chaos: A tiny minority of politicians and big business bosses make all the decisions regardless of what the rest of us think. £ billions are spent on war, 800 million people go hungry worldwide on a daily basis, and millions of others live lives of insecurity due to job casualisation. This seems pretty chaotic to us. If you were a Martian, you'd suggest we could do better: And we can.

Anarchism is about taking power out of the hands of the rich and powerful and we, the working class, who actually do the work taking back control of this chaotic society. We do this through working class self-organisation. This means us getting together and acting by ourselves and for ourselves,

independently of political parties, trade unions and other organisations that are part of the system.

If our efforts succeed we will have the task of organising the new society, and if it is going to be run efficiently, decision-making must take place where it matters - in our workplaces and communities. An alternative society also needs to do what capitalism has failed to do: ensure that people are to be adequately fed, housed and clothed. To do this there must be planned economic activity. Anarchists want a society where the needs of all the people are met adequately throughout their lives, and this requires a continuous, co-ordinated effort. It also requires free and equal decision making structures as only a plan devised by and involving the people as a whole can meet the needs of the people as a whole.

Anarchy works best when decision-making is by the largest group possible such as 'mass assemblies' of communities or workers. A mass assembly should be structured so that it cannot be hi-jacked by any group or individual. Obviously, some decisions effect people across a wider area and we can't all have a mass meeting across a city, region, or continent. So, while to be present when a decision is made must be the best option, it's not always possible. Therefore, any fair process needs to take account of those who are not there.

For anarchists the best way to do this is to elect someone to specifically carry out your wishes - a 'delegate'. This is different from a so-called "representative", like an MP or a Councillor, who has complete power to do what they like for a few years including ordering us about. A delegate can be 'mandated' - elected freely by those

whose views are to be put forward and required to report straight back to those people afterwards. As soon as a delegate does something that isn't in their mandate, they can be held to account, recalled and replaced.

This is the basic nuts and bolts of anarchist organisation. It's very simple and common sense: Everybody is in control and nobody takes over and gets corrupted. This is how we see the structure of the free society of the future and how we organise today as anarchists in local, national and international organisations.

Pie in the sky? It's been done before many times: 1871 The Paris Commune where after a year or so of agitation and insurrection, Paris was in the hands of the people - Hungary 1917: again for a short but blissful period the state was effectively incapacitated, as a general strike led to the development of a republic organized by workers councils.

These model resurfaced again in 1956, when once again a councils republic was declared - Makhnovschina 1917 - 21, Ukraine - Councils Republic of Bavaria 1918 /19 - Italy in the early 1920's when over 600,000 people occupied their workplaces - Spain 1936 saw workers control and peasant collectives in large swathes of the country that lasted for a number of years.

Before and during these and countless other uprisings organised anarchist groups have played an important role in agitating amongst the people to inspire and prolong periods of revolt, fighting to turn them in to full blown revolutions.

As anarchists we don't have a blueprint for a new society, though we can say that we want a world radically different from the one we currently live in. Lots of useless jobs that millions of us do now, such as financial work or producing weapons, would not be needed. Communities would be transformed into places where we actually enjoy living. Work would probably be organised on a more local basis, and would be far more enjoyable as we workers would have control over what we do, and this work would be responsive to community needs. With useless work being eradicated, we would have more time to enjoy life, and creativity - music, art, architecture - would flourish. The possibilities are endless.

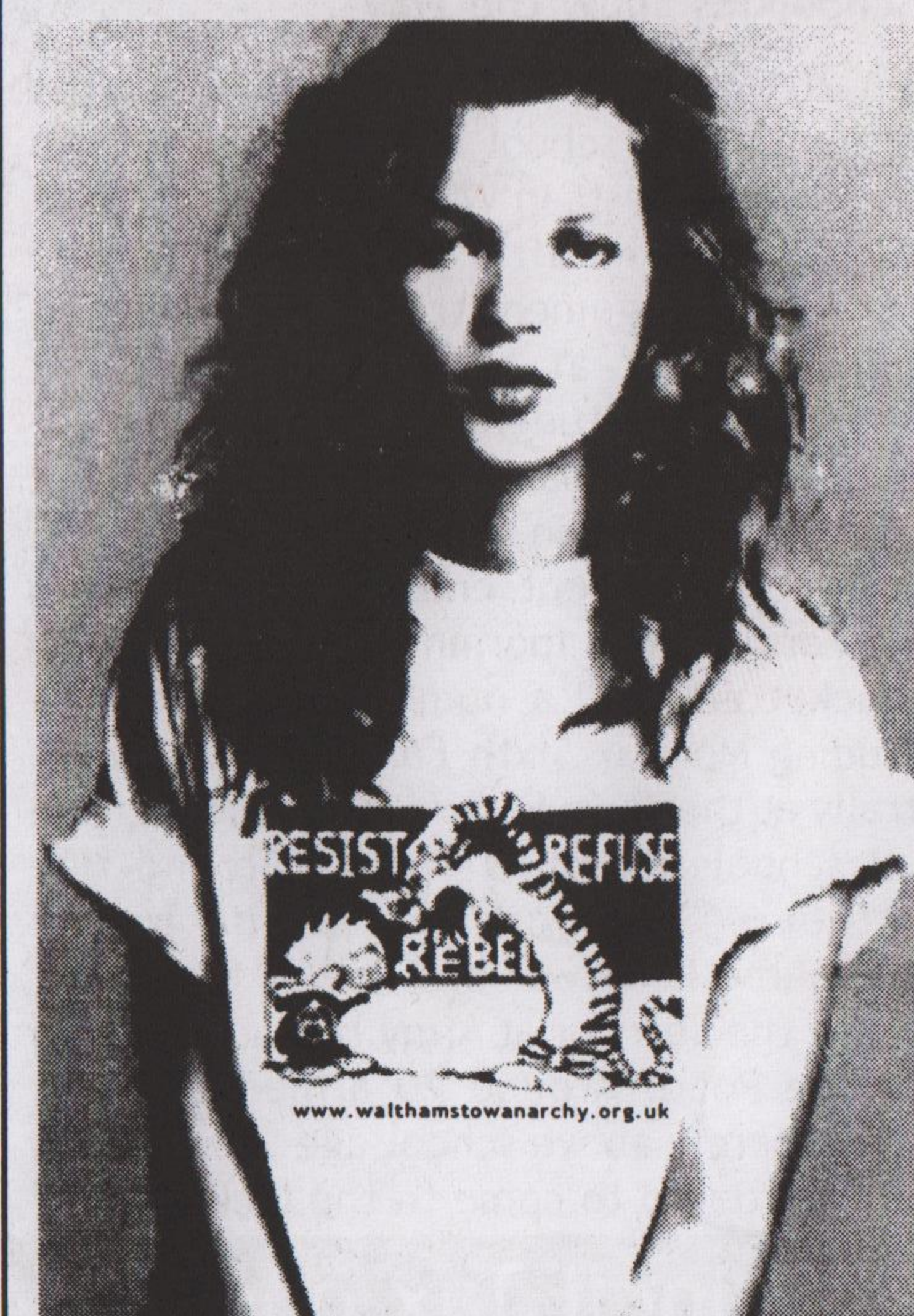
What's it all about ?

The Underdog has been produced by the Walthamstow Anarchist Group, a collective of local anarchists, revolutionaries, and all round troublemakers. Its aim is to help build up an opposition to the system in our area and one day, with a bit of luck, overthrow it in its entirety. Telephone 07810 288 889 or e-mail:

Get involved with THE UNDERDOG

So here we are at issue number six of Walthamstow's only truly independent paper. Our print run has increased with each issue as we continue to get more readers and distributors. The accompanying increase in production costs has been pretty difficult to cope with and is the main factor that could limit our growth in the future. If you like *The Underdog*, think that what we are doing is worthwhile and would like the paper to continue to grow then please send us a donation - no amount is either too small or too large! We are always looking for people to contribute local news articles and opinion pieces. Send any contributions to our e-mail address or PO box. And of course, we always need people to help distribute *The Underdog* - it goes in pubs, shops community centres and we also drop it through letter boxes. Let us know if you want to do your street.

T-shirts: all proceeds to The Underdog



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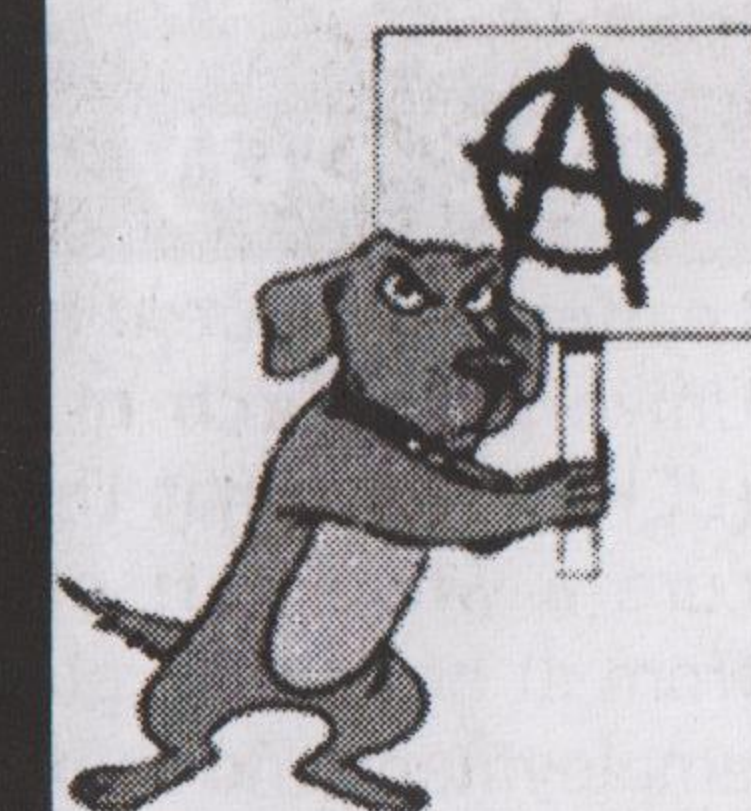
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THE UNDERDOG

Walthamstow's rabble rousing rebel rag

Issue 6 - June 2003



Free/Donation

Council tax rise pays not for healthcare, housing or anything useful but...

Bombs, batons and bureacrats

Waltham Forest's Council Tax increase came in at a phenomenal 19.6% last month. And in the upside down world of 21st century capitalist Britain, there won't be any higher spending or improved services. The Council will be continuing its relentless "slash and burn" campaign against the most essential local services providing basic welfare to ourselves, our friends, neighbours and families. Spending cuts of £6.3 million have been guaranteed. Expect this to be one promise that local politicians don't break.

On top of this, last month there was the 1% rise in National Insurance, and thanks to the virtual news blackout on the increase, the majority of us were not even aware of it until it had come in to effect! When faced with such a bizarre situation - tax rises coupled with cuts in basic serv-

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ices - it's only natural to expect some kind of reasoned explanation. Is this what we get? Is it hell!

Passing the buck.

There are four main players involved when it comes to Council Tax - the Government, the Council, the Greater London Authority (GLA) and us, the people who pay it. The Council uses money raised from collecting the Council Tax as well as money from central Government to fund local services. A proportion of our Council Tax is also set and claimed by the GLA to pay for things like the Fire Service and the Police. This situation conveniently allows them to blame each other for any tax rises and cutbacks, leaving us with no explanation as to who is at fault. So let's look at some simple facts ourselves:

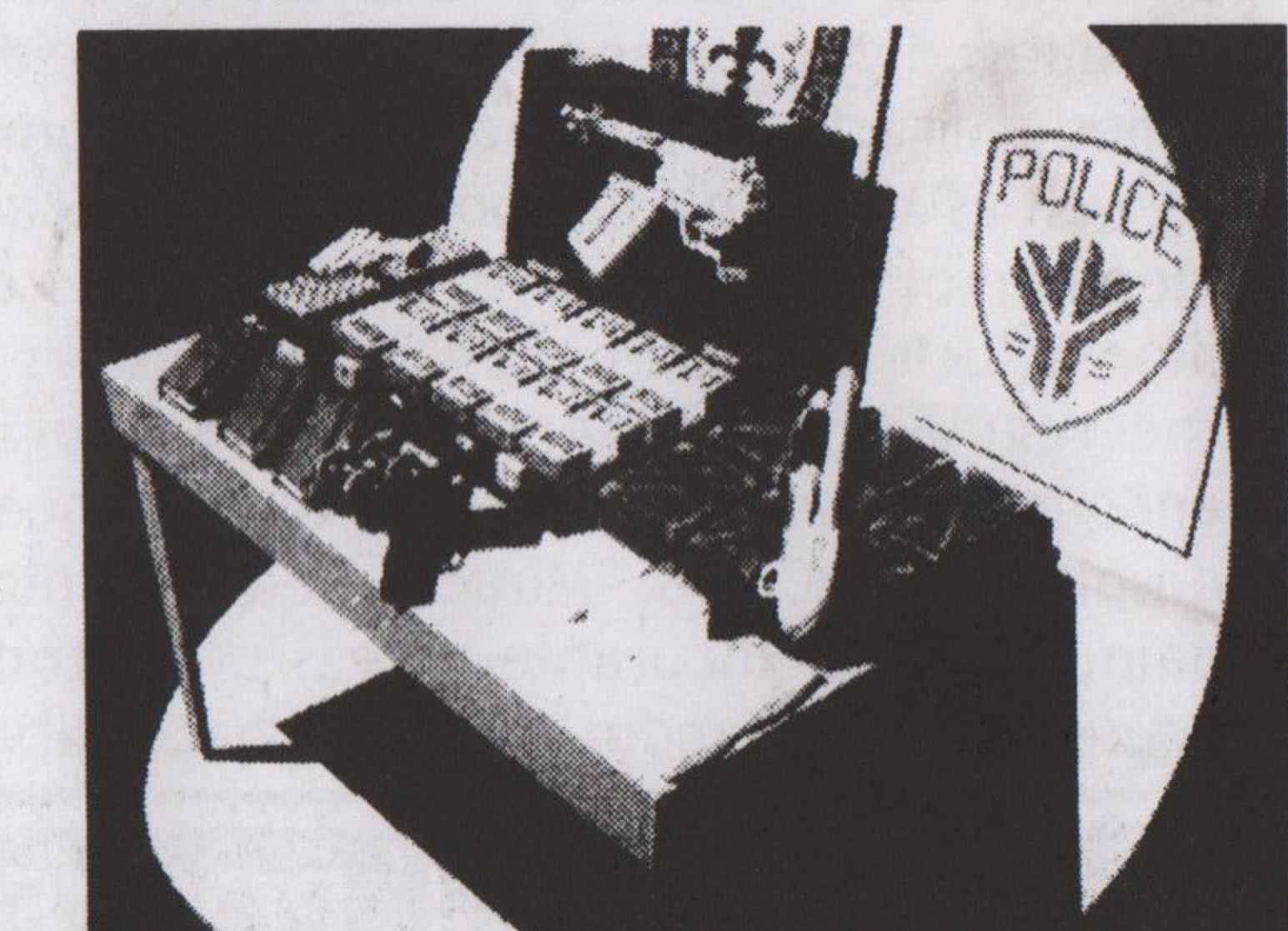
Bombs

The Government, in anticipation of an ex-

pensive war, cut back its contribution in Waltham Forest and elsewhere in Britain, while raising National Insurance. War, don't forget, is a very expensive game. So far, they have spent £3.5 billion (not million) on bombing Iraq, and that is even before we pay for the cost of the occupation!

Batons

The GLA have taxed us more in order to pay for more police. Presumably this is in anticipation of the extra crime that the poverty caused by the various tax in-



creases are going to lead to. Not, of course, that the 30 extra police allocated to Waltham Forest - at a cost of £1.5 million to you, dear taxpayer - will do anything to either prevent your house being burgled or catch the burgler once its been done over. The only places they'll be patrolling are shopping centres -making sure that no businesses lose any goods to shoplifters. Think of the resources that are put into chasing a few shoplifters, and compare it with the help you actually get from the police if you get burgled. Even if a promise of more "bobbies on the beat" may make you feel safer, it's a promise that will never mean anything in reality. The reality is that the extra money we are paying will go to protect big business and the wealthy, just as it always has done. Meanwhile, they'll keep an eye on the rest of us with more and more CCTV cameras, helicopters, and cars whizzing through our streets.

If you think that this sounds like a knee-jerk anti-police bias, well, our view is based on some very clear facts. £383.7 million of

the Metropolitan Police Authority's 2003-4 budget is to be spent on "Special Operations" - an increase of about £50 million on last year. This includes "Royal protection", "Diplomatic protection" and "Palace of Westminster protection", as well as Covert Operations and Intelligence (read "spying on people critical of the system"), Special Branch and anti-terrorism. This represents 14.3% of the Met's total annual budget. The amount to be spent on child protection initiatives? £500,000 - or 0.02% of their annual budget.

Bureacrats

And finally, there are our own Waltham Forest councilors. The recently leaked findings of the Improvement and Development Agency (I&DA) Report are a damning assessment of the tell-tale control-freakery, dogmatism and corruption that

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we have come to expect from local and national politicians alike. These power-hungry, bureaucratic minded dimwits treat the borough as a private fiefdom. And the arrogance with which the local Labour Party have dismissed the findings of the I&DA report show that they have no intention of mending their ways by resigning. They put their own careers and political aspirations above everything else, to the detriment of the rest of us. So it should

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The UCKG: putting the pay into pray

Leaflets distributed in Walthamstow by the Universal Church of the Kingdom of God (UCKG) claim that their church Pastors can cure a whole raft of personal problems - from ill health to relationship issues to unemployment and so on. By giving money we display our faith in God and so receive his blessing and are healed, the UCKG would have us believe. Here we look at the issue of what is called "faith healing". Faith healing is as old as religion itself. Historically, the medicine man, shaman, or sorcerer appeared to be able to set aside the order of nature, tap mysterious cleansing forces, and, apparently achieve cures. Faith healing was widely used in primitive cultures before and during the development of modern medicine. It is certainly not a thing of the past or a forgotten superstition, and still exists in its continued guises today. Faith healing essentially exploits the innate power the mind has to heal the body of imagined ailments, often by explaining this under-explored scientific phenomena as divine intervention. Many modern ailments have been proved to have a psychological basis, for example Eczema. Faith healing uses the placebo effect. Research shows that the placebo effect can be far greater than is commonly thought. The power of the mind is immense and its enormous capabilities yet to be fully explored.

The danger here is exploitative religious groups like the UCKG claiming these abilities in the name of their money hungry God. They go beyond simple charming of minor ailments and claim to be able to cure bigger illnesses such as Cancer or even Aids. This is false and dangerous, and of course, they take a lot of money for their "services".

In America today child abuse agencies are overwhelmed with problems caused by faith healing. A study on faith healing families found that 4 out of 5 children that died after faith healing did so from illnesses that had a 90% cure rate with medical treatment. A number of religious sects favour prayer over medical care. Christian Science is probably the best known of these groups. "You can Heal," a pamphlet of the Christian Science Publishing Society, states that "every student of Christian Science has the God-given ability to heal the sick". The most comprehensive examination of contemporary "healers" is James Randi's *The Faith Healers*. The book describes how many of the leading evangelical "healers" have enriched themselves with the help of deception and fraud. We recommend it.

Do you need help in escaping from a cult? The Cult Information Center (CIC) is an educational charity providing advice and information for victims of cults, their families and friends. Contact Ian Haworth on 0870 777 3800 Add: BCM Cults, London WCIN 3XX www.cultinformation.org.uk/home.html

Reclaim our cinema

Following a successful public meeting by The Underdog, some local residents - including ourselves - have set up a new campaign group called "Reclaim our Cinema" (ROC). The Universal Church of the Kingdom of God (UCKG) have bought the cinema building and shut it down and are waiting on their appeal against the Council's decision not to allow them to turn it into a church to be heard by the Government's Planning Inspectorate. This takes place from the 10th-12th June. In the meantime ROC is keeping people informed of the situation with the cinema mainly by leafleting houses in the area and holding stalls in the town square. ROC are also distributing information on the UCKG



A ROC stall doing brisk trade in the town square

that reveals their true parasitical nature. This is a vital task as we can not over-estimate the importance of the fact that the UCKG actually own the building. This means that even if their appeal is rejected they still may not sell the cinema and move out immediately. They are a very rich company after all, and so won't need their money back in a hurry. They may even see the cinema as a decent property investment worth hanging on to. The UCKG must be made aware that they will never have an easy time in Walthamstow and that many people in the area know exactly what they are up to. To get involved e-mail reclaimourcinema@hotmail.com www.walthamstowcentral.co.uk/roc

Charity Commission UCKG whitewash - as predicted by the Underdog 2 issues ago! The Charity Commission (CC) have finally published the report of their investigation into the UCKG. It is so spineless, dire and obviously a whitewash that a full length analysis would be a total waste of the Underdog's precious space. We'll just point out that CC investigators couldn't have been looking very hard if they "did not find any evidence that the UCKG or those representing it were claiming to be able actually to perform miracles, heal those suffering from ailments or exorcise individuals who are allegedly possessed by demons". Tuesday night at the UCKG's Finsbury Park HQ is called "Miracle Healing" and Sundays 4pm service is headlined "Miracles Evening". As well as this the CC report says "...in cases where they receive notification that a member of the church is allegedly possessed by demons or is suffering from an illness such as cancer they or the Pastors would encourage the individual to join in the regular church services and say prayers for those who are affected whilst encouraging such individuals to continue with their medical treatment." This is despite the UCKG's "Miracle Healing" night being sub-headed "If you are sick, in pain, have an incurable disease, doctors cannot help, etc." *"I am the Lord that healeth thee"* (Exodus 15:26) What charity from the Charity Commission!!!

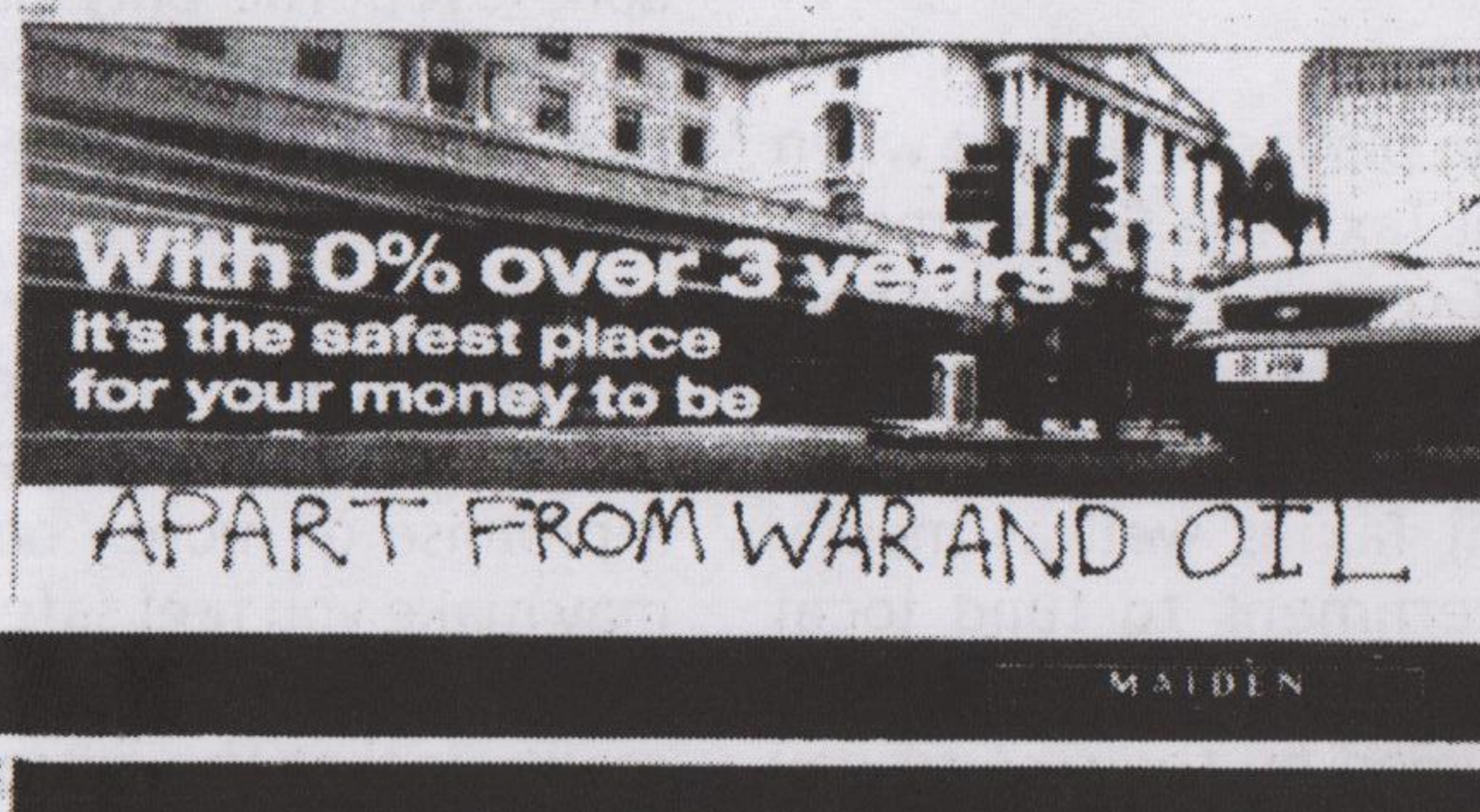
WANTED - BILL POSTERS

In the last issue, we phoned the council's "Tip Us Off" hotline, and found they were interested in complaints about flyposting but flummoxed when it came to complaints about eyesore advertising billboards. Most billboards boast the name of the company who place them there on their frame: Maiden, Clear Channel and JC Decaux are all prevalent in Waltham Forest. They require "advertisement consent". This is like planning permission, and applications are sent to the

Council planning department. The council can refuse advertisement consent on the grounds of a) safety hazard; or b) "detritmental amenity". What's more, only residents and business people in the "immediate vicinity" of the proposed billboard are

informed of the application, and therefore realistically only they can lodge objections. The plot thickens when you take into account the fact that a huge number of billboards have never sought or received advertisement consent. Woodlands Park Residents Association, in neighbouring Haringey recently found, after trawling through council documents, that a staggering 48 out of 50 billboards in their area were illegal. The planning officer at Waltham Forest admitted

that there were large numbers of illegal billboards in the borough and said they were hoping to take on more staff to deal with the problem. In the next issue, we hope to publish a hit list of some of the unauthorised billboards in the borough.



A subvertisement near Blackhorse Road tube - absolutely nothing to do with us...

Waltham Forest against the war

The size and scope of protests against the attack on Iraq both nationally and worldwide has been phenomenal. The demonstrations on 15th February at which up to 2 million marched in London, and the demonstration on 22nd March were both well attended by Walthamstow residents, including a banner and contingent from Walthamstow Anarchist Group (W.A.G.). On Saturday February 22nd W.A.G. and friends held a protest outside the Territorial Army barracks at the top of Lea Bridge Road. Our slogan was "Beds for Whippets not Bombs for Bush", making the link between the obscene amounts spent on war and the chronic under-funding of our NHS. Leaflets were distributed detailing the exploitation of young people by the British army, and giving advice about how to get out. Drivers enthusiastically tooted their support.



The WAG flag flies at Britain's biggest ever demo

Schoolkids show the way

On 20th March, the day bombing started around 1,000 school students walked out to stage protests in Walthamstow. Both at Walthamstow Girls' and Leytonstone Schools management tried to lock the students in but at both they failed: At Leytonstone, students climbed over railings, and at Walthamstow Girls management eventually gave in and opened the gates. A large contingent emerged from Leyton 6th Form in the morning and successfully "picketed out" a number of schools including Monoux Sixth Form. Meeting centrally at the Town Square the students from all schools marched up and around Hoe Street. The junction at the top of Selbourne Road was blocked. It then went up to the Territorial Army barracks on Lea bridge Road. Around 20 armed soldiers, many barely above school-age themselves, were ordered to come to the locked gates

Council Tax cont...

Continued from page 1

come as no surprise that despite getting an extra 17.5 per cent tax off us all, and getting the same money from the government in real terms, they are still planning massive cuts that will affect the lives of thousands of us who live in the Borough. So there we have it. Added to the usual Council incompetence and bureaucracy we've all come to expect, we have two more factors pulling on our purse strings - bombs and batons.

The current system gives politicians a licence to tax us and spend our money on increasing the wealth and power of the elite they represent. The costs of the problems that this system creates, such as crime, are then pushed back on to us.

to protect themselves from the children! The march was followed by four police riot vans throughout, but police were unable to control or stop it. For many of the Borough's young people, it was their first ever political protest. But the students were well organised, confident and disciplined. As the police occasionally got heavy, or tried to move in and block the protesters in, the demonstration moved, therefore preventing any situations where the police could make arrests. The protesters refused to be blocked in or controlled by the police. Shopworkers came out and applauded, and residents stopped and smiled, showing their approval. One protester told "The Underdog":

"Everybody looked out for each other. The feeling of solidarity was very strong and very different from anything I've ever been on. Usually, on a march that has been agreed with the police beforehand, there is no real feeling of solidarity and it's very passive. This was something completely different: there were no leaders telling people when to stop or go, or preaching at you. Everybody just moved together as a mass, and it was effective."

Nationwide protests

These actions in Waltham forest are just one example of scenes repeated by school and college students around the country. If these actions had been joined by similarly militant actions in workplaces across Britain this would have been a chance to force the Government to back down. Copies of our leaflets given out at the TA barracks are available from us on request. For more information about any future student organisation and protests in Walthamstow phone Hawwa on 07880586304 or Moynul c/o 07796697271

And while we're on the subject...

Looking at the Metropolitan Police Authority's budget for this year we have to point out that an incredible £267.1 million - that's 10% of the £2,680 million grand total - is accounted for as "the increased costs of providing existing services." Incredible! Do we get an explanation of this hyper-inflation of costs? Of course we don't. Has any mainstream journalist bothered to look in to this black hole in the Met's accounts? Of course not!

The Underdog's Survival Guide

Now that the Leyton Advice Bureau has shut down, simple information enabling people to get benefits that they are entitled to and learn about rights protecting them from landlords, bosses and creditors is going to be harder to come by. In the last issue of The Underdog we printed advice on how to deal with credit card debt. This issue we continue what will be a regular feature by looking at a couple of other thorny problems:

How to deal with accusations of benefit fraud:

The Government spends hundreds of thousands of pounds talking about this but actually has little success prosecuting alleged fraudsters. It is important to remember that receiving benefits you are not entitled to does not automatically make you guilty. Overpayments of benefits can be caused through official error and claimant error and may not actually be classifiable as fraudulent. If you are accused of fraud by benefit agency staff don't pay any attention to their attitude, much of which may be bluff, as in the case of bailiffs. Remember, you are allowed to agree or disagree with statements they ask you to sign and there should be no coercion on their part what-so-ever. If you are found guilty you should always appeal.

Bear in mind that benefit underclaiming is much more widespread than fraud so never, ever, let them make you feel guilty and admit to anything.

Employers who fail to pay employees tax and national insurance:

Here's a real case of fraud that the government does nothing to stop meaning that rip-off bosses keep getting away with it. Many people are unaware of a problem until they become unemployed or sick and need to claim contributory based benefits. They will be refused these benefits and cannot win their appeal if no National Insurance has been paid.

No one has to accept this situation. Employers should be warned, in writing, that the Inland Revenue could be called in to check their books and that this could result in a jail sentence for avoiding tax. This is normally enough to make them pay up. The best way to avoid this situation occurring in the first place is to get a P60 when you start work, insist on regular pay slips, both of which you have a right to. If you work in a more lawless trade such as the building industry legal avenues may not be as easily accessible, in which case there is always direct action. As the saying goes, if you are knocked, knock it down! It'll make then think twice before ripping the next poor bugger off.

Next issue: No win no fee accident specialists - smarmy, conning bastards or what?

Need more help? Walthamstow has an excellent Citizen's Advice Bureau on Hoe St.