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KILLING CONTINUES IN HAITI

In a Freedom exclusive, Jack Ray investigates the situation in Haiti, five months on from the coup d'état that deposed Haitian president Jean-Bertrand Aristide, the people of Haiti continue to be subject to brutal treatment from the new interim government. Human rights observers visiting the country report the deaths of more than a thousand Haitians, in addition to burned and looted homes, political detentions, the suspension of habeas corpus, mutilated bodies, suppression of free speech and demonstration and the arbitrary rule of paramilitary gangs, often led by men previously imprisoned for massacres during the 1991-1994 dictatorship.

Port-au-Prince morgue reports that it had to dump approximately a thousand bodies in a mass grave at Titanyen over the course of March, in many cases as family members were too scared to come and claim their relatives for burial. Typically the morgue would expect around to deal with around a hundred such cases per month. Additionally similar disposals have been necessary at hospitals in other towns. In some of the cases witnesses in the IJDH's recent report tell of mutilated bodies, including the decapitation of Junior Saintilles and his brother Reynold.

Thousands of Haitians remain in hiding for fear of the 'rebel' paramilitaries and social conditions

continue to deteriorate. The new government has pulled funding and support to literacy programmes, as well as food and shelter provision.

Electricity and water continue to be a problem, as does the massive inflation of fuel and food prices.

The attempts by the interim government to disassociate itself from supposedly autonomous gangs looks increasingly farcical. The Quixote Centre states that the new administration "appears to be implicitly supporting criminals-at-large and resurgent military and paramilitary groups." Even supposed human rights groups such as the National Coalition for Haitian Rights are effectively acting as apologists for the regime. Its director, Pierre Espérance, proudly displayed his anti-Aristide propaganda when visited by the National Lawyers Guild, and refuses to investigate the large trail of blood pooling about the new government. Paramilitaries and police in some areas are mounting joint operations or in some cases simply incorporating 'rebels' into the local force.

The new authorities now act with impunity, arresting prominent Lavalas activists without any warrant, refusing any due process to detainees. In some cases the police hold family members in place of their planned arrest, a tactic frequently used under the Duvalierist dictatorship; Anne Auguste, an activist



State gunman in Haiti

and folk singer, was arrested along with ten of her family members, among them children. Even when the judicial wheels slowly turn they are thwarted by the new government. When a judge ordered

the release of FL (Aristide's political party) Deputy Jacques Mathelier, authorities at first attempted to force a reversal of the decision and eventually moved Mathelier to another

jurisdiction. Both Auguste and Mathelier are presently being held indefinitely without charge.

Freedom of the press has been de

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FIRST CLASS VICTORY

On July 20th 1500 bus drivers across South Yorkshire began a strike that surprised almost everyone but the bus drivers, by lasting for the next three weeks – one of the longest running continuous strikes in the UK bus industry for the past thirty years.

After being offered a pay rise of just 1.5% the drivers voted by more than nine-to-one for indefinite strike action, and put in a demand for a 30p per hour across the board rise, a reduction in working hours, and a reduction in the length of time it takes for a driver to move from the starting rate of £5.85 to the full rate of £7.53. The company could easily afford this from its £16million profits – £6million from its most profitable region, South Yorkshire.

First's wages locally are so low they have difficulty filling vacancies, recently turn to Poland to recruit.

The strike was completely solid from the start, with the only buses running being agreed Mobility services for those

who would otherwise be housebound.

First bosses launched a media war, but it didn't even convince the passengers – surveys showing up to three-to-one support for the strikers. After the first week of the strike First accepted the 30p rise, but insisted it could only be paid for by loss of the first days sick pay – worth about £200 a worker. That offer was rejected by five to one.

Support for the strike came from First depots across the country (the 'final' pay deal in Bristol was also rejected. First, wanting to stop 'a Sheffield' here, magically found some extra money for this year's deal). A threat to run a limited free service with managers from across the country driving was kyboshed when other unions said they would refuse to cover their duties. The dangers of raising the stakes in the dispute were too much for First, who rapidly backed down. After another similar offer was overwhelmingly rejected, First threatened to

go to court to get the ballot annulled, as some papers were sent to workers not affected by the offer. But again they never dared.

At that point First returned to the negotiations and suddenly conceded all the workers' demands, as long as the union would accept a two year deal – with next year's rise being the same as this year's. The strike was costing First £1million a week, and millions more for shops – M&S in Sheffield saying they were down £400,000 a week in takings. The offer was accepted by four-to-one by the strikers, with 250 still voting to continue the strike.

The solidarity of the strike meant that union officials never backed down from demanding anything short of the full claim. Over 100 workers a day joined the picket line, including drivers who had voted for a return to work. Given the way First caved in so quickly, it's just a waste that more wasn't demanded in the first place.

Richard Belbin

G8: CRUNCH TIME

The G8 summit comes to these islands next year. Those of us planning to protest against it in 2005 can learn a lot from what happened during this year's summit in Georgia, USA. Among other things, we can learn a lot from how it was spun to the general public. The UK Chancellor, Gordon Brown, set out his vision for the G8 summit in a recent Independent article: a liberal summit that will take action on poverty and defend the environment. Why should we care what he says? Because it tells us to prepare for a true flood of liberal propaganda next year. When the G8 comes to the UK it will be protected, not just by batons and tear gas, but also by a web of legitimacy, and it gets this legitimacy from pretending to act for the poor. Most of the left, trade unions and NGOs (non-governmental organisations, like Oxfam, buy into this web – by lobbying the G8 to 'do something' they admit the G8 has a right to exist, as long as they can hope for a few crumbs from its table.

As Gordie says: "2005 is the crunch

year for the world trade talks ... designed to make real and irreversible progress in tackling world poverty." Note the careful coupling of 'world trade talks', i.e. pushing forward with global capitalism, and 'tackling world poverty'. If you're against the G8, you're against the wonderful development presidency – support us, or the African kid gets it.

This is the Gordon Brown as featured on Christian Aid leaflets; some NGOs seem to believe that Brown could turn into a crusader for the oppressed if only the right peaceful pressure was put on him. This word 'peaceful' is important. If you are part of a group that thinks that Brown could be a potential ally, then you are going to want to pressure him in the nicest and gentlest manner possible.

This is why the recent call to action, issued by the soft left/NGO Scottish Mobilisation Committee has already stated that they will only support 'peaceful' protests.

We've seen this kind of division practised before. But at the 2001 G8

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Home and away

FREEDOM

Volume 65 Number 16

Anarchism

Anarchists work towards a society of mutual aid and voluntary co-operation. We reject all government and economic repression.

Freedom Press is an independent anarchist publisher. Besides this newspaper, which comes out every two weeks, we produce books on all aspects of anarchist theory and practice.

In our building in Whitechapel we run Britain's biggest anarchist bookshop and host a social centre and meeting space, the Autonomy Club. We're currently developing open-access IT provision for activists to use.

Our aim is to explain anarchism more widely and to show that human freedom can only thrive when the institutions of state and capital have been abolished. Freedom's editors wish to present a broad range of anarchist thought, and as such the views expressed in the paper are those of the individual contributors and not necessarily those of the editorial collective.

Angel Alley

We at Freedom would like to extend our sincere thanks to those of you who have donated to us so far. Of course more donations and bankers' order gifts are still appreciated! And again just a reminder that this is the last issue to be priced at the 1987-level of 50p as from the next one it will rise to 80p. You can still extend your subscriptions at the old rate if you do it now however, and the change will not affect people who have already paid for subs.

We've had the outside of our building re-decorated, with a freshly-painted front door (see below), signs and a new A-board to replace the current half A-board (more of a board really) which proudly announced the presence of the FREEDOM BOOKSHOP.



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Next issue

Contributions are wanted for future Freedoms. The next issue will be dated 4th September 2004 and the last day to get your copy to us will be Thursday 29th August (see contact details above for where to send your letters/articles). If you are interested in writing regularly for Freedom we want to hear from you!

News from the inside

Freedom for prisoners

As many of you may know, Freedom provides free subscriptions to anyone in prison. If you have friends or family in prison, or regularly write to a prisoner, if they are interested we will be happy to send them a free sample issue or sub. If you are a prisoner yourself we can provide subs to any of your fellow inmates if they so desire. Please also feel free to write to us with any news about your imprisonment, developments in your case, requests for penpals or anything else!



Leonard Peltier

Leonard will be 60 on 12th September. Someone from a LP support group in Belgium has produced an online birthday card on which anyone can place messages, the messages will all be printed out and sent to him, for the card see <http://users.skynet.be/kola/lp-bd.htm>, for more details about his incarceration see www.leonardpeltier.org

Paying to stay?!

American prisons, faced with growing numbers of inmates and falling budgets, have started charging prisoners for their time inside, in Macomb County, Michigan, 'pay to stay' fees range from \$8 (£4.34) to \$56 a day, according to how much you can afford, and to make it worse you can get sent back for not paying the bill.

More than forty states allow their jails to charge fees, and the charges are popular with many, although in many cases, the cost of collecting the fees exceeds the amount taken. Prisoners say the fees are steep for a shared cell and 2,800 calories a day, and we'd have to agree with them, Macomb County sheriffs took more than \$1.5 million in prisoners' money last year!

Anarchists in trouble

Germany: Thomas Meyer-Falk
Thomas Meyer-Falk, a German red/anarchist skinhead has been imprisoned from 1996 for a bank robbery (he planned to use the money to fund political activities) and since then has been sentenced for threatening judges and public prosecutors, which lengthened his time to over fifteen years!

He has been kept in isolation since his arrival in prison (except for a small break in 1998) spending 23 hours a day in his cell with only a small radio and some books. "Spending over seven years in isolation is definitely not easy, but my mind is stable and the solidarity from outside jail is helpful and does me well." Which is just one of the many reasons we ought to be supporting him! Letters of support can be sent to Thomas directly at the following address: Thomas

Meyer-Falk, c/o JVA- Z.3117, Schonbornstrasse 32, D-76646 Bruchsal, Germany. For more info see www.freedom-for-thomas.de

Germany: G.B.

On 28th June 2004, our friend and comrade was arrested in Aachen, at the border between Belgium and Germany. He was arrested with three other persons after an incident involving a shoot-out with police and hostages being taken, and charged with planning armed robbery.

B.G. is a well-known anarchist, 26 years old, and has been active within the movement for several years, particularly in the solidarity work with prisoners and illegal immigrants. B was kept in isolation all week and denied access to a lawyer, and legal visiting rights were not granted. Correspondence has also been blocked. Comrades in Germany provided funds for a lawyer, some money, clothes, and other necessities.

The identity of the three other arrestees is still unknown, but apparently they are Spanish: two men and a woman.

On the 5th August at 8am police from Aachen and the LKA Sachsen (State police) searched the flat of two people from Dresden who had initiated support work for the arrestees. They have now been arrested themselves and charged with complicity in the planning of armed robbery.

The local Anarchist Black Cross have stated that it is a deliberate attempt to criminalise legitimate prisoner support work. ABC-Ghent have released a statement saying "We will not be silenced. We will continue to denounce and struggle against political and social repression. We will continue to fight for a free and just society."

Support donations can be given to the Anarchist Black Cross - Ghent 001-3364945-91 (IBAN BE23 0013 3649 4591)

Email abc_gent@yahoo.com for more info.

Bulgaria: Elitsa, a 20-year-old Bulgarian anarchist, has become the latest victim of the Bulgarian government's attempts to criminalise dissent and label anyone who disagrees with government policy as threats to 'national security'. She has been charged with 'crimes against the Republic of Bulgaria' for spreading 'fascist ideology and terrorism'.

Police thought that she really shouldn't be selling back issues of the Bulgarian anarchist journal Svobodni Misl (Free Thought). She was also nicked for handing out leaflets calling for more freedom, equality and autonomy. Now any 'literature' she intends to distribute must first be approved by a police inspector.

Source: SchNEWS

Russia: Aleksei Cherepanov

On the 13th of August the court hearing of this anarchist and journalist from Krasnodar began. He is accused of a number of crimes following an illegal search, carried out without the presence of the hosts of the house or civilian witnesses as required by Russian law. Among the items 'found' were 24.047gm of marijuana, 1.062gm of heroin, six bullets of calibre 5.45mm, more than a hundred titles of political literature, 600 roubles and two gold rings. Cherepanov's fingerprints were not present on either the bullets or the drugs.

Additional info from www.avtonom.org

LISTINGS

Bristol and Bath

3rd September Benefit for Bristle mag with punk/ska from PAIN plus DJs from Positive Vibration sound system at Porter Butt pub, London Road, Bath. 7.30pm to midnight, £4.50. Contact bristlemag@yahoo.co.uk
Every Sunday the Kebele Kafe from 6.30pm, 14 Robertson Road, Easton. For info call 0117 9399469

London

21st August Acoustic music night from 8pm at Use Your Loaf, 227 Deptford High Street, SE8.

28th August The Counter Culture Bookfair at Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, Holborn. For more info see www.blackcatpress.co.uk

2nd September Where now for the anti-advertising campaign? Open discussion organised by Haringey Solidarity Group, 7.30pm at 42 Falmer Road, N15. For info call 020 8374 5027 or email hsg@globalinternet.co.uk
17th September London Anarchist Forum meeting with talk and bookstall from 8pm at Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, Holborn

6th October Early Globalisation: transnational anarchism as practice and mediated imagery in the late nineteenth century, British Academy lecture at 10 Carlton House Terrace, SW1, 5.30pm. See www.britac.ac.uk/events

10th October Tony Allen talking about Speakers' Corner - To disturb the comfortable and comfort the disturbed - organised by SPES at Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, Holborn, 3pm
27th November Anarchist Bookfair at ULU, Malet Street, WC1 from 10am to 7pm. See www.anarchistbookfair.org
Every Wednesday the LARC Library from 1pm at 62 Fieldgate Street, E1.
Every Friday vegan café at Use Your Loaf, 227 Deptford High Street, SE8
Every Saturday Anarchist chess club at the Autonomy Club, 84b Whitechapel High Street, E1 from 2pm. Bring a chess set along.

Norwich

29th August Teddy Bears' Anti-GM Picnic in Earlham Park. Contact teddiesagainstgm@yahoo.co.uk

Scotland

23rd August Carry On Up The Clyde, The Big Blockade at 7.30am. For info call 08454588361 or check out www.tridentploughshares.org/coulport/index.php

Nationwide groups

Anarchist Federation
Network of anarchist-communists
Box 2, 84b Whitechapel High Street, London E1 7QX
www.afed.org.uk

Antifa

Militant anti-fascist organisation
Box 36, 84b Whitechapel High Street, London E1 7QX
www.antifa.org.uk
Class War Federation
Class struggle anarchist group
PO Box 467, London E8 3QX
www.classwaruk.org
Earth First!
Ecological direct action network
www.earthfirst.org.uk
Industrial Workers of the World
Revolutionary DIY union
PO Box 74, Brighton, BN1 4ZQ
www.iww.org.uk
Solidarity Federation
Anarcho-syndicalist organisation
PO Box 469, Preston PR1 8FX
www.solfed.org.uk
For details of smaller and local groups see www.enrager.net/britain

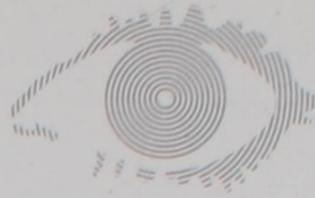
Social Centres

Autonomous Centre of Edinburgh (ACE)
17 West Montgomery Place, Edinburgh
www.autonomous.org.uk
The Cowley Club
12 London Road, Brighton BN1 4JA
www.cowleyclub.org.uk
Freedom
84b Whitechapel High Street, London E1 7QX
www.freedompress.org.uk

Kebele

14 Robertson Road, Easton, Bristol BS5 6JY
www.kebele.org
Lancaster Resource Centre (LaRC)
The Basement, 78a Penny Street, Lancaster
www.eco-action.org/lancaster
London Action Resource Centre (LARC)
62 Fieldgate Street, London E1
www.londonlarc.org
Occupied Social Centre
159 Fortess Road, London NW5
www.wombles.org.uk
Printworks Social Centre
58 Albion Street, Glasgow
www.glasgow-autonomy.org
The Rampart
7a Rampart Street, London E1
SUMAC Centre
245 Gladstone Street, Nottingham NG7 6HX
www.veggies.org.uk/rainbow/
Use Your Loaf
227 Deptford High Street, London SE8
www.squat.freereserve.co.uk/useyourloaf.html
1in12 Club
21-23 Albion Street, Bradford, West Yorkshire, BD1 2LY
www.1in12.com
56a Infoshop
56 Crampton Street, London SE17
www.safetycat.org/56a

The anti-big brother paper



BB powers

Watching

Despite its ineffectiveness at preventing crime, over the past decade the government has spent almost 80% of its crime prevention budget on CCTV. The UK now leads the world video surveillance. British citizens are now monitored by over four million CCTV cameras, and Londoners will be filmed on average 300 times per day. Facial recognition software has been installed in many of them, although it has proven to be almost useless, and 'Smart' cameras which identify patterns of likely 'criminal' behaviour have been installed on the underground. Other technology in the pipeline includes gait-recognition software and integrated CCTV networks which can identify individuals by their walking style and track them around a building, airport or city.

Listening

British intelligence's number one listening post, the GCHQ is tasked with eavesdropping on millions upon millions of communications. It searches for key words in conversations to identify suspect people. Its confidential staff manual, leaked to the Guardian, makes clear that its budget is determined in part by US intelligence requirements, and the UK Parliament has no power to affect it.

Torturing

The UK Court of Appeal has ruled that evidence gathered with the use of torture can still be used as evidence. The appeal was lodged by the ten men who have been jailed indefinitely under the Anti-Terrorism, Crime and Security Act 2001 and who do not know most of the evidence held against them. Some have been held for nearly three years, on the basis of evidence apparently extracted under torture from Guantanamo Bay.

Tracking

Radio Frequency Identification – RFID – is used in tags attached to items which transmit data, including identification and location information. The tags can be powered by the electro-magnetic fields of the RFID detectors and so do not require batteries and can be very small. It is most commonly used in department stores for tracking items of clothing, although chips for implanting beneath the skin have already been developed. It could easily be used by corporations or governments to track citizens wherever they go. At present no legislation exists to control the use of RFID data concerning individuals.

Checking

The Evening Standard revealed last week that Immigration officers and police have been carrying out illegal immigration checks on the tube in London. Despite the fact that police are forbidden from stopping people due to their accent or appearance, during these controls they question anyone who looks or sounds 'foreign'. If they are met with suspicion or hostility they demand identification and then may arrest the person.

Controlling

Police forces all over the UK have been given curfew powers to pick-up all under-16s who are outdoors after 9pm. Children not complying face either a fine or imprisonment until 6am the following morning. Liberty are seeking a child who has been detained to bring a test case opposing the legislation.

'Papers please!'

As our hard-won civil liberties are eroded, repression has become a big business, discovers Rob Ray

The government are pushing 'voluntary' ID passports for 2007, phasing out further distribution of the current ones entirely. New cards will use Biometric tests to determine your identity, which will be checked against permanent details held on a secure (for whom?) database.

Beverley Hughes, from the Home Office, said: "The Government envisages identity cards will provide every person legally resident in this country with an easy and secure way of demonstrating their right to be here and of asserting their place in the community. The Government's proposals are designed to protect, not erode, civil liberties by protecting people's identity against fraud."

Biometric testing is touted as the way of the future. The leader in pushing Biometrics forward is the USA, who have pressured countries in the EU to sign up, or risk getting turned away at the border.

The US is also, perhaps not coincidentally, the top dog in researching Biometrics, with West Virginia in particular being poised to benefit from any increase in use of the new technology.

Great Britain has been first and fastest to agree to upgrade its passport systems in this way, prompting forecasts from the International Biometric Group that global turnover will rocket from \$1bn now to \$4.5bn in 2008.

So we know it'll make money. But how reliable, secure and protective will these cards be? The evidence suggests a score of nil point.

Reliability

The two likely methods to be introduced on biometric cards are fingerprinting and Iris scans.

While fingerprinting is highly effective on CSI: Crime Scene Investigation, it is not in real life. Recent research suggests that Heathrow alone would generate 1,000 false alarms a week from misreading valid cards.

Iris recognition meanwhile, which remains the strongest contender for



acting as a backup to fingerprinting, requires a high level of technology and training, and with all the attendant costs, is unlikely to be practical for mass deployment.

Security

It seems unlikely that in practice the cards will have a great impact on UK security. Machine readable passports have been available for decades, but usage of the technology at checkpoints has been patchy at best. A senior pilot who flies from Stanstead said: "Customs and Excise have big rooms with lots of expensive equipment that simply never gets used. No-one has the time or training to bother with it."

This problem will be even more prevalent in institutions such as the NHS or DWP, who have even less history of using such techniques and

would have to see them introduced from scratch at great cost and additional pressure for staff.

The most likely beneficiaries will be the police, not because of the ID cards themselves, but because of the attendant need to create a national database containing the personal details of every cardholder in the country.

The National Identity Register will hold information not only on your Biometric stats, but also on birthday, home address, personal status along with all your other National Insurance/tax details, etc. There is no cast-iron guarantee that this data won't be misused.

Protection

So who exactly is being protected by all this? The state says it's the law-abiding folk of middle England, but really they're

gaining little from the deal beyond a false hope of curbed immigration and less crime. Any technology the government introduces is going to be bettered by the very criminal gangs they want to beat, because there is too much money in it for forgers, scammers etc to just give up.

In situations where this is not the case, such as individual health tourists, costs far outweigh benefits. The NHS has a budget of £70bn, health tourism costs £200m. You do the maths.

In the end it seems the only big winner here is the state, who can use ID cards as an excuse to gradually pool all their information on troublemakers into one, easily accessible database. In conjunction with their increased powers of arrest, detention etc, it will provide a highly effective means of keeping tabs on dissent.

Animal rights, human wrongs

The recent highly public success of animal rights activists across the UK has led to talk of legislation and crackdowns on internal 'terrorism'.

Editorials across the UK media, supported by a surprisingly ham-fisted political hysteria, have praised business heroes for fighting what is regarded as huggery of the worst sort.

As a result, David Blunkett intends to loosen the laws on stalking so they incorporate groups of employees. His measures however have been regarded as mostly irrelevant, because as even

the Daily Telegraph was happy to note, 'There is nothing to stop police and the courts using existing powers'.

There is no doubt the police have a legislative arsenal currently to please even the most hardened Tory.

Since 9/11, reinterpretations of EU law, coupled with Blitzkrieg Blunkett's machinations, have led to the reclassification of any group seeking to significantly alter the state's political, social or economic structure as terrorist.

In practice this has led to the repression of anti-capitalist groups across Southern

Europe, but strangely, not of far-right violence. In the UK progress towards implementing this direction has been slower but no less inexorable.

The Terrorism Act, ID cards and a redefinition of the Public Order Act now mean that you can't protest in groups of more than two without potentially being moved on, you can be searched and locked up for 48 hours without charge (unless you're a foreign national in which case it's indefinitely), your possessions confiscated, your parking place suspended (we kid you

not) and if you're short of your ID card you won't be able to get legal representation, health care, benefits, etc., etc ...

Most recently, there have been plans to expand police powers to make crimes such as litter dropping an arrestable offence. These will be combined with new powers to take DNA samples at the roadside, photograph suspects, keep suspected drug mules for up to twelve days to let it pass through, and legislation 'to deal with demonstrations outside parliament'.

International

Anarchism in Turkey

As the Turkish anarchist movement comes of age, Batur Ozdinc assesses its past year of activity

In Turkey the anarchist movement is enjoying its 'youth years' – a bit confused about what to concentrate on and how to organise better but day by day growing and becoming more effective. Relatively more organised in bigger cities like Istanbul, Ankara and Izmir, smaller cities like Izmit, Mersin, Malatya and Bolu have various anarchist collectives, circles and 'affinity groups'.

Although there is no anarcho-space in Ankara right now (there were two anarcho-spaces in recent years but both closed down), anarchists meet in a café/bookstore infoshop named Anarres. In Izmir there are few initiatives mainly engaged with agitprop. There are some other underground/anarcho-groups in the city creating their own music and publishing 'zines'. In recent years there have been anarchist activities in a number of cities; a few direct actions in Izmit, talks and film-exhibitions in Antalya, Bolu, Denizli, and in Usak.

The Anarchist movement in Turkey is deeply affiliated with anti-militarist movement. Most of those rejecting compulsory military service (which is becoming increasingly common) are anarchists and anti-authoritarians.

On 28th and 29th June this year the NATO summit was held in Istanbul. Anarchists formed the organisational group 'Libertarian Coordination Against NATO' and a series of activities were held. On 4th April, to mark the foundation day of NATO, an anti-NATO picket was organised. Following this, the 'Militourism Festival' brought anti-militarist, anti-war and anti-NATO propaganda. Lots of stickers and posters were pasted up, leaflets distributed and a talk on

'Capitalism, NATO and Counter Movement' was organised.

Come 27th June, anarchists walked within 'Black Block' reaching some 300-400 people, and in the following were involved in clashes with the police. It was the first time that anarchists became a real 'force' in the streets and even leftist periodicals/papers mentioned the anarchist presence.

In the last few years libertarian communist views started to become more popular, groups like Liberter (Istanbul) and Tacanka/Karakizil (Ankara) emerged and started a discussion on anarcho-communists' involvement in the class movement. Unfortunately there is no real organised participation to the workers' movement at present, Birlesik Isci Sendikasi (BIS) are the only independent self-organised revolutionary class-struggle trade-union in Turkey. BIS succeeded in organizing a group of contracted PTT workers last year, starting a strike over inadequate pay. Unfortunately the dispute was lost and the union shut down by the state.

KAOS GL appeared as a libertarian gay-lesbian periodical in September 1994 and since then the group became more and more active. In time they have organised lots of seminars and talks and were the first gay-lesbian group that to march on May Day. They also run their own cultural center in Ankara. They have strong relations with anarchists in Ankara and elsewhere.

Turkey's only anarchist publisher is Kaos Publications, which was founded in 1994. They have published 22 books and two brochures, and are presently working on an edition of Proudhon's Philosophy of Poverty.

Kara MecmuA (Black Periodical), Kara



Above: anarchists demonstrate against war. Inset: said anarchists are nicked, and fly black flags from the police bus.

Gazete (Black Paper), Anarsizmir (Anarch-Izmir) and Uygurliga Karsi (Against Civilisation) all issued their tenth editions in January this year. There are also lots of zines, alternative/underground publications, and newsletter ssuch as Oldsletter (Ankara), Pasli Teneke (Izmir) and ozgur KarArt (Malatya).

The Turkish section of A-Info has been active for over four years and serves as a good source of anarchist

news. Anarsist Bakis (Anarchist Look) website provides an excellent source including hundreds of anarchist articles. Anarchists and anti-authoritarians are also involved in Istanbul Indymedia.

There is another group which is mostly active in Istanbul publishing a bi-weekly paper named Ozgur Hayat (Free Life) and working under the name SED (Social Ecological Transformation). A few years ago they were isolated by other anarchist groups and individuals

after an attack on an anarchist comrade and ongoing threats to other anarchists. They have worked under the name of Anarsistanbul during anti-NATO protests and mobilized some hundreds of people. For now they are focused on an ecological protest campaign for construction of dams on Dersim (Tunceli) – Munzur River.

Batur Ozdinc is a member of the Ankara Anarchy Initiative

Starbucks union-busting

Daniel Gross, one of the Starbucks workers in New York City that has helped spark a national campaign to organize the world's largest coffee chain, is under attack. Starbucks have served Gross with a final warning before termination. The two page letter accuses (among other things) that he obstructed the entrance and exit of customers whilst protesting at the home store of Fabian Vera, who had previously been brought in to advise on busting the union where Daniel worked. However, film taken by a fellow union activist conclusively proves the charges to be false.

Gross' Starbucks store was first unionised with the revolutionary Industrial Workers of the World earlier

this year and is part of a nationwide campaign to unionise the badly paid and casualised baristas. Starbucks has used every trick it knows to stop that happening. Recently the National Labor Review Board decided to allow Starbucks to appeal the decision that enabled the workers at Daniel's store to elect a union representative, as a result forcing the workforce to wait potentially several years for such an election.

As a result, in a statement delivered by Daniel Gross, the union (IWW IU/660) has pulled its petition for an election and decided to pursue its immediate demands through direct action. It appears that Starbucks are now determined to victimise Daniel; and being aware of close attention from

the National Labor Board's investigation into their unfair labour practices, have resolved to pack Daniel's file before finally sacking him.

The IWW have put out an urgent appeal for solidarity, Daniel Gross could be sacked at any time, so they would like people to contact Candace Nunnally (cnunnally@starbucks.com), Daniel's District Manager and request that Starbucks recognise workers' rights or potentially face a boycott, e-mails and phone calls to Starbucks headquarters in the UK are also requested- ukinfo@starbucks.com and (020 7878-4929). Try to make sacking Daniel more hassle than it's worth.

See listings for IWW UK details

Killing continues in Haiti

page 1 →

facto suspended; the Ministry of Education has shut Radio TiMoun and Tele TiMoun and destroyed radio stations in Cap Haitien and St Marc. Journalists have also been detained and severely beaten. On 18th May a planned demonstration against the interim government was suppressed on the (false) premise that the organisers had not given sufficient notice of their intentions. Police fired on protesters causing at least one death.

Sharecroppers and tenant farmers are reportedly being forced off land by groups of rebels to make way for the return of their former owners; often politicians and businessmen associated with the 1980s dictatorship. Employers are attempting to take advantage of the newly favourable political situation to

ignore minimum wage demands and social legislation, using the 'rebels' to attack labour organisation.

The presence of the UN's Multinational Interim Force (MIF) continues to bolster the strength of the new administration, as the Haitian people face up to the prospect of fighting the reprisals of reconstituted death squads, the arbitrary actions of the interim government backed by the forces of the rich nations and to struggle for the social rights that Aristide, never as radical as the western media painted him, never gave them.

This is the first in an exclusive three-part investigation. Make sure you don't miss the future instalments by subscribing to Freedom today (see back page).

Feature

Up against the wall

As the Israeli apartheid wall is constructed, Tax talks to the anarchists doing their best to sabotage it ...

It would be wrong to call Anarchists Against the Wall an organisation in the formal sense, and they themselves would probably prefer not to have this label. The label was created by the Israeli media once their actions came to its attention. It was clear from the interview that they would prefer just to be seen as anarchists, since as anarchists opposition to the wall would automatically follow. Shortly after the interview was conducted, two of them initiated a direct action at the wall and smashed through two gates, one of which was electrified. The action was given the encouragement and consent of the local Palestinians, and had Palestinian participation, but nevertheless demonstrated the special role the Israeli anarchists play in the unarmed struggle. As Israeli citizens they are in far more danger from the IDF and the legal system than international activists, but then again, as Israeli citizens they are more passionate in their opposition too.

What size is the organisation and what are its main functions?

Raz: We are at demonstrations and actions once or twice a week, and on these demos there are generally ten to fifteen of us. The organisation is really more of a network for anarchists who want to do direct action, and we have about a hundred active people on the contact list. As for our functions, they change with the Palestinians. Up until February last year we concentrated on direct actions against the wall – cutting or dismantling it, but we have slowly changed slightly after two big events: after the end of the Masha peace camp,

and the popular uprising in Budrus. In Budrus we moved towards popular uprising happily; we were invited to take part in daily demonstrations and resistance by the community themselves, and it was really cool to see the community rising up together. Since then we have tried to combine this sort of work with our direct action – this march could be considered part of this strategy.

How has the state reacted since your creation?

Raz: In the first two actions we had, in Zubaba, there was no state intervention. Then in Masha on the 26th of September the army shot an anarchist in both legs. One person was arrested after a demo and had to sign a contract promising not to damage the wall again.¹ A few people have been interrogated by the Shabak.² On demo's the police are always trying to arrest the Israelis now. It won't be too long before someone gets a serious prison sentence. We are under surveillance as well, which we know from experience. The Shabak are really on our back with monitoring and stopping actions before they happen. If they know where and when we will cross through the wall into Palestine, all they have to do is notify the checkpoint or get the taxi we are in stopped on the way. When the International Court of Justice trial of the wall began in the Hague on the 23rd of February we got stopped on our way to a demo three times using different routes. We ended up going back to Tel Aviv and holding the demo outside the municipality building there, which is basically like a massive military compound in the middle of town. A

few people blocked the road and stop their cars coming out. Twelve people were arrested for this. Many have been charged with assaulting police for passive resistance. The trial will be in September and I think this is where the legal system will catch up with us.

How much support – if any – do you have within Israel?

Raz: Actually we do have some support from individuals in



Palestinians and others breach the fence

Israel. We do not have the official support of any groups, but individuals within different Israeli peace groups and also some journalists.

Internationally, there was a benefit gig organised for us in Amsterdam two months ago. Last year two of us toured Europe giving lectures and were able to collect some donations too.

Was this tour within the anarchist movements in the countries visited?

Raz: No, it was not explicitly anarchist. It was more about telling people the realities, about the wall and the occupation. The lectures were at universities, so they were for students and anyone who tended.

How do you see the situation developing?

Raz: With continuing land confiscations, and continued extension to the fences, do not see it getting any better. It looks like the resistance in Israel to removing any settlements means the fence will go up, and go up where it is now. That means well into the green line. Er ... don't get me wrong I don't want the wall anywhere at all ... For the situation in general, it won't come anywhere near peace whilst there are still settlements.

Have you considered doing actions at settlements then?

Raz: No. The settler security would probably shoot us, and what would be the point if they didn't? The residents wouldn't listen to what we have to say. These people think what they are doing is the Will of God. The army are reasonable in comparison.

What are the group's intentions for the future? Is there a particular direction the group is moving in or would like to move in?

Raz: No. We follow Palestinian initiatives³ basically. We participate in their initiatives, but we always try to be involved in the planning and decision making too.

Do you expect to grow in size?

Raz: Not really. We have really just united anarchists interested in direct action in Israel, I don't think that we have created any new ones!

This brings me to my next question: for you personally, which came first – opposition to the occupation or anarchism?

Raz: Opposition to the occupation.

Do you see it as natural that anarchists would support the struggle and your participation then? I'm playing devil's advocate, but isn't this a national liberation struggle, dominated by religion and nationalism?

Raz: I expect anarchists to support the struggle. This is not a national liberation struggle; it is a human rights struggle.

The right answer! In that case would you like to extend an invitation to anarchists to come out and work with you?

Raz: Sure. It's not something we actively do, but we have houses and places for people to stay. It's definitely a possibility.

Are there any Palestinian anarchists?

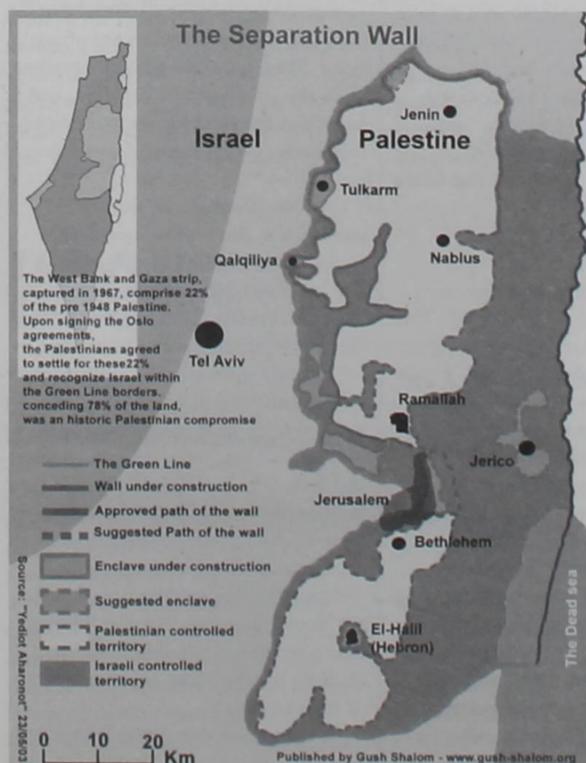
Raz: Apparently yes! Some people said they met Palestinian anarchists in Balata refugee camp. Some people we work with are secretly anarchists though they won't admit it! Perhaps you should ask them?

Do you have a message for the international anarchist community? They all read Freedom of course!

Raz: If they see this struggle as part of their struggle they are welcome here. We would like to have more contact with other organisations internationally. I know it's a bit shitty, but money always helps too. We have a website I think, but I can't remember the address.⁴ It's probably best to email me there. And that's for anything, not just if you want to give some money!

1. The Israeli security forces are fond such contracts, and are a useful propaganda tool for the Israeli public. They have the dual purpose of making the IDF seem calm and reasonable and the prisoner, normally uncharged, seem guilty by association.
2. Branch of Israeli Secret Service association.
3. They are like the ISM in this respect association.
4. www.squat.net/antiwall.

This interview was conducted for Freedom between Tax (a British International Solidarity Movement activist) and Raz (one of the Anarchists Against the Wall) during a break in the ISM-initiated march along the proposed route of the Apartheid wall in Palestine. The questions are both those of the interviewer and the Freedom editorial collective.



Editorial

Neither David Blunkett or Michael Howard thought the death by his own hand of 14 year old Adam Rickwood, at Hassockfield secure training unit on 9th August, worthy of comment. But then, they've ignored every other death in custody, so what difference does one more death make? Eleven female prisoners have killed themselves in jails in England and Wales so far this year. Last year there were fourteen – so this year the Prison Service is going to break its own record. Staff at HMP Holloway cut five women from nooses every day. On the same day that Adam Rickwood died, Jason Lee Alldiss killed himself at HMP Elmsley. Since New Labour came into office it has forced up the prison population to record levels. 16,500 are two-ed up in cells designed for one person. Imagine having a shit in front of someone else every day. Imagine being banged up in a jail awash with people, ringing with noise all day, with no escape. Ninety-two prisoners took their own lives in 2003-04. Yet no minister or civil servant is forced to resign. The death of 92 of those in their care isn't seen as a mark of failure. So far as New Labour is concerned, it's just collateral damage in their war against the poor.

The redistribution of wealth from poor to rich begun by the Tories has continued under New Labour. There is, though, one key difference. The Thatcher years were taken up with a war against organised labour. That war won, New Labour has launched an all-out war against the poor. The low wage economy which Blair presides over stifles dissent through the relentless policing of everyday life.

Both Blunkett and Howard have determined that the race to the next election will be fought over 'Who can promise to kick the poor the hardest'. Howard promises to push up the prison population still further. Blunkett responds by promising to increase police powers – offering a blanket power of arrest, more community support officers (including plainclothes) new search powers, etc.

Blair's government has come to look like a dictatorship by stealth, a slick suited quiet fascism. In response, too many on the left have argued for a craven 'defence of the rule of law' against New Labour. But the rule of law is whatever capital wants it to be. In resisting this government's agenda and rebuilding the militant organisations of the working class such resistance entails we should be no more concerned with the rule of law than our enemies. We cannot resist New Labour with one hand tied behind our backs. The 'rights' embodied by the European Convention on Human Rights are but gifts of the state. Only by destroying that state will we guarantee the rights we seek to preserve.

Quiz answers

1. Socialist Worker. He went on to write about oi music for Sounds and then joined the gutter press as a rent-a-quote.
2. After the council tried to put a BNP councillor on it, it was disbanded.
3. Radio Libertaire – the French anarchist radio station based in Paris.
4. The Fundacion de Estudios Libertarios Anselmo Lorenzo, based in Madrid, collects important documents from the Spanish movement. It is named for a Madrid printer often called the 'father of Spanish anarchism'.

Commentary

IWCA

Knowing very little about the IWCA, which doesn't exist in my area, I was pleased to see the full-page article in the current Freedom. At last, I thought, I would learn something about it.

But the article by Pepe Cormano was disappointing. True, he makes good points about the contradictions in the IWCA's approach to the mayoral election in London. But in dismissing Lorna Reid's result in London ("they did disastrously..."), Pepe ignores the IWCA's successes elsewhere.

What about the three IWCA councillors elected in Oxford on the same day? One of them, a sitting councillor, was re-elected. Another unseated the Lord Mayor. Has Pepe ever travelled outside London? Is he aware that London is in so many respects a special case?

Pepe says the IWCA "still can't make a national breakthrough comparable to that of the BNP". Why make this comparison? (And what breakthrough by the BNP?) Why not compare the IWCA with Respect, which has only just won its first council seat? Or with the Socialist Alliance, which only ever won one council seat, and is now destined to be closed down?

Of course, elections are only a part of it. But despite the good points in his article, Pepe Cormano came across as grinding a sectarian axe.

Let's hear a bit more about the IWCA, from someone who is less biased against them.

Tim Oxtan

I thought Pepe Cormano (*Breaking From the Left?*, 7th August) completely missed the point in his critique of the Independent Working Class Association.

He suggests that the IWCA are vanguardist and have a manifesto which is in effect issued as an ultimatum to the working class. The IWCA, in relation to their manifesto, explicitly state that their programme is an "evolving document" which will be amended as new people join, with different experiences. Pepe's own analysis of the internal structure of the IWCA suggests that the 'vanguardist' claim has no substance. Moreover, Pepe makes the mistake of suggesting that any organisation with "ideas, structure and political programme" is in effect a form of vanguardism. On that basis, the AF, DA and Class War would just as much be damned. There is a danger in assuming that any form of political intervention is vanguardist or 'substitutionalist'. This, if anything, reflects the extent to which the left – including anarchists – have come to be distanced from the working class.

Anarchists almost automatically see their ideas as coming from outside the class and – rightly – are concerned by this. The solution though is not to argue that we have to wait for the working class to spontaneously adopt anarchist ideas, but to address the issue of our isolation from the working class and seek to become a current of ideas within the class. To call any form of political intervention vanguardist is to accept – and resign ourselves to – our isolation. We could learn much from the IWCA in this regard. The whole point of the IWCA project is to win back credibility for revolutionary politics within our class. Anarchists may have a tactical difference with the IWCA over electoral intervention – but we should be clear that the IWCA's perspective on this is, precisely, tactical.

This is not to suggest that there aren't political problems with the IWCA. Pepe suggests that the IWCA are being "duplicitous" and are keeping their political aims hidden. I don't think this is the case. I think the truth is that some of the main players in the IWCA have determined that revolutionary socialist politics are irrelevant to the working class as things stand – that the best we can accomplish in the short term is a militant reformism which might, through community struggle, restore working class standards of living and class consciousness to pre-1979 levels. Hence the IWCA talk about the "working class recovering its share of the cake" rather than the fact that we baked the fucking cake in the first place. Equally, the IWCA are national-focused; they offer no analysis at political or economic level of capitalism as a globalised form – which, given the extent to which the working class here will have to pay for capital's imperialist adventures in Iraq and Afghanistan, leaves them fighting with one arm tied behind their backs. How can you, for instance, resist cuts that will be justified on the basis of 'war needs' unless you've also opposed the war?

Finally, the terrain of class struggle isn't what it was in the 1970s. In recognising the relevance of working class communities – rather than workplaces – as primary sites of struggle, there is: 1. a danger of neglecting work and conditions of work as an issue per se; and 2. neglecting the extent to which the victories won by capital have changed the everyday life of the working class. Politically, many of us are more alienated than ever – but socially we're more integrated, we buy into the consumerist illusion that liberation comes from a widescreen television and a pair of Air Jordans less critically than previously. The 'common sense' of working class life is determined by capital – by the ruling ideology of the day – and this is predicated on consumerism and caring for self rather than class. Any political intervention has to focus on challenging this – in addressing issues of crime, anti-social behaviour and illiteracy, the IWCA have begun to tackle these issues with more honesty than the rest of us have managed, but there's a lot of work still to be done.

Any anarchist critique of the IWCA has to begin with accepting that their founding documents at least ask the right questions – and those questions are ones which too many supposed class-struggle anarchists have fudged for years.

John Shute

Anti-fascism

Thank you, editors, for printing my complaints about the treatment of David Irving (*Freedom*, 7th August). But before I try to answer your argument, will you allow me to air a couple of grumbles about your response?

You gave my comments the heading 'Anti-anti-fascist'. Not really fair or accurate in what it implies; I have been a passionate anti-fascist since at least the age of fifteen (which is rather a long time ago). You also imply that I advocate "passivity and inaction in the face of oppression." I have done no such thing. (And, incidentally, I don't think Irving was oppressing anybody.)

You still don't explain what you mean by 'crush'. Something along the lines of what you quote Hitler saying would have been the only thing that

would have stopped the Nazis? "If our adversaries ... from the first day had smashed with the utmost brutality the nucleus of our new movement." Are you saying that we should smash up the offices and homes of the BNP, maybe kill a couple of its members? And give Irving a savage beating? And so create martyrs and convince most people that anarchists are indeed what they had always been led to believe, thugs and assassins?

One of the most important factors in Hitler's success was precisely the public insecurity and turbulence resulting from the clashes between the Nazis and those who were trying to 'crush' them. The bulk of the German population longed for order and safety, and by means of skillful propaganda the Nazis were able to make it seem as if the situation was all the fault of the 'reds' and that Hitler's party would bring stability and peace on the streets. (Which of course it did.)

There are several ways of countering fascism, and one of the most important is probably through the trade unions. But violence on the part of anarchists is going to neither increase union membership nor recommend their arguments to those who are already members. Workers inclined to be seduced by the extreme right are not going to be enlightened by thuggery from those on the other side.

Amorey Gethin

Do they work?

In his letter of 7th August, I think Stevey R misunderstands me – probiotic yoghurt is not (necessarily) genetically modified. Nor is GM harmless – enforced monoculture and dependence on corporations for seeds, could potentially lead to a collapse in the global food supply.

Furthermore, in many cases, such as with heroin (diamorphine), it is not the drug which causes harm and misery to "individuals, families and society in general" but anti-drug legislation. Thousands of World War One veterans became addicted to diamorphine in military hospitals and have been prescribed it their whole lives. Not only has this had no significant effect on their physical or mental healths, it has not caused them to go out robbing or prostituting themselves to fund their habit.

As for the claim that the 'war on drugs' and 'war on terrorism' are unrelated, Stevey would do well to look at the US media, where in many places the two are intrinsically linked – particularly with regard to the cartels and paramilitaries of Colombia, and the opium fields of Afghanistan.

Alex Allison

GM

I, like Donald Rooum, find the exchange on GM to be 'repetitive'. This is due, however, to my having to repeat the arguments and facts Donald consistently ignores. He states that he has discussed "dubious arguments agreeing with Michael Meacher," claiming I "repeated Meacher's falsehood that the only non-GM maize field-tested against GM maize was sprayed with atrazine." As Donald knows, this is itself a falsehood. I stated that the GM crops trials were flawed as they used atrazine. As I indicated in a later letter (*Freedom*, 12th June), this simply repeated what was reported in Nature magazine and had nothing to do with Meacher.

That same letter analysed the article from Nature which Donald uses to bolster his case. Significantly, its authors failed to compare the trial results to the "few sites" (all four of them) which used non-triazine pesticides. Rather, they combined results from these along with other trials (including those which used triazine pesticides post-emergence) to produce their highly speculative conclusions. Simply put, even his one reference refused to apply Donald's methodology on this matter. Perhaps unsurprisingly, Donald ignored my analysis in favour of repeating the claim that the trials proved the safety of the crop in question.

In addition to ignoring my analysis of his one piece of evidence in favour of his argument, Donald ignored another significant fact. As I noted, the biotech company in question has refused to allow the crop to be sold if it must be planted in the same conditions under which it was tested. This means that the trials, even if they were not flawed, are meaningless. Donald says that we must be "sure enough for practical purposes." Surely he must agree that for a test to be valid it must reflect the practical way the test subject will be used?

But I am being repetitive. Suffice to say, I feel that most people with an open mind and a scientific bent would agree that to generalise (as the Nature article does not) from a mere four tests (whose growing conditions will be ignored in practice) to prove "that the risk does not exist" is foolish and, more importantly, bad science. Particularly as the long term impact of GM crops is unknown and, almost certainly, non-reversible (another issue Donald refuses to address).

Sadly, Donald's claim that "superstitious people sometimes distort facts to justify their beliefs" seems more applicable to himself in this case.

Iain McKay

Print media

I can't resist responding to Paul-François Tremlett's comment (*Letters*, 10th July) that "I realise print media as we are accustomed to it is dead," especially when it's written in a print media.

Here in Bristol, the collective publishing Bristle magazine, our (nearly) quarterly 40-page independent anarchist mag (a mere £1.50!), have been considering the relevance of our small effort, given the growth of online news sites, discussion groups etc, and in particular the local presence of Bristol Indymedia, which many of us support too.

Our conclusion, to be shortly published in the forthcoming Bristle no.17 special feature on the media, is that print media is indeed still valid. Here's an excerpt from the article *Why We Still Need Alternative Print Media*:

"The appearance of the world wide web has allowed different kinds of news to be spun. It would have been easy to say 'well we're yesterdays news' and leave it at that. But this would have been wrong strategically. Politically these are dismal times, but also times of change, and voices of dissent and resistance through a diversity of media are more important than ever. I hope Bristle maintains the old-fashioned qualities of education, agitation and err, ... organisation.

"It is no coincidence that Bristol and

REVIEW

Partake of some uplifting homegrown grassroots social realism and pass the Skinny Man, recommends Tom Jennings

Probably the most talented UK rap lyricist and performer yet to emerge, SkinnyMan finally releases a full-length album this month – and it's a gem. Council Estate of Mind (Low Life Records) presents an autobiographical odyssey structured around dialogue from the renowned television film *Made In Britain* (director Alan Clarke, 1982). This play followed Tim Roth's delinquent youth through an official 'system' whose callousness, hypocrisy and brutality inevitably produced a vicious anti-social thug. But rather than rehearsing yet another earnest wake-up call to the liberal middle classes ('talking to power' being the traditional reformist agenda of British social realism), Skinny flips the script entirely. Instead he shows how the hardest of hard times can generate an astonishing degree of rebellious imagination, positivity and persistence. These are valuable resources in countering depression, self-hatred and sociopathy, but lead to neither conformist respectability nor resignation to domination (and thus don't figure in 'rehabilitation').

The key to this fortunate phenomenon is an appropriate blend of lower class social environment, solidarity, spirit and stimuli. So, SkinnyMan's distinctive vocal style originated in his upbringing as a white kid embraced by a predominately West Indian neighbourhood in Chapeltown, Leeds. This background is also the root of a natural anarchist philosophy of freedom and expression – plus the crucial understanding that "it's more about embracing the difference rather than being scared of it ..." and the spiritual corollary: "One love, one blood".¹ These reggae influences echo in some of the outstanding musical production courtesy of the likes of newcomer Adam M, DJs Noize and Flip, Stoned Soldiers, and Baby J (for the first single, cautionary crime tale 'I'll Be Surprised') – while the prevailing mood is laid-back hip-hop, in tune with the reflective tenor of the lyrics. The album title, though, refers to the most respected model for the MC as ghetto poet-philosopher – 'New York State Of Mind' by Nas – and rather than Queensbridge, SkinnyMan riffs on his

youthful travails in and around Finsbury Park, London.

On his years of exclusion from school: "It had a great impact on my sense of self in that I had to establish what I thought was relevant to my life out of what school would have provided ... I decided it didn't actually have any relevance". Then, roaming the streets with others like him, "robbing freely off the capitalist conglomerate to clothe and feed ourselves ... The children of the lost generation, free to live and prosper like children in the woods of the concrete jungle." In this sense, "Coming from nothing, having nothing, you've got nothing to lose". Since then, the single-minded intention to shine in music (see 'Life In My Rhymes') – putting in enormous amounts of work and with widespread acclaim from jungle, garage, grime and hip-hop enthusiasts, but without any financial support – has been repeatedly interrupted by time inside for dealing herbal cannabis. "When I'm in prison I just take the time to reflect upon my environment, inspire through my poetry, try reading inspiring literature, just try and stay mentally strong. I think that my imagination is so broad that – no matter what situation of physical containment I'm in – I'm always free and I always will be free".²

The CD's sleeve notes flesh out the album's concerns, describing the despair and hopelessness of contemporary inner city kids: from increasingly bureaucratized and regimented education and sweatshop job training to the withdrawal of facilities for youth; from the disappearance of public housing to increasing poverty and homelessness along with the glamourisation of consumerism; from patterns of policing legitimised by drugs and gun crime hype to spiralling incarceration. All of these phenomena link together in "proving the trade of human custody to be a flourishing business, as if we didn't know that after 400 years of slavery. We still have slavery in place and in effect in the form of the compulsory workforce regimes of many prisons". From focused anger, the conclusions manage to forge hard-won hope, setting an example without being preachy or arrogant: "Showing the justice system



to be failing as a whole leaves us posing the question where is the justice for the youth of today? To whom I now refer to as the children of the lost generation, because for any of the urban youths facing such obstacles whilst still maintaining to inspire for betterment in achieving goals and turning their dreams into reality I give this offering as a token of my appreciation through a 'council estate of mind'."

This articulation of the artist's role is far from the stereotype of a bragging, self-important, loudmouth rapper. Neither is SkinnyMan self-righteous. The message (see 'No Big Ting') oozes

humility and heartfelt warmth towards the communities which have nurtured him ("Community is absolutely essential to me ... [it's] your surroundings [and] ... everything you have amongst you ...") – while fully aware of their and his own shortcomings. But still, "I'd like to say that it is my sound-minded responsibility to ensure the better upbringing of consciousness and righteousness for the next generation".³ And while there have been many gifted individuals, some excellent music and vibrant local scenes in UK hip-hop over the past twenty years (consistently

hampered by the blinkered stupidity of the music industry), it's only recently begun to emerge from various subcultural cul-de-sacs. The quality, passion and conceptual sophistication of Council Estate of Mind is further evidence of its maturity.

www.tomjennings.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk

1. Quotations from interview with Fraksha in UK Hip-Hop (www.ukhh.com).
2. Quoted in James McNally, 'The Real Slim Shady', Hip-Hop Connection, No. 180, July 2004, pages 58-63.
3. Quotations from interview with Nikesh Shukla in UK Hip-Hop.

BOOKS

The State
by Harold Barclay
Freedom Press, £5.50

The state is neither an inevitable, nor natural, phenomenon, but the creation of despots. Its history is a history of power, wealth and tyranny. The immortality of the state is the greatest myth of our society. Harold Barclay explains how a powerful elite has seized complete power of society, through control of agriculture, warfare, trade, labour and other resources. Do we really need the state or should we organise society ourselves?

The Last Capitalist
by Steve Cullen
Freedom Press, £3.50

In this future world, Anne Riordan's particular fancy from the bad old days is the crime fiction of the twentieth century. Here she embarks on a quest through a future Britain of federated communes, as she searches for one particular obstinate refuser known as the Last Capitalist. Readers are drawn into the life of the patient sleuth searching for this hangover from the past, which reveals quite a lot about the shape of the future.

Writings Against Power and Death
by Alex Comfort
Freedom Press, £5.00

Alex Comfort is best known nowadays as the author of the phenomenally successful *Joy of Sex*, but he is also a poet, novelist, critic, doctor, medical biologist, the pioneer of gerontology in Britain, a pacifist – and an anarchist. From the early 1940s he was, for a decade, a prolific, combative and innovative writer on pacifism and anarchism. This collection of Comfort's writings is edited by David Goodway.

Max Stirner's Egoism
by John P. Clark
Freedom Press, £4.50

Whilst agreeing with other critics that Stirner's thought must ultimately be looked upon as process of egoistic enjoyment for the author, here Clark argues that there is no reason to limit one's view of it in this way for there are other dimensions to Stirner's thought besides the aesthetic. This book is aimed at those who wish to consider the coherence, consistency, cogency and defensibility of Stirner's arguments. All available post free from Freedom Press.

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Commentary

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the Southwest are both one of the main hubs of Indymedia, and the home of Bristle. In mutually supportive events such as the community media day, the Bristle Collective co-operates with comrades in Bristol Indymedia. There has also been co-operation with the recent Schnews tour and Dialect Radio. A healthy local independent media springs out of a lively spirit of resistance ... and helps to keep it bristling.

"Here are several reasons why I think a print magazine like Bristle is still worthwhile:

- The printed page is not dead and is unlikely die. After the popularity of Harry Potter and Lyra even people under twenty have started to read again.
 - Unlike virtual news sites Bristle can be read in the work canteen, on the beach, in the bath (without getting electrocuted), on the toilet or on the bus. Not everyone accesses the internet!
 - People read hard copy in a different way from online texts and cognitive differences exist in the way that they understand what they read.
 - Bristle can provide longer, more in-depth articles, to be read and considered at peoples' leisure.
 - Print magazines can have a tangible presence in local communities in a way that online journals don't. They can be sold in shops and venues and street sold at events. Bristle's readership and influence will always be slightly different from Indymedia.
- "It's vital if we are going to develop viable alternatives to the present unsustainable, imploding system that radical ideas are available to everyone ... Despite the growth in online media there is no evidence whatsoever that this has been accompanied by a collapse in newsprint and magazines. Hundreds are on sale and being launched - Zoo and Nuts spring to mind! Corner newsagents are piled high because people still like to read print and see images on paper ..."

I've heard via the likes of Active Distribution that print media sales are down, inferring people don't want to read. But is it the readers, or us? Perhaps we have retreated too far into the virtual world, and lost the benefits of human contact. Perhaps this is indicative of the current state of the movement, opting for the glitzy, easy option on-line, and ignoring the necessity of day to day human interaction and hard work. How many anarchists actually try to sell their publications direct to the public these days? For issue sixteen of Bristle we upped our print run to nearly a thousand, and some comrades made an effort to sell on the streets and at events. We may benefit from the fact we are a regional mag selling locally, but the results have been impressive.

M.H.

G8: crunch time

page 1

summit in Genoa, Italy, the Italian state used armed violence against all protesters, peaceful or not, and Blair and Brown stood by without a murmur.

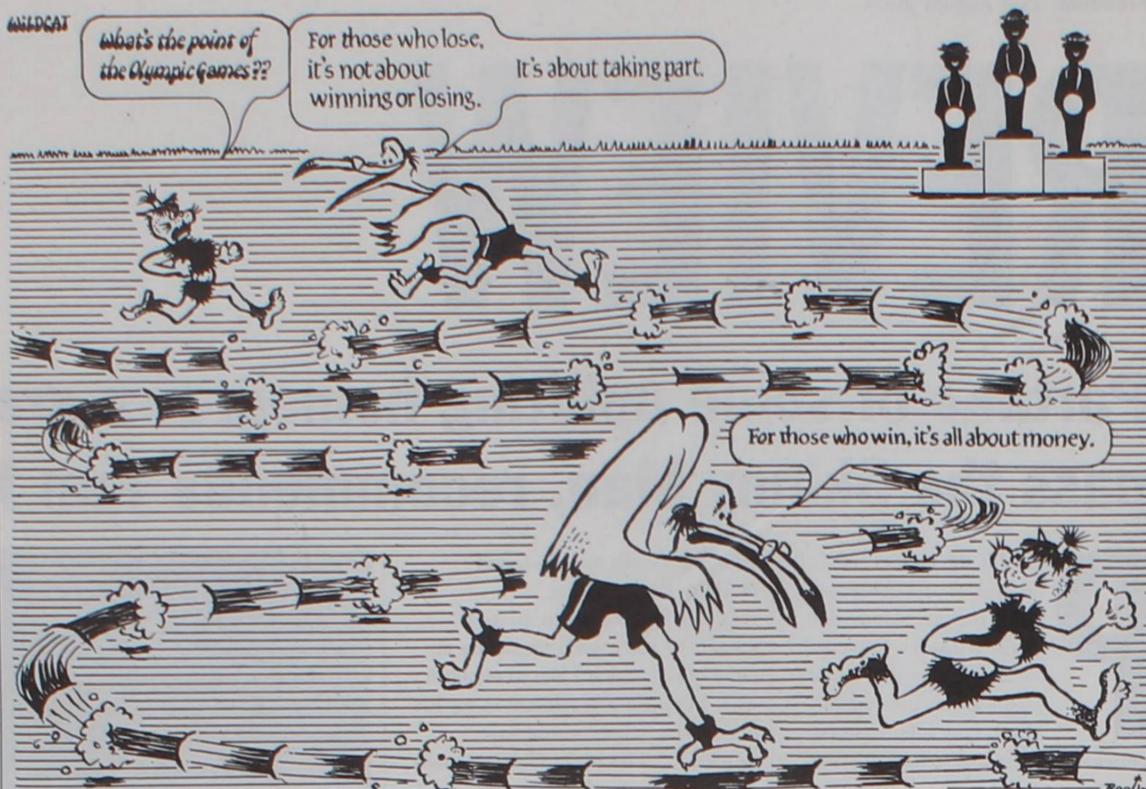
So the liberal bullshit that Gordie and Blair come out with is aimed at weakening and splitting the anti-G8 forces; playing on the hopes and fears of the liberals and dividing us safely into the peaceful, reasonable types, and the violent uncontrollables.

Likewise, many liberals try to divide the Labour government into the mad, imperialist Blairites and the more social justice minded ones like Robin Cook or Claire Short. This ignores the fact that both sections of the Labour Party share a love affair with big business, especially the City of London. During the late 1980s Gordon Brown, John Smith and Mo Mowlam were crucial to old Labour's plans to woo the City. Another false division is that between mad, imperialist States like the USA, and more social justice minded ones like France. It's true that in Sea Island there were arguments between USA and French delegates over how Iraq is to be carved up. However, this was really just an argument among capitalists with very slightly different interests. The French state is just as much eager to extend capitalism's power across the globe as the US or UK state, but wants to make sure that its own companies get a share.

One problem that anarchists will face in mobilising against the G8 in 2005 is that the 'official' opposition will have lots more money. Groups like Oxfam, big trade unions like the GMB all have cash to spare on making publicity and booking meeting rooms. There's a danger that we could get sidelined. On our side is that fact that we're right - there is no useful compromise to make with the G8; we cannot expect anything good from it and the only sincere path is to disrupt it. This should mean that the more people find out about our plans, the more support we'll get. Whether we organise militant actions, mass demonstrations or midnight sabotage, the important thing is that we do so in a revolutionary way - organise using direct democracy in order to get change in there here and now while building up our own power in order to get much more.

• Since this piece was first written a full page advert has been published in The Guardian by several NGOs thanking the UK government for its action against world debt at previous summits. Gordie has thus won a bit of free Labour PR aimed at the government's liberal supporters. However, in a recent newsletter Mark Curtis (now head of the World Development Movement) states that the past few years have seen no real action against third world debt by the rich countries. Unfortunately he still goes on to rally his supporters with the promise that things might be different at the next G8 summit. Just write one more letter and it will all change ...

WILD CAT



A sideways look

Echoing something I've written about here before, there was a report to the Labour Party National Executive at the beginning of this month which made grim reading for them, if not for us. If they take out lapsed memberships, the Labour Party now only has 190,000 members, on a par with when Ramsay MacDonald split Labour in the thirties. It has more than halved since Blair came to power.

Of course, we can't exactly crow - there are nowhere near that many anarchists, but this is a low-water mark for people nominally participating in what might loosely be called 'left' politics. Much ink has flowed to address the alienation of Labour from its traditional activist base, particularly since Iraq. But I think we're seeing something different here: a general disengagement from formal politics. Not because people aren't political or don't care, but because the choices offered by that formal politics don't reflect the choices they face, or, if they do, they are of the Hobson variety.

Responses to this are varied. Many just keep ploughing their usual furrow. The SWP have opted for alliance with communalism, ditching in the process a strong adhesion to the social gains made by women and gays. The Independent Working Class Association have struck out with an agenda indistinguishable from a radical tenants association. Almost every sect on the left is seeing its electoralism as a means to an end, the end in this case being disillusioned trade unions' political funds.

What's interesting is that the Labour Party, with all its resources and the services of top consultancy companies like Price Waterhouse and Accenture, can't come up with anything better. In a barrel-scraping initiative, Home Office

Minister Hazel Blears is proposing that Labour "should seek a new cadre of members by offering those who join the right to attend nationally organised seminars on political ideas." If that doesn't get the pulse racing of any would-be student presidents I don't know what will, phew!

She also wants to find more ways for local people to be involved in running public services - presumably like the local pizza place supplying meals on wheels, the local taxi firm running transport and the local Christian fundamentalist car dealer running schools. (And to show how difficult satire is in modern Britain, at least one of these has really happened).

Talk to people around the Labour Party and you find that Iraq was for many the final straw. They might all be against it, but they have no say. Policy is tightly controlled by the leadership, conferences are just for show and dissenters end up in the political equivalent of the salt mines. It's no surprise that so many of Blair's key allies are people with a background in Leninism (Mandelson, Milburn). Substitute a few boring speeches about nationalisation of the top two hundred monopolies (preferably in a fake Liverpool accent) and you find that New Labour has succeeded where the Militant Tendency failed. They've taken over the Labour Party, bored everyone else senseless and implemented democratic centralism.

If you're reading this in the first place you'll know that there is nothing democratic involved, it's all about centralism.

Is Blair the new Lenin? Mandelson the new Trotsky? I'll leave that one up to you. But it's worth remembering that we're not just against the Blair government for what they do, but also the way they do it.

Svartfrosk

13

Number of construction workers killed in the rush to build infrastructure for the Athens Olympics

3 million

Number of unsold tickets to the Olympics - over half the total number of 5.3 million

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2. What happened to Calderdale Council's race equality committee?
3. Who has been broadcasting since 1981 on 89.4FM?
4. What is the Spanish equivalent of the Kate Sharpley Library?

Answers on page 6

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