

# CEASE FIRE

Newsletter of the Nottingham Student Peace Movement  
Email: sunspm@nottingham.ac.uk

Issue 3 - Dec 2004  
Printing Cost 40p

Website su.nottingham.ac.uk/~nspm

The Peace Movement presents

## THE PEACE CONFERENCE

A ONE-DAY EVENT TO RAISE AWARENESS,  
ENGAGE IN DEBATE AND DISCUSS SOLUTIONS

### When and Where?

Mid-February (around Sunday the 13<sup>th</sup>), Portland Building (tbc)

### SESSIONS

#### WHAT'S OIL GOT TO DO WITH IT?

(Environmental issues and the Iraq war)

#### IN THE SHADOW OF THE WAR ON TERROR

(How civil liberties and rights are being affected in the UK)

#### WHAT ARE WE GOING TO DO ABOUT IT?

(Discussing potential solutions to conflict)

## CEASEFIRE

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Ceasefiremag@yahoo.co.uk

## Peace in Poetry

Clarissa Hughes-Parker

### Morning Lecture

Why bother with clumsy

Love when Hate is

So easy?

Why build a dream when

Greed's gravity rebels

Against every tired brick?

But breathing is so simple

When time is on your side

Words are melting pebbles

In this crimson maze of clouds

And yes this morning

We believe in healing

And in rebelling

Against... the rebellion

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## Election Time: Genuine Breakthrough or PR nonsense?

Hisham Yezza

So. George Bush, despite or perhaps because of the valiant /appalling campaigning of the Michael Moore brigade has been re-elected and four more years of smirking and swaggering are set to follow. Maybe Dubbya was right after all, maybe he had been "misunderestimated".

Now that we know what the head is going to look like, let us inspect the footprints: In Iraq, the assault on Fallujah has been ruthless and hundreds to thousands of civilians (depending on who you ask) have perished as a result. The US government and its Iraqi franchise have declared that all 200.000 of inhabitants had left the town before the attack. Not only is this statement laughably unlikely but un-provable and uncheckable anyway. Indeed, extensive media coverage on the civilian casualties has put to rest the myth that only "militants" had been killed, many civilians either didn't want to leave or were unable to do so and the difficulties the medical and humanitarian aid agencies are finding in getting to Fallujah at this very moment are an indication of how hard movement in and out of that city has been for weeks now. It is clear that the elections are being pursued mostly as a media exercise for the consumption of western audiences, despite the very clear lack of preparation on the ground the US leadership is determined to have the headlines it wants come January. Many Iraqis are genuinely keen on holding elections but are not encouraged by the US's blatant arm-twisting tactics (newspaper closures, political arrests and intimidations) to ensure that the "right" leadership is elected in Iraq. George Bush has no time for an Iraqi leadership whose main priority is the welfare and future of the Iraqi people because that would come in direct conflict with too many American interests (business or otherwise) and that's not what Neocons had in mind when they drew the invasion blueprints now is it?.

In occupied Palestine, President Arafat's death has been seen by many as a chance for a less charismatic and thus weaker leader to emerge who would be more willing to toe the Israeli line on central issues such as the Inalienable right of Palestinian refugees to return to their homeland or to the question of dismantling the countless illegal settlements that Israeli governments have been building on Palestinian lands for decades, the January elections in occupied Palestine will be a test of whether the Palestinian cause will continue to be the object of endless yoying between world powers or a show of unity and resistance in the face of occupation, only a leadership determined to achieve a lasting peace through co-existence based on justice can truly deliver it. As with so much in politics, whether these elections will prove to be genuine landmarks or yet another hyped-up exercise in make-belief remains to be seen.

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Arafat and the ambassador: Beyond the cliches

Debate: Will Marching Lead us anywhere?

Political Prisoners: Stop the execution of Tenzin Delek

Electoral sham in Uzbekistan

Anyone remembers Haiti?

...and more



## DISHONOUR AMONG THIEVES

Richard Hindes

The Chagos Archipelago is a chain of coral islands in the Indian Ocean, approximately halfway between Africa and Indonesia, seven degrees south of the equator. The climate is hot and humid, but tempered by sea breezes. The soil is fertile and the surrounding sea, rich in fish. The islands were known to Arab seafarers in the early century, but "discovered" by the Portuguese in the 16<sup>th</sup> Century. Although they didn't settle it, they did give Diego Garcia, the largest island, the name it still holds. The island was settled by French colonists in 1776 and remained populated for the next two-hundred years. Today, however, the population are gone and in their place stands a US military base on Diego Garcia used in the bombing of Afghanistan and Iraq. How this state of affairs came about is nothing short of a scandal and worthy of far greater comment than it usually attracts. That the story is largely unknown, even among those critical of Western foreign policy, is testament perhaps to the servility of the dominant media in the US and UK to the interests of power. Fortunately there are some who are prepared to speak up about the story. Among them, veteran investigative journalist and perennial irritant of the powerful, John Pilger who's documentary on the issue, "Stealing A Nation," was shown on ITV1 recently. This will hopefully help to raise people's awareness of the issue. The archipelago belongs to the UK and was retained when Mauritius became independent, by its incorporation into the British Indian Ocean Territory

(BIOT). This was done, because of an agreement between the US and UK that Diego Garcia would be made available to the US for a base. Additionally the US wanted the island and the archipelago "swept and sanitised", which meant that the 2,000 people living there had to be forced from their homes. Some found themselves unable to return to the islands after making visits to Mauritius, others were told that they might be bombed, others were simply loaded onto ships and taken to a prison on the Seychelles, now demolished. One particularly affecting episode saw the 1,000 pet dogs on the island gassed by US military personnel, using exhaust fumes from their vehicles. The implicit message being that if the islanders did not leave, the same would happen to them. Alongside the removal of the population, there were extensive machinations on the part of Foreign Office mandarins to ensure the whole affair was kept secret. Much of this effort was centred around promulgating the idea that the Chagossians were not a settled population, but rather transient labourers, which they knew to be untrue. Lawyer for the islanders Richard Gifford opines that all they were concerned about was that they might be caught, the effect on the people who they had exiled was essentially irrelevant. One former official, interviewed by Pilger in the course of his documentary, seeks to defend a (now deceased) colleague who described the islanders in a memo as "a few Tarzans and Man Fridays," by explaining that he would not have written such a thing if he

had known it would enter the public domain. Most of the population ended up living in Mauritius where many died as a result of the poverty which they found themselves in, or because of "sadness". Rates of suicide, alcoholism and drug use were chronic and conditions have improved little in the years since their exile began. Pilger visited a family who had been filmed in 1982 living in abject poverty with 25 sleeping in shifts in one room. Twenty-two years later he finds them in the same house, in much the same conditions.

Despite their dire situation, the Chagossians have not given up and continue to fight for the right to return to their homes. In November 2000 they won a major victory in the High Court, which ruled that the expulsion of the islanders was illegal. The case also brought to light many files revealing the truth behind the expulsions. As a result of the ruling, the order expelling them from their homes had to be rewritten, allowing the islanders the right to resettle on the islands. The UK Government, however, insisted that treaty obligations with the US meant that Diego Garcia itself had to be excluded from resettlement.

In June of this year, the government went even further, introducing two Orders in Council which prevented anyone from setting foot on the Chagos Islands. Orders in Council are a crown power and allow the government to enact law without any democratic oversight. Pilger comments that dictatorships operate in a similar fashion, albeit without the "quaint ritual".

A number of islanders have also travelled to the UK in the hope that they will be able to find a better life here. They all have British citizenship and argue that the government should either allow them to return home or support them in moving to and settling in the UK. On November 3, around 80 islanders protested outside Downing Street making this very demand. They held banners demanding, "If You Can't Support Us Send Us Back To Diego Garcia", "Give Us Back Our Dignity" and "Stop Your Hypocrisy, Prime Minister". On that day and the next there were adjournment debates in Parliament about the treatment of the islanders. It appears from these that the government has no intention of providing support for the Chagossians who have come to the UK, leaving this to already overstretched councils.

The treatment of the islanders has been nothing short of contemptible. While the population affected is relatively small (there were some 2,000 islanders at the time of their expulsion while the community now numbers around 4,500) this takes nothing away from the immorality of what has been done to them. No-one would argue that the murder of Kenneth Bigley was acceptable because he was only one person. The crime is real and continues today, it also facilitates further crimes such as the illegal invasion of Iraq. For these reasons we should do all we can to see the base on Diego Garcia closed and the islanders returned to the island, with suitable compensation for their treatment. Achieving this will not be easy, but it is not impossible. It is only by doing nothing that we guarantee nothing will change.

## EDITORIAL

Hish Yezza

Welcome to the last issue of Ceasefire for 2004, in this edition you will find a nice selection of articles about topics that vary from animal rights to Tibetan political prisoners, from an interview about Arafat with a former British ambassador to articles about the current state of the world in Uzbekistan and Haiti. January 2005 will prove to be a pivotal moment in the geopolitical history of this nascent century. By then we would know the result of the Ukrainian elections and we will presumably witness elections taking place in occupied Iraq and in occupied Palestine.

Closer to home, the coming general election might prove a litmus test for Blair. Although it is unlikely that labour will lose the election, mainly thanks to the toothless lacklustre opposition the Tories have presented, the anti-war movement has an excellent opportunity to campaign for a nationwide electoral boycott of all MPs who voted for military action.

This might seem rather beside the point (or even pointless some pedants might retort) but the truth is one of the main reasons Blair still succeeded in taking the country to war was the collusion of a big chunk of parliament. MPs voted for the war knowing very well all the popular wrath was going to be directed (as turned out to be the case) against Tony Blair himself. In effect, the anti-war movement's strategy, which clearly promoted the idea that Blair was almost solely in charge has not been a wise one.

Blair is himself quite untouchable, he is still viewed by his fellow party colleagues as an asset because most of the media has portrayed his stance either as a heroic principled action against tyranny and terrorism or a genuinely well intentioned project unfortunately based on false intelligence. Either way, Blair was shown to be the good guy.

So what now? Here in Nottingham, the peace movement continues its effort to raise awareness about issues that concern us all. Not only Iraq but also Occupied Palestine, Sudan, Diego Garcia, The Ukraine, Tibet, the fight for the environment, the fight against AIDS and third-world famine, the struggle for democracy and for human rights.

We are currently organising a one-day Peace Conference which will be held sometime in mid-February and which will hope to address a vast array of issues and topics, please stay on the look out for details. Several high-profile Speakers have been invited and hopefully confirmed and we look forward to a massive level of attendance and interest. As always, our website is an excellent resource for all news regarding the Peace Movement so do check it regularly, please do not be a bystander, email us your thoughts and your articles and join the debate about the ideas that matter to us all. **Peace.**

Please send in your articles, photos and cartoons for submission to [ceasefiremag@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:ceasefiremag@yahoo.co.uk).



## One truth or many? Dan Robertson

On Friday [26<sup>th</sup> Nov] NSPM held an event entitled Race, Peace, and Justice, with a panel of distinguished and interesting speakers on the subject. Whilst I enjoyed the opportunity to discuss the immensely important issue of race, and how it is centrally important to any visions of peace we might have, I found that the shift of attention towards religion instigated by some of the speakers raised some interesting questions that were not addressed on the night.

Dr. Azzam Tamimi, a prominent Islamic political thinker, was particularly keen to embrace Islam as the one and only path towards peace and racial unity. Whilst his vision of a single people united in the worship of God was certainly a striking and noble one, his behaviour and values appeared to contradict these stated aims. Almost in the same breath Dr. Tamimi's speech moved from the stirring imagery of people of all nations, colours and classes united in prayer at the Haj, to xenophobia and thinly disguised racism. Americans were people with "very little knowledge about their own history" to him, and the Jews of Israel and beyond were consistently referred to in derogatory terms. Perhaps the latter is unsurprising. Dr. Tamimi is a Palestinian, hailing from Hebron, and like all the people of that nation has had to endure the immense hardships of Israeli occupation of Palestinian lands. However his hatred, as this was what it seemed to be to me, did not sit well with his ideal of one indivisible people of God.

Another dangerous idea that I felt Dr. Tamimi propagated was that Islam was the only religion

with ideals of racial and social equality. Christians and Jews were dismissed as "not knowing what their religion is any more", and self-declared "chosen people of God" respectively, whilst Dr. Tamimi seemed either unaware of the existence of other belief systems, or thought them unworthy of consideration. This is clearly not the case. From my own experience of Buddhism, I know that this belief system considers the self to be an illusion, and all sentient beings (including animals and denizens of spirit worlds) are considered worthy and capable of enlightenment. The vows of a Bodhisattva, one committed to take the path of a Buddha, are to work towards the attainment of enlightenment by all these beings with no specifications of race and social class. Other religious viewpoints are similarly open. I have heard a Hindu philosophy where ultimate truth is considered to be similar to the centre of a circle, with all religious paths leading from different points on its perimeter to that centre. No such acceptance of other paths and peoples seemed forthcoming from Dr. Tamimi.

Another of Dr. Tamimi's theses was that western culture was corrupt because we no longer feared God. Because we no longer believe in, and consequently no longer fear Hell, we will do anything that we can get away with. The idea that we should act out of a continual fear of a wrathful God seemed particularly at odds with any inclusive and positive society that I have ever imagined. What about just doing things because you think they will bring good to other people? What about

avoiding doing bad things out of a sense of personal responsibility, not just because you're afraid that you might get devoured by flames in the afterlife? The universe that Dr. Tamimi seemed keen that we should embrace seemed imbued with authoritarianism and oppression. I was reminded of Jeremy Bentham's proposal for a Panopticon prison, where the prisoner is kept forcibly in line out of fear of the all-seeing eye of the prison guard. I am at a loss to imagine how anyone could feel at peace with the terrifying fear of punishment constantly imminent.

These thoughts reminded me of the great promise and great flaws of religious belief. On the one hand the image of a diverse body of people coming together in worship of the common good is incredibly inspiring, and a reminder of the great sense of unity that it is possible to obtain through a common religion. On the other hand, anyone who thinks that they have a monopoly on the truth is living in delusion as far as I am concerned, especially where this explicitly contradicts the ideals of unity that they claim to espouse. We want a world with a multitude of different paths, of different truths, where any human being is free to work towards their chosen truth in the manner that they choose, or not at all if that is their choice. We should all endeavour to learn from one another, and work together for our collective good. It is only then that we can really start to function as one human race.

## NEWS

Compiled by Dan Robertson

### GUANTÁNAMO TORTURE

The International Committee of the Red Cross has charged in confidential reports to the United States government that the American military has intentionally used psychological and sometimes physical coercion "tantamount to torture" on prisoners at Guantánamo Bay. Doctors and medical personnel conveyed information about prisoners' mental health and vulnerabilities to interrogators, the report said.

The report of the June visit said investigators had found a system devised to break the will of the prisoners at Guantánamo, who now number about 550, and make them wholly dependent on their interrogators through "humiliating acts, solitary confinement, temperature extremes, use of forced positions." Investigators said that the methods used were increasingly "more refined and repressive" than learned about on previous visits.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2004/11/30/politics/30gitmo.html>

### FALLUJAH: THE DAY AFTER

According to a recent United Nations news report, approximately 70 percent of the houses and shops of Fallujah were destroyed in the recent assault. Firdoos al-Abadi, a spokesperson for the Iraqi Red Crescent Society (ICRS), said that most of the children in Fallujah were sick and in need of urgent medical help. Injured people stuck in their homes were unable to get help as the ICRS was not allowed to distribute food due to security issues and they were not able to move to the centre for supplies. "It is not only a health need, it is also a psychological

need to have someone to talk to when you are surrounded by dead bodies. Some people have been subjected to trauma," al-Abadi explained. "My nephew cries every night asking God to take him with the angels, so he doesn't have to hear the horrible explosions anymore," Salsam Omar, a resident of Fallujah said.

The Daily Mirror (quoted by Mike Whitney in a Znet article) has also reported that "US troops are secretly using outlawed napalm gas to wipe out remaining insurgents in and around Fallujah." Tony Blair is being pressed by angry MPs to reveal whether he knew about the use of this banned weapon. The 'new' napalm, which the US has admitted it used during the siege of Baghdad, is said to chemically differ from the traditional weapon to "decrease environmental damage"!!! In addition, Iraqi doctors have noted that many of the bodies they have examined have been "swollen, yellowish and have no smell." Asia Times online has reported that "Americans used chemical weapons in the bombing of Jolan, ash-Shuhada and al-Jubayl neighborhoods".

[www.irinnews.org](http://www.irinnews.org)

[www.zmag.org](http://www.zmag.org)

### DISPROPORTIONATE USE OF FIREPOWER?

The French government has admitted that its soldiers in Cote d'Ivoire killed "about 20" people in Abidjan last month when they fired into angry crowds of supporters of President Laurent Gbagbo. French TV station Canal Plus aired images of French helicopters firing canon rounds to try and clear crowds of anti-French demonstrators. "Firing like this upon civilians who are

not carrying fire arms far exceeds what is required to maintain order and indeed the mandate of the French armed forces," said the International Federation of Human Rights (FIDH), "We cannot remain silent about these events or minimise their importance." ([irinnews.org](http://irinnews.org))

### PEACE STUDIES PROFESSOR VICTIM OF RIGHT-WING WITCH-HUNT

Ball State University professor George Wolfe, director of the university's centre for peace and conflict studies, is being accused by notorious conservative author, commentator David Horowitz of hating America and supporting terrorism. "There are 250 peace studies programs in America like the one at Ball State," Horowitz wrote on his website "They teach students to identify with America's terrorist enemies and to identify America as a Great Satan oppressing the world's poor and causing them to go hungry."

Wolfe called the charges "absurd" and "shameful", and added, "The restraint of anger is the antithesis of being a terrorist. So if anything, what we are doing is creating understanding and disseminating knowledge to prevent terrorism rather than fomenting it."

### CASH CONVERTERS (Schnews.org)

- Money raised by first Band Aid single: **£9.5 million.**
- Sub-Saharan Africa's debt: **\$256 Billion**
- Security budget for the 2005 G8 summit in Scotland (where Blair reckons Africa will top the agenda): **£150 Million.**
- Cost of Iraq war so far to UK taxpayer: **£8 Billion.**



## The Ceasefire Debate: Will marching lead us anywhere?

Catherine Taylor & Hich Yezza

### ESFailure?

I'm constantly struck by the huge importance of social and environmental issues. And I'm constantly struck by the general public's ignorance or apathy towards them. I'm not saying everyone should dedicate their lives to campaigning, but I do think the 'common man' can and should do more. We just need to work out how we can mobilise him.

I went to the ESF last month, but I didn't march. I didn't march because, frankly, I wasn't sure what we were marching for. The ESF handout claimed it was a protest against war, racism, fascism, capitalism etc. etc. Generally speaking, I'm opposed to all these things, but I feel that vague, blanket protests such as this can be counterproductive.

Demonstrations can be enormously effective in alerting the public and government to the extent of opposition to specific situations or government actions. But when people protest about everything, it just tells the general public that there are x number of commie tree-huggers, and that's what we are to the rest of society. Until we change this perception of us it will continue to be difficult, if not impossible, to garner support for causes that really deserve it. I fear that too much protesting, especially umbrella protests, just put the whole social/environmental justice movement at odds with the rest of society.

There was a lot of talk of solidarity at the ESF. Of course, we should show solidarity with the Palestinians, the Burmese, the Sudanese, the Tibetans etc. however, solidarity is a loaded, emotive word. To many people it suggests a unification of beliefs; an ideological grouping. This is not the sense in which the word is usually used, but I fear it is the sense in which much of the average population usually interprets it. I, personally, sometimes feel uncomfortable joining groups or organisations because I worry they will hold a belief which I don't. I think this is part of the reason why most people today are not politically active: they don't want to sign up to all of a group's

beliefs. It's one thing to oppose the war on Iraq, and another to oppose continuing foreign presence there. These issues can be delicate, and everyone is entitled to disagree about them. The marches against the war in Iraq were attended by a wide variety of people. From what I did see of the protest at the ESF, there appeared to be less variety. Not to mention less quantity.

I am not suggesting we 'assimilate'. We needn't compromise our beliefs to make us more accessible to the mainstream. However, I am suggesting tolerance, and more importantly understanding, of the more conservative sectors of society and the average non-political man. We must accept that people will agree with us on some things and not on others. And we can find solidarity on specific injustices without needing solidarity on everything.

We need these people if we are to show the government that society, not just a section of society is opposed to things it does. We can change the world. We cannot do it on our own.

### ESFuture?

Marching can very often be a rather tedious and painful experience, as someone who has taken part in some rather dishearteningly small marches as well as some annoyingly chaotic ones, I have often wondered whether the whole concept was rather out of date and out of steam. Indeed, there were many times when marchers (often quiet cute nuclear families on a citizenship-asserting day-out) found themselves completely in shock at what some of their fellow protesters were chanting or shouting (or burning, or swearing) and it was then that you could see that being against the war in Iraq provided little guarantee that views on other subjects would necessarily be similar or even close.

This obviously poses a problem, how can you express your political views without being trapped in someone else's agenda? How can you help what you believe to be a worthy cause without having your presence and your moral vote hijacked by organisations you didn't even know existed let alone

claimed you as a sympathiser?

The short answer is simply that you can't really do much about who else turns up next to you at a march and what their particular set of views and opinions (however bigoted or open-minded) will be. But you have to accept that a trade-off is needed between volume and clarity of message. The more narrow and clearly-stipulated the declared aim of a particular march is (say for attacking Iraq only if a second UN resolution is passed and the Inspectors confirm categorically that WMDs have been found) the less people will turn up. The fact that Freedom for Palestine was a prominent co-message of the anti-war protests is no accident but a clear attempt to mobilize all segments of the anti-imperialism majority of the population.

Does this mean protesting or marching or holding dull dry seminar after dull dry seminar on the predicted impact of participatory economics on cocoa trade in West Africa is something not worth doing?, of course not. Does it mean we should attempt to reach out to the mainstream and try to understand as well as deal with all the misunderstandings and misconceptions that social justice activism is often the victim of? by all means.

The ESF and similar ventures are an imperfect but nonetheless valiant effort on behalf of a wide variety of people and movements attempting to reach a critical mass that would one day translate into a policy shaping force. It's true that it is often pervaded by a lot of self-righteous self-serving preaching which might irritate and infuriate mainstream audiences. But this is something that could be ironed out and dealt with gradually as the generation currently breathing fire into the movement grows older and wiser and gains more knowledge and as a result more humility.

It is therefore essential that self-criticism and self-examination are at the forefront of the social justice agenda. Sinking into the false comfort of the holier-than-thou mindset which, unfortunately, is increasingly happening to many "leaders" of the movement is something that should be fought and addressed if we are serious about maintaining the movement's relevance.

## The Haiti Crisis: Imperialism strikes again!

Andy Robinson

The Iraq war has been covered extensively, but misleadingly, in the media, but America's and the West's other extensive military interventions in the same period have been largely ignored. In addition to the Iraq war and the ongoing guerrilla war in Afghanistan, America now has a direct military presence in numerous other countries including Colombia, the Phillipines and Pakistan. In Haiti, the US force is part of a UN force which is, however, largely under US leadership. The force entered the country following a coup, and is now holding up the existing regime.

The coup followed from a rebellion in the north of the country by what the media calls "rebels" or the "opposition". It was basically a rebellion by paramilitary forces connected to the police-state apparatus of previous dictatorships in Haiti. The country, one of the world's poorest, has spent most of its existence under brutal tyrannies, but has been a democracy for the last decade or so, after a refugee crisis prompted America to stop supporting an especially brutal regime in order to curb the flow of Haitians to America. The President, Jean-Bertrand Aristide, was a moderate reformer. His measures did little to help the poor, and Haiti remained popular among sweatshop owners, but he did enough for the poor that he was, and remains, immensely popular in Haiti's slums and shanty-towns. The US refused to consider him a legitimate president on the basis of the refusal of the opposition to stand in elections. But this was clearly in the opposition's interest, as polls suggest Aristide would have won by a landslide. By remaining on the sidelines, the opposition could help concoct an image of Haiti as a tyranny, ruled by Aristide's supporters and goons. Although misleading, this image has got a lot of coverage in the western media.

When a rebellion broke out, America and other countries sent troops, ostensibly as peacekeepers, but in fact to support the rebellion. As the rebels were about to storm the capital, Aristide mysteriously disappeared and stepped down. It was later revealed that he had been abducted by the CIA and spirited out of the country. This ensured a swift military victory for the rebels, who are now the ruling power in Haiti.

Immediately, the new regime, with US support, put in place a regime of terror against suspected opponents. Reports are coming out of Haiti of death squads roaming the streets, asking people if they support the regime and shooting them if they say no. Opposition leaders and grassroots activists have been rounded up in huge numbers, and popular demonstrations are brutally repressed. All of this is carried out with the support and connivance of US and UN forces, who even help carry out some of the arrests. In one incident this summer, for instance, US troops stormed the house of a prominent Aristide supporter, and, finding the supporter not at home, took the family hostage until he handed himself in. In another incident last month, US forces stormed a radio station to arrest a Haitian MP who was being interviewed.

A major uprising broke out in October, after regime forces opened fire on peaceful protesters. The uprising, focused in the shanty-towns, is supposed to have taken the Iraqi resistance as a model, and the western media was awash with reports of beheadings, although observers on the ground question whether these were the work of the resisters or the regime. What was not so well covered was the brutal repression which followed the uprising, during which some sources estimate that hundreds were killed and many more arrested. Again, the US and UN forces were at the

forefront of the operation, spearheading the military actions to take control of the shanty-towns. In the meantime, workers' rights, always a problem in Haiti, are under attack to an unprecedented degree, with attempts being made to break the nascent trade union movement in the sweatshops. On one occasion, sweatshop owners of the Grupo M chain, which produces consumer goods for companies such as Levi's, hired troops from the neighbouring Dominican Republic to evict workers sacked from a factory.

In short, American and UN troops are acting as the special forces of a brutal military dictatorship which took power by overthrowing a popular elected president. They are backing up a regime which is involved in gross human rights violations and attacks on the population. It is disgusting, if not entirely surprising, that western forces are being used in this way, and it confirms that the current world system is based on the violent subordination of the global poor – the main reason for repeated military interventions by western powers. Peace activists should campaign against this intervention and call for a withdrawal of support for the military regime, while at the same time supporting popular organising efforts such as the unionisation of the sweatshops.

*The author is currently a research student at Nottingham University's Politics School.*

#### Further information and contacts:

Haiti Support Group – the main Haiti solidarity group in Britain

<http://haitisupport.gn.apc.org/>

Haiti Action Committee – campaigning group which provides regular action bulletins <http://www.haitiaction.net/>

No Sweat – campaign against sweatshops and for unionisation of workers <http://www.nosweat.org.uk/>



## Direct Local Democracy (Part 2)

Andy Burrell

...Continued from previous issue

Many people often dream of a day when a party like the Greens will win the general election and the Prime Minister will have long hair and wear tie-dye t-shirts. This of course would be a fantastic thing but perhaps not quite as fantastic as we might hope. The problem is that any government is still confined by the international organisations that are dominated by the wealthy industrialised countries. Radical governments have been elected into power across the globe, but often precious little changes as they are shackled by debt, economic planning and bullying by the international community. This can be seen in South Africa and more recently in Brazil, each of which had a popular radical party voted into power, and both of whom had to accept largely neo-conservative economic policies dictated by the international economic institutions.

This lack of real power to choose seems endemic in representational democracies, a clear example of which was the recent US elections. Kerry and Bush were very similar in the large majority of their policies and in effect very little would have changed if Kerry had won the election. The problem is that governments must deliver a growing economy, and thus growth is seen as an end in itself. Often the way to achieve this is a one-size fits all economic policy.

Now leaving the pro's and con's of neo-conservative economics aside, the point I want to highlight is that even with a massive mobilization of voters in a country in order to elect a radical government, the decisions that will effect THEIR lives are still all too often taken by people far away, with little to no knowledge of their local community. Say what you want of this but it is definitely NOT democracy.

So the area where we can truly regain a political say and resurrect a form of democracy is, I believe, on the local level. It is on this level where we can be the most pro-active and make positive decisions rather than just reacting against bad ones. It is also where we can affect the most change

and have the biggest influence. This includes things that aren't overtly democratic decision-making bodies, like volunteering for example. Many of these activities contribute to a network of people and resources that falls largely outside the capitalist system of markets and co-modification. It can often be a form of dissent but most importantly is pro-active and gives examples of how things can work. We all know examples of community projects that are greatly beneficial to the people affected by them.

As far as the issue of democracy is concerned, local decision-making bodies are vital. At the moment most local decisions of any importance are made by centralised professional politicians, and not by the community that they affect. Obviously a major overhaul of local decision-making is not imminent, but the desirability of local decisions made by local people seems apparent. The main area where this can be affected now is in local projects and groups.

On a purely practical level, as regards getting involved in Nottingham, it must be said that Nottingham does not have a vibrant scene of political dissent and public assembly decision-making bodies, etc. As students we face the extra problem of only being temporary residents in the community and can perhaps feel like guests. So for those of you not involved in any activities I would urge you to get involved in some way. This is not purely because the world is in such a bad state that it needs you, but because by being passive you relinquish control over many areas of your life to centralised bodies. Movements need people and democratic movements need a lot of people so, to those involved in various activities, we need to be as open and welcoming as possible. Going to meetings for the first time can be intimidating and we need to welcome people and include them in the decision making process not have committees that do it all themselves. We need to join with local people, link our various efforts collectively in an organised manner and make proactive decisions so that we can start having an impact on things that affect us directly.

Trying to empower ourselves is of paramount importance; the process of HOW this is done is equally important. Democracy is, of course, vitally important but the idea of democracy must go right to the top. Presidents and leaders can make for easy decisions but equally can exclude people from the decision making process or from getting involved at all! It is too often the case that when someone wants to get involved the only place for them is outside the decision making clique as a foot soldier so to speak. Addressing this problem requires organisation and effort but it must be taken seriously as it is essentially the blueprint of what many of us want on a larger scale, i.e. more involvement from a lower level concerning the larger decisions. If a project or society relies too heavily on one person then with their removal can come the downfall of the project, it also may run a danger of being the vision of just one person which in a community orientated project may not be the right vision or could at least be improved upon. Lack of organisation in order to delegate and assuming people's incompetence are two common problems. Equally, people's reluctance to take on responsibility can be a problem. But co-operatives and committees do work and, as we see so often on a large scale, are far preferable to a centralised (and often self-interested) decision making body.

So what I want to impress upon you is not that there are serious flaws in democracy, and changes that are needed. I take it for granted that the majority of you reading this will agree that, even if the degree of desired change varies from person to person. What I do want to impress upon you is that the most important area of change is on the local level, and that in trying to affect change you go about it in a way that you would ideally like to see the larger picture. Hopefully you envision this as consisting of bodies that are open and welcoming, with as directly-democratic decision making processes and as broad a hierarchy as possible.

*The first part of this article can be found in the previous edition of ceasefire or on our website [www.su.nottingham.ac.uk/~nspm](http://www.su.nottingham.ac.uk/~nspm)*

## Pain is Pain Dominic Wong

Animals may or may not have rights, but rights are not the only issue. Humans have rights that are ignored and violated all the time. The question is how to live. If you believe that we have created rights because we have morals, than we must live by them. Part of the moral code we strive for is to give equal consideration to all beings. Once we consider an animal fully we then realize that we should treat them with respect and as individuals.

A common argument why animals don't deserve rights is that they are not as intelligent as humans, therefore cannot comprehend these rights. If so, what about humans with developmental disabilities? Should mentally disabled people that have lower mental capacities than pigs, and have no prospect of gaining those faculties, be eaten, used for their parts, caged, tortured and tested on. The answer is no.

The philosophy of equal consideration as argued by Peter Singer illustrates the difference between the rights that exist. It is not equal rights that I am arguing for: obviously a cow does not have the right to drive a car or purchase property because it will be incapable of doing so. But has the right to equal consideration. This means that when we consider the interest of each individual separately. A cow may have an interest in not having its child taken away at birth, it may have a right to keep its child. It may also have an interest in not being murdered or tortured. When we weigh these interests against ours we can argue that the cow's interest in not being murdered takes precedence over our interest in having a steak for dinner.

Some may argue that in nature animals are hunted and killed all the time. Likewise humans can be hunted and killed by animals or other humans without a thought about our rights. This does not mean, however, that we should voluntarily subject ourselves to this, especially not unnecessarily. We make a weak claim when we say animals kill each other therefore we should too. The fact that we know better makes us morally bound to not inflict pain on others; it is the responsibility that comes with our knowledge. Furthermore it may be a necessity for some animals to eat other animals and it is not possible to argue that one should do something if

they in fact cannot do it, and vice versa. However it is certainly not a necessity for us to kill animals.

Pain is pain. The bottom line is that animals can feel pain, and as sentient beings they do not deserve to be subjected to this pain if it can be avoided, just as we do not deserve to be subjected to pain unnecessarily. Not just physical pain, but emotional pain, as intelligent creatures some animals can be traumatized by their treatment and socialization, we must recognize this.

Non-human animals (because humans are animals as well) are subjected to disgusting tests like the LD50 where the aim of the experiment is to determine the dosage at which the test substance will kill half the animals in the study. The Draize eye irritancy test, which can last up to three weeks, causes suffering as dangerous substances are poured into rabbits' eyes and left to fester. Injection studies, immersion tests, inhalation tests, dermal toxicity tests are some of the others and in none of these tests are the animals given pain killers of any sort as to not disrupt the accuracy of the study.

When animals are subjected to pain they cry out, they try to escape, they make the same reactions that we do because they feel a comparable sensation. Some people try to deny that animals feel pain, but if these animals have organs and nervous systems so similar to ours that they can be used as substitutes for human tests, then why is it not obvious that they would feel the same pain as ours? Animals do feel pain. Some animals have sharper senses than our own, like a dog's sense of hearing or a shark's tactile sensitivity, meaning that they may feel even more pain than us for a particular stimulus.

I would rather see these tests performed on meaningfully consenting humans than on non-consensual victims. By the same reason, animals do not consent to be eaten, and furthermore do not need to be eaten by us.

As Jeremy Bentham put it, "The question is not, can they reason? Nor can they talk? But, can they suffer". Animals should be treated as ends in themselves, and not as means to our ends. They should also be given the same consideration that we would give to anybody else.

## Stop the execution of Tenzin Delek

Rosie Ellis



Imagine being arrested and thrown into prison for a crime you did not commit. Imagine being sentenced to death with the knowledge that your only fault was an attempt to rebuild the life of your shattered community. Imagine having your most fundamental human rights violated and not being able to do anything about it.

For more than 10 years Tenzin Delek Rinpoche worked tirelessly to try to develop social, medical, educational and religious provisions for impoverished Tibetan communities. Communities that have been impoverished by the occupation of the Chinese for more than half a century.

In April 2002 Tenzin was arrested along with Lobsang Dhondup accused of involvement in bombings and inciting a Tibetan uprising. Lobsang has since been executed and Tenzin awaits a 2 year suspended death sentence. There is no credible evidence supporting claims made against Tenzin and at the time of arrest both were denied access to an independent lawyer and neither received a fair or open trial.

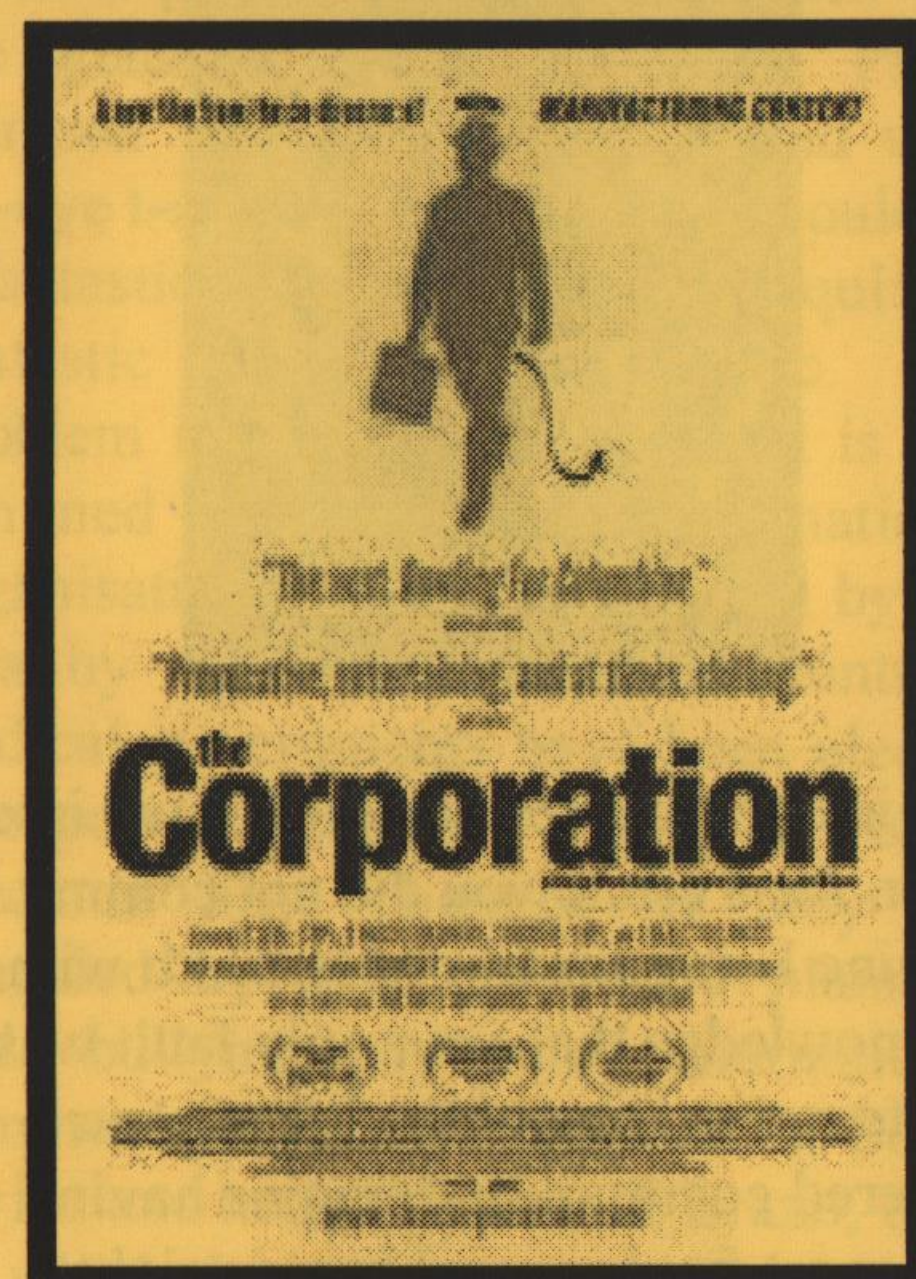
There has been some pressure on the Chinese government from the international community to stop this injustice but not enough is being done. Unless action is taken soon, the future for Tenzin is bleak.

From Tuesday 23<sup>rd</sup> November, Free Tibet will be joining One World Week in trying to promote the struggle of those such as Tenzin and celebrate the values and cultures of people across the globe. Free Tibet urges you to come along and sign up to the campaign to liberate Tenzin and give him the fair trial he deserves.



## FILM REVIEW: The Corporation

Dan Robertson

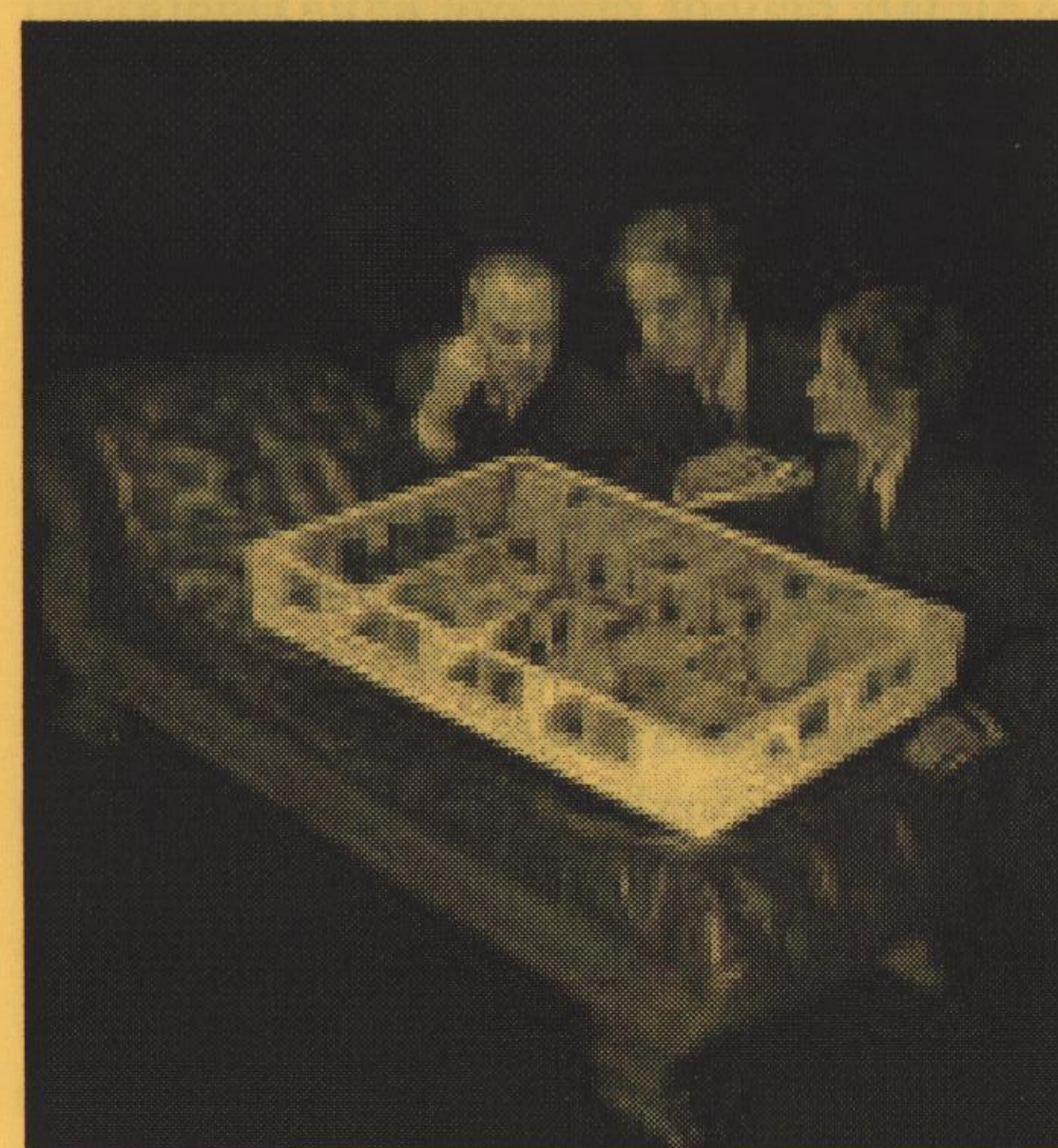


"The Corporation", by Mark Achbar, Jennifer Abbott & Joel Bakan, is a film eagerly anticipated in anti-globalisation circles, even if it hasn't made it to many screens across the land. The premise of the film is simple – the corporation, as an entity, is now so huge that national governments cannot contain or regulate it. The lack of accountability of this agency of capitalism to any considerations other than economic growth and profit, means that corporations are devouring the planet on which we live, and enslaving its people. It's not exactly a new thesis – this has been the message of the anti-globalisation movement for some time – but it's an attempt to make the ideas more accessible, and to communicate them in a new format.

Does it work? In terms of accessibility to all audiences, the 2hr25 film will be overlong for some, and I found myself straining to maintain my concentration for the full duration. Some of the stories will be familiar to some, for example, the uprising of the people of Cochachamba, Bolivia, against their government's decision to privatise their water. There is plenty of novel material as well though, including the story of the convoluted pathway by which corporations won the right to patent life in the US, via an appeal that scraped through a minor court by 3 votes to 2.

The film features the words of many of the 'usual suspects' of the anti-globalisation movement including Noam Chomsky, Naomi Klein and Michael Moore, but it's the unusual voices who are often the most impressive. These include Ray Anderson, the CEO of Interface carpets, who'd experienced a revolution in his thinking about the sustainability and ecological impact of his business' activities. It was also good to see the 'unconverted' portrayed as ordinary human beings with ordinary motivations. Chomsky makes a parallel with the institution of slavery, where the slave-owners were often perfectly good human beings who treated their families, and even their slaves, well. It is the system of slavery, like the system of capitalism, that it is "monstrous".

In spite of the film's length, it is a necessarily incomplete catalogue of the flaws of big business.



The Corporation is a thorough attempt to explore the ills of the capitalist system and its role in sacrificing the human and natural worlds to the mills of economic profit. It's an admirable attempt to introduce the ordinary filmgoer to the threat of the business-driven economy and what it entails. Despite verging towards the sensationalist at times – 'diagnosing' the corporation as psychopathic – it raises all of the right questions concerning the extent to which this institution has come to dominate modern life. Leaving the cinema with messages of hope from inspirational characters such as Dr. Vandana Shiva (an Indian anti-GM campaigner) and Oscar Olivera (member of the Bolivian Coalition of Water and Life), makes it possible to imagine a world in which the scourge of the corporation is no more.

## Electoral Sham in Uzbekistan (and you don't even have to look at the exit polls to tell)

Richard Hindes

The world's attention is currently focused on events in the Ukraine. It is not, however, the only former Soviet Bloc country currently weighing up its relations with the West and Russia facing controversial elections. This is also occurring in Uzbekistan, although with Islam Karimov having all but abandoned even the facade of democracy, the situation in the Central Asian Republic may be even more extreme.

An article by Galima Bukharbaeva of the (highly recommended) Institute for War and Peace Reporting ([www.iwpr.net](http://www.iwpr.net)) reveals that Parliamentary elections to be held on December 26 are to be boycotted by three opposition parties. The Birlik ('Unity') and Ozod Dehkonlar ('Free Farmers') parties announced their decision after they were prevented from registering candidates, while a third party ERK ('Will') declared from the outset that they "did not want to take part in a lie".

Bukharbaeva explains the significance of the election:

*The election will create a two-house parliament for the first time, replacing the old single-chamber body. The lower house will have 120 deputies elected on a constituency basis, less than half the 250 who now sit in the legislative chamber. The upper house will consist of 100 senators, 16 appointed by President Karimov and the rest picked by regional councils.*

According to The Central Election Commission, CEC, about 500 candidates will compete for the 120 seats in the legislature. Birlik and Ozod Dehkonlar had hoped to be among them. Since no Uzbek opposition group has been granted official recognition, they are prevented from standing in their own name. The two parties had instead opted to have candidates stand as independents, who would be nominated by public "initiative groups".

Bukharbaeva notes that even this is a step forward as the two parties have been forced to operate underground, with their leaders in exile, for a decade. Despite this apparent step forward, both

parties found officials unwilling to accept application papers.

He reports, "Leading figures in Birlik accuse election officials of a range of tactics to avoid processing its applications, including refusing to accept documents, closing election offices and even running away from them. In cases where documents were accepted, they were returned later with officials complaining that signatures in support of the candidate had been forged."



(Tashkent Police on the streets. BBC news)

The effect of these machinations was that the November 11 deadline ran out before Birlik was able to provide evidence as to the provenance of the signatures they had collected "and in some cases even before it managed to track down the election staff." Among those whose papers were rejected was the party's deputy chairman Ismail Dadajanov who put his name forward in the Fergana Valley city of Kokand. He reported having difficulties previously when he had arranged a meeting of his initiative group in a theatre only for managers to abruptly change their mind and declare that the building required urgent renovation work.

And what does the CEC have to say about all this?

*A spokesman for the CEC denied allegations of misconduct by officials. Press secretary Sherzod Kudratkhojaev said it did not matter to his commission whether independent candidates represented an opposition party or not, since their nominations came from an initiative group, not the party itself.*

*Documents were rejected not to stop the opposition taking part in elections, but because the candidates? like many other independents? had broken many rules, said Kudratkhojaev.*

*He dismissed the allegations of police intimidation made by Birlik's Musojonov, saying, "There was no pressure on anyone; that information is not objective."*

*Some of the initiative group members did not even know their details were being used to nominate a candidate for the election, he said.*

*"How can these complaining opposition members nominate themselves as deputies - how can they call for order - if they commit violations themselves?" asked the CEC spokesman.*

All very convincing given the Karimov regime's record, I'm sure you'll agree.

Dadajanov notes that the upside of his party's failure to achieve representation in the elections is that it clearly shows the paucity of choice on election day. "We showed in practice that these elections cannot be honest if there were violations even at the initial stage of gathering documents," he said. Bukharbaeva cites "independent political scientist" Bahodir Musaev who argues that the nomination of candidates by the opposition was doomed from the start because Karimov remains opposed to true pluralism. "These elections are without choice," he said. "This system of power does not allow outsiders in." Musaev also believes, "The boycott will not work, because to achieve that, one would need an organised structure to conduct an extensive public campaign. The regime will not allow that."

Karimov's opposition to true pluralism does not mean there will be no candidates contesting the election. There will still be five parties on the ballot, all set up with Karimov's blessing and articulating pro-government policies, with little to tell them apart. Nonetheless an Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe report on the elections noted, "The lack of registered opposition parties and obstacles for independent candidates seriously marginalises the possibilities for meaningful political competition."



## ARAFAT AND THE AMBASSADOR

(Conversations with Former Ambassador Stephen Day on Post-Arafat Palestine)

Steve Martin and Luke Bocock



Yasser Arafat, derided by some within Israel, yet celebrated as a hero in the Occupied Territories, has shaped the course of events in the Middle East for decades. His death has opened up new possibilities for Israeli co-operation with the Palestinian Liberation Organisation, and his elected successor will now determine, to some extent, whether this possibility will become a reality. We asked former ambassador to Tunisia and director of the MBI foundation Stephen Day whether Arafat's death has indeed heralded a historic opportunity for the peaceful settlement of a conflict that has blighted the twentieth century.

### Arafat's Legacy

Having met Arafat roughly 25 times over 4 years, Stephen Day was largely positive about his leadership. He did note however that 'a lot of the blame must be accepted by his [Arafat's] administration' for the failure of reconciliation. He recalled how, in meetings with the British, the Palestinian representatives were incredibly casual with records. Whilst the British embassy religiously administered their paperwork, Arafat would simply note down agreements in his ever present notebook. He also noted how Arafat 'thrived on being the

focus of attention', describing Arafat's desire for power as 'a drug'. Despite this Stephen Day found Arafat very polite and courteous during their meetings: never once was important information leaked to the press, and Arafat had a pragmatic approach to negotiating, acknowledging the importance of secret dialogue. One point which struck him as interesting was the frequency with which Arafat tried to use the British as a route to Washington- Arafat certainly identified the central role the United States played and still plays in the Middle East.

### Who can we expect to fill Yasser Arafat's shoes?

Whether the PLO will now renew the vigour with which it has sought peaceful reconciliation with Israel in the past could well depend on the result of the forthcoming elections. Stephen declined to offer his prediction on the outcome of the imminent elections that will determine Arafat's successor. He concluded 'that's what Palestinians have to decide, it's no use an outsider saying that'. Despite this, predictions can and are being made. The possibility of a coalition of the old and new guards seems particularly unlikely. If the moderate rhetoric of Arafat's most likely successor, former Prime Minister to the Palestinian Authority Mahmoud Abbas, does not captivate Palestinian hearts and minds it is likely that the popular jailed Fatah leader, Marwan Barghouti, will triumph even if a Hamas candidate does run for the chairmanship. Certainly the emphasis on Arafat's old Tunisian network will dwindle as Palestinians in the Occupied Territories seek to play an important role in determining their own future.

### The possibility of peace

Stephen Day concluded that peace in Palestine is realisable in the post-Arafat era once we abandon the 'constant search for a quick fix', an aspect he describes as being 'one of the most depressing of the whole issue'. This optimism is not based on George Bush's recent 'roadmap' for peace, nor in the belief that the UN can play an important role in peace negotiations: Stephen notes that the 'General Assembly is not going to solve the problem of Palestine.' Instead it is based on a belief that 'conditions for democracy are far more advanced in Palestine than anywhere else in the Arab World'. Despite this the issue remains unsolved. Both Arafat and Ariel Sharon have labelled one another terrorists, and many in this unending conflict now enter negotiations with blood on their hands. The situation will not be changed by impatient diplomats, but by a concerted and sustained effort on the part of the PLO and the Israeli government.

### The Olive Tree Project

The key to success, Stephen Day believes, is increased interaction between Israelis and Palestinians. In this spirit Stephen is currently promoting an initiative run by the MBI foundation called the Olive Tree Project. This project is endeavouring to bring Israeli and Palestinian students together, to study in London for a degree, and to get to know and interact with each other in a way that is not possible in Israel or the Occupied Territories. By creating 'a pool of talented young people with a personal commitment to human rights and to the promotion of mutual understanding between Israelis and Palestinians', the architects of the Olive Tree Project hope to 'create a better shared future for Israelis and Palestinians'.

## "Innocent women and children"? Dominic Wong

Almost every time I engage with the news media I am confronted with the loaded phrase 'women and children', often prefixed by 'innocent'. Each time it may be in a different context but I always get the same mental image: helpless innocent victims.

This phrase describes anyone who is not an adult man. Why should there be a phrase that excludes adult men?

Typically we hear the phrase when an atrocity is described and they want us to direct our empathy towards the human toll. We will sympathise with these victims more than adult men because adult men are often the perpetrators of the atrocities as most of the planners and fighters are men.

Men have more control in our patriarchal societies: the system favours them and disadvantages women. Adult men abuse women and children more than women and children abuse adult men. And in times of conflict it is they who suffer more because of the system that disadvantages them and gives them less access to money, education, resources, property, power and autonomy. A radical feminist may have an analysis like this. The empirical evidence also seems to support most of these claims, so the majority of society accepts them.

But is the victimisation of many women and children a reason to give preference to them regardless of the context? We feel outraged when our sympathy is aroused by hearing that x-number of women and children were amongst the victims of some assault or attack. But would it be a more palatable statistic had it been just adult men? Surely the adult men who had nothing to do with the atrocity are just as innocent and deserving of our remorse. So why does the media keep reinforcing the 'woman and children'/adult men dichotomy? Maybe this constant barrage of 'innocent woman and children' dialogue reinforces this stereotype that women and children are helpless victims and actually disadvantages them further.

There are arguments for protecting children because they may be more vulnerable than adults, both physically and mentally. Children may not have

developed their rational capacities yet and may not understand many of the consequences of their and other people's actions. Since they are young they probably have not been involved in these atrocities, which is why people describe them as innocent. However there are many adults that have also not developed these faculties that we take for granted. There are many uneducated and illiterate adults all over the world. Surely these people deserve a similar kind of protection given to children.

Often elderly people begin to lose their mental faculties and become as aware of their surroundings as children. They also may become less physically able than 'women and children'. Surely some elderly should be grouped into the same category. Yet elderly adult men are neither women nor children.

Women may be termed innocent because they are likely to not have had any involvement in the atrocities because they are excluded from the power structure and the decision making processes. But when we look at people like Margaret Thatcher and Madeline Albright, we hasten to call them innocent, indeed they are part of that power structure. We often find women in military and militia who have chosen to join by using their rational capacities. So when a female soldier kills another human, what is it that she is innocent of?

When we turn the tables and look at atrocities committed against us we don't seem to make the distinction between 'woman and children' and adult men. When the World Trade Centre in New York was attacked and destroyed, and the Pentagon in Washington DC, we viewed all the occupants of the building as innocent victims. It did not matter how many women and children were there, because we knew the men were equally as guilty or not guilty of whatever it is that people are not guilty of when they are dubbed 'innocent'. So there is an implicit double standard that directs our sympathies to the innocent American men, but not to the innocent other-world men.

On the other hand if the people who planned and executed the attacks were doing it because of their contempt

for American imperialism and foreign policy, in their eyes they were all guilty. The women working in the Pentagon were involved in the foreign policy and the women in the World Trade Centre were involved in American imperialism. So women are or can be just as guilty, or not innocent as men.

Definitely in some instances it does make sense and is right to single out women and children. Humanitarian Assistance for Women and Children of Afghanistan provides free education for illiterate adult women and girls. They are justified in singling out women because under the Taliban government women were not allowed to attend school. There are twice as many literate men as women. But then there are many countries where the literacy rate hovers around 20% or 30%. And we are forced to think about the men who are illiterate as well, because the 70% or 80% of illiterate people are comprised of both men and women.

In northern Uganda The Lord's Resistance Army has abducted more than 30,000 children to fill its military ranks during the course of the war. There are over 100,000 child soldiers in Africa alone. This includes girls of nine years old. These children should be singled out for protection, so they do not have to fight in war.

But some of these children will have done and seen what many of us could not even comprehend. Are these children still 'innocent'? Choice is not the issue, since many people are conscripted into the military. The point is these children are not 'innocent'. Is a child not to be considered guilty of murder because s/he is a child? Are these children still considered 'children' just because they are younger than the arbitrary age the government uses to define them? Is it more horrible to see a child kill an innocent adult or an adult kill an innocent child?

The answer to any of the questions will depend on your subjective beliefs but next time you hear or read the phrase 'women and children', think about the context it is being used and whether or not it makes a difference that 'women and children' are involved.



# Activism News

## Animal Ethics Society created

The University of Nottingham Animal Ethics Society is the only campus group that focuses on the interests of animals, and our relation to them.  
[su.nottingham.ac.uk/~animal](http://su.nottingham.ac.uk/~animal)

## Counter Terror: Build Justice 2005

International month of peace action  
19 Mar-15 Apr 2005

Organised by Justice not Vengeance (JNV) and Voices in the Wilderness. 'Counter Terror: Build Justice 2005' is about refusing to wait for the next move from the warmongers, and instead setting our own timetable, and making our own plans, to help create an irresistible social force that is powerful enough to prevent war. Britain, Canada and the US are going to stage a major counter-terrorism exercise later in 2005, which has been a year in the planning already. Thousands of troops and law enforcement officers will be deployed on both sides of the Atlantic.

JNV and Voices in the Wilderness do not object to emergency services practicing for extreme situations. We believe, however, that the most important and urgent response we should be making to the threat of terrorism is to direct the foreign policy of our governments away from war, threats, and support for unjust regimes. Popular protest is desperately needed to prevent our governments from carrying out illegal military attacks in the future. We must be able to counter the terrorism of the United States and Britain.

NSPM has signed up to this initiative.  
[www.j-n-v.org/Counter2005](http://www.j-n-v.org/Counter2005)

## Bush is back!

Reports indicate that President Bush will be visiting Britain in the run-up to the British general election, almost certainly in February (though possibly in January, immediately after the inauguration). Time to start putting thinking caps on!

## Victory for Iraq Pillage Protestors

On 23rd Nov, human rights activists Ewa Jasiewicz & Pennie Quinton were acquitted of aggravated trespass, for entering the Iraq Procurement conference, an event for signing Iraqi reconstruction contracts. The protestors disrupted the conference with banners informing attendees that their business was nothing less than the pillage of Iraq, and illegal under the Hague regulations and Geneva convention.



The women (pictured above) argued that they could not be charged with 'the disruption of a lawful event' as the event itself was facilitating such illegal actions. Meanwhile, the privatisation of Iraqi resources continues...

[indymedia.org.uk/en/2004/11/301892.html](http://indymedia.org.uk/en/2004/11/301892.html)

## The BBC - Legitimising mass slaughter in Fallujah

On December 2, the peace group A Call For Light held a peaceful vigil outside the BBC, Bush House, Aldwych, London (<http://www.acallforlight.org/>). According to Media Lens "Like the rest of the mainstream media, the BBC did next to nothing to expose the devastating effects of US-UK war and sanctions on the civilian population of Iraq from 1990 onwards. Ahead of last year's war, the BBC endlessly echoed and channelled UK government propaganda claims, almost never subjecting those claims to serious challenge. Post-invasion and post-Hutton, the BBC has presented the occupation of Iraq as a flawed but well-intentioned act of 'liberation' and 'rebuilding'."

[www.medialens.org/blog/index.htm](http://www.medialens.org/blog/index.htm)

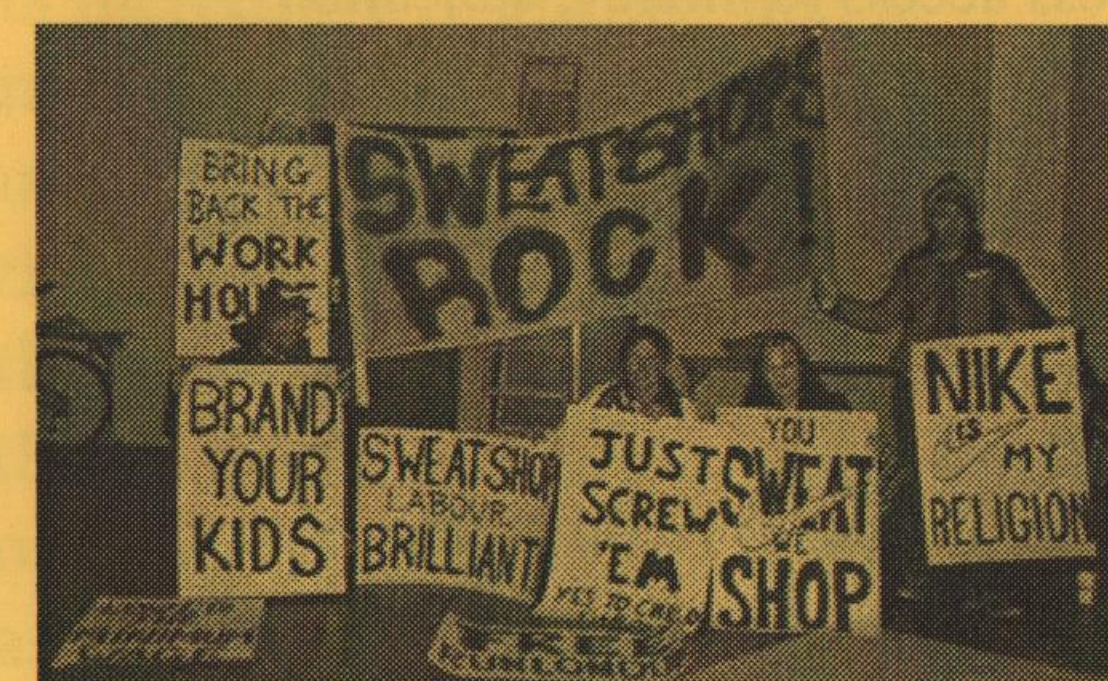
## Healthy appetites

Italian anti-globalisation activists chomped their way through 2,000 euros (1,400 pounds) worth of food, and polished off five bottles of Moët et Chandon champagne at a restaurant near Venice, before scarpering leaving only a brief note. The restaurant was targeted as it had hosted Nato conference delegates the month before. The letter read "Consider this 'collateral damage', as Bush would say as children die in bombing raids".

<http://news.independent.co.uk/europe/story.jsp?story=588818>

## Sweatshops rock!

Culture jammers gave Nike a headache at the 'Nike Run London' on 28th Nov. Fully dressed in homemade Nike attire, a group of fervently 'pro-Nike' activists headed down to the finish line to chant: Sweatshops rock! Child labour is good for the economy! We need your little hands to do the small stitching!



Nike were not too amused to find the slogans appearing on their 30ft screen... and then the awards ceremony... and cropping up in BBC interviews...  
<http://sweatlondon.com>

## Cabinet Office die in for Iraq

As part of a series of die ins, protestors entered the Cabinet Office on 23rd Nov where they wandered around for 20m before demanding to speak to someone responsible for the actions being taken in Iraq. They then held a die in, covering themselves with fake blood.

<http://www.indymedia.org.uk/en/2004/11/301761.html>

# Massive sell out

Dan Robertson

About three weeks ago, I was sitting in the Portland Cafe and noticed some flyers that had been left on most of the tables in the immediate vicinity. It was for The Times' "Top 100 Graduate Employers", a book distributed by careers services for free. The list, according to the flyer, is based on research conducted on more than 15,000 final year students leaving UK universities in 2004. I was intrigued to find out where exactly large numbers of my fellow students were going.



Nottingham Careers fair 2005

Predictably, the results were astoundingly awful. Some companies and sectors were listed on the rear of the flyer. Talk about an anti-capitalist's nightmare! The list included oil multinationals (ExxonMobil & Shell), banks (Barclays, Citigroup, Deutsche Bank, HSBC, Lloyds TSB, Royal Bank of Scotland), arms manufacturers & (ab)users (Army, BAE Systems, Ministry of Defence, Rolls Royce), and big pharma (AstraZeneca, GlaxoSmithKline). There were many other activist "favourites" in there too: ASDA (Walmart), British Nuclear Group, Marks & Spencers, and McDonalds (tellingly). I'm sure if you're reading our website or magazine you don't really need any introduction to the multiple sins of these transnational villains. If, however, you do, I'd advise you to check out Corporate Watch, and the links I've (hurriedly) included below.

Of what remained, there were plenty of accounting and consultancy firms, financial services, marketing and media corporations. Mobile phone companies and supermarkets. The kind of really useful jobs that we couldn't live without. Ok, so the NHS did make it on there, and a teacher recruitment programme. And the truly fine body of men and women that make up the Metropolitan police (should have filed them under weapon abusers).

It would appear that students don't give a shit, except about the money of course. It could be that people genuinely don't know about the concerns that activists for social justice raise around some of these corporations. However, from a recent leafletting campaign around a careers' fair at the university I took part in, I would say that it's mainly the "don't care" camp. Some people who read our leaflets about Shell and Rolls Royce were genuinely shocked, but most would just shrug their shoulders and continue their enquiries about pay and promotions. It's easy to brush out of sight concerns about the ultimate use (and possible great harm) of your future career, when listening to the seductive tones of a company rep. The companies wouldn't really be allowed to do these things, would they?

The necessary myth about the ultimately harmless nature of corporate activities, is a very worrying one. Whether we like it or not, students at universities like our own are going to be the captains of industry, the leading politicians, and influential thinkers of the imminent future. If there is no dissent about the choices that are acceptable to make in choosing a career, and if there is no questioning

of the role of one's life except for personal profit, now whilst we are young and idealistic, god help us in 10 or 20 years time.



(From [www.stopesso.com](http://www.stopesso.com))

Sure, we can have ethical careers fairs, and that's a good place to start in getting people thinking, but we have to be more radical than that. It's the idea of thinking about having a career, rather than having a full and complete life, that I object to. It's time we challenged the prostitution of our abilities, and the control that the corporate job market holds over people. We should be making people ask what they would prefer: someone to design the next generation of mobile phones that we all have to slavishly buy, or someone who's going to provide a useful role in a community. It's time we started thinking of what we 'should' be doing with our lives.

## Useful Links:

<http://www.mcspotlight.org>  
<http://www.corporatewatch.org>  
<http://www.bigcampaign.org>  
<http://www.caat.org.uk>  
<http://www.stopesso.com>  
<http://www.commondreams.org/views01/0228-02.htm>

*This article is an edited version of a recent entry on the peace movement's regular online Blog: The Peace Pipe which can be found at*  
<http://thepeacepipe.blogspot.com>