

FREEDOM

80P ANARCHIST NEWS AND VIEWS

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PHILIPPINES MASSACRE COVER-UP

Following the 16th November massacre of strikers at the Hacienda Luisita sugar mill, a government investigation into the murders look set to exonerate the authorities and attempt to throw the blame on to the victims, amid claims that pickets were armed and attacked riot police and army units in the lead-up to the attack (see Freedom, 27th November).

The National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) revealed in a press conference, supposedly called to announce the near completion of their work, that weapons had been recovered from the scene, namely slingshots, knives and blunt instruments; one man had been arrested for illegal possession of a carbine.

But these hesitant pre-report conclusions may cause more questions than answers. The defence offered by authorities for opening fire on the picket was that the group had been infiltrated by guerrillas for the Maoist New People's Army (NPA). Yet, even by their own admission the protest contained but a smattering of basic weapons, even though the NPA owns thousands of assault rifles and high calibre weapons. Blunt objects, slingshots and knives would be more characteristic of picketers attempting to prevent the dispersal of their picket, rather than of rebel insurgents confronting army and police.

Local union organisers and people in the Tarlac province where Hacienda Luisita is located have reacted angrily to accusations that any of the dead

were NPA guerrillas. Deputy Director of the Police General Reynaldo Velasco, head of the police investigation into the murders, had announced on national television that one of the dead, June David, was confirmed to be an insurgent. Yet union organisers were able to produce both an ID card for Hacienda Luisita Inc (HLI) in addition to David's payslip, proving that he was genuinely an HLI worker.

The Cojuangco family, the owners of HLI continue to assert that the majority of farm workers union CATLU was not supporting the strike, and that picketers had been ferried in by militants. Yet local Catholic clergyman Reverend Father Ramon Capuno stated that he had known all of the dead and knew they were workers at the HLI.

Since its inception the Filipino government, police and army have seemingly worked to steer the 'independent' inquiry toward vindicating their actions – as a result few of the workers and peasants of Hacienda Luisita seem to be expecting justice from the NBI. Direct action against the owners of the plantations and mill is continuing. Picket lines have been maintained since they were first recovered just two days after the massacre and whilst management had previously maintained token production, supplies ran out on 2nd December, with smoke ceasing from the sugar mill's chimneys. Local union leader Ricardo Ramos spelled out their determination "If all else fails, the



The calm before the storm – farmworkers picket Hacienda Luisita before the massacre

Cojuangcos should expect greater wrath from the people seeking justice".

Solidarity protests against the Department of Labour and Employment (DOLE)

have taken the fight to the government, with thousands involved in a sit-in at DOLE's office in Intramuros. Protesters have demanded the resignation of

labour secretary Patricia Sto. Tomas, who was responsible for issuing the back to work order which they describe as a 'licence to kill'.

BUSH-WHACKED

November saw Bush elected to the White House for the first time.

While increasing numbers of voting irregularities are rising, the same cannot be said of most other economic statistics. Employment growth has declined for the past consecutive months. The monthly percent changes in employment reached their highest point during this recovery in March 2004. Since then, employment growth has continuously slowed. Employment growth in July 2004 was the lowest in all of 2004 and the lowest since December 2003.

In other words, the US economy still has 1.2 million fewer jobs than at the start of the recession in March 2001. If employment growth had kept pace with population growth during the recovery there would have been 4.0 million more jobs in July. If timed from the start the recession, this would have been 6.9 million more jobs in July.

Ignoring inflation, the recovery has seen the slowest growth in weekly earnings of non-production supervisory workers. Factoring in inflation, weekly earnings growth for the entire recovery is negative – a new record low. This is a good indicator of actual income of the majority of the American workforce. Overall, this recovery has the slowest growth in total salary and wage payments ever.

Some things are rising, of course. US workers are seeing the costs of housing (renting or owning a home) go up by 7.5% since the start of the recovery, health care costs by 11.8%, and energy

costs by 34.1%. Unsurprisingly, households have incurred record debt levels and have seen their share of disposable income used to repay that debt in each quarter is at 13% for the thirteen quarters ending in March 2004. This is the first time since the early 1980s that this amount has been this high.

Unsurprisingly, the Bush Administration's rhetoric has ignored this reality. Rather than match their 'pro-jobs' words in action, they have focused on reforming overtime regulations than boosting job creation or aiding those struggling to make ends meet. This reform will see an estimated six million workers losing overtime protections. Bush wants to weaken them even more while seeking to make his elite-skewed tax cuts permanent. If this welfare for the wealthy goes through it will, as shown in the past few years, simply deepen the deficit without adding significant stimulus to the economy and the labour market.

TRAINS ROLE IN STOCK

Three major events are happening around UK railways over the coming months. Best publicised of these is the upcoming fare increase in January 2005.

Despite evidence that trains long ago reached the point where higher fares simply mean fewer travellers, hikes of up to 7.2% are being imposed by franchises across the UK with the blessing of central government. On average, fares will rise by 4%, despite a general lack of improvement amongst private rail companies thus far in punctuality and reliability.

Train companies have defended the move, saying they can't provide better services and more investment without that money. But the investment they are paying for has already been funded by taxpayers' compensation for poor rail network conditions, according to union TSSA.

The highest rise will be on the Silverlink service to London Euston, but every franchise in the country will

be taking extra money, with the lowest rise hitting 2% in Hull. Inflation is currently at 1.1%.

The second lowest unregulated fare rise comes from Southeastern trains, which announced a 3% rise. Southeastern, the only public train service in Britain, recently reported the best figures for service improvement in the country, rising to mid-table from rock-bottom in the space of just one year's operation (Freedom, 27th November).

Southeastern are quietly in the midst of being re-franchised as a new 'Kent' area, with negotiations continuing this month. Favourites for the improved line are a GNER-led consortium. The move continues despite petitions from 117 MPs to halt the sell-off and 3,500 personal postcards from customers.

Finally Southeastern's controlling body, the Strategic Rail Authority, is being dissolved. Their role will be split between Network rail and direct

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Home and away

FREEDOM

Volume 65 Number 24

Anarchism

Anarchists work towards a society of mutual aid and voluntary co-operation. We reject government, and all forms of exploitation and domination.

Freedom Press is an independent anarchist publisher, founded in 1886. Besides this newspaper, which comes out every two weeks, we produce books on all aspects of anarchist theory and practice – see our website for a full list.

In our building in East London we run Britain's biggest anarchist bookshop and host the Autonomy Club meeting room and the Freedom Hacklab open-access IT space.

Our aim is to explain anarchism more widely and to show that people can work together and use direct action to practically improve our lives and build a better world.

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

After a hectic few weeks around the Anarchist Bookfair, things are winding down at Freedom for the Christmas break, but don't forget our Christmas Party (see listings, right, for details).

Many thanks to the Bookfair organisers, it was a highly enjoyable event.

Priorities for next year have to be continuing to stabilise our cash flow, so if you are renewing your sub please consider becoming a Supporter Subscriber, or including a small monthly gift by Standing Order.

Have a great Christmas, Hanukah, winter solstices or what have you. See you in 2005 (or at our party).

Donations

Many many thanks to all the readers who have included gifts with their sub renewals, and those of you who slipped us some cash at the Bookfair – we couldn't keep going without your generosity.

One-offs
MG, £3; JL, £56; MA, £10; RE, £10;
NP, £5; MH, £40; TG, £20; AF, £10.

Standing Orders (amount per year)
BP & MP, £20; SE, £28.

Contact details

Freedom Press, 84b Whitechapel High Street, London E1 7QX
Tel/fax: 020 7247 9249
www.freedompress.org.uk
Enquiries: info@freedompress.org.uk
Copy/Letters: copy@freedompress.org.uk
Subscriptions: subs@freedompress.org.uk
Circulation: circ@freedompress.org.uk
Freedom Press Distribution:
distro@freedompress.org.uk

Next issue

Contributions are wanted for future Freedoms. The next issue will be dated 8th January 2005 and the last day to get your copy to us will be Thursday 31st December (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 wish. Please also feel free to write to us with any news about your imprisonment, developments in your case or anything else!

ELP withdraw support from Billy Cottrell

Earth Liberation Prisoners (ELP) have withdrawn support from William 'Billy' Cottrell following his decision to try and save his own skin by naming two other people during his recent trial for a series of ELF attacks on Sports Utility Vehicles (SUVs). In a joint statement made with the former 'Free Billy Support Network', ELP named Cottrell as a 'police informant' and apologised to the many people who previously supported him. "Despite the fact that Cottrell has testified, both ELP and the former FBSN would like to remind everyone that although Cottrell has turned traitor there are many other good prisoners who need our support and we hope this will not put people

off supporting them." For a full up-to-date list of eco-prisoners please e-mail ELP4321@hotmail.com

ABC launch new FIES pamphlet

In a collaborative venture involving Anarchist Black Cross groups across Europe a new pamphlet has been produced on the struggle against the Spanish FIES isolation units. The booklet is nearly 40 pages in length, and contains an in-depth analysis of the struggle by both prisoners and anti-



FIES activists. It makes powerful reading. Copies can be obtained for £1 (including postage) from Brighton ABC, PO Box 74, Brighton, BN1 4ZQ.

New prisoner support group in London

A new prisoner support initiative has been established in London. Exhibit @ deliberately chose not to call themselves London ABC, so as not to be confused with the ABC group that folded some years ago, but they are committed to supporting prisoners and opposing the prison state. The group recently issued their first newsletter, which sets out their position and gives advice on writing to prisoners. Exhibit @ hope to have a meeting of affinity groups and individuals set up in London soon, and "welcome any offers of help, ideas for action, information, enthusiasm, chocolate and flattery." For more info e-mail prisonisacrime@yahoo.co.uk or write to Exhibit @, c/o 56A Crampton Street, London SE17.

Bomb attack on Milan prison

A group calling themselves the Armed Cells for International Solidarity/FAI* have claimed responsibility for a bomb attack on Milan prison. Two homemade bombs were used in the action, one consisting of a covered dish filled

with gunpowder, the other of a coffee-pot containing dynamite. In a statement issued by the group they said they planted the bombs in solidarity with anarchist prisoners in Spain, Italy, Switzerland, and Germany, as well as with prisoners struggling in the Spanish FIES isolation units.

* Not the Italian Anarchist Federation FAI

New animal rights prisoner

Long-standing animal rights activist Sarah Gisborne has been remanded into custody accused of 'conspiracy to commit criminal damage'. Please send letters of support to Sarah Gisborne, LT5393, HMP Edmunds Hill, Stradishall, Newmarket, Suffolk, CB8 9YN.

Judge attacked by man on trial

A Judge was hurt when he was attacked by a defendant who leapt from the dock. The man, in his twenties, hurdled a glass screen, raced towards the bench, and then climbed into the enclosed area holding Judge Michael Stokes QC. "I've got previous convictions. Do you think you're going to stitch me up?" he said. Before the Judge could be rescued by court officials, his sash was ripped off and his shoulder injured.

Compiled by Mark Barnsley

LISTINGS

Bath

17th December Benefit club night for Bristle magazine at Leftism, Porter Butt pub, London Road, 9pm to 1am, £3. Contact bristle@yahoo.co.uk

Bristol

Every Sunday the Kebele Kafe from 6.30pm, 14 Robertson Road, Easton. For info call 0117 9399469

London

17th December Use Your Loaf presents Ebenezer Thakrar's Xmas Party at the Open Arts Platform, Hales Street, Deptford, SE8 from 7pm to 11.30pm
18th December Freedom Christmas party at 84b Whitechapel High Street. 3pm to 7pm. Bring a bottle.
9th January 'The role of the Vatican in the Rwanda massacres', a lecture by Linda Melvern at the South Place Ethical Society, Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, WC1, at 11am. For more info see www.ethicalsoc.org.uk/events.htm

Newcastle

11th to 13th February Projectile: an anarchist festival of film and ideas, exploring the past, present, and future of anarchism, and featuring rare and radical films, music, entertainment, talks and discussions. For more info see www.projectile.org.uk

International
26th December International Pizza Punk Day, so mark this day in your calendar to practise the ancient arts of mutual aid, voluntary association and, of course, vegan pizza making workshops. See www.eroding.org.uk/pizzapunx.htm
6th July 2005 Global Day of Action at the opening day of the G8 Summit www.agp.org or www.dissent.org.uk

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

Dissent

A network of resistance against the G8
www.dissent.org.uk

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

The Rampart

7a Rampart Street, London E1
SUMAC Centre
245 Gladstone Street, Nottingham NG7 6HX
www.veggies.org.uk/rainbow/

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



You can get Isy's 'zine from Freedom for £1 (plus 60p p&p inland, £1.20 elsewhere).

News

In Brief

Billion pound heist

A new pensions dodge could deprive the treasury of nearly £1 billion a year. The scheme centres around a legal loophole which allows companies to pay less national insurance while increasing the take-home pay of workers.

For example, if an employee takes a pay cut, but in exchange gives over their share of NI contributions to the company, they take home more money while the company pays less overall thanks to NI tax breaks.

Nominally this means the treasury ends up taking the rap, as they get less in NI contributions.

The Treasury have admitted that this tactic is entirely legal. However, the dire state of the Chancellor's financial statements means that this will be unlikely to continue. The likely solutions will be either to close the loophole, or more likely, to take the money back in taxes.

As corporations are already under pressure to relocate their operations to cheaper European destinations, this will probably take the form of greater pressure on our pay packets. All £1 billion of it.

Fiscal conservatism

The Republicans have pushed through a \$388 billion spending bill. Due to the massive deficit, the bill aims to cut funding for everything from education to environmental clean-ups.

Amidst all this prudence however, a new expense was created, namely the allocation of \$2 million for the government to buy back the presidential yacht Sequoia.

Two million dollars so that Bush can play sailor while millions of Americans get funding cuts. Meanwhile, an \$800 billion increase in the government's borrowing limit has also been agreed. The deficit reached \$413 billion last year and is expected to climb indefinitely.

Better than beer and sandwiches...

As Freedom went to press, the International Confederation of Trade Unions (ICTFU), the largest international union body in the world, was holding their 2004 world congress in Japan.

We say their, because although the event is supposed to involve the united efforts of 152 countries and 148 million people, ICTFU have failed to publicise it. It seems the delegates are having a good time though, with 'dramatic entertainment' laid on according to the ICTFU website: "A single drum beat brought the participants' chatter to an end. A dramatic performance followed, as six young Japanese musicians in traditional dress, three men on drums, three women on the three-stringed shamisen, held their audience transfixed."

Good to see they're not treating this as some sort of jolly at our expense then.

Swamped?

A new UN study has warned that immigration rates would have to rise to 'virtually impossible' levels to provide enough people of working age to support Europe's retiring population.

Although current immigration levels are helping to offset a shortage of labour in Europe, this benefit will not be enough to take care of the baby boomers, according to the report released this month.

Citing France as an example, the report projected a need for 90 million migrants by 2050 to put enough people in work to offset their number of national dependents.

Underworld union

In conference, Gemma meets the International Collective of Prostitutes

There was a relaxed atmosphere at the meeting in St Mary's Church, Somerstown. Stalls sold books, there were badges, T-shirts and African food. Speakers came from as far afield as Sweden and New Zealand.

The thrust of the conference was to expose the forthcoming government paper 'Paying the Price' as a racist whitewash over the real issues, and to promote the decriminalisation of all forms of sex work. Existing legislation does not protect prostitutes from violence, and falsely places them in zones which only ostracise them from the community, when they are and have always been fully integrated members of it as mothers, housewives and workers.

The conference began with a rebuttal of the paper's main themes. Speakers suggested the 'trafficking of women' is used to sideline the larger problem of women's mobility and immigration within fortress Europe. 'Paying the Price' neglects the major issue of women's poverty and economic disadvantage as a reason for going into sex work, instead focussing on drug use. Meanwhile when women are moving because of sexual persecution or torture, they fail to find support from the authorities.

Cristel Amis from the Black Women's Rape Action project gave the example of a young Rwandan, kidnapped and brought to the UK, then forced to have sex with men: "When she escaped from him in London and went to the Home Office to claim asylum, the officials were extremely rude and hostile, even the security

guards who had no business with her application ... Inside the building there is no privacy, you can hear other applicants being questioned.

Interviewees are shouted at and accused of lying about their situations. After her application, there were so many delays in giving her help that her lawyer had to threaten social services with suing to get her case rolling."

This is a common occurrence, according to ICP. There are big bucks in trafficking, and it is sensationalised by the media blanketing the issue and labelling sex workers with the supposedly 'feminist' stereotype of being 'oppressed trafficked women'. Police don't ask sex workers about their lives, whether they've been trafficked, they just want to see their immigration papers.

The second part of the event centred around decriminalising prostitution. The most powerful statistic is that it is ten times safer to work in premises controlled by the prostitutes themselves. Catherine Healy from New Zealand said: "New Zealand abolished all laws on prostitution eighteen months ago. Sex workers feel better and safer in their situation. There has been no increase in the numbers of women going into the profession, and no rise in sexual violence in communities where sex workers operate, as opponents of the repeal suggested there would be."

The International Collective of Prostitutes was founded in 1975 as a self help group for sex workers when traditional feminist groups rejected them and they were unable to join mainstream unions.



Occupation of Holy Cross Church in Kings Cross, London

They have campaigned to have rape recognised as a legitimate reason for claiming asylum in the UK, amidst widespread dismissal and disbelief from the authorities. They have also lobbied government for the legalisation of the sex industry within Soho. Although the collective, affiliated to Global Women's Strike and All Women Count, has a reputation for strict centralism within its ranks, the enforced independence of the group from government authority has a great deal of relevance to the anarchist left. Their tactics by necessity have to avoid going through the normal unionist channels, and fight consistent misrepresentation by both media and

government.

Women in the sex industry help one another and self organise to prevent sexual violence from dangerous clients. Solidarity amongst sex workers is emphasised as important. Of particular interest was the occupation of King's Cross Church in 1982 to protest the lack of legal aid available to sex workers. They managed to stay there for twelve days and were joined by women from all walks of life. Legal Aid for women was set up as a result. Not an official body, it operates from the crossroads women's centre in Camden, an example of directly positive, successful extra-governmental action.

Just change the Q to an N

While still bogged down in Iraq, the US is trying to lay the groundwork for regime change in Iran. Colin Powell has started the ball rolling, making comments about Iran's nuclear ability. Bush repeated the warnings in Chile. And the amazing thing is, after the debacle of Iraqi WMD they are being taken seriously by the media. Obviously politics based on the assumption we have the memory span of a Goldfish and the media's job is to help the powerful lie.

This is particularly insulting to the intelligence as the source of Powell's 'information' is one of those 'exile groups' which were so reliably providing details of Iraq's WMD. This

classified single source was unvetted and yet was happily used as evidence for immediate action against another member of the 'Axis of Evil'. At least Powell will not have to go to the UN and talk bollocks again.

So much for gratitude. Iran was one of the few states which wanted Bush re-elected.

Of course, what with the Iraqi quagmire, it is unlikely that the US will attack the much stronger Iran. So expect the call for sanctions (to soften it up until such time as the US can get enough troops together to invade). Which will probably be around a year after Blair and Straw strenuously deny that such an invasion is planned.

Imagine if...

Blunkett tried in vain to pull himself together. He sat in his bunker with his teddy, Eva, awaiting an end to the bombing. He was sure that any day now his legal superweapons would finally go into mass production and wipe out his Liberal enemies, but waiting was hard.

"A conspiracy of Lefties, terrorists and Liberals ... Liberals ... are trying to stop my vision of a glorious thousand year war against our asylum-seeking enemy!" he shouted at no-one in particular, frothing wildly from his mouth.

His loyal dog Ruby guarded the door against intrusion, but whined at his outburst, obviously worried about her master's health. Blunkett made an effort and calmed himself down.

His blitzkrieg campaign against the menace of terror, to give his department more lebensraum, had begun so well. First he had built up a loyal army of police, which he had marched into the regions. That had been his crowning moment, when he had first proven that the liberal left were beef-eating surrender monkeys.

He had gone from strength to strength

ever since, gathering power to the home office and cracking down on things which could weaken the backbone of his chosen people, like civil liberties. But all of a sudden, things had gone horribly wrong. His affair with Kimberly Quinn had distracted him from his task. He had sat with her reciting "If God is love, and love is blind, and I am blind, I must be God." That hadn't gone down well, so eventually things had finished (her fault), and his liberal enemies were now taking full advantage, accusing him of corruption.

"How dare those Liberals talk of me that way!" He shouting, tearing up bits of carpet. "The law is on my side. I know because I make the law!"*

Ruby whined again, but Blunkett was beyond caring. He chewed madly on a chunk of carpet, as the fallout grew louder outside his reinforced door.

"It's just you and me now, Eva." He muttered, gripping his teddy. "The Liberals won't take us alive."

*Phrase used was allegedly part of a threat over parental access made to Mrs Quinn when Blunkett found out he'd fathered her son.

Freedom Christmas Party
 Saturday 18th December • 3pm to 7pm
 at Freedom Bookshop (down Angel Alley)
 84b Whitechapel High Street • London E1 7QX
 (nearest tube Aldgate East tube or buses 25, 205, 254)
 bring what you expect to find, i.e. booze

Polls apart

As new elections are ordered in the Ukraine, Iain McKay can't help noticing certain double standards

Ah, the irony! The Bush Junta has denounced the Ukrainian elections as illegitimate. Apparently the conservative candidate has claimed victory by a narrow margin but – and we are not making this up – the results are under suspicion because the exit polls gave a narrow victory to his liberal challenger.

And yet no one in the media is claiming that the defeated should just get over it or ignore the conspiracy theories circulating the internet. No comments on how exit polls are unreliable (or ignoring the fact that they are). No one is claiming that the results clearly show that the opposition is elitist and out of touch with the real Ukraine. What a difference an ocean makes! In Eastern Europe exit polls indicate potential voting fraud when they don't agree with the vote count and provoke massive direct action to rectify the situation. In America that same disagreement indicates that exit polls are flawed and should be disregarded (and discarded).

The Ukrainian politicians haven't got their manipulation of the voting system down to the fine art the Republicans seem to have. It looks like that there is evidence that there something to be concerned about. In the land of the free, the media is simply ignoring the rising numbers of voting irregularities and fraud claims in the last Presidential election (just as they did in 2000). But this should not detract from the sheer irony of Junta's protests.

Of course the Western media has followed the US government's lead, generally peddling the elections and

resulting protests based on a certain ideological presupposition. This explains the protests as a conflict between a popular and brave democrat, Yushchenko, and an unpopular authoritarian Soviet nostalgic, Yanukovich. Any facts which contradict this fairytale are suppressed. For example, any allegations on election fraud committed by Yushchenko-supporting local authorities in western Ukraine are unreported, as is evidence of intimidation against election officials. Ignoring, as the media generally has, these reports of opposition dodgy poll-related activities, the key problem for the government can easily be seen. Unlike the Bush Junta, Ukrainian politicians have used the visible hand rather than the invisible one to fix the election.

Evidence that something was amiss with the US Presidential is being ignored by the mainstream media. For example, it is accepted that the early exit polls (which showed Kerry well ahead) were simply wrong because more Bush voters showed up later in the day despite providing no evidence. And what of the fact that exit polls are rarely wrong, except (apparently) in this case? Or that the chances of Bush achieving the results he did in the three key swing states of Ohio, Florida and Pennsylvania with the resulting discrepancies between predicted (exit poll) results and actual vote counts being due to chance or random error being 250 million to one. Or that in ten states where there were verifiable paper trails or no electronic machines the final results hardly differed from the initial exit polls. In non-paper-trail

states, however, there were significant differences. Or that all the voting machine irregularities so far uncovered seemed to favour Bush.

So how did Bush do it? In Europe citizens count the ballots. In the US it is privatised, with the employees of a highly secretive Republican-leaning company, ES&S, managed every aspect of the 2004 election. This includes everything from registering voters, printing ballots and programming voting machines to tabulating votes. Armed guards are often used to keep the media and members of the public who wished to witness the count at bay. This happens for 60 million voters in 47 states. Most other votes were counted by three other firms that are snugly in bed with the GOP. So four companies control the US vote count. Diebold, ES&S, Sequoia and SAIC and all are extremely close to the Bush Junta. And so Bush ensured his victory by the power of invisible hand.

As the rulers in capitalism have long known, (invisible) market forces shaped by economic power and coercion are much more potent weapons to ensure hierarchy than (visible) state action. The refrain of every apologist of capitalism is that economic coercion/power does not exist, while (of course) ignoring the (extensive) state action needed to create capitalism in the first place and skew the market in favour of the capitalist class. Once those preliminaries are set up, the market will reinforce the power of the capitalists, ensuring that the initial inequalities tend to increase over time. The state can then remain in the background, intervening as required to stabilise the system and keep the



People power? Opposition supporters demonstrate in Kiev

working class in its allotted role. Clearly the oligarchs in Ukraine have yet to learn this lesson and their interventions (on both sides) have been crude and more fitting to an earlier age of capitalist development.

It is easy to see why the media frenzy over events in the Ukraine. Yushchenko has strong links with Washington, whose State Department has poured millions into the 'free' election and provided the resource for the exit polling. Thus the US is backing a pro-Western free-marketeer who wants Ukraine to join NATO. Guess who wants that to happen? Ultimately, this is not about liberty for the people of the Ukraine. It is about ensuring the same sort of freedom for transnational

corporations which the US is failing to do in Iraq. Once that is achieved, people power is quietly forgotten (and repressed when required – with the implicit support of the West).

So neither side deserves any support. The task in the Ukraine, as elsewhere, is to build a social movement which is run by and for working class people and will defend their interests (political, economic and social) by direct action and solidarity. Only such a movement will ensure that every government in every country is considered as illegitimate and, ultimately, end the farce of a political system which simply results in the picking which member of the rich (mis)rules us in the interests of capital for four or five years.



In echoes of the *autoreduzioni* or 'self-reduction' movement of the 1970s, Italians have again begun shopping together to impose their prices. In one case two hundred people looted a supermarket in Rome after management rejected a 70% discount offer (see picture).

Grease the wheels

Halliburton have finally for the first time to the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) in the US that they paid bribes to Nigerian officials.

Various investigations have exposed a \$180 million dollar slush fund that has been used for backhanded deals with senior Nigerian figures.

The company directly involved in the scam, Kellogg Brown and Root (KBR), has been under pressure since journalists uncovered financial irregularities last year, but this is the first time the company has admitted any liability.

The end product of the deals is said to have been construction rights to a \$6 billion gas refinery. Handled by London Lawyer Jeffrey Tesler, the fund is said to have lined the pockets of ex-Nigerian oil minister Dan Entente by around \$2.5 million, and ex-KBR chairman Albert Stanley by \$5 million. The payments,

which took place when US chief Dick Cheney was still in charge at Halliburton, are being investigated by French authorities.

Although the company has blamed Stanley for the incident, questions have been raised over how the disappearance of \$180 million of company funds could go entirely unnoticed by the notoriously fastidious Dick Cheney.

Investigations into the payments, which took place in 1999, have alleged bribes of this kind to be illegal under international law, leaving Cheney open to indictment proceedings as ex CEO of the company. Halliburton have denied they are illegal.

The SEC have filed suit to investigate KBR's funds more thoroughly, and have subpoenaed various company employees, including Stanley. Interestingly, they appear to have uncovered even this early on a series of other dodgy deals,

with a Nigerian fertiliser plant receiving particular mention.

While KBR's stock has dipped following the revelations, Halliburton's stock has continued in bullish form, setting a 52-week high the day Bush and Cheney regained office.

In separate developments

- Halliburton are also in the frame over its alleged involvement in the theft of radioactive substances from the Nigerian government in 2002. These were retrieved from Germany in October of this year after the Nigerian Government placed a ban on the oil group taking further contracts (a move condemned by the US).
- Kellogg Brown and Root are current favourites to take on the \$4billion contract for building Britain's next two aircraft carriers.

Feature

Assisting suicide

For the terminally ill, the right to die in the manner of their own choosing is fundamental, argues Stuart Hartill

A chronically ill 66 year old has finally been allowed leave to travel abroad to Switzerland to fulfil her wish to die. After a high court battle against the 1961 suicide act, which imposes a fourteen year jail sentence on aiding and abetting suicide, Mr and Mrs Z were allowed to take the trip at the end of last month.

Mrs Z died on the 1st December, leaving her husband of 45 years. She had an incurable brain condition. The right to commit suicide is an issue which touches people all over the world, but this particular case has made huge headlines in Britain.

Excuse me for saying so, but for a while now I've thought that sometimes we anarchists get so up our own arses with the exotic issues that we forget about the bread and butter stuff which affects all ordinary people. That's sad, because in the process we miss the chance to communicate to them the common sense of anarchism.

All that reading up on the Situationists or the Spanish Civil War, all those nights in the warehouse you were turning into a resource centre (well, both of them until the electricity was cut off and you had to go home to play your rent-a-rebel CD collection) – corporate capitalists must be quaking in their sweatshop-made fashion footwear.

From my research into, and the odd experience of, effective campaigns a common theme emerges. There's an emphasis on looking and listening to where things are rather than trying to bolt on a solution from another culture and another time, because people can come up with imaginative ways to combat oppression which are specific to their own time and place.

But the way in which that oppression works, and most people's knowledge and concern about it, is centred on things like lack of half-decent health care, houses and schools. Because too often that concern is only represented by middle class views in the media, we can also make the mistake of thinking they are only middle class concerns, or that only middle class people come up with alternatives.

Not so.

I know, for example, of Colin Ward's excellent historical reclamation work on anarchists and housing, which started well before squatting and temporary autonomous zones went on every trustafarian's 'to do' list. Until I read that, I was simply unaware of the ways in which working class families in the 1940s took on the new welfare state in a battle over autonomy centred on decent housing, or of how fast the dream of homes for workers degenerated into nightmare estates of identikit hovels where you couldn't even decide what

colour your front door should be.

Perhaps similarly we should start thinking about care of the dying. It is something we all have to deal with at some point, and seems like a reasonable test of how civilised any society is.

But then, as freethinking anarchists, no priest, no judge and no civil servant is going to tell us how to live or die, are they?

Actually, they do dictate how we die, and they can do that because we are social animals, and nothing we do happens without impacting socially.

Actually (to give a specific example of how this oppression works) if you die by your own hand or with assistance there's the very real chance that some hairy-knuckled plod will tear your house apart in an effort to put your loved ones away for it. That's what happened to friends of mine simply because they talked about the issue before one of them died.

So forget about dying at the barricades and let's get real about this: many of us are destined to die painfully, soaked in our own piss and shit in a private or local authority nursing home, mostly understaffed by underpaid women. If we're going to do better than that by ourselves, our families and our mates we need to think about it fast.

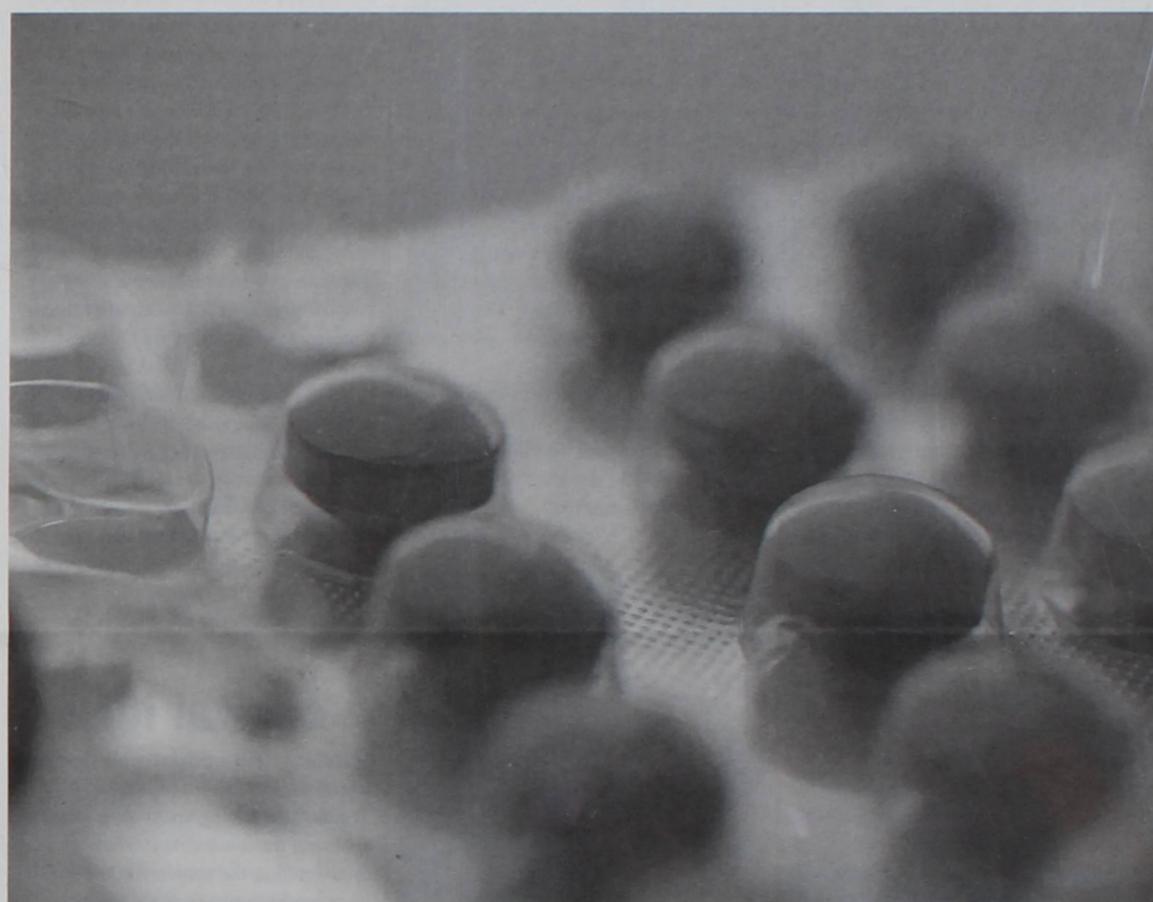
What has sparked me off is my involvement in the Manx Death With Dignity campaign, which is seeking the right for terminally ill people on the Isle of Man (a 'self-governing' British dependency) to request help to die, subject to suitably stiff safeguards. Our campaign kicked off a 21st century series which has spread throughout the British Isles and eventually even stirred the UK parliament into looking at the issue again.

Despite working in both private and public healthcare in the past, I'd never really thought about the assisted dying issue before agreeing to help a terminally ill environmentalist mate run one last campaign, and to keep it going if he died before it was over.

In my time in the NHS I knew doctors often surreptitiously helped an old person out of their pain with a morphine-based mixture called a 'Brompton Cocktail', and it was never talked about, never recorded as a conscious medical decision to help someone die, etc.

Similarly, I've known for years that a certain kind of bod with an aristocratic disdain for the law is always prepared to quietly assist an individualistic mate to pop their clogs when the pain gets too much. It amuses me that these folk are rumoured to typically be genteel old ladies, rather than stereotypical 'anarchists', by the way.

It has taken this campaign to make me think about care of the terminally ill properly in connection with anarchist



principles – or at least to start looking for some connection. In particular, the way in which we meekly hand over care of the dying to 'public private partnerships' such as the hospice movement – a nasty little scam cooked up between religious freaks and free market vultures whose real motives and methods are hidden from public view by clever use of charitable status.

As you'd expect, the resulting public debate over here proved that religious bigots don't like anyone deciding their own fate, doctors don't like being asked to explain what they do behind closed doors without consulting patients, and politicians can't think about anything unless there's a brown envelope being waved under their noses. That much we took for granted.

On the other hand, as it happens, even in a place regarded throughout the world as a redneck backwater most of the population, when asked, thought a change of law to allow dying people some choice was a reasonable idea. Newspaper and television polls, radio phone-ins, petitions and submissions to a Manx government select committee on introducing an assisted dying act all show around 80% support for change.

To me that proves yet again that ordinary people have more sense than 'professional' activists credit them with. I must be honest, having battled with sickening racism, sexism and homophobia here for years I would not have credited them myself eighteen months ago.

Some things did surprise me though.

Until this campaign I lazily wrote off the local hospice as little more than a private nursing home with delusions of grandeur – where fat Rotarians go to die because they're too snobbish to conk out next to their employees in an NHS bed. I just thought that if bosses want to die alone and unwanted while priests and hospital administrators root through their wallets, fine.

But there's more to it than that.

Firstly, on the Isle of Man, the government doesn't provide any other facility for the terminally ill, and not much for the elderly. They save money to subsidise the tax dodgers who directly or indirectly keep most of the population in work by paying the hospice to look after the terminally ill and poorly supervised private nursing homes to look after the rest.

In turn the hospice saves money by paying core staff below NHS rates, like the private nursing homes, and getting volunteers to do the rest. Then the hospice raises money, as I see it firstly by only appearing to have spare beds for those who will them large sums, secondly by encouraging firms with a poor public image to 'donate' money which can be clawed back in tax relief, and thirdly by rattling collecting buckets at the public. Of course, this isn't easily provable because as a private firm their methods and finances aren't scrutinised by any government committee, and as a Manx charity they don't have to publish accounts or, in a

broader sense, to account to anyone except the Attorney General anyway.

The more I think about it, the more I see how professionally managed 'voluntary sector' leeches invent needs and play on emotions to avoid us thinking clearly about how they act. Because it is done by a charity, not 'the government', our critical defences are down. Then they can go about their 'fundraising' to build institutions we don't need, where we hand over our loved ones to die instead of trying to work out more humane communal ways to cope with their ill health and inevitable death.

We're stuck between guilt that we aren't doing our 'duty' to families and the realisation that we're so busy overworking to pay bills (including the nursing home, of course) that we can't stay at home to care for them anyway. Meanwhile, they strike a quiet deal with some contractor to vastly overprice the work, cop most of the cash off us as charity or government grants, then split the difference.

Frankly, though this campaign has set me thinking about questions I should have asked years ago, I don't have many answers yet. I write this hoping that other anarchists will also be moved to start thinking about it, and to provoke a debate which until now seems to have been confined to genteel retired schoolmistresses and their like, and who I'm beginning to think are far closer to Emma Goldman's ideals than us flag-waving poseurs!

Editorial

In the recent Queen's speech proposals were outlined to deal with crime, drugs and anti-social behaviour. The Government think that by making us scared they can justify taking away what little freedom we have claiming that they are doing it to 'protect' us. The solutions that the Government want to see implemented involve tougher policing and harsher punishment. However these measures don't tackle the real problems or the cause of crime in fact they inflame them. Anti-social Behaviour Orders (ASBOs) have been heralded as a way to solve the problems plaguing working class communities. All they really do though is further isolate people from each other.

The alienation that we all face on a day-to-day basis has not been created recently by these new laws; it has existed for years and is inherent in the system that we live under. People can't afford houses in the areas where they work so they are forced to live miles away and commute. People know who's sleeping with who and the entire life history of characters in Eastenders or some other soap but don't have any idea what their next door neighbour's name is.

Police, oppressive laws and CCTV can never solve our problems. The only way we can fight against anti-social behaviour is to build community solidarity. This can be done by organising social and cultural events. Working towards a level of community where we have face-to-face relationships with the people who live on our streets. If we know each other then this artificially created fear disappears. When you're walking down the streets at night and you see a group of youths hanging out is it going to be as frightening if you know they are Bob and Jane's kids from down the road? If we all know each other are people going to be as likely to act in a way that is damaging to the community?

Of course this level of community will not appear overnight it will take long sustained hard work to make it happen. Whilst we are doing this we are still faced with the immediate problem of anti-social behaviour. We have to take action to directly confront the problems we are facing. Organising walks around your local areas at night in large groups can help people feel safe. Start a dialogue with people who are causing trouble and trying to come to a solution that benefits everyone. Instead of forcing teenagers out of an area because they are causing trouble campaign for better youth facilities so they have something productive they can do. Engage all members of the community in clean up and regeneration projects. This way people take pride in their neighbourhood and won't want to act in a way, which disintegrates it. Examples of this sort of action are springing up all over the place. In Oxford people from the Greater Leys estate found out the park where a gang of kids would meet before threatening and assaulting people. The local residents then served the park with an 'eviction notice' and picketed the entrance. In Manchester they have regular anti-mugging patrols.

These are things that can be done in every community by ordinary people. It is not just important that we do these things but imperative. We need strong communities, which can protect themselves and run their own lives without having to rely on anyone else to do it for them.

We have a feature article about Anti-Social Behaviour Orders coming up in the new year!

Commentary

Wee news

I have been a reader of Freedom since the age of 17. I am now 70 and I am delighted at the direction you are trying to take the paper. I also note your frequent requests for articles but have never felt up to writing anything specifically for Freedom. I have however attached a wee free handout that I do on a monthly basis*, please feel free to use anything you may find worth printing. I would also like to add that my small article on poverty in Britain was out on the street a week or so before I received my copy of Freedom, just in case you think I'm pinching your thunder.

John Couzin.

* For a copy email ann_arky@btinternet.com

A nit-pick!

It's always upsetting when good photos are not used with *maximum* effect.

The cop 'batoning' a protester (13th November, page 5) is a case in point. The intended victim was *not* on the public highway, but a resident standing in her front garden, intending to record events in front of her home. This is clearly shown if the complete photo is used. I've seen postcards that, incredibly, remove the bottom of this same print, so missing out this crucial evidence! I attach the full photo. Could I recommend you use the 'fuller' version in the future?

Bob Potter



The Bookfair

I'd like to use your pages to pass on my thanks to the Bookfair organisers for sorting out another top day at the University of London Union. Once again, it was a well-attended and positive event – and the meetings I went to were excellent. My opinion's shared by the many people I spoke to on the day and subsequently. Well done!

However, I'd like to raise two things. Firstly, numbers were a bit down this year. I suspect that the lack of the usual stickers and flyposting left a few people unaware it was on. On a sadder note I think that if possible it would be better to have the Bookfair somewhere else next year. The behaviour of the ULU security staff in the evening left much to be desired. When those attending the Bookfair put several thousand pounds behind the ULU bar, and spent many hundreds of pounds on food there, one would expect that the event staff at the venue would not act like the worst sort of authoritarian. I hope that should the Bookfair return to ULU the organisers take ULU to task to ensure that this year's nonsense is not repeated.

Edward McKenna

Whose crime?

I am startled by the outburst of Sir John Stevens, Commissioner of Police in the great metropolis, advocating retaliatory violence against thieves on your property, even to the extent of endangering their lives, and proposing a loophole in the existing law for the benefit of the householder. Just what we need from a chief cop (soon to hang up his silver buckles).

Perhaps he will also dole out some much needed advice on how we are to deal with thieves of property, usually money, from things like pensions, banks, post offices, handbags, business when they are about to go bust, state funds like expenses for housing allowances which are used to buy and sell properties free of tax, the list goes on and makes one's mind boggle.

It does not appear to enter his awareness, or that of lesser mortals, that the crimes allegedly being perpetrated by the young against society are but a mirror of the greater crimes being perpetrated by those so-called paragons who profess to lead us but diddle us by stealth and, if we get suspicious, claim confidentiality as an excuse for no scrutiny by the great unwashed.

I will be watching John's face in the pensioners' queue at the local council office, with his questionnaire from the DWP like a labourer's Burke's Peerage in his hand, waiting his turn to claim help with his rent and council tax, his cap respectfully doffed.

Such would be reality, and camels can go through the eye of needles.

Garry Bradford

A capital idea

Middle age must be a terrible time for Marxists, and, to some extent, Trotskyites: having spent their youth awaiting the inevitable revolution, they discover that the proletariat are far too busy working or watching television to get the uprising started. To those of us who have surpassed dialectical materialism, this is no great surprise: the revolution will not be televised, and it will not be led by any particular social class.

So, what becomes of these disillusioned revolutionaries? Well, many of them become reactionaries (by which I mean counter-revolutionaries) and get jobs in politics or (their former nemesis) big business. They begin, at first, to criticise the working classes for being lazy and/or inept – in short, their former idols are 'sell-outs' and have lost out on the chances they had for radical change. Now, the only chance of improving the common lot is through the deregulation of industry, through a 'stakeholder' democracy and private financing of public services.

Does this sound familiar? It's very New Labour, isn't it? Not that the mastermind of that insidious cult, Tony Blair, was ever a Marxist. Many of his Cabinet colleagues were, though, and over the Blair years, we have seen many former Trots serving in the most right-wing 'socialist' government Britain has had since ... well, the last Labour government.

Odd how those who, in the past, supposedly objected to 'the markets', eventually fall under their spell. In the town where I live, the MP is an ex-Trot and is a born-again believer in capitalism. I won't mention any names (clue: he's the Duchy of Lancaster), but suffice to say he's only interested in what politics can do for him.

Apparently, he once managed a hippy bookshop called Days Of Hope, though it was more commonly known as Haze Of Dope. Maybe what they say about cannabis – that it rots your brain – is true, but the same thing could be said for Trotskyism.

James Doran

There's one DIY space in the UK where you can get zines like: **Slug & Lettuce, Profane Existence, Maximum Rock n Roll, Heartattack, and R.T.B.**, music from labels like: **Broken Rekids, Active, Skuld, Havoc, Malarie, Flat Earth and Mortahate**, books from **AK Press, Freedom, Rebel Press, and many others!**

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Want ads

A class struggle anarchist / libertarian communist group is forming in Romford and the surrounding area. To get involved email romfordanarchists@hotmail.com or call 07774 641587 and leave a message.

Hey punx, do you want to part with your old records/tapes/zines or shirts? I'll pay you good prices for good condition items.

Contact Clint on 07780 634884, shortfuserecords@hotmail.com or visit Aldgate Press.

We're looking for short (preferably under two thousand words) histories of radical events, strikes, revolutions, wars, etc., from a libertarian/working class point of view for a people's history web site.

Contact admin@enrager.net or write to us at enrager.net c/o Freedom, 84b Whitechapel High Street, London E1 7QX.

Rilindje Fara e Mirë Bibliotek Projekt (RLP) is a radical non-profit free reference library in Tirana, Albania. If readers would like to donate any radical printed matter, videos, CDs, etc., this would greatly help our project. We have no PC or internet access so we feel very isolated. Contact RLP(A)2, Postfach 256, CH-4142 Muenchenstein, Switzerland.

Roman A. Dogan for RLP-Albania

I've been in communication with Manchester AF about starting a Federation here in Sheffield. We are hoping to set up a meeting to discuss how to build here in Sheffield.

Contact sheffield_anarchists@yahoo.com for more info.

Joe

Trains

page 1

government intervention. NR will take on direct and total control of the network, while the government will oversee the franchise system, timetables and monitoring of performance.

The idea has had mixed reactions, with some welcoming the change and others seeing it as just another attempt to sidestep the problem of placing rolling stock and rail maintenance in separate organisations.

The SRA's dissolving has heartened many, as it has earned a reputation for folding under government agenda and failing to deliver improved services.

There will also be a welcome move to give Scottish and Welsh networks more local autonomy.

However, the moving of this power directly to cabinet control – giving ministers more power over the railways than under nationalisation – has worried passenger, rail safety and union groups.

Approximately 250 jobs will go from the department.

Film

page 7

McCarthyism succeeded thanks to Soviet plotters who found it thoroughly congenial to their aims – a fascinating, if muddled, attempt to disentangle the contradictions of right-wing politics. Unfortunately, the supposedly liberal-left Demme substitutes benign intelligence agencies which only ever use dirty tricks to foil the multinational enemy (I kid you not!) and honourable patriotic Party patricians who have fought corporate takeover for years (yeah, right).

Conspiracies have long been fertile territory for cinema – where the close-up simulation of intimacy renders historical phenomena in individual terms. Action films hysterically mobilise adolescent masculinist muscle in desperate response, whereas at least political thrillers sense the world's complexity. And given that paranoia represents the psychotic underbelly of individualism, parapolitics likewise seductively suggests that humanity's ills result from the hidden agendas of evil elites. Of course the latter exist, and create havoc. But the more difficult truth – that domination is sedimented into the routine material of institutions, discourses, bodies, societies and economies – remains opaque to mainstream media, culture and politics. Both Manchurian Candidates aspire to stir up the murky depths. In their different ways, both fail enjoyably.

www.tomjennings.blueyonder.co.uk

* Author of Winter Kills – which similarly smuggled unusually interesting political speculation into Hollywood (dir. William Richert, 1979).

Quiz answers

1. He said "I say violence is necessary. It is as American as cherry pie" in a 1967 speech.
2. According to revolutionary leader and President Porfirio Diaz, to be so far from God and so close to the United States.
3. She called it a "cultural Chernobyl". Ballard said he preferred to think of it as a "cultural Stalingrad".
4. One for giving information which is definitely true, the other for passing on material taken without checking from someone else.

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REVIEW

At the British Museum this winter, badges mean more than in the real world, writes Richard Griffin

Walking to this small exhibition at the British Museum in my lunch hour I noticed just how few people were wearing badges. In fact I only saw one, a man who had a bright orange badge saying 'Star'. This, if it had been in the Status Symbols exhibition, would have been exhibited in the case marked 'Badges for the sake of badges', distinguishing it from the other badges on display which have a purpose, mostly political although some like the famous Blue Peter badge denoting that the wearer belongs to a club.

Before I had a chance to see this though I got lost. I'm always doing this: assuming I know where somewhere is, marching off with purpose only to be completely and utterly wrong. Where I thought the badges exhibition was, was instead a display of the paintings and sketches collected by the Evening Standard film critic Alexander Walker, donated to the museum after his death last year. This was seriously good. If you were put off by the admission charge at recent

London exhibitions of modern art by Philip Guston, Lucian Freud or Bridget Riley this is a chance to catch work by them and others including Miro and Hockney for free. As a quick sweep through post war contemporary British and American art this is hard to beat. It is always worth getting lost in the British museum!

Eventually though I found the badge exhibition, tucked away in room 69a in the coin section (for the record: up the main stairs and turn right). As an accessory badges are pretty equalitarian, a cheap way to express your self and your beliefs. They have been around for a couple of centuries. This exhibition though concentrates on modern badges with a heavy emphasis on politics. In one case you will find a classic circled 'A' anarchist badge (helpful museum explanation: "anarchists do not believe in any form of government"), next to a 'Don't Vote It Only Encourages Them' badge from the US. More disturbingly are examples of badges extolling 'white power', almost next to a Black Panthers one.

Badges can make powerful statements

whether about sexual orientation (an SM one: 'My Pleasure, My Pain, My Choice'), particular events ('Stuff the Jubilee'), war ('No war for Oil') or national identity ('I'm Backing Britain'). Some have little meaning but would please a Situationist ('Give Peas a Chance' or 'Rights for Fruit Flies'). Some badges can define a generation. In the early 1980s it seemed that almost everyone I knew wore a CND badge or a 'Don't Blame Me, I didn't vote Tory' one. Others like the Blue Peter one or the old craft union ones are more exclusive and elitist: not everyone can get into the club. While worn by individuals badges can also give us a sense of belonging.

Most badges you see people wearing today fall into the last category in the exhibition: badges for the sake of badges. Not political statements, no proud announcement of identity or group affiliation, just personal adornments, no more important than a cuff link or tie. This says a lot about modern society I guess. While Stop the War badges are displayed I think it is fair to say outside of universities very few people wore



them. On the train home that evening though I did notice most of the railway workers had RMT badges on. They certainly seemed happy to announce that they were union members.

If you are in London pop along to the British Museum and check both the

badge and the Alexander Walker bequest exhibitions out. Make sure you ask directions first though!

Status Symbols: Identity and Belief on Modern Badges, British Museum, London, until 16th January 2005. Free.

FILM

Jonathan Demme's *The Manchurian Candidate* effectively updates John Frankenheimer's classic 1962 Cold War conspiracy thriller – with Gulf rather than Korean War veterans brainwashed into becoming political moles and assassins by corporate, not Russian,

agents. Given the present War on Terror and the better-understood amoral criminality of the military-industrial complex (as well as the prevalence of government via mythology, mystification and spin), these revisions seem appropriate – as do

the science-fictional (but only just!) electronic surgical implants replacing good old-fashioned behavioural conditioning. The unfolding plot (in both senses) shows the Army bureaucrat (Denzel Washington in Frank Sinatra's role) and Vice

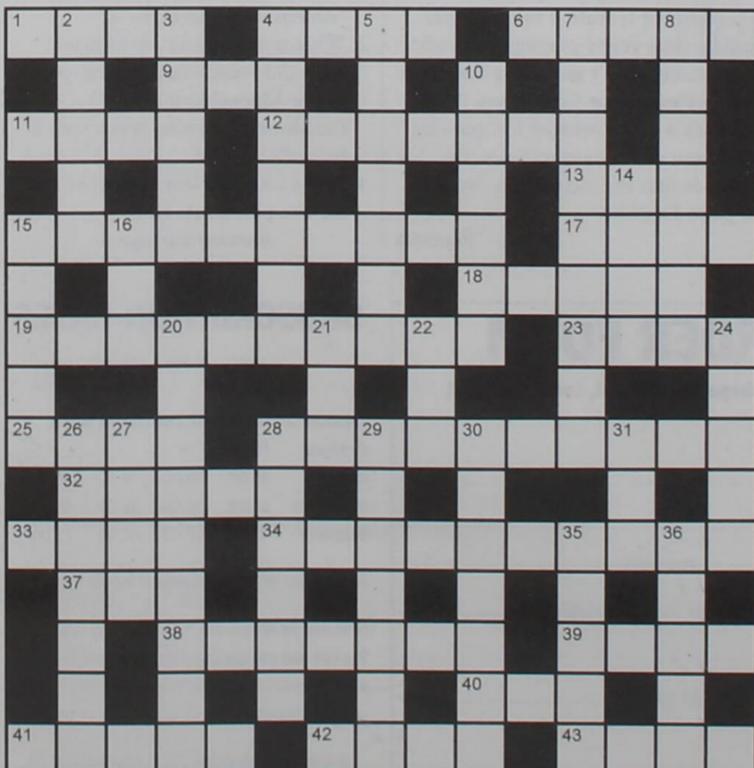
Presidential candidate (Liev Shreiber for Laurence Harvey) gradually resisting their 'Gulf War Syndrome' zombification amid manipulation by Shreiber's Senator mother (Meryl Streep) and sundry political, big business and media masterminds,

crooks, lobbyists, lackeys and lickspittles.

However, while the new denouement is very neat, we lose much of the political sharpness of the source novel by Richard Condon,* wherein

➔ page 6, column 5

PRIZE CROSSWORD BY BJARNI



- ACROSS**
- 1 I try to get in the same place (4)
 - 4 Able to return to Napoleon's prison island (4)
 - 6 Lola leaves distraught alcoholic for Marx brother (5)
 - 9 Outfit to manipulate unscrupulously (3)
 - 11 Naked Witness (4)
 - 12 Leave a rum turn before I find edible freshwater fish (7)
 - 13 Tit is nothing to get your teeth into! (3)
 - 15 Censor text by expurgation and so bewilder uneasily (10)
 - 17 Transmitted by speech in free for all (4)
 - 18 Without illumination until improper (5)
 - 19 Union members only in give-away after time is called! (6,4)
 - 23 Persist in use to repair shoes? (4)
 - 25 Newborn star in Sukarno vagaries (4)
 - 28 Freedom readers chain Tsars excitedly (10)
 - 32 Heathen contained by propagandā (5)
 - 33 Combine together to make primer

- for bomb? (4)
 - 34 Rotten Peel sent round protest missive intended for public readership (4, 6)
 - 37 Lenin isn't in, he's found (3)
 - 38 Aircraft pilot scores six in compromised cardiac artery (7)
 - 39 Recompensed for wage-slavery derived from a dip (4)
 - 40 Air about Provos (1,1,1)
 - 41 Comic Mark's iron alloy (5)
 - 42 Revolutionary socialist horse's gait? (4)
 - 43 Wets' reversal for scouse (4)
- DOWN**
- 2 Feast for Dennis the Menace's comic (5)
 - 3 Fear of Rasta locks? (5)
 - 4 Donald's Professor Free-Range the bald intellectual! (7)
 - 5 Nasty, this, and short – lacking human responsiveness (7)
 - 7 The masses hop and oil twice in revolution! (3,6)
 - 8 Rural Indian cooking fuel – perhaps swop cat around (7)
 - 10 Stop sleeping – it's that kind of call! (4,2)

- 14 Atmosphere rising under a song for solo voice (4)
- 15 Salted back and sides of hog for philosopher who expounded inductive reasoning (5)
- 16 Global trade rules enforcer for world in tow unfairly (1,1,1)
- 20 Actor's alias has identical agent confused inside (5-4)
- 21 Our local star, a tasteless daily publication (3)
- 22 Belonging to us for sixty minutes, we hear (3)
- 24 New cops' stun-gun rates badly (5)
- 26 Luxurious for the rich – no let up in disorder (7)
- 27 Container for flower display in Geneva settlement (4)
- 28 I am one deriving isolation due to lack of social control (6)
- 29 Rate bet differently for helper (7)
- 30 I follow public relations in religious fad to find perpetrator (7)
- 31 Group that's become solid? (3)
- 35 Pat rising as Spanish bar snacks emerge (5)
- 36 Class enjoying superior economic status in level items (5)

Horoscopes

What will the next year bring for Freedom readers? MaJick John tells all in his 2005 annual Horoscopes.

Aries

(21st March-19th April)

You want a change in your life. Unfortunately the transition to 2005 will not bring this for you. Apart from initially forgetting to change the year whenever you write the date for the first few weeks, your dreary existence will continue very much as before.

Taurus

(20th April-20th May)

Taureans are highly concerned with personal wealth. However since Freedom filters out all subscribers from bourgeois areas we know that your personal 'wealth' is largely contained in your labour power. That's right: your ability to work. And let's be honest: you're a no-good slacker. With a bad attitude. And no skills. Mate - it's not looking good.

Gemini

(21st May-21st June)

2005 will be a year of great intellectual growth for you. In March you finally realise you should put your trousers on before your shoes, and daily life instantly becomes less of a struggle.

Cancer

(22nd June-22nd July)

Next winter you will be drenched with water by a driver who thought it would be amusing to soak your hippy arse by driving through a huge puddle outside your squat. That evening you find yourself not being immediately spurned by all members of the opposite sex, and it slowly dawns on you that maybe, just maybe you should start to shower.

Leo

(23rd July-22nd August)

One drunken evening, well into dusk, you and a comrade arguing the relative merits of anarcho-communism and anarcho-syndicalism in modern Britain will be struck by the Earth-shattering revelation that they are in fact exactly the same. Fortunately however you will have forgotten this by morning, much in the same way as when you dream you discover the meaning of life, but come the next day you can't quite put your finger on what it was... But hey at least the other people in your Federation will still talk to you.

Virgo

(23rd August-22nd September)

A few days into the new year, living in Paris, you leave the Dyelo Truda group. You concoct a plan to gain entry to the Soviet Union by writing articles implying sympathy with the regime. You get a strange sensation you are living out the last year in the life of Peter Arshinov, but shake off the doubts as you cross into the USSR and help organise anarchist groups. As you are taken to be executed you realise you should have listened to them.

Libra

(23rd September-23rd October)

2005 will bring many great things for you. After a fun-filled New Year break you will find a computer error has tripled your wages and redefined your job description to underwear-appraiser for the stars. You get off with the trophy partner of the editor of a well-known trendy lifestyle magazine and get whisked around the world on their Lear jet, snorting cocaine with Chomsky and spreading the word of libertarian communism across the globe. (What a happy coincidence: I'm a Libra! - Ed)

Scorpio

(24th October-21st November)

Your brief spring dalliance with a Trotskyist group of paedononces ends as swiftly as it began after an argument about R. Kelly takes a nasty turn.

Sagittarius

(22nd November-21st December)

You will finally find the solution to world hunger, poverty, boredom and alienation which has always been just around the corner. Then you'll discover the secret to cold fusion and a cure for AIDS before, in a cruel twist of fate, being caught by some hungry escaped piranha in the Thames and eaten alive before you got to tell anyone.

Capricorn

(22nd December-19th January)

Your dreads begin to fuse together as the year begins. As the months pass and interconnections spread, covalent bonds form between billions upon billions of dread molecules, as faint chemical and static electrical impulses begin to course their way across the surface. By winter your lone uber-dread has become self-aware. Upon gaining intelligence it decides to get itself a haircut.

Aquarius

(20th January-18th February)

Your next year's experiment in free love will find you 2m inside the perimeter of Lakenheath, legs akimbo and pants around your ankles when you realise that Poison Ivy isn't just an affectionate horticultural nickname...

Pisces

(19th February-20th March)

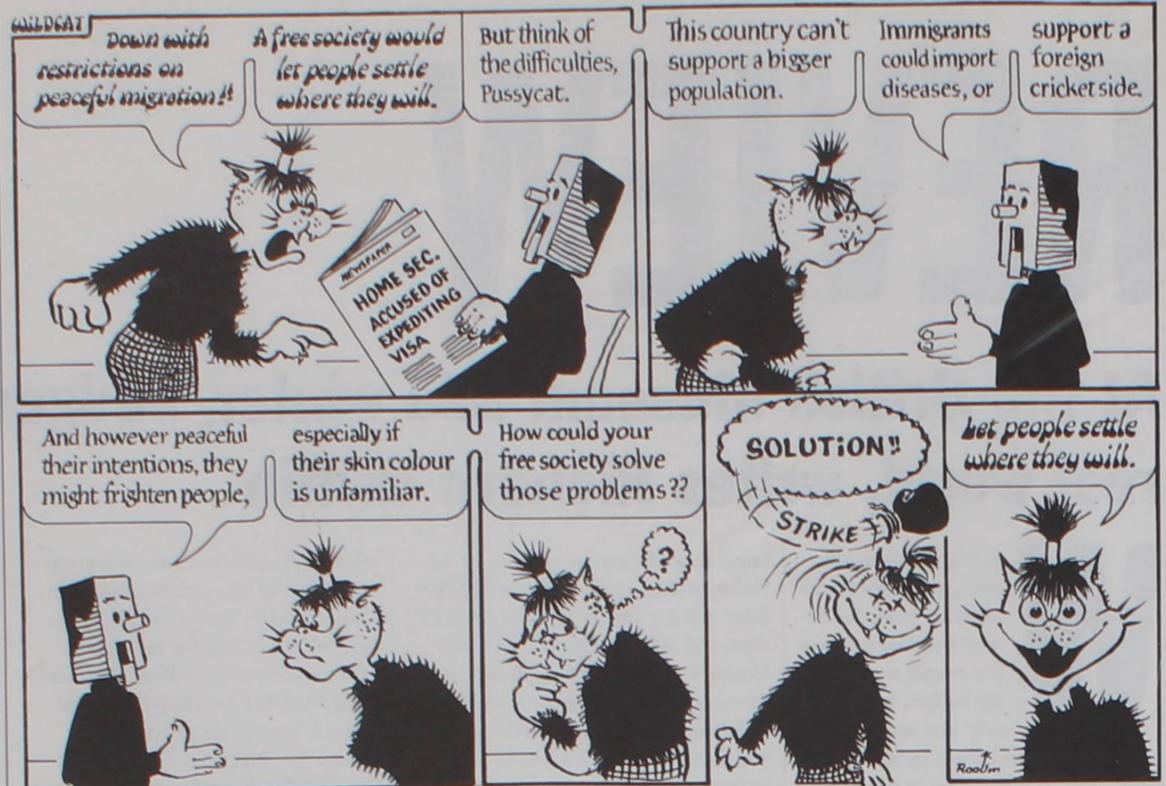
At work next year, with Jupiter rising in the fourth quadrant, you will be exploited by a tall, dark character masquerading as a friend. With the guise of helping you he in will in fact get you to work for him, while only paying you a small fraction of the value of your labour, keeping the surplus for himself and expanding his empire of control.

2

Number of terrorism convictions as a result of trials brought before a jury since 11th September 2001 in the US.

2

Number of them dismissed due to a 'pattern of mistakes' by the prosecution.



A sideways look

It's been remarked to me a couple of times recently, that though the political content of Freedom is improving, the spelling and grammar are slipping. Given the choice, that's the way round I'd want it, but there are serious reasons why an anarchist paper should try to get its spelling and grammar right. Most important of these is that it's in the business of communication and needs to be understood by its target audience. This is particularly true if you're writing for anyone whose first language isn't English - if they need to look up a word in a dictionary it helps if you've spelt it right.

There's another principle at work as well - which is that people who can't spell or use incomprehensible grammar often have things to say that should be heard. If I fell into this category, I'd expect the editors to correct these mistakes and talk it through with me. Freedom is written for public consumption, so it should be comprehensible. It can vary certain of the 'rules' of grammar quite happily, so long as it remains understandable to its readers. It's the corollary (and yes, I had to look that one up) of criticising elitist language for excluding people.

Why is this an issue? The recent Tomlinson report into the future of A-levels talked a lot about standards of literacy and numeracy. The government has already indicated it will go along with elements of the report and introduce a broader diploma.

This in itself sounds like a good thing. A broader education is beneficial to those studying, and Britain has long forced its students to specialise at a far earlier age than anyone in Europe. Naturally, it's being done for the wrong reasons - it's in

response to the needs of employers, not the needs of individuals to have more chances and lead more fulfilled lives. But it is a step in the right direction.

The input of the employers' organisations has been mainly to whinge on about declining standards. They are shocked that some people spell as badly and consistently as Shakespeare. And in an age which values speed of communication over accuracy (witness text messaging, or rolling 24 hour news) it is at least partly true. But while you would expect a journalist or librarian to be literate, a high standard of literacy isn't really necessary for a gas fitter. He can talk about the Worcester boiler he's fitting, spell it Wooster or Worster and no one really minds so long as he's fitted it right.

The bosses moan that there aren't enough literate, numerate workers. As is usual when they say something, it's not the whole story.

I am a literate, numerate worker (with all sorts of other skills). I want a different job. As far as I know, I'm not even blacklisted. But can I find any? What these employers really want is a highly educated workforce prepared to work for peanuts. This is one of the drives behind moving jobs that require intellectual work abroad.

And it's not as if the bosses themselves can do it. My Head of Department recently sent out a memo to all staff that was full of spelling and grammar mistakes - and our management is stuffed full of upper middle class rugby-playing types who presumably didn't go to Bog Standard Comprehensive or Crap Town Poly. Still, it's a useful wheeze for ignoring what you don't want to do on the grounds that the instructions weren't in plain English.

Svartfrosk

Blast from the Past

From Freedom, 13th December 1947. A letter from a German anarchist appealing for assistance from British comrades:

"Who today care about us, who have been in prisons and concentration camps for many years? We are being ignored, we are being sabotaged, and silence envelopes us and everything libertarian. Beautiful, cheap speeches are made, which do not oblige anybody to do anything, while we die of starvation. The Nazi criminals in their camps receive far better food than we.

Since 1918 I have stood in the front line as an anti-militarist and free socialist, was imprisoned several times between 1922 and 1933, had my house searched time and time again. From 1934 to 1936 I was in prison and concentration camp. In 1939 I was imprisoned again because of illegal activities and refusal of military service, followed by transfer to Dachau, where I was liberated only in 1945.

Today, I sit in a freezing room without any fuel, without food, and starve even more that during the concentration camp years. My nerves are finished...

We don't need kind words, but food to keep alive. We have no socks and our shoes are falling apart."

S.F. Frieburg

The quiz

1. According to US Black Power leader H. Rap Brown, what was as "American as cherry pie"?
2. What was Mexico's misfortune?
3. How did French theatre director Ariane Mnouchkine describe Eurodisney, and what was writer J.G. Ballard's riposte?
4. In the Choctaw language what are the two past tenses for?

Answers on page 6

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