

# FREEDOM

80P ANARCHIST NEWS AND VIEWS

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## BA WILDCAT

**A** two-day wildcat strike by baggage handlers fighting the mass sacking of 667 catering workers at troubled company Gate Gourmet has ended with all 1,000 staff back at work as of 12th August.

On Monday 8th, two hundred staff met in the factory canteen to discuss their rejection of a new deal enforcing longer hours and making delivery drivers pay for their own petrol. Managers allegedly locked them in for four hours without access to toilet facilities having been unable to make them go back to work.

A 100-person picket came out in protest the next day, and they were sacked after a ten minute ultimatum to get back to work. Others were dismissed by megaphone later in the company car park, while workers on holiday or maternity leave had P45s posted through their letterboxes. Their final pay packets were also docked.

On 10th August, the wildcat strike began. Members of the tight-knit community, based largely around Heathrow, who worked in baggage handling, came out to highlight both the nature of the sackings and accompanying attacks on wages and conditions at the in-flight catering company.

Gate Gourmet have been looking to cut staff for over a year, as the continuing drive by airlines such as BA to reduce flight costs impacts on revenues. The problem was compounded in March by the loss of major customer Virgin Atlantic.

As a result, negotiations over possible wage cuts and job losses have been on-

going, though not successful, with the TGWU. A spokesperson for Gate Gourmet said: "Earlier this year Gate Gourmet UK management had agreed to a deal because the TGWU Regional Organiser informed them that he could secure a 'yes' vote in a ballot in June. However, the staff heavily voted against the union's own recommended proposal."

A secondary plan has also been in the works, as boss Eric Born set up a new recruitment company, Versa Logistics, in January, hiring scab labour from Eastern Europe to undercut existing staff. Born is the sole member of the Versa board and has admitted its primary function is as a strikebreaking service.

A spokesman said "Versa was set up early this year due to the threat of imminent strike action. It was important to have a contingency plan."

He and company CEO David Segal are already well known anti-union figures in Texas.

BA have complained that staff demand overtime for working outside their remit, and that productivity is low. Nevertheless, the average full time wage for Gate Gourmet's UK workforce in London is just £13,000 per annum – largely because of the overtime payments – and productivity has not significantly changed since the company was bought by Texas Pacific in 2002 from Swiss Air for an estimated £441m.

BA originally owned the company, but spun it off for £65m in 1997. The company has revenues of £1.06bn



and 22,000 employees. Gate Gourmet lost £22m in 2004 and looks set to lose £25m this year, and hopes to save £8m from the cuts. However, the original hoped-for figure earlier this year was £14m, suggesting that cuts will continue in other sectors of

the business.

Tony Woodley, chairman of the TGWU, said: "It is Classic American-style union busting."

The two day strike is estimated to have delayed up to 300,000 people and cost BA up to £40m. BA have hired private

investigators to find out whether the TGWU helped the strikers in any way, which would make them liable for a costly law suit as both unofficial striking and secondary picketing are illegal in the UK.

Rob Ray

## 3-WEEK HUNGER STRIKE

**A** group of Ugandan refugees are into their third week of hunger strikes in protest at proposals to deport them. Thirty women are involved in the protest, at Yarl's Wood in Bedfordshire, which they hope will persuade the government they are serious about the danger they would be put in if they were sent back.

One woman said: "Despite Uganda being cited as one of the safer and more stable African countries, we were raped, beaten, imprisoned and then forced to flee for our lives. If we are returned, our lives will be in great danger."

"People who have been deported to Uganda have been taken into detention

and disappeared."

Reports have emerged of poor treatment at the centre. Women in Yarl's Wood are being prevented from sending faxes about their legal case to support groups (faxes are free, unlike phone calls).

Managers have said women can only contact their lawyers, but many have no lawyer and need help finding one or getting a second legal opinion.

Rape survivors have also been prevented from contacting Black Women's Rape Action Project and Women Against Rape, depriving them of specialist help that may have a direct bearing on whether the legal case that is made to the authorities on their behalf is accurate and complete.

Women are also facing other harassment, according to Legal Action for Women. A spokesperson said: "Male guards entered the room of Harriet Anyangokolo, the spokeswoman for the hunger strikers, late at night without knocking, once when she was in her underwear and once when she was naked. Ms Anyangokolo was so traumatised

by this, as it brought back memories of the rape she suffered while in detention in Uganda, that she attempted suicide.

Many of the women are HIV positive, and face uncertain medical provision if sent away, but will nevertheless be removed if the hunger strikes fail. A hunger striker said: "Home Office assurances that medical treatment is available to people with AIDS who are deported, are not true. Just the tests alone cost the average monthly wage of a civil servant and we don't even have jobs or housing to return to."

A Home Office spokesperson said there had been no complaints to back up the allegations, while Yarl's Wood staff said to the BBC: "Everyone's needs are being taken care of and there is no question of people not being looked after properly." Yarl's Wood is run by a private company, GSL UK Ltd.

For more information contact: Legal Action for Women, Crossroads Women's Centre, PO Box 287, London NW6 5QU, Tel 020 7482 2496 minicom/voice, Fax 020 7209 4761; 07958 152 171, email: law@crossroadswomen.net

## TESCO TEMPS

**T**esco has faced protests across three countries in solidarity with striking temporary workers at their Greenhill Distribution Centre in Dublin. UK activists organised pickets at more than half a dozen stores in Liverpool, London, Oxford, Nottingham, Belfast, Glasgow and Leeds, reporting widespread support from shoppers and staff for the action, as well hostility toward Tesco and temping in general. Further actions were planned from the 10th to 12th August in the Polish towns of Gdansk, Poznan and Warsaw.

The dispute centres on Tesco's exploitation of Polish workers employed through the Grafton Recruitment Agency. The supermarket chain used the carrot of permanent contracts and the stick of threatening instant dismissal to force workers to adhere to ever increasing production targets. Workers organising as the 'Committee of Defence of Temp Workers in Tesco' protested to management, only for two workers – Radek Sawicki and Zbyszek Bukala – to be fired. Protesters are demanding their reinstatement, along with equal pay for

temporary workers and in-house contracts after three months work.

The Liverpool picket, carried out by Polish ex-agency workers and T&G members, carried a banner reading: "We can change this situation. We're fighting for improvement now! Let's not allow ourselves to be exploited by employment agencies."

Elsewhere, Glasgow Tesco was picketed by 20 activists under the banner of the Industrial Workers of the World, with the same Hackney store targeted in May Day's Precarity Assembly action once again receiving visitors. One London worker leaving the store told protesters, "I shouldn't be seen talking to you lot here, but I just wanted to say I totally support this".



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# Home and away

## NHS computer risk

The £6bn plan to introduce a nationwide NHS computer system and patient database could be suspended as fears about future funding and support from the initiative amongst local NHS trusts.

Lack of consultation from central government with local chiefs trying to implement the scheme has also led to low morale and disengagement, according to a report from the Department of Public Health.

The database has received heavy criticism from civil rights groups and the left-wing press over its potential for abuse. Anyone who logs on to the system will be able to find out personal details about patients.

Costs are also spiralling, up from £6bn to current projected costs of £30bn by 2015; year on year this will be equivalent to almost half the total government increase in health spending.

## ID cards fingered

The case for ID cards has suffered a setback after the minister in charge of implementing them admitted the £6bn scheme would not prevent terrorism or fraud. Home Office minister Tom McNulty said that the government had exaggerated the benefits of the scheme.

The news comes after similar comments by Charles Clarke, the Home secretary, who said, shortly after the 7/7 bombings, that they would not have been prevented, and a report by senior researchers at the London School of Economics condemning the scheme's inefficiencies.

Phil Booth, from No2ID said: "Mr McNulty's attempt to 'come clean' doesn't change the fact the Home Office is still spending our money to pushing its deceptive ID plan on us."

## Mass act of defiance

Protests against the Serious Organised Crime and Police bill to prohibit unauthorised protests at the houses of parliament have gone extremely badly, with low turnouts and a strong police reaction.

Six were arrested at the protest, which drew around 150 people. Police officers patrolled the square, using stop and search orders to get the names and addresses of anyone who could be a possible protester.

"It's madness," said one woman. "How can you go and kill so many thousands of people [in Iraq] and yet you refuse freedom and democracy here?"

"I cannot comment about that," said one officer.

Brian Haw, who the law was originally aimed at due to his constant daily protests about government policy at the site, was exempted from the ban following a High Court case late last month.

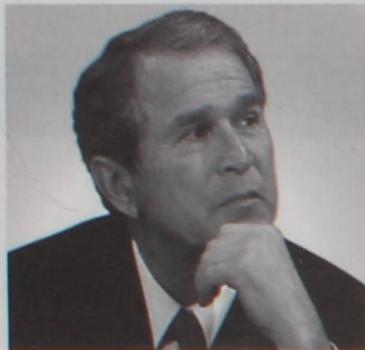
## Bonehead not snakehead

A BNP member has been caught smuggling illegal immigrants into Britain. Ben Boylen, 27, had an Albanian woman inside his car and two of her children hidden in the boot when he was stopped by immigration officials driving off a ferry at Dover.

He was so embarrassed that he told friends in the BNP that he had been smuggling drugs. Boylen pleaded guilty to smuggling three Albanians after initially saying he was giving the woman a lift. He told officers: "Why would I do this? I'm a member of the BNP."

An immigration source said: "He was trying to pass off the woman as his wife but she looked nothing like the passport photo and didn't speak a word of English."

# Around the world



• **ARGENTINA:** Anti-capitalist and autonomous workers groups have issued a call to action for 4th and 5th November, when the US President George W. Bush (pictured above) will be in Argentina to finalise the Free Trade Area of the Americas (ALCA) agreement, at the Organization of American States (OAS). It was a call to action against NAFTA (the north American free trade agreement) that culminated in the EZLN revolution on 1st January 1994 (see Zapata of Mexico by Peter E. Newell, published by Freedom Press).

• **POLAND:** Andrzej Mierzwinski, an activist with Solidarity since 1990, is taking an unprecedented legal action against the union for failing to protect his interests. Mierzwinski was fired from his work at a bakery loading flour after taking medical leave on the advice of his doctor. When he contacted Malopolska Regional Solidarity for support, they said they could not help. A Solidarity leader told Gazeta Wyborcza newspaper that "we came to the conclusion that an employer has the right to fire a worker who was on medical leave so long."

• **IRELAND:** Big Plane Small Axe, the new film by Margareta D'Arcy on the mis-trials of Mary Kelly – the anti-war activist who took an axe to a US aircraft at Shannon airport in January 2003 in protest against US military

presence in Ireland – is now available (from Freedom, or from Margareta D'Arcy, 10 St Bridget's Place Lower, Galway, Ireland, for £11, including postage and packaging).

The film recaptures the rhythm of the trials through the excitement, fear, glee and heartbreak expressed by Mary's family and supporters. Kelly was charged with criminal damage and, after three trials, was sentenced to two years' gaol, suspended. "Every single day, every hour of every day, they have banned the unspeakable subject of the war in Iraq. She's put it back in court and she's



Margareta D'Arcy (right)

defied them to do it. It's now a matter of court record! Three different trials, they haven't put her away, she hasn't apologised for busting their plane!"

As free as a bird!

• **ENGLAND:** Global Women's Strike need support for their continuing Community Anti-War Picket and Open Mic each Wednesday between 5.30 and 7pm, on Parliament Square. Called by women in February 2003, under the theme Invest In Caring Not Killing, the picket "highlights the often hidden struggle women make for the survival of families and communities against war, coups and occupations".

Since 1st August, new legislation (Serious Organised Crime and Police Act) has criminalised peaceful protest in and around Parliament Square. Police can impose draconian conditions on protests including: when and where it

can take place; how long it can last; how many people can attend; how much noise can be made; and the number and size of banners and placards used. GWS said: "We intend to establish that we are a 'continuing' demonstration and are therefore exempt from the new law. Please join us. We appreciate your support."

• **JAPAN:** President Koizumi (pictured below) has stepped down and called a new election in protest at his own political base foiling his plan to privatise Japan Post, the state owned mail network, earlier this month.

Koizumi has been under severe pressure from his own party in recent months, as he tries to impose a stronger neo-liberal policy in the country.

As the election campaign starts, Koizumi has finally caved in to international pressure and will for the first time this year, not be visiting the notorious Yasukuni Shrine shrine in Tokyo, which honors 14 Class-A war criminals responsible for Japan's aggression war against its neighbouring countries.

In other news, Japan has reacted belatedly to the Freidmanite US government's decision to impose steel tariffs on them by banning American tractors and ball bearings.



• **USA:** Indicted at the end of May under the controversial Federal Animal Enterprise Terrorism Act, the SHAC 7 are activists persecuted under the provision of the act which seeks to punish anyone who 'physically disrupts an animal enterprise'. It's not hard to see how and why such wording has come about.

Specifically, the SHAC 7 are alleged to have operated a website reporting on and expressing ideological support for protest activity against HLS and its business affiliates. If convicted, they face a total of 23 years in prison and upwards of \$1.25 million in fines.

Immediately after the indictment a series of rallies and protests began.

Supporters have been following developments in legal proceedings in Trenton (New Jersey) and a defence fund was set up. Source after source, blogs, news reports, websites and print and online campaigns have covered the case and its implications for dissent, the Guerilla News Network (GNN) having been particularly supportive.

Louis Further

# Prison news

## Turin anti-fascists released

The seven Turin anti-fascists imprisoned in July have now been released, but are still subject to house arrest. They were originally arrested in raids connected to an anti-fascist demonstration in Turin in June, and remain charged with 'subversive association', 'pillage', 'devastation', and 'use of force against a police officer'.

## William Frediani

Also in Italy Il Silvestre defendant William Frediani has been released from prison, but remains under house arrest.

## Harjit Gill

American animal-rights activist Harjit Gill, who was recently sentenced to six months in a halfway house would appreciate letters of support: Harjit Singh Gill, 148118-097, 111 Taylor Street, San Francisco, CA 94102, USA.

## Jeremy Bamber evidence

Lawyers acting for Jeremy Bamber believe that new evidence will clear him of the

1985 murder of his family. Bamber, now 44, has always denied shooting his adoptive parents, Neville and June Bamber, along with his sister, Sheila Caffell, and her twin six-year-old sons.

The new evidence, which has been submitted to the Criminal Cases Review Commission, is said to prove that Bamber was in police custody when Caffell was killed. Scientists will be called to argue that apparently fresh blood on Caffell's body means she can only have died a maximum of two hours before a number of photographs not seen by the jury in Bamber's trial were taken at around nine on the morning of the murders.

A log of police activity also records that blood was seen flowing from the mouth of Caffell at about 7.30am. Police records show that Bamber, then 24, had been with police since about 3.00am after he had called police to tell them about a disturbance at the farmhouse. Giovanni Di Stefano, the high-profile Italian legal adviser acting for Bamber, said he believed that the

pictures were enough to quash his client's five convictions for murder.

## Prison slavery pickets

Leeds CAPS group continue to hold regular pickets of Wilkinson stores in protest at the company's continued exploitation of the forced labour of British prisoners. The latest picket by the group was of an open day at Wilko's soon to be opened store in Armley, close to the notorious Leeds prison. More pickets are planned and solidarity actions are requested. Leaflets can be downloaded from the CAPS website at: [www.againstprisonslavery.org](http://www.againstprisonslavery.org). Contact [againstprisonslavery@mail.com](mailto:againstprisonslavery@mail.com).

## Freedom To Protest conference

A conference is being organised on the theme of new repressive legislation and its relation to protest. "The aim of the conference is to share experiences, and promote mutual aid and co-ordination among groups threatened by repressive laws, and to develop effective strategies for standing up for our freedom to

protest against injustice and oppression.

"We want the conference to be a positive and empowering event, focusing on what we can all do to fight against injustice and oppression, rather than focusing on lots of scary examples of repressive measures (which we know exist!)."

Individuals, groups, and organisations are invited to get involved in organising the conference. More information at [freedomtoprotest.org.uk](http://freedomtoprotest.org.uk)

## Prison ship closes

HMP Weare, the Prison Service's latter-day prison hulk, moored at Portland in Dorset, has finally closed after long-standing criticism from virtually every part of the political spectrum. The prisoners who were held there have been transferred to other jails, along with prison staff. The future of the ship, which was previously used as a troop ship in the Falklands and later as a floating jail in the US, has not been disclosed.

compiled by Mark Barnsley

# News

## A very personal debt crisis

The number of people applying for bankruptcy protection is at its highest since 1965, reports Rob Ray

There has been a significant rise in the number of people declaring themselves insolvent, while many more are taking Individual Voluntary Arrangements\* with their creditors this year.

It brings the number of self-declared bankruptcies for this fiscal year to 100,000 for the first time. The number is up from 22,000 in 1997 when Labour first came to power. The figure represents 75% of the total, the rest being made up of creditor-forced insolvency.

High street banks seem to be viewing this as a long-term problem, as they have recently increased the amount of money in their protection fund for bad debts. Barclay's bank, who made a record-breaking £4bn profit in the last half of the year, said: "Credit provisions rose 20%, driven principally by an increase in delinquencies and a reduction in recoveries in UK credit cards." New rules regarding bankruptcy, which clears a person's credit status after one year rather than three, have played a part in the increased number, according to insolvency specialists, but is mainly down to wider economic influences.

Howard Archer, chief UK economist at Global Insight, said: "The sharp jump in the number of individual insolvency highlights the fact that many people have borrowed to their limits, making them vulnerable to even the relatively modest rise in interest rates that occurred through to August 2004."

The high number of people living on the edge of bankruptcy through borrowing may have its roots in the sales techniques of the banks. Two people who posted to Libcom.org, a libertarian website, described their experiences:

"They hand out credit left, right and centre," said The Button. "I hadn't had a bank account for six years, I walked

into HSBC with the missus, walked out with a joint bank account, an overdraft facility and a mortgage.

"A couple of months later, they sent me a pre-approved offer for a gold credit card, which I applied for because it's handy for buying online, and they give me a £6,000 overdraft limit. The missus applies for one, and they gave her a £6,000 limit too – and she's a full-time student (albeit a funded one). So that's £12,000 credit between us."

Chris said: "The lending institutions have dished out credit irresponsibly. To individuals to fund lifestyles beyond their means and to companies who are desperate for investment capital for businesses that rely on faulty predictions of demand."

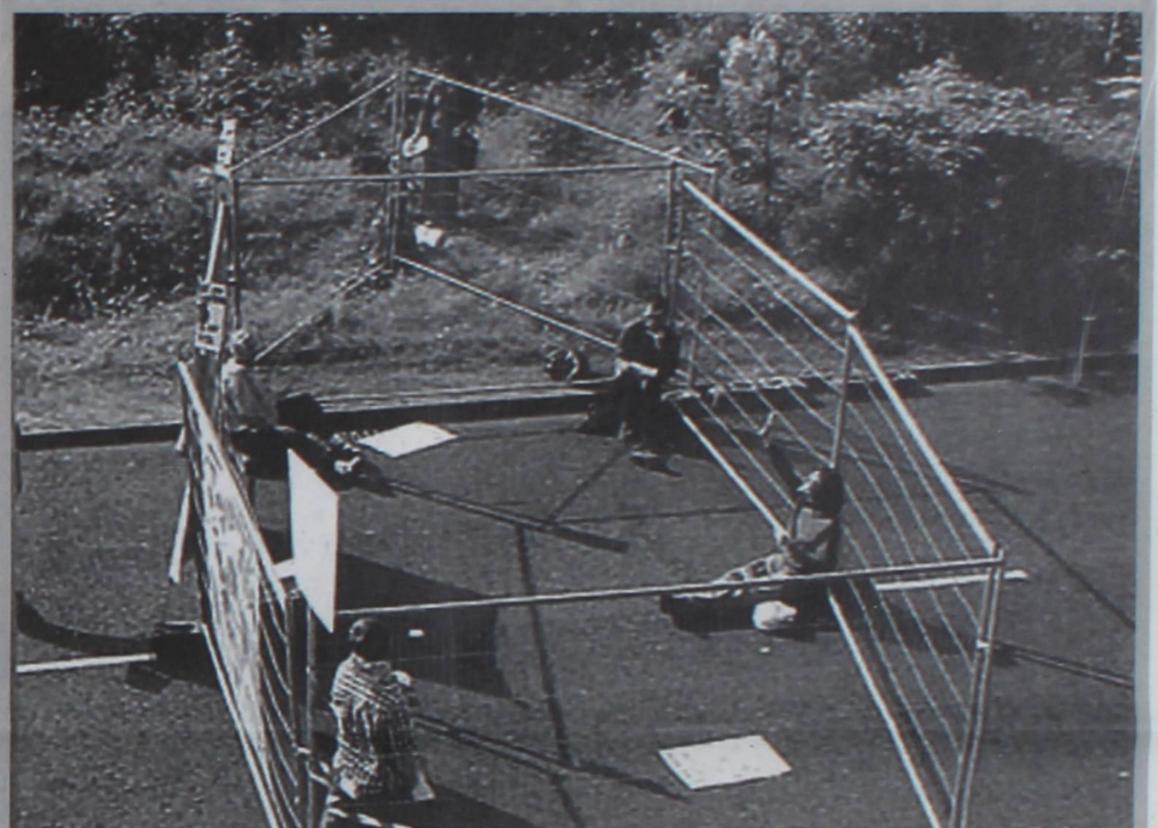
"Debt is the newest form of slavery. It's a consequence of a policy of strategic de-industrialisation carried out not for the sake of economic efficiency, but for the purposes of social control."

A continuing slump in retail and manufacturing trade has led to large-scale layoffs and increasing unemployment across the UK.

Manufacturing output and sales fell for the fourth month in a row in July. The overall economy is at its weakest for twelve years, according to the government.

Business analysts hope a 0.25% cut in interest rates, imposed by the bank of England earlier in August, will boost the economy. The cut will be equivalent to a £25 annual saving on a £10,000 debt, or just over £2 a month.

\* IVAs are long term agreements where a debtor will agree to a partial write-off of their debts with their creditors in order to avoid going into bankruptcy, where the creditor is likely to lose all their unsecured loan money and the debtor loses house/furniture, etc., and continues to pay back at a reduced rate. Generally only suitable for people with £15,000 or more of debt.



As protest group Smash EDO prepare for a mass demo on 13th August to kick-start the 2005 Smash EDO Peace Camp, EDO MBM have had two activists remanded in Lewes. Campaigners are planning a week long protest camp from the 13th to 19th August. Pictured above is a cage roadblock.

Since the beginning of 2004 a broad cross-section of activists in Brighton has been campaigning to shut down the weapon manufacturers. The company manufacture electrical components for missiles, fighter planes and tanks at their premises on the Home Farm industrial estate, Moulsecocomb. In 2003 they gained a contract for the supply of release mechanisms for the Paveway series of guided bombs, the most widely used and lethal weapon during the invasion of Iraq. EDO also supply equipment to companies known to sell weapons to the Israeli state.

The movement against EDO MBM includes anti-capitalists, academics, students, peace/anti-war activists, human rights groups, Palestine solidarity activists and faith groups. Many were involved in the mass movement against the war in Brighton and some have been to conflict zones and seen the effects of the equipment EDO MBM manufacture.

In Brighton, on the day war started, five thousand people took to the streets in protest. The campaign against EDO MBM aimed to galvanise those people into taking positive action to kick the arms dealers, those who had propped up the war, out of their community.

(Source: Indymedia)

## Loyal mail

Executives at Royal Mail are planning to cut between 30 to 40,000 jobs from the company's workforce over the next five years, according to a new plan submitted this month.

The cuts follow 53,000 layoffs since 2000, and would represent a total loss of nearly half of all Royal Mail employees over this decade if carried through.

LECG, employed by communications regulator Postcomm to look into Royal Mail, revealed senior staff were planning job cuts before Postcomm's recent decision to quash plans to substantially raise postage prices as part of their investigations.

Royal Mail chairman Alan Leighton had originally blamed the announced cuts on Postcomm's refusal to allow him to raise the price of stamps by over 30%.

Instead, Postcomm have said they will allow a more modest rise of around 10% over the next four years.

The LECG report suggests Royal Mail can achieve this. It said: "Cost control targets imposed by regulators are rarely welcomed by the companies they regulate, and are often described as unachievable. Notwithstanding this, these targets are generally exceeded."

The public service loses money when transporting stamped mail, but made £537m in operating profits this year after staff managed a miraculous turnaround in services and efficiency.

Leighton has attacked these loss-making sectors of the public service, wishing to make the company a viable commercial concern.

The spending of Royal Mail's executives

has been criticised by LECG however, who in their report noted that £1.4bn is due to be spent on investment. The report said these: "poorly supported initiatives which have a significantly negative impact on value", had seen no real financial case made for them.

CWU deputy general secretary Dave Ward said: "We will be seeking an urgent meeting with the Royal Mail Board and Government to address our legitimate concerns. In particular, we want the company to be more honest with employees about their long-term agenda."

In related news, engineers who service the Royal Mail network have voted to strike in a dispute over pay. The staff, employed to maintain post office property following an outsourcing deal, voted by 69% to take action.

## FBU strike at Suffolk

Planned job cuts in Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk have been met with strike action by the FBU, as ballot threats continue on the issue of government plans to regionalise the entire service.

Firefighters struck on 8th August, only briefly leaving the picket line to help a 45-year-old woman who had collapsed in front of the fire station to get to hospital.

Budget-slashes imposed by the local fire authority, reported in Freedom in June, would see 12 full-time posts go from the local service - to be replaced by retained personnel. The total number of full-time crew is 40.

The move would leave the turntable ladder, a vital piece of firefighting equipment, crewed by non-professionals and severely impact on

the service's community outreach programme, designed to help with fire safety.

Suffolk FBU stated: "According to the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy Annual Fire Statistics of the 22 Combined Fire Authorities and county fire brigades in England with populations of less than 900,000, Suffolk is bottom of the table in terms of fire service spending."

Bury is currently 67 retired crew short in Suffolk, leading to doubts over claims by the fire authority that the lost firemen would be replaceable.

It was confirmed on the 11th August that the government is planning to close local fire control centres in favour of a £1bn scheme with nine regional centres.

# Iran cracks up

**Sustained riots, protests and a general strike across Iranian Kurdistan have been met with troops and state violence, reports Jack Ray**

Minority groups in Kurdistan have responded to police brutality and martial law with two months of sustained resistance, including mass demonstrations, violent conflict with the state and a general strike across the province of Kurdistan, with the authorities responding with a crackdown that has claimed up to fifty lives.

The wave of conflict began when Shivan Qaderi, an activist in the Association of Human Rights for Kurds, was killed on 9th July. As Qaderi calmly approached police he was shot and wounded, before being shot twice more, then tied to the back of a jeep and dragged through the streets of Mahabad.

Thousands of residents took to the streets in the days that followed, the unrest soon spreading to Sanandaj, Pichanshahr, Baneh, Sinne, Bokan, Saqqez, Oshnavieh and Sardasht, with protesters reportedly attacking government buildings and throwing stones at the police.

These were met with state violence, three more were killed at Oshnavieh and dozens more at Mahabad and Baneh. One eyewitness at Saqqez on 3rd August reported Revolutionary Guards firing indiscriminately to disperse crowds, telling Human Rights Watch that one shot man's family tried to come to his aid. "As his family tried to retrieve the body, the security forces pointed their guns at them and threatened to shoot them. Then they started beating his family with batons."

The Iranian government moved to arrest prominent Kurdish opposition figures such as Kurdish Women's Rights

activist Dr Roya Toloui and Mohmoud Saleki, the spokesman for the Organisational Committee to Establish Trade Unions, on 1st August along with hundreds of others taken during demonstrations and raids. The following day the Kurdish newspapers Ashti and Asu were shut down. A general strike was initiated across the province on 7th August with Mahabad, Sardasht, Rabat, Piranshahr and Bukan reported to be absolutely deserted.

The Iranian government have swamped the area with State Security Forces Agents, Revolutionary guards, Bassij paramilitaries (directly loyal to Ayatollah Khomeini) and Ministry of Intelligence personnel, having some 100,000 troops in the region. Attack helicopters patrol the skies to prevent attacks on government buildings and public gatherings of more than two people have lead to arrests.

Tensions among non-Persian minorities in the country have been heightened by the recent election of hardline President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad. The events in Kurdistan come on top of sustained rioting by Ahwaz arabs in the Khuzestan region. Months after 150 were killed by security forces demonstrating against the Iranian government, Ahwaz Arabs rioted over the weekend of 23rd to 24th July, setting up barricades of burning tyres, setting alight to police cars and state banks. Police broke up the protest with gunfire.

The Ahwaz complain that the regime is imposing forced migration from the region, which contains 90% of the



The border town of Suleimaniya, inset President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad

country's oil reserves and 10% of OPEC's total output but uses little of the wealth to benefit the area's poor.

Nasser Ban-Assad of the British Ahwazi Friendship Society claims that the protests are symptomatic of a wider problem that could pull Iran apart. "The regime is crumbling along its territorial

peripheries," he said. "Non-Persian ethnic groups, which comprise 50-60% of the Iranian population are uniting to overthrow a cruel and despotic regime. The Ahwazis are standing in solidarity with our Kurdish compatriots, just as they stood with us during the April uprising. The uprising is gathering pace and the

world will see disobedience grow under Ahmadinejad."

Iraqi Kurds ignored calls by Patriotic Union of Kurdistan leader and Iraqi President Jalal Talabani to demonstrate in solidarity with their Iranian compatriots in a mass protest at the border town of Sulaimaniya.

## Still no equality

Goldminers have led a strikewave across South Africa. Eighty thousand members of the the National Union of Mineworkers downed tools on 7th August after negotiations with mines employers broke down over wages and conditions. The threat of an indefinite strike forced concessions from employers eventually bringing an agreement from workers to return to work on 12th August.

Relations in the industry are particularly bitter because of the persistence of apartheid-era single-sex hostels, which ensure that four-fifths of workers continue to live in poor accommodation at risk from disease and often seperated from their families. The hostels are seen as a symbol of how aspects of apartheid South Africa endure for the poor.

Kgosi Mogaki, Director of Social Planning at the Ministry of Mines, said: "I lived in hostels and it was horrible,

we were about 18 in three by three metre rooms with our bicycles in the middle."

Angeline Sokwaliwa, an NUM Housing Shop Steward, said: "To just group so many people in the same room, it's unacceptable. It affects people's lives. If someone has TB, another person will be easily infected."

The strike was the largest since a mass walkout against apartheid in 1987 and is part of mounting industrial unrest threatening the ANC's neo-liberal economic programme. Even President Thabo Mbeki has been forced to admit that South Africa is still a land of rich white and poor black people. "I had the opportunity to see the country from the air and I could see apartheid," he said. "I could see where the rich white people live, and next to it where the poor black people live."

Patrick Craven, a spokesman for the main union federation COSATU, said: "In terms of pay differentials, South

Africa is one of the most unequal societies in the world."

NUM workers receive a £191 monthly minimum wage compared to the seven figure annual salaries of some South African bosses.

Municipal workers have also been on strike in a dispute over pay and conditions with local government employers. After two warning strikes, 80,000 members of the SAMWU union are on indefinite strike. Members held mass demonstrations picketing mayoral and council offices around the country. Forty-three were arrested in Durban after protesters threw stones, concrete slabs and bottles at police.

Willie Jacobsz, the boss of Gold Fields – the second largest producer in the country, has pledged to fight parts of the settlement. "In the context of the current labour environment the settlement is not unreasonable," he said. "However, we will have to claw back the above inflation component."

## Chevron paid soldiers

Chevron, the US oil corporation, paid Nigerian soldiers to suppress protests by villagers that Human Rights Watch say led to the death of four villagers and the disappearance of another 68 – now presumed dead. The payment – which Chevron claim was merely "a long-standing industry practice of paying a small amount for each day to protect the people and property of the oil companies" – was revealed in a San Francisco federal court where the corporation is being sued for the attacks carried out on 4th January 1999. The bill was paid within 24 hours of submission.

Barbara Enloe Hadsell, attorney for the villagers, added that Chevron had provided helicopters for the mission, with their own personnel accompanying the soldiers, even directing the pilot to pursue fleeing villagers.

The incidents led to the destruction of two villages, Opia and Ikenyan. Opia youths had set out to demand compensation from Chevron on 3rd January for fishing nets, traps, hooks and other equip-

ment destroyed by tug boats and floating barges. They were dispersed by security guards, and returned to their village.

The following day, after a meeting, villagers decided to send a delegation of women and elders to demonstrate that the youths had the wider support of the community. Upon arrival at the rig they were met with gunfire. They fled back to the village where they were attacked by a blue and white helicopter. Then more soldiers came along the river in 'sea trucks' firing from their boats. This was repeated downstream at Ikenyan. Both villages were burned to the ground, with Human Rights Watch recovering four bodies.

Violence against oil protesters in the Niger delta has been relatively common over the last ten years. In two famous incidents, the Nigerian military government executed nine Ogoni activists, including Ken Sawo-Wiwa, in 1995, as well as killing two Ilaje protesters occupying a offshore oil platform in May 1998.

## Feature

# Shell shocked

**From Ogoni to Erris – an astonishing story of exploitation, brutality and resistance happening across the Irish Sea**

A windswept boggy field on the north west coast of Ireland bears a black and white sign with a stark message – Nigeria 1995, Rosspoint 2005. It was placed there by Philip McGrath, a farmer who has spent the last six weeks as a prisoner of conscience in Cloverhill prison, Dublin. The hamlet of Rosspoint is at the heart of a struggle whose frontlines have, over the summer, expanded, first across the country and later overseas. Terry (member of the Anarchist Federation) looks at the involvement of the nebulous smorgasbord of ‘activists’ that constitute the libertarian left in Ireland. Initially, a Solidarity Gathering was held in Rosspoint in early June, that would establish a national Shell to Sea network to carry out solidarity actions. Now, the Rosspoint Solidarity Camp is mostly involved in picketing the Rosspoint compound and in helping on the farms and gardens of the prisoners.

### Background

A consortium of Shell, Statoil and Marathon want to construct an unprecedented high pressure raw gas pipeline nine km and a refinery – to bring gas from the Corrib Field in the north Atlantic. Both pipeline and refinery adjoin peoples’ houses.

The entirety of gas and oil reserves off the coast of Ireland were given away in a neo-liberal bonanza, with no state stake in them whatsoever, leading one Italian engineer working on the project to exclaim, “your government – crazy!” Not to mention the detrimental effect of pollutants from the planned development on both the regional water supply of Carrowmore Lake, which is near the refinery site, and on Broadhaven Bay,

### Grassroots Gathering

The timing of the revelations over Shell’s actions in Ireland look set to dominate talks at the country’s national forum, Grassroots Gathering, taking place from 27th-28th of August in County Mayo.

Since the winter of 2001 there have been nine Grassroots Gatherings, with discussion and organisation around a wide range of issues. This will be the first rural-based Grassroots Gathering and is being organised as an initiative of the Rosspoint Solidarity Camp. The Camp will provide food and accommodation. A venue is to be confirmed. The gathering is themed around local community campaigns similar to that in Rosspoint and the surrounding areas – the struggles of ‘ordinary people’, rather than environmental activists. Workshops will consist of people from local community campaigns talking about the different tactics, forms of organisation, and methods they have used rather than a concentration on the issues. The Gathering has no cover charge.

which provides livelihoods to local fishermen and into which the Shell/Statoil consortium plan to pump the waste from the refinery.

The state has worked overtime to facilitate capital. The lands of farmers on the pipeline route have been hit with Compulsory Acquisition Orders, normally only used in state developments, e.g. motorways, and which allow the seizure of their lands by private companies to build a development, which not only do the landowners not agree with, but which they regard as a threat to their lives and those of their families. This is not a land issue, this is a health and safety issue; the affected farmers would be happy with a pipeline running through their lands if such were not a danger.

These are small farmers in the west of Ireland, not the owners of huge agribusinesses. Shell attempted to access their lands in January and again in March, on both occasions being refused access on the grounds they did not have permission to enter the properties and did not have ministerial consents to lay the pipeline (and they later admitted they did not). On 4th April Shell got an injunction from the High Court, a court order forbidding anyone from interfering with their work on the lands, a development that ultimately led to the imprisonment of five men on 29th June.

### Action

Since 19th June all deliveries of construction materials to the compound at Rosspoint have been halted. The entrance to the compound is via a very narrow country road. Shell proposed to bring 60 to 70 trucks a day onto the road. When a local car met with a truck, a load of supporters brought their cars and vans to join the first car and before Shell knew what was happening there was an array of vehicles on both sides of the truck – all parked in such a way that normal traffic could continue, but trucks did not have a wide enough berth to drive past.

This began a 12 day 24/7 vigil at the roadside. The Rosspoint Five went into prison on 29th June. Since 30th June the Rosspoint compound has been closed to engineers, managers, white collar workers and all other employees of the contractors Sicim and Roadbridge. The Rosspoint compound is the base of operations for the construction of the overland pipelines. Installation of the pipelines was due to begin on 25th February. Barring one small part this hasn’t happened.

Pickets, sometimes numbering in the hundreds, have closed down the refinery construction site at Ballinaboy, which is effectively the only part of the onshore development that any work has been done on. The pickets in Ballinaboy were carnival-like in their early days, with kids playing football in front of



The refinery construction site at Ballinaboy

the main gates and the local country and western protest anthems blaring out. The inland development has been shut down and, due to climatic and geological conditions, cannot be carried on during the winter months.

The same is true of the offshore pipeline. Shell had a small window of opportunity in which to build it. The Solitaire, the world’s largest pipelaying ship, was scheduled to come in on 15th August, but local fishermen mobilised at least 15 to 20 boats to exercise their fishing rights in its path, and Shell have been forced to temporarily shut down that part of construction.

Innumerable solidarity actions have taken place, including the simultaneous shutting down of most of the Statoil petrol stations in Dublin.

### Lessons

In Class Struggle Versus Summit Protests, Matti from libcom.org argues “that summit protests are yet more disconnecting of politics from the lives of working class people”. He writes: “They are totally symbolic and, for all their radical talk, couldn’t even be to build a movement capable of challenging capitalism. Our politics are only relevant if we ground them solidly in our everyday lives and orientate ourselves towards our workmates and neighbours to solve the problems faced by our class.”

We can take this as our starting premise, and ask how do we get there, by using the Shell to Sea campaign as an example. I should point out that ‘activist milieu’ and ‘traditional class struggle anarchism’ are ideal types, generalisations used to investigate our situation, that there is far less division between the two in Ireland than in Britain, and that in supporting the popular struggle in

Rosspoint the ‘activist milieu’ has been far more useful than ‘traditional class struggle anarchism’.

A first issue: what workmates and neighbours? Other traditional class struggle anarchist critiques of the activist milieu have identified its material basis as the problem. That is to say, students, ex-students who are currently unemployed, and folk immersed to varying degrees in some sort of counter-culture – essentially people living a transitional existence. For instance, a now dormant group I was involved in, Galway Grassroots, was effectively annihilated by a combination of people moving from the city, and an increase in college workload. The youth involved in libertarian left politics often do not have workmates, or have them for very long, and likewise with neighbours, that is to say, they have a transitory life.

The model employed in Shell to Sea is one where such people’s participation in a popular struggle is possible. On the one hand we have Rosspoint Solidarity Camp, to which unemployed people and students on summer holidays and so forth can travel to, live in, and participate; on the other hand we have the Shell to Sea campaign whereby people around the country and overseas can rally around a popular struggle irrespective of how embedded they are in their own local community.

The other issues are subjective: What attitudes ‘activists’ have that inhibit them from participating. Firstly, we have notions which see ‘activism’ as the vehicle of change, this is coupled with an effort to get more people to participate in activism. Essentially for this perspective popular struggle might as well not exist, and activists have to transmit their ideology into the rest of society much like pouring water into

empty glasses. Hence one might hear that “nothing much environmental has happened in a long while”, meaning activists have adopted some other issue from the shopping list of good causes, while innumerable local community campaigns work on environmental issues below the radar screen.

Also, there is a complete disdain for green issues among the ‘traditional class struggle anarchism’. During my participation in the Shell to Sea campaign over the last few months I have made contact with, to varying degrees, eight different community groups involved in campaigning on planning decisions, against, for instance, superdumps, incinerators, and pylons. In a Celtic Tiger Ireland hurtling along a course of untrammelled development without regard to peoples’ health, lives, and livelihoods, this is a major arena of struggle. Ironically what orientation exists towards this on the part of the libertarian left comes far more from the ‘activist milieu’ than ‘traditional class struggle anarchism’.

A major issue is lack of organisation. Over the course of the last four years tri-annual get togethers called Grassroots Gatherings have brought various libertarian strands including anarchism, radical ecology, libertarian off-shoots from the Moscow-line Workers Party, and multiple others into the pot. Unfortunately this important step forward has not gone far enough and has not developed a permanent national organisational structure. This proves problematic in terms of communications, forward planning, and management of resources.

For more information see [shelltosea.com](http://shelltosea.com) or [indymedia.ie/mayo](http://indymedia.ie/mayo)  
Contact [london@shelltosea.com](mailto:london@shelltosea.com)

# Commentary

## FREEDOM

Volume 66 Number 16

### 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

The more observant among you may have noticed some changes. You'll be reading this on a different page for a start, there is no editorial and listings have moved. It may even be on time.

Our main change, dropping the editorial column, is more for the sake of honesty than anything else. Although editors have written the column on occasion, it has as often been the case that a contributed comment piece from someone else just happened to fit the space.

Instead, we can now free up the space to cover more news which, given that we're having difficulty fitting everything in at the moment, is actually a bit of a relief.

More additions to the editorial team have arrived, taking the total number up to seven, including a second professional journalist, a member community newsletter the Totally Independent, and even, potentially, a web editor (though as ever, don't get too excited yet).

As such, we are left with only one vacancy for a reviews editor on the production side, and we are now looking for people with experience of news writing, to get in touch about sorting out a regional network.

In other news, we're officially banned from Oregon State Prison in the USA again, having had a brief period as a 'recognised publisher'.

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### Next issue

The next issue will be dated 3rd September and the last day to get your copy to us will be Friday 26th August (see contact details above for where to send your letters/articles).

### No to ID

As a committed anarchist of lifelong standing I'm used to keeping a sharp lookout for those of us who mistake tactics for guiding principles. What I have in mind is taking part in causes relatively near our own position with the laudable aim of spreading our own word by helping in deeds. The danger is always that those of us doing so may go native.

I've distanced myself from this struggle several times over the years (not going to now!), first over CND – a good source of power though a rotten industry, another weapon to kill people with for our (all) rotten politicians.

And I'm uncomfortable at what I think are signs that the 'Say no to ID cards' leader in the last issue of Freedom shows a belief that this bureaucrats' bad dream is any more of a threat to our lives than we face every day already. Do we think the UK is a better place to exist than most other places in the world? I spose so! Do we think it's so good here that we should earnestly strive to maintain the liberty our politicians are so proud of? I hope not.

If we join forces – temporarily – with anti ID card movements it must be to point out that what's important is to show the government that its own power ain't secure, as demonstrated by their stupid proposal. And don't worry about governments taking any effective action here. If they wanted to help us protect ourselves against bombs that are certainly being readied against us – they'd be taking action *against* Muslims or people with darkish skins instead of announcing daily measures to protect – from *other* people who live here – the populations containing the ones who want to kill us.

Now, I'm not *proposing* such action here, just pointing out we have *no* worries about efficient use of any method *our* government comes up with.

Paul Campbell

### Changing our way of life

Even as the last echoes of the bombs faded on 7th July, it was clear that the authoritarians of New Labour would use it to increase the powers of the state as well as their hold over society. As Blair uttered the words that the bombs would not change our way of life, it was certain that he would do so – egged on by the right-wing media, of course.

Come August, and Blair did not disappoint. Before jet-setting off on his holidays, he held a press conference to announce his capitulation to the bombers – and the likes of the Sun and Daily Mail. He outlined a raft of plans to combat the terrorist threat his own policies has helped to increase. After urging us that the terrorists would not succeed in changing our way of life, Blair did their job for them and announced that "the rules of the game are changing." By that he meant the balance between civil liberties and the state was shifting.

Mark one up for the terrorists. If they really do hate our way of life and seek to end it, as Blair claims, then he has just appeased them. What are a few hard won liberties compared to having to admit to being wrong on Iraq?

These new ground rules will, apparently, include "deportation and exclusion" for "advocating violence to further a person's beliefs or justifying or validating such violence." It is doubtful that this means that George Bush will be refused entry to our shores or that he himself will be departed. Advocating violence or justifying it seems to be perfectly acceptable if it is the state which doing the killing.

And what of the new offence "of condoning or glorifying terrorism"? Will this be applied to state terrorism? Say, for example, 'Shock and Awe' style policies? Or the levelling of whole towns, like Fallujah? And what of Blair's "justifying or glorifying terrorism anywhere, not just in the UK"? Will this be applied to those seeking to explain such acts? And will it apply to state approved terrorists? For example, would it have applied to those who supported (and armed) the Contras in Nicaragua or the Afghan forces fighting the Soviets? If, for example, a right-winger praises the former for defeating 'Marxist tyranny' will they be hauled into court?

He happily notes that the state "already powers to strip citizenship from those individuals with British or dual nationality who act in a way that is contrary to the interests of this country." Sadly, it seems unlikely it will be applied any time soon to him or his cronies. After all, his poodle like following of Bush has made this country less safe and his home policies have hardly promoted the interests of anyone, bar the wealthy and corporations.

Blair opines that our "duty is to share and support the values that sustain the British way of life." Yet

Britain is a diverse country, riddled with cultural, class and social divisions even in the white population. Most Scottish people, for example, do not consider themselves as British for a start. And are the 'values' of the 'British way of life' the same for a striking worker as for their boss? Of course not.

The concept of one way of life in inherently totalitarian, fostered by those who seek conformity to power. The diversity of life ensures that there can only be ways of life, not a way of life. Ultimately, by 'British' Blair means whatever the state defines it as – in other words, middle class English who vote Tory (or Tony). Rest assured that any new laws allegedly passed to combat Islamic extremists will be used against the general public – i.e. anyone who does not fit into the 'values' of those who rule this country and their kept politicians. We know this because it has already happened to anti-capitalist protesters. That is why we must fight now to defend what civil liberties we have and anarchists should be at the forefront of any such campaigns.

Iain McKay

### Sleepwalkers

The need for manual labour has decreased since the Industrial Revolution, and the need for mental labour has increased. But now with the continually improving capabilities of computers, the need for mental labour is also declining.

Technology – firstly as machines, now as software – vastly reduces the role for humans in all kinds of work: no-collar, blue-collar, white-collar, managers, entrepreneurs, engineers, designers, scientists. All will become redundant – first the working classes, then the middle classes, finally the ruling classes. What will they do? Watch television, choose the brand of junk food, and play at voting (whether Big Brother or the ingredients of HP sauce or HP politicians, makes no real difference) – the new opiates of the masses: media, consumerism, 'democracy'.

The reason for this trend is primarily greed – the desire for more than is good for you. The current mechanism for this is mainly capitalism, for the past century or two. Previously greed was mediated more by military force or religion, for example imperialism. Greed drives the desire to control (to secure future profits) and greed drives technology. Technology is also driven by other motives but it is company profits that drive the current excessive rate of technological change that causes much human stress.

Eventually all people will be redundant, whether this happens within your lifetime or your children's. The number of people employed in service industries is increasing at present, but what use are these to machines? Even those in power (by position or wealth) will be replaced by artificial mechanisms, because sooner or later their intelligence will exceed that of humans and their systems will be too complex for humans to control or understand.

Why should the people in power go along with their own demise? Why do they continue to ignore the gross destruction of the environment? The same answers to both questions: short-termism, their greed overrides their critical faculties, they are no longer in touch with (see themselves part of) the natural world.

This is true to a lesser extent of many in the 'civilised' rich countries, they have been cut off from the land and nature (the word 'civil' has the same root as 'city') so that children believe milk is made in supermarkets not cows. This fracturing of connections is largely due to the existence of money. But since most citizens have to do physical work and look after children or the aged, they retain some contact with the real world – with which they have to co-operate. In contrast the wealthy see the world as populated by objects on which they can impose their will.

The future is uncertain. The replacement of human work by machines may be halted by several events. There may be insufficient natural resources (certainly the Earth's resources will run out long before humans can travel out of the solar system, so there is no comfort for pie-in-the-sky sci-fi escapists). There may be some geo-, astro-, eco- or biological disaster which sends most of us back towards the stone age – but without the natural resources they had and with more pollution. There may be enough people who wake up to seeing where their long-term interests lie and are prepared to do something about it. There may be some alternative I have missed, but this is not idle speculation. (You don't have to take my word; you can work it out for yourself from history and trends in computer technology, using logical deduction.) Before the end of this century one of these alternatives will have happened. It is utterly impossible for us to continue as we are.

There are some who believe in social liberation but are gung-ho for technology – the 'progress' that has meant a reduction in the quality of life for many of the world's population. They, like the capitalists, have a blind faith that technology will solve any problems that technology creates, and they assume that machines more intelligent than themselves will simply obey their human wishes rather than their own. For example, money may be of no use to a network of machines. Humanity will be an irrelevant historical detail, and probably a waste of resources.

Dave Milner

**ZAPATA OF MEXICO**  
by **PETER E. NEWELL**

Zapata was the leading figure of the Mexican Revolution of 1910. He fought for the rights of local communities against greedy landlords, treacherous politicians and foreign-owned companies. Under the slogan 'Land and Liberty!' he became the purest embodiment of the Mexican Revolution. Zapata's memory, like his ghost, rides on in Mexico.

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### Quiz answers

1. Eat it. It's a type of filled pasta so-called because priests liked their food.
2. "The greatest happiness of the greatest number is the foundation of morals and legislation." And bugger any minorities who disagree...
3. Suffragette Emmeline Pankhurst.
4. He wrote the original French words to the Internationale.

# REVIEW

## The showdown between a turncoat secret service agent and his harshest critic failed to clear the air, according to Stephen Booth

**O**n 21st June in Conway Hall, London, former MI5 officer David Shayler and veteran spookhunter Larry O'Hara aired a public debate on Shayler's claims regarding the Secret Service's status, operations and aims. Shayler left the Secret Service in 1997, claiming his revelations could "bring down the government". He was jailed in France, and later prosecuted under the UK Official Secrets Act. Subsequently he has campaigned on civil liberties, together with girlfriend and former MI5 supervisor, Annie Machon.

Dr Larry O'Hara is the editor of *Notes From the Borderland*. A veteran anti-fascist, he is perhaps best known for his pamphlet *Searchlight For Beginners*, which is a detailed expose of the group's state connections.

### The debate

Larry O'Hara questioned David Shayler about anarchist group Class War, where Shayler outed an infiltrator subsequently named as Andy Bryant (codenamed agent 25/79), and displayed patronising contempt for his target calling CW "a tiny and ludicrous anarchist group". Shayler went on to claim that another member (agent 25/80), a Special Branch agent inside CW was an "unstable drunk" who propped up the administration of the organisation, while drinking multiple cans of Special Brew, and beating up policemen.

David Shayler claimed that the Official Secrets Act and libel laws restricted what he could say. He claimed to want to expose agent provocateurs, but few in the audience bought any of this. Larry also mentioned the claims about

MI5 infiltration in the top echelons of the Socialist Workers Party (SWP). Shayler claimed he does not know who the infiltrators were. However, (strangely) he also said that if somebody ran a list of names by him in private, he would nod his head. He claimed that Shayler / Machon closed down the MI5 anti-SWP operation as a waste of time, a claim that fell on sceptical ears with the audience.

### Audience questions

Class War members present challenged Shayler's comments against the group such as "being more of a threat to public health than public security ... a rag tag group of crusties, alcoholics and dogs on string". Andy Bryant, the first agent, was known to them, but the second agent did not fit any real member. Shayler backtracked on his claim, stating the man may not have been a member, but a casual anarchist who drifted in and out of various groups. If so, this could not support Shayler's claim that the group collapsed when this agent pulled out. The more he was pushed to disclose the details behind his claim, the more Shayler's story cracked.

When asked about current groups under MI5 investigation, Shayler said little. Larry suggested that the Far Left, Far Right, Animal Rights, anti-Globalisation, anti-EU groups, and football gangs were in the frame.

Sheila Trapovska asked whether Freedom had ever been under surveillance? Shayler said yes, but provided no details.

### The outcome

I am not aware of a similar recent case, where such a figure has faced up to some of his most severe and radical critics in this direct way. On this level,



London's MI5 building, and David Shayler (inset)

David Shayler ought to be praised for turning up. On the other hand, the criticisms made by Larry O'Hara and by others, stand.

David Shayler's stand as a civil libertarian was unconvincing. For example, he does not call for the abolition of the security state's powers for telephone tapping, but rather demands these be admissible as evidence in court. He asks for Parliamentary oversight of the security services; however, we already have this, and it does not work. It is worthless. Shayler expects the security services to be more efficient and less bureaucratic, less tied up with red tape. This is hardly

a recipe for restraining them.

When challenged on particulars, Shayler tends to blame MI6. Where clear evidence of MI5's wrongdoing was put forwards, he claimed ignorance of the case, or that MI5 operated on the 'need to know' principle and that he was out of the loop. This tendency to deny all knowledge was the poorest and least convincing part of his presentation. Were Shayler a genuine penitent, openly, he would be prepared to spill the beans.

In some respects, Shayler invites comparison with the 1980s Spycatcher man, Peter Wright. Wright seems to have been motivated by bitterness over his

pension. Shayler's motivation is less clear. Whistleblower? Reformer? Egotist? Rebel? Nemesis? David Shayler is more to be understood as a Postmodern figure, standing outside Thames House, casting his lethargic thunderbolts across the river towards Vauxhall Cross. Seemingly, he would like to appear to be MI5's harshest critic, demanding that it clean up its act. Yet, in contrast to this impression, in this age of spin doctors, glossy PR campaigns and posturing, he is its staunchest advocate.

*Notes From The Borderland* is available from BM 4769, London WC1N 3XX [borderland.co.uk](http://borderland.co.uk)

## BOOKS

### India Divided: Diversity and Democracy Under Attack

by Vandana Shiva  
Seven Stories Press, £7.99

Along with Arundhati Roy, Vandana Shiva is an Indian export loved by the neo-liberals of Britain and North America. To an extent Shiva, who trained as a physicist, has been stealing Roy's clothes, drawing attention to the plight of the country's displaced subsistence farmers and their dependant communities, while looking at the impact of globalisation on Indian culture and its diverse ecology.

In this context the chapter, *On Being Indian: Globalization, Bharateeyata and Hindutva*, is the most interesting because it begins to discuss identity and belonging in the context of India's post-colonial history.

"[Indian] civilization," she writes, "is based on simplicity and the small-scale that is a pre-condition for ecological sustainability and economic justice."

As a champion for the rights of the Indian people, Shiva has to be read but it's a real shame she hasn't discovered anarchism.

### Against Civilization: Readings and Reflections

Edited by John Zerzan with illustrations by R. L. Tubbesing  
Feral House, £7.99

Feral House's edition of John Zerzan's 1999 anthology adds 14 new essays to complete 67 pieces. This time around Zerzan has included an essay by the anarcho-futurist writer Ursula LeGuin (*The Dispossessed, The Word for World is Forest, Always Coming Home*), recognising that his original selection was a little too masculine.

There are several contributions from women but none improve the anthology. He has also recognised that a book on anarcho-primitivism without contributions from indigenous peoples leaves the anthology looking a little too WASPish. Sadly, John Mohawk comes across as being completely civilised, with only John (Fire) Lane Deer and Richard Erdoes adding any sort of credibility to the primitivist cause, which they achieve with some humour.

We have a new joke on the reservation, they write. "What is cultural deprivation?" Answer: "Being an upper-middle-class

white kid living in a split-level suburban home with a color TV."

And this is really the problem with the anthology. It is white, it is neo-liberal and it is male. While there are interesting snapshots of the works of George Marsh (*The Earth as Modified by Human Action*), Paul Shepard (*Nature and Madness*), William Koetke (*The Final Empire*), Theodore Roszak (*Where the Wasteland Ends*) and Kirkpatrick Sale (*Rebels Against the Future*), this is largely yet another Americo-centric view of the world.

Wilderness may mean something to white Americans with bourgeois sensibilities, but wilderness and the idea of primitivism holds nothing for Europeans. Being against civilisation is a laudable notion, but believing, as Zerzan clearly does, that anarcho-primitivism is remotely feasible in a post-carbon world is ridiculous – even in North America.

### Change the World Without Taking Power (2nd edition)

by John Holloway  
Pluto Press, £16.99

When John Holloway's book came out in 2002, it caught the imagination of the

'no global' movement but it also provided a realistic antidote to the nonsense that spurted from Hardt's and Negri's *Empire*.

Holloway's book has its share of Marxist grunge; thankfully it benefits from the author's need to explain, in clear language, the meaning of revolution in a world that is being changed by activists and communities against all manner of injustice and oppression.

Holloway manages to evoke the Zapatista revolution without treating the people of the Chiapas like neo-liberal gods. Instead Holloway exposes the tendency among lifestyle anarchists and neo-liberals to mythologise the Zapatista model.

As a lecturer in sociology at Puebla University in Mexico, Holloway has been well placed to show that these 'land and liberty' indigenous peoples do not have a unique model of autonomous assembly and self-organisation. What they have is imagination.

The Zapatistas changed the symbols that defined their lives, using their imaginations.

If there is a global movement at all, it is, writes Holloway, a "movement against invisibility" – a movement that

we are all part of because we are all involved in many different struggles "visible in so far as they are considered to impinge upon power politics".

According to Holloway, "all rebellious movements are movements against invisibility" and this is a struggle of non-identity, of the invisible, "of those without voice and without face." At a simple level it is about our own dignity and the "refusal to accept humiliation, oppression, exploitation, dehumanisation."

He argues that it is the very horror of the world that obliges us to learn to hope – and to find ways in which we can change the world without taking power. While all the attention is centred on protests and on the lifestyles of the people involved in these so-called global movements, the focus is being diverted away from the debate and development of the societies people desire.

The issue needs to be centred on the questions of 'Land and Liberty', both of which are denied to the majority of us, no matter where we live. In this context Holloway is worth reading.

When ordering books from Freedom please add 10% towards postage and packing in the UK, 20% overseas.

## A Sideways Look

In the Bible, it is written that "man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." This tells us something about the Bible's authors and their intentions, but it also tells us something about bread. Many people know the first half of that saying and, naturally enough in our diet-conscious times, assume it to mean that people should eat a balanced diet.

However, the second part of the quote is about following religious rules ... evidently, man (sic) can live by bread alone.

We don't have to delve that far back in time or travel that far from Britain to find places where this has been true. Shepherds in southern Italy were eating nothing apart from bread in the period before and immediately after the second world war. In poorer parts of the world now bread is the staple of the diet, meaning it is nearly all of it.

While clearly not a balanced diet in the sense we would understand, it's important to remember that people who do live by bread alone don't eat what is sold in supermarkets, with water added and goodness taken out, the bastard child of the industrialisation of food.

Something like 90% of bread made in Britain comes from a few giant factories which operate the Chorley Wood Baking Process. This process requires flour to be processed and treated, the fermentation of the dough to be speeded up and copious amounts of water added. It's why no one raised in the last forty odd years could possibly conceive of anyone 'living' by bread alone.

These enormous bread factories supply the pasty white sliced stuff, the anaemic brown sliced stuff and a whole range of products that are part-baked, ready to be warmed through by the 'in-store bakery' which is there to delude customers into thinking the bread is fresh and has been baked recently. Needless to say this process requires a fleet of lorries chugging up and down the trunk roads.

There is so much goodness in whole-meal flour, milled properly, then mixed and given time to rise, before being baked. There is some speculation that the loss of a lot of the trace elements and vitamins in bread that has been traditionally made (and is after all, a food we have evolved with for the last twelve thousand years) has had knock on effects in people's health. It could account for the phenomenal growth in childhood asthma in the developed world. Sadly, there seems to be little research on this.

A couple of months ago, a Freedom correspondent pointed out that people spend far too much on bread at Borough market, and by implication, other farmers' markets. A contrast was drawn with the poverty of people who live not far from Borough (and may even have lived there before the rich moved in). All these things are true, but the problem with bread, as with many other foodstuffs, is we don't see the real cost. It's not possible to compare a loaf baked by a craft baker using the finest ingredients

to something that one of the unskilled assistants at Tesco has warmed up. If my journey to work took me anywhere near Borough Market I'd be happy to pay the extra to get something worth eating - as it is I stand depressed in the supermarket wondering why the gentrification in my area only seems to bring estate agents and wine bars.

Svartfrosk

## Blast from the Past

From Freedom of 27th August 1983 on Turkey: "Thousands of political prisoners in Turkey's military prisons have been on hunger strike against prison conditions since 7th July. The action has already claimed two lives, Irfan Ornek and M Solmaz. Both died after being tortured by the prison authorities to get them to quit the strike. Hundreds of prisoners are reported to be in hospital, some in a coma, and others are refusing medical attention.

The authorities are doing everything in their power to break the strike, now that it is reaching a critical stage where successive deaths could occur. Fasting prisoners are systematically being removed from their cells and tortured and their screams are being broadcast over the prison PA.

The action originally comprised some 2,500 prisoners in Istanbul's military prisons, one of which has recently been converted into a single and double cell prison and is reserved for especially troublesome political prisoners and the top leaders of political groups, and parties.

The prisoners demands centre around the refusal to wear prison clothing, their refusal to submit to military discipline such as saluting officers, singing fascist songs, and military marching. They are demanding an end to torture, beatings, and bans on visitors, and for access to lawyers, newspapers, books, pens, and paper. They want the abolition of the isolation cell system and a return to the ward system.

There is evidence that the hunger strikes have spread to prisons in other towns in recent days."

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## The quiz

1. What might you do with a priest strangler?
2. How might the philosophy of utilitarianism, as popularised by Jeremy Bentham, be summarised?
3. Who said "the argument of the broken window pane is the most valuable argument in modern politics?"
4. For what is Eugène Pottier remembered?

Answers on page 6



## Imagine If...

Mohammed nodded to his guards, who melted into the night. He didn't want them to be seen on this, most auspicious day.

He had been waiting for months to make sure the situation was to his liking, and the British government hadn't made it easy for him, with their ID cards, and ban on foreigners who supported terror.

It had made many of the old radical clerics obsolete, banned from the country due to their views, so Al Qaeda had been forced to come up with a plan.

It was a cunning plan, and one that was already serving them well elsewhere.

They just didn't tell anyone who they were. Mohammed himself had been carefully not been saying anything for quite a long time, as he had originally been trained as a suicide bomber but had been drafted into the media side when their old hacks were turfed out.

Finally his contact appeared. "So you say you are a supporter of terror, but you won't tell me your name or allow me to photograph you?"

Mohammed panicked for a moment. What should he answer? Then his training kicked in. "I cannot tell you my name because I would be deported, but I would not condemn more bombings."

The reporter started noting, and Mohammed sighed with relief. No-one had told him exactly how hard it would be to avoid being caught out.

He wondered how suicide bombers managed to slip through, if this was the level of difficulty placed before them.



## Listings

until 28th August Art Not Oil exhibition - art, music, film, sound, talk and more at Oxford House, Derbyshire Street, London E2, see artnotoil.org.uk

1st to 10th September Vegan and vegetarian dolphin camp in Wales (not a place where vegan dolphins stay, but a chance to see dolphins!) contact cetaceadefenceuk@yahoo.co.uk

2nd to 4th September Anarchist cultural event in Florence, for info email marcella.schmidt@unimib.it

2nd to 4th September Off The Tracks Festival, Castle Donnington, call 01332 384518 or see offthetracks.co.uk

5th September Bristol Indymedia film night at Cube Cinema, Dove Street South (off King's Square), Bristol, screening Rebel Without a Cause and exclusive footage from the recent G8 protests - doors open 7.30pm, film starts 8pm.

13th to 16th September Disarm DSEi arms fair at ExCeL Centre, London Docklands, contact 07817 652029, disarm@dsei.org or see dsei.org

17th September Home Education Fair from 1pm to 5pm at Westbourne Grove Church, Westbourne Grove, London W11, call 020 8969 0893 or email info@choicesineducation.org.uk

22nd September World car-free day, see carbusters.org/wcfd

25th September Demonstration at Lakenheath, for info contact 01508 550446 or info@lakenheathaction.org

25th September London Vegan Festival from 10am to 7pm at Kensington Town Hall, Hornton Street, London W8, see londonveganfestival.org.uk

27th September to 2nd October Peoples' Global Action conference in Haridwar, Uttaranchal, North India, see agp.org

1st October Star Wars: an international activists conference, organised by Yorkshire CND, for more info see cndyorks.gn.apc.org

1st October Planning meeting for climate campaign demo (to be on 3rd December, midway through the next round of UN climate talks in Montreal), from 12 noon to 5pm at the Asian Cultural Centre, Manzil Way (off Cowley Road), Oxford, for info see campaigncc.org

16th October International day of action against McDonald's, to mark World Food Day, call 020 7713 1269 or see mcspotlight.org

22nd October The 24th London Anarchist Bookfair moves to a bigger venue, where you can get the latest books, pamphlets, magazines, etc., plus meetings and discussions on all aspects of anarchist activity, which are open to all, as well as a professionally-run creche and hot food. The venue is the Resource Centre, 356 Holloway Road, London N7, from 10am to 6pm, see freespace.virgin.net/anarchist.bookfair/

23rd October Freedom to Protest conference in central London from 11am to 5pm, for more info see freedomtoprotest.org.uk

26th and 27th November BeyondTV International Festival, Swansea, see www.undercurrents.org/beyondtv

3rd December International Day of Climate Protest, see campaigncc.org

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