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BLAIR'S WAR CRIMES

Tony Blair continues to court controversy as more revelations emerge about his decisions to take the country to war.

The official inquiry into the Iraqi war, headed by senior civil servant John Chilcott, finally began on 24th November, six years after the invasion.

Set up by Gordon Brown in June of this year after mounting public concern over the continuation of the war, the inquiry was originally to be held private examining the UK's involvement in Iraq from mid-2001 to July 2009, but is now open to public scrutiny after accusations of a government stitch-up.

The inquiry, whose findings won't be published until after the next election, will interview all the major players, including Tony Blair, who will give evidence of the UK's involvement in the run-up to the conflict, the subsequent military action and its aftermath to establish, according to the brief, the way decisions were made, to determine what happened and to ensure that in a similar situation in future, the government is "equipped to respond in the most effective
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LENS CAP DUBAI ON THE BRINK OF COLLAPSE



Dubai is the world in miniature (pictured above is part of Dubai's World development) as it faces both immediate financial collapse from the unstable market system or long term flooding from global warming. Can we do anything to stop capitalism ruining our planet?

SUPPORT FOR POLISH MILITANTS

Members of Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) and the Polish Anarchist Society staged a picket outside the Polish Embassy in London on 29th November in solidarity with the militant factory workers from the Cegielski plant in Poznan, Poland.

A dozen or so activists hung a banner on the railings and leafleted the area in support of the sacked factory workers, who are also members of the Workers Initiative (Inicjatywa Pracownicza – IP, a Polish anarcho-syndicalist trade union.

The Polish workers asked for support for five IP activists sacked in October for organising in the workplace, along with an end to the repression against trade union activity, an end to the redundancies and negotiations to resolve all outstanding demands.

The Cegielski plant is one of the most famous plants in Poland; it was founded in 1846 and continues to manufacture maritime engines and parts. At its height in mid 1970s it employed over 20,000 workers, which today is reduced to just 2,800. IP have been active in the plant since the late 1990s and orchestrated a strategy of 'plyta' ('platform/square') a form of wildcat strike.

An agreement was signed on 25th November 2009, by the Workers' Initiative and the factory owners ending the dispute, and the five IP-activists, who had been illegally fired earlier, are set to return to work. The owners also recognised the union protection for the five activists. The IP have agreed to suspend protests while the management promised not to make further redundancies.

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NEWS

IN BRIEF

SURGE WITHOUT VICTOR: No prizes for guessing that your friendly anarchist newspaper is against the surge in Afghanistan. So, sparing readers the whining lefty ain't-it-awful polemic, let's take a punt on whether President Osama's 'last best hope' of sending an extra 30,000 troops will defeat the Taliban in three years or be America's new Vietnam.

Now, just over 100,000 troops will be available to control 28 million Afghans, compared to Soviet forces of 500,000 back in the 1980s who didn't do that well.

Ignoring such a recent example, consider that in the early 1940s the so called 'cheese eating surrender monkey' people of France were able to cause more than minor difficulties to their occupiers despite a million German troops unrestricted by 'a hearts and minds strategy'.

VERMIN: *Freedom* never descends to personal insults or sympathises all that much with politicians, but when the Labour Party sack a local election candidate who had called the Queen 'a parasite' and 'vermin', then we feel obliged to defend free speech, or at least the truth.

Peter White posted on the Facebook page of Conservative MP Andrew Rosindell, who has been campaigning for the Queen's diamond jubilee in 2012 to be marked by a public holiday.

Peter White said "What is the point of celebrating the diamond jubilee of someone who is born into a position of privilege, she is a parasite and milks this country for everything she can."

He went on: "She has more front than Margate asking for extra money from the civil list."

G20 JAILING: On 1st December 2009, Mindaugas Lenartavicius was sentenced to two years imprisonment after he pleaded guilty to a charge of arson at the Royal Bank of Scotland branch in Threadneedle Street.

Lenartavicius was seen pulling out a lighter and repeatedly flicking it alight on 1st April in order to set window blinds on fire, Southwark Crown Court heard.

His 'not guilty' plea to a charge of being reckless as to whether life was endangered was accepted by the court.

WORLD CUP: By the time you read this the football World Cup draw will be decided (4th December) and we will know who is in the 'group of death' and there will be much bewailing of how unfair it all is.

Don't worry, we're not planning hippy type three-sided alternative 'Global Saucer'.

But we will be following the impact of the tournament on working class people in the new year.

LENS CAP AGAINST THE (NANNY) STATE



We urge all our readers to drink in moderation and so we wish to warn everyone about the 32% alcohol beer, 'Tactical Nuclear Penguin', which is shown being unveiled by BrewDog of Fraserburgh. BrewDog was previously branded irresponsible for an 18.2% beer called 'Tokyo', which it then followed with a low alcohol beer called 'Nanny State'.

Bush demo in the courts

The seven day trial of George Anton and George Orton concluded on 1st December with Anton's acquittal and Orton facing a retrial in April after a hung jury.

Both had been charged with violent disorder (section 2 Public Order Act 1986) for their participation in the demonstration in Whitehall against George Bush's visit to London on the 15th June last year.

Just to recap on the events of fourteen months ago, this was hardly the Poll Tax riot. Stop The War wanted to march up Whitehall so that George Bush could see their demo as his 15-vehicle motorcade swept past, while the Met wanted the crowd to stay in Parliament Square.

When protestors tried to walk up Whitehall, the cops battered them with their truncheons. Even Carol Vincent from 'Big Brother' got



hit (for her own safety, as a police witness put it) when she tried to handcuff herself to the barriers the cops used to block the road. The police line was not breached or even pushed back.

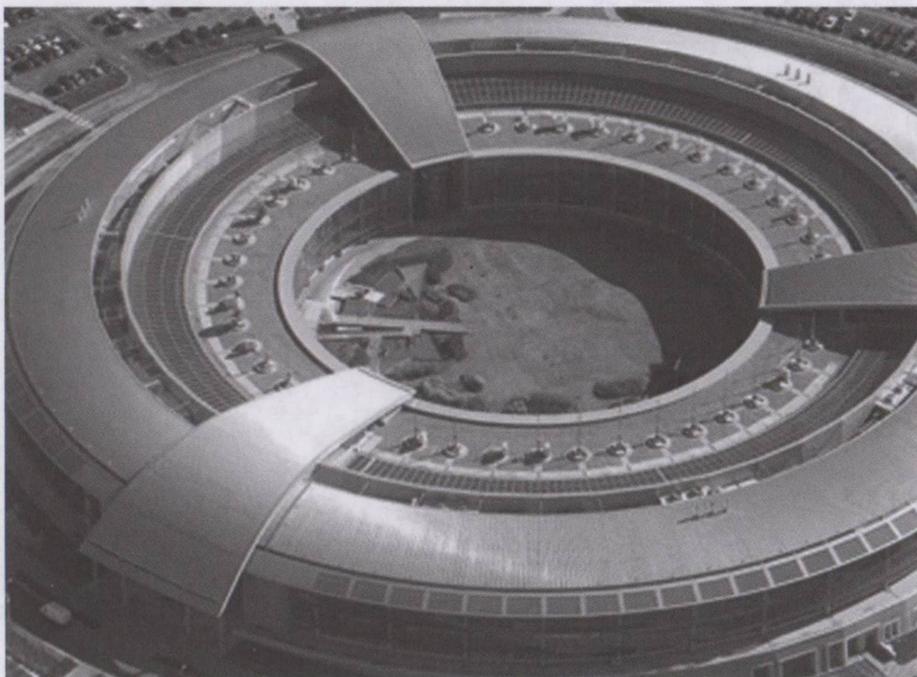
Later the remains of the crowd were kettled and several were brutally grabbed by snatch squads. However this one-sided show of force did not stop a dozen people being prosecuted, mainly for public order offences.

Some people understandably pleaded guilty to lesser charges in deals with the Crown Prosecution Service to avoid the risk of going to jail. However, of those courageous people who stood up for their right to protest, none has been found guilty, with only George Orton's retrial remaining.

As to the trial itself, it will surprise very few of our readers that there were discrepancies between the recollection of the officers giving testimony and the footage shown, particularly that provided by independent photographers who, amazingly, recorded things that the careful police investigation neglected. Praise is due to them and to the people who came forward as witnesses to the police brutality on the day.

If you haven't experienced it, it is hard to comprehend the pressures of having a court case with the prospect of imprisonment hanging over you for 14 months. We congratulate all the people involved for this victory against police repression and wish George Orton the best of luck in April.

Witnesses and film are still needed for upcoming prosecutions in the G20 cases. Please contact Liam Pollard at Bindmans solicitors (020 7833 4433) if you can help.



Left, the Government Communications Headquarters (GCHQ) building; right, some of the Estes model rockets

Jailed for keeping schtum

A 33-year old has been sentenced to nine months imprisonment for refusing to decrypt his personal computer files.

The unnamed man is believed to be the first person sentenced under Part III of the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act (RIPA), which came into power in October 2007. RIPA Part III was set up on the pretext that the government required legal access to suspected terrorists' secret files of death and destruction. In the words of Jack Straw, who introduced the legislation: "It was government trying to put in place increased powers so that we could preserve and sustain our democracy against this new kind of threat."

He was initially arrested in September 2008 coming back on the Eurostar from Paris, where French police sniffer dogs had detected the model rocket he was carrying. The rocket, made by American hobby company Estes, was in its original packaging and did not include the rocket engine. However the Metropolitan Police's elite Counter-Terrorism Command

(CTC) saw it fit to detain the suspect at the high security facilities of Paddington Green police station. During several hours' questioning, he made no comment.

After being released on police bail in spite of minute traces of explosives detected on his body, he returned to the station as appointed. This time he was re-arrested for carrying a pocket knife.

At this point CTC demanded he provide access to several hard drives and USB key drives which they had seized during investigations. Refusing to do so, he was warned they would seek a section 49 notice under RIPA Part III, which gives a suspect a time limit to supply encryption keys or make target data intelligible. Failure to comply is an offence under section 53 of the same Part of the Act and carries a sentence of up to two years imprisonment, and up to five years imprisonment in an investigation concerning national security.

Following the warning, he was bailed again. Feeling harassed by the police and insisting

he had done nothing wrong, he did not return as appointed. This led to the police raid on his home on 7th March this year.

Insisting throughout on his right to remain silent is ultimately what allowed him to be charged, on ten counts, under RIPA Part III.

He was also charged for his missed bail appearance and for two attempts to get a new passport, falsely claiming his was lost. He says CTC told him he would not get the one they had seized back, so he applied for a new one.

At the trial on 2nd June he pleaded guilty to all charges, wrongly believing he would be released that day thanks to time served. Instead, taking into account the passport offences and missed bail, he received a total of 13 months.

Before finishing what would have been a six-and-a-half-month prison term during September, the 33-year old was sectioned under the Mental Health Act. He now does not know when he will be released from hospital.

Blair's war crimes

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manner in the best interests of the country".

Already information is being revealed that confirms what many anti-war activists have always advocated – the war was not legal and reasons for going to war was based on fraudulent information intended to deceive parliament and the British public. Regime change was the driving force behind George Bush's decision to go to war, although its legality was never established, and which Tony Blair was complicit in despite the warnings.

Sir William Patey, head of Middle East policy at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) at the time, told the inquiry: "We had at the end the regime-change option. We dismissed that at the time as having no basis in law."

Sir Peter Ricketts, then the political director at the FCO, went on to confirm: "We quite clearly distanced our self from regime change. It was clear that was something there would not be any legal base for."

A Cabinet Office paper drawn up at the time warned: "A legal justification for invasion would be needed. Subject to law officers' advice, none currently exists. This makes moving quickly to invade legally very difficult."

The final justification for going to war came in Tony Blair's speech to the Commons where he described Saddam's weapons programme as "active, detailed and growing" and said the picture emerging was "detailed and authoritative".

Sir William Ehrman, the Foreign Office's director of international security at the time, told the inquiry that ministers were repeatedly warned over the limits of intelligence on Iraq. "We did get a report that chemical weapons might have remained disassembled and Saddam hadn't yet ordered their assembly. There was a suggestion that Iraq might lack warheads capable of effective dispersal of agents."

A senior law lord, Lord Steyn, has already demanded an interim report for "the inquiry to conclude that in the absence of a second UN resolution authorising invasion, it was illegal".

Blair himself is to face the inquiry earlier next year, although Gordon Brown, the then Chancellor who bankrolled the war, has not been called to give evidence.

ANALYSIS

Economic commentary

In this fifth part of his look at the financial crisis, John Griffin examines the secret handouts given to banks

I thought we'd got to the end of the banking saga, but then on the 24th November Mervyn King (pictured right), Governor of the Bank of England, revealed further handouts to RBS and HBOS which had been kept secret. Having developed an out-of-controlness theme in Part 4 (*Freedom*, 21st November), this latest instalment builds on rather nicely.

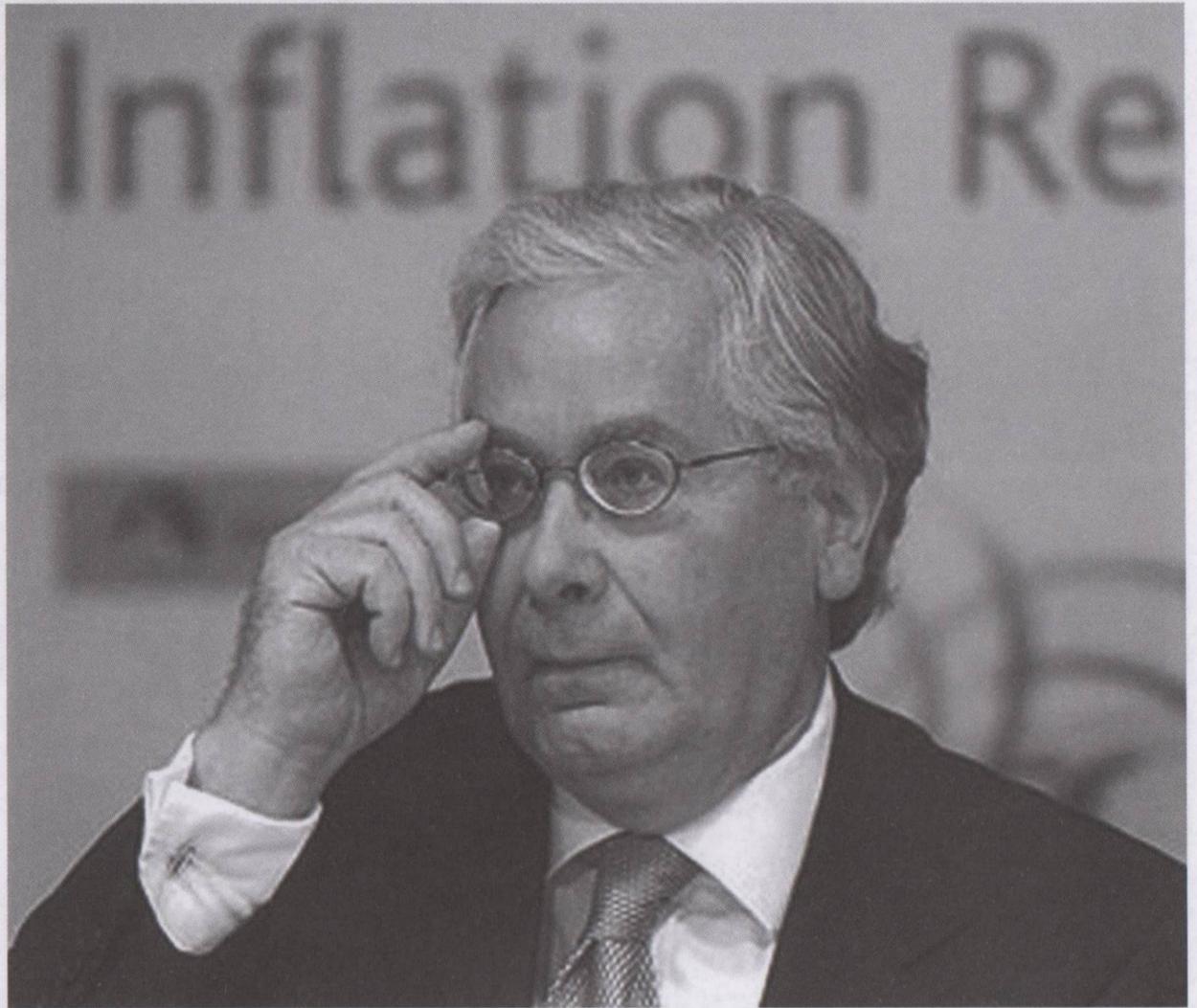
The sums involved are £36.6bn to RBS and £25.4bn to HBOS – a total of £62bn. All told, this is a very big number, even though a relatively small addition to the eye-watering amounts previously disclosed. Let's hope there is no more black-budgeting. The emergency loans were made up until 13th December 2008, when there was a real danger of the collapse of the entire banking system, and the Government was persuading Lloyds to take over HBOS rather than having to nationalise it. The loans were secured with £100bn of collateral and subject to interest paid to the Bank of England. Repayment was completed in January 2009.

There are several deceptions here. For the merger to go ahead, it was necessary to gain the agreement of Lloyd's shareholders who, it was rightly assumed, would not be pleased to take on the £25.4bn debt, so they were kept in the dark. King, however, made it clear that: "The board of Lloyds was fully in the picture, knew exactly how much support HBOS was receiving, as did their legal advisors, and they concluded it still made a considerable amount of sense for Lloyds and HBOS to merge". So the Government, Bank of England and Lloyds' directors together conspired to deceive the shareholders, but this deception was not apparently fraudulent in any way. Everything was under control!

Long before the takeover, we can imagine the HBOS directors frantically selling their HBOS shares – they knew better than anyone else where the bodies were buried, one of whom being that bearer of unwelcome news, Paul Moore, their Risk Manager, whom they had sacked.

I would have thought that the secret State bail-outs would have run foul of the EU competition laws, but I have so far seen no reports of this. Assuming the EU was told before King's announcement, one wonders if this was before the Lloyds-HBOS merger? I bet it was after! And the Government, we are now told, changed the rules used by its own Financial Services Authority to make its manoeuvres legitimate. So that's all right then!

The Government and Bank of England must surely wish that their mucky little secret



remained buried forever, not just for the last year, although that may be enough to blunt the wrath of Lloyds shareholders. The Bank of England says that disclosure now has nothing to do with the imminent publication of a report from the National Audit Office. They tried to smooth their passage by first getting King to make his announcement to a Treasury Select Committee of MPs. Darling faced the Commons the next day.

Inflation, deflation and Gaia

I have the uneasy feeling that the vast amounts of money pumped into the economy must eventually encourage inflation and debase the currency further – the Pound has already fallen about 25% against the Euro since the crisis began.

The Bank of England of course knows the dangers, but prefers inflation to deflation because it encourages people to spend and thereby boost tax revenues. Also, as time passes, inflation reduces the real cost of debt repayments – handy that. On the other hand, when there is deflation and prices are falling, people tend to hold back their spending, anticipating that prices will fall still further, thus prompting a downward spiral in economic activity. Hence all that quantitative easing. Yet quantitative easing did not work in Japan.

The Japanese quantitative easing, like ours, involved their Central Bank buying back government bonds, whilst keeping interest rates just above zero. It was introduced in stages from 2001, after prices had been falling for two years, and ended in 2006. However,

the *Guardian* has just reported that prices are now falling again. Brown and Darling may have copied the Japanese, so no doubt they are keeping an eye on developments there.

The Japanese have been feeling the draught from competition from India, China, Taiwan and Korea – they call the 1990s 'the lost decade'. This turn of events may be ominous for other economies, there being far too many producers using too much technology to glut the world with goods and generate unemployment. All of which threatens the stability of the financial world – together with the planet's ecology. Gaia will never dance to their kind of music.

Underneath all the hoo-hah coming from Copenhagen lies the uncomfortable truth that to save our planet we have to produce and consume much, much less. That means falling prices, more unemployment and less tax revenue: deflation. We are currently experiencing the biggest financial crash since that of 1929, but in the UK output has fallen only 6%. To make things right with Gaia, we have to make far deeper cuts than that. The economic implications are obvious – that's why Governments around the world will never agree on a sound ecological strategy, it's up to us!

We could conclude, tying together the economic, the ecological and the out-of-control, by saying that we are so eager to destroy our habitat that we want to do it on credit, so much so that recently we broke the banks in the process.

Some would call this madness.

IN BRIEF

COPENHAGEN: James Hansen, probably the world's most prominent Climate scientist, says it would be better for the planet and for future generations if next week's Copenhagen climate change summit ended in collapse.

In an interview with the *Guardian*, Hansen said that any agreement likely to emerge from the negotiations would be so deeply flawed that it would be better to start again from scratch.

"I would rather it not happen if people accept that as being the right track because it's a disaster track. The whole approach is so fundamentally wrong that it is better to reassess the situation."

Excellent plan, and the same for capitalism please.

WHITE PAPER: Alan Johnson, the Home Secretary, has announced a white paper on policing. Wait with bated breath for the dramatic reforms he has in mind.

There should be a standardised beat patrol vehicle in police livery with blue lights available for use across all forces. Standardised police uniforms – currently each force has its own variation with helmets or caps – and one supplier of body armour.

Are people having difficulty know who's a cop or not? No the simple truth is it's a plan to cut costs by 5% in the next five years – amazing no one thought of it earlier.

POVERTY: The Joseph Rowntree Foundation says poverty in Britain is as bad as it was in 2000.

The group said that issues of unemployment and the repossession of homes had become more acute before the recession started. It said long-term solutions were needed to reverse the poverty trend.

Too true.

STUDENTS: A university is giving some of its politics students lessons in how to campaign and take direct action.

The Sheffield Hallam students will have to conduct an activism project and campaign on a theme of their choice.

Course leader Dr Annabel Kiernan said many students did not have time for protest as they were too busy working to pay off their tuition fee loans.

GREY DRIZZLE: The Met Office has said that last month was the wettest November on record, with an average of 217.4mm (8.6in) of rain across the UK.

The weather station that recorded the highest rainfall last month was in Shap, Cumbria, with 621.4mm (24.5in). The previous recorded average of 193.6mm (7.6in) dates back to 1951.

Time to revive the anti-nationalism plan of renaming countries after their predominant feature, hence these islands as Grey Drizzle.

Student politics

The state of student politics at the end of 2009...

The Autonomous Student Network was founded on 24th October 2007 and is still growing and developing, with people from around 40 UK universities involved in groups on their campuses, on the email list and on the web forum.

The network was set up by students at Goldsmiths University as an alternative to socialist and liberal student networks and the defunct NUS: to join up anarchist and autonomous groups and individuals at different universities, such as the Sussex Autonomous Group. We felt that this would strengthen existing groups and encourage other people to form new groups, which is still happening but much work lies ahead with the corporatisation of universities gradually eroding higher education.

For the academic year 2007–2008, the network was mostly a London network, with groups and individuals at Goldsmiths, SOAS, Queen Mary's, UEL, Imperial, Middlesex, UCL, LSE, Imperial, Birkbeck and more. We focused on organising student blocks at demos, such as those against SOCPA; campaigning against corporations on campus, such as the Sodexo catering company (with their links to the prison system and military institutions); highlighting the impossibility to

organise politically within the NUS (we wrote a pamphlet explaining that the NUS is no longer a union capable of radical politics and calling for other forms of organising); and having stalls, such as at the annual People & Planet student conference, Shared Planet, which is one of the largest annual student gatherings.

At the Anarchist Bookfair in 2008 we held a meeting and from then on the network expanded to become a national network, with students from Sheffield and beyond getting involved.

At the Anarchist Movement conference in June 2009, the web forum was launched and the network re-vitalised. At present, People & Planet and ENS (Education Not for Sale, which is part of the NUS) are involved in useful activity, however the ASN is the only network engaging in anarchist politics and thus needs to expand and strengthen so as to work with education workers, such as people in UCU (the University and College Union) to successfully resist the changes threatening higher education.

Ex-student researcher

I am currently working on a project looking at the corporatisation of universities with People & Planet: Reclaim Research, contact: autonomous-students-network@lists.riseup.net or see:

- autonomous-students.net/index.html
- ucu.org.uk
- <http://peopleandplanet.org/reclaimresearch>
- sgr.org.uk



INTERNATIONAL

IN BRIEF

BRAZIL: Petroleo Brasileiro workers plan to hold 'surprise' stoppages almost daily at units of the Brazilian state-controlled oil producer after disagreements on the suspension of striking workers led wage talks to stall. The FUP union recommended workers hold an average of six unannounced and isolated stoppages a week at Petrobras facilities.

CANADA: Steel firm Vale Inco is suing the Steelworkers unions Local 6500 and 19 for \$25million after it hired a private surveillance firm to gather evidence strikers were slowing down lorries. The company claims such an action would break the terms of an injunction against picketers at the site, who have been out for four months now.

GERMANY: Anti-terrorist police sealed off an airport terminal late last month after they found what they thought were two fishy looking packages.

However they were left floundering for an explanation after the blue plastic-wrapped containers began to go off – it turned out they were full of 140lbs of frozen fish.

HONDURAS: The de facto authorities in Honduras have stockpiled 10,000 tear gas cans and other crowd control equipment, triggering fears of an increased risk of excessive and disproportionate use of force by security forces in the near future, according to Amnesty International.

INDONESIA: Twelve days before the critical UN Copenhagen Climate Summit, Greenpeace activists shut down the export facilities of a major pulp mill operated by pulp and paper company APP, in the heart of Indonesia's rainforests. Sinar Mas is a leading driver of global climate change due to its widespread role in forest destruction.

IRELAND: On 24th November, 250,000 public sector workers took part in a national strike against planned pay cuts. Anarchist organisation Workers Solidarity Movement has congratulated public sector workers who took part in the-hour work stoppage and called for further stoppages.

RUSSIA: Anti-fascists have paid tribute to 26-year-old activist Ivan Khutorskoy, who was shot to death at the entrance to his home in Moscow. One comrade said: "Vanya was a great figure in the Russian anti-fascist movement, and I am sure many people will write down their memories of him."

VENEZUELA: On 26th November, young cameraman Mijail Martínez was assassinated in the city of Barquisimeto. It is thought the killing may be linked to his and his father's roles as ex-Bolivarian militants – they had been making a series of official complaints against corruption and human rights violations at the highest levels of government.

LENS CAP GENEVA



Up to 4,000 people marched in Geneva to protest ahead of the WTO meeting in an international demonstration on 28th November as part of an international week of action. Clashes broke out during the demonstration as parts of the crowd attacked property, smashing the windows of banks and shops, and setting a number of cars on fire. Police used tear gas, concussion grenades and water cannon.

Star Tarnac witness recants testimony

A star witness for the French police in the Tarnac Nine court case against anarchists accused of railway terrorism has recanted his testimony and accused police of misrepresenting and pressuring him into condemning his friends.

Jean-Hugues Bourgeois, a farmer who lives next door to the commune in which the Tarnac Nine live, was used by police as a major plank in their case against the accused.

It was his deposition, which he says he signed without reading, which accused the Tarnac Nine of having "little regard for human life" in an alleged plot to sabotage high-speed train lines which saw them arrested in 2008.

At the time, Bourgeois's farm was the victim of attacks, and he was in contact with the

police of Riom. On 12th November 2008, the warrant officer in charge of the case contacted him, while the surveillance of the people questioned in Tarnac was in course. The officer knew that Bourgeois including them among his friends and regularly saw them.

The officer brought him to the Riom police station where SDAT officers brought specially from Paris awaited him. His interview lasted nine hours. According to someone close to Bourgeois, it was an ordeal. He came home in shock. As if he'd been the 'victim of an attack'.

The admission came just a day after it was revealed that in a raid on another Tarnac-related arrest police had held guns to the heads of four and six-year old children.

Notes from the United States

It was reported earlier this month that In-Q-Tel, the investment arm of the CIA, is investing in Visible Technologies, a software company which specialises in monitoring social media websites including blogs, Twitter, Flickr, YouTube and online forums and Bulletin Boards.

Apparently it's part of a larger movement by spy services to improve the way they gather what they call 'open source intelligence'. That's information which is publicly available. When questioned, a spokesperson for In-Q-Tel even admitted that it wants Visible to track foreign

social media so that the CIA and presumably other 'intelligence' organisations can obtain early warning of the way in which people in other countries are responding to American policies.

Noah Shachtman, contributing editor at *Wired* and editor of 'Danger Room', the magazine's own national security blog, explains: "Visible... basically takes blog posts and takes Twitter updates and takes comments on YouTube videos and sort of sorts them out and decides which people have the most

French posties say non!

UK parallels unmistakable as EU postal directive hits La Poste

As a massive public outcry continues to build throughout France against the privatisation of postal services, thousands of workers have gone on strike against a free-for-all market.

The anger of the workforce at proposed changes to the sector led to a major demonstration on 24th November which coincided with protests by education workers who are facing mass layoffs.

According to the Sud postal union, one in three workers joined the strike against privatisation of the La Poste service, though management said the figure was half that.

The action follows a national campaign organised by leftists earlier this year which saw more than two million people 'vote' to keep the postal service as is.

Support for the campaign has been highest in rural areas – Ambazac near Limoges balloted 85-to-3 on a 100% turnout in favour of a nationalised service, a figure which has been paralleled across the countryside, supporters say.

The reaction has been strong enough that the French government initially issued a denial that privatisation was on the agenda, with French Labour Minister Xavier Darcos insisting that the service would remain '100% public'.

However such reassurances were met with derision by campaigners, who pointed out that proposed reforms and 'liberalisation' of the service dovetailed almost entirely with EU



directives which state that European postal monopolies must be opened to private competition by 2011.

Such cynicism was largely borne out when a share issue aimed at raising 2–3 billion euros – around 25% – was confirmed towards the end of 2008. France's constitution currently bars the state from selling more than 50% since La Poste is classed as a national public service.

President Nicolas Sarkozy is also known to be a fan of the private plan, saying that the idea of a stock market listing 'deserves interest'.

State proposals for a sell-off have been helped by financial troubles in the company, which is currently running with massive debts, allowing them to cite inefficiency as a reason

for change. In the first six months of 2009, profits fell 19% while revenues slipped 2%.

However workers at La Poste argue the service has been deliberately run down with little investment in new equipment and that no account is taken of the requirement for a universal service.

Under European Union rules, most mail markets including France must be open to competition from the start of 2011. Twelve of the EU's 27 states, mainly in eastern Europe along with Greece and Luxembourg, can delay this to 2013.

Meanwhile, education workers demonstrated against an ongoing swathe of cuts to the sector, in which the education minister has announced 16,000 jobs will be lost next year, as part of a wider 50,000 losses by 2013.

Notes from the Unites States

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weight in the blogosphere, which people are the most influential, and also filters out, you know, certain key words, decides whether certain posts are hostile or positive."

Visible typically sells its data to companies like Microsoft – assessing how people are reacting to Windows 7, for example. When PETA (People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals) went after meat-packer Hormel for some of their business practices, Visible kept track on anti-processed food activists.

For some time Microsoft and Google have been known to collect posts by contributors across a variety of sites. Both companies have recently signed deals with Twitter and Facebook whereby all published tweets and all blog updates will be available for search in the two companies' search engines.

While the state is finding money to follow who's hot and who's not in the world of blogging, it is failing to feed its poor. Government data in November revealed that nearly 50 million Americans – including

25% of all children – did not get enough to eat last year.

The Department of Agriculture admitted that nearly 17 million children lived in households in which food was 'scarce' at some point during 2008, an increase of four million over 2007.

- Civil rights attorney Lynne Stewart has been ordered to prison to begin serving a 28-month sentence after a federal appeals court upheld her conviction. Her crime? In 2005 she was found guilty of distributing press releases on behalf of her jailed client, Sheikh Omar Abdel-Rahman.

The panel also described Stewart's (who is 70) sentence as 'strikingly low' in view – effectively – of her political beliefs. Those included refusing to capitulate to the State's demands that attorney-client confidentiality and indeed, that the latter's access to legal advice at all be considered a privilege and not a right.

Louis Further

Chinese authorities fail miners' families

Relatives of miners killed in one of China's worst mining disasters in recent times are furious that authorities have provided them with next to no information about the situation.

At least 104 miners were killed in the explosion last month at a mine in the city of Hegang, near the Russian border. Another 65 people were hospitalised and four are thought to still be trapped inside the partially collapsed tunnels.

The accident occurred in one of the largest and oldest state-run mines, belonging to the Heilongjiang Longmay Mining Holding Group.

Luo Lin, director of the State Work Safety Administration said on state television that lax management was behind the mine explosion.

Families of the dead miners will receive up to 300,000 yuan (£22,000) in compensation. The mine explosion is the deadliest since the one that killed 105 miners in the province of Shanxi in December 2007.

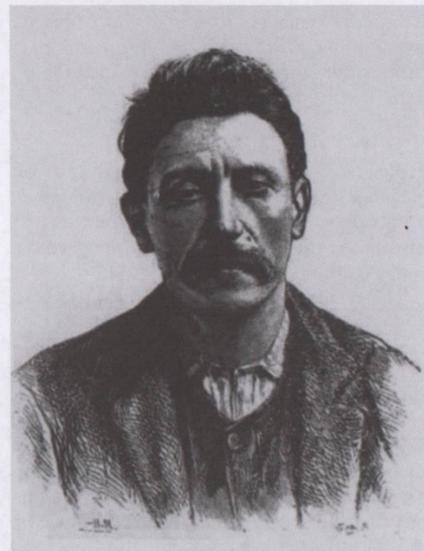
Illegalism and insurrectionary anarchism

The recent arrest of Alfredo Bonanno on suspicion of an alleged bank robbery in Greece has exposed the risks and reopened the controversy surrounding the tactic of political expropriation.

Whilst criminality remains in the arsenal of the movement on the continent, its use in the UK is rare. It is often argued that this is a result of the efficiency of the British state in surveillance and arrest, compared to their European counterparts. The failure of 'illegalism' to generalise in the British movement is not purely tactical – for many its rejection has a moral and political basis. Illegalism is as much a product of historical and geographical contexts as a result of an ideological construction. To explain the development of hostile critiques of illegalism requires a backward glance to the turbulent history of the individualist tendency within the anarchist movement.

The seeds of illegalism developed on the fertile ground of post-commune Paris. The ensuing decades saw witness to increasingly repressive measures enacted by the 'Third Republic' that were to rack up class tension. Political suppression of working class and revolutionary organisations, forced anarchists into the adoption of clandestine and illegal methods of activity, the result of which was an acceptance and normalisation of illegality amongst Parisian anarchists.

The publication of *The Ego And Its Own* (1844) was also to have a profound influence on illegalism as both a theory and praxis, growing from 'individual or egoist anarchism'. For those unfamiliar with individualism, Stirner advocated that there was no rational ground for a person to recognise any authority above their own or to place any goal before that of their own happiness. As such, egoists (anarchist individualists) reject the concept of morality, viewing principles of conduct as prohibitive to individual freedom.



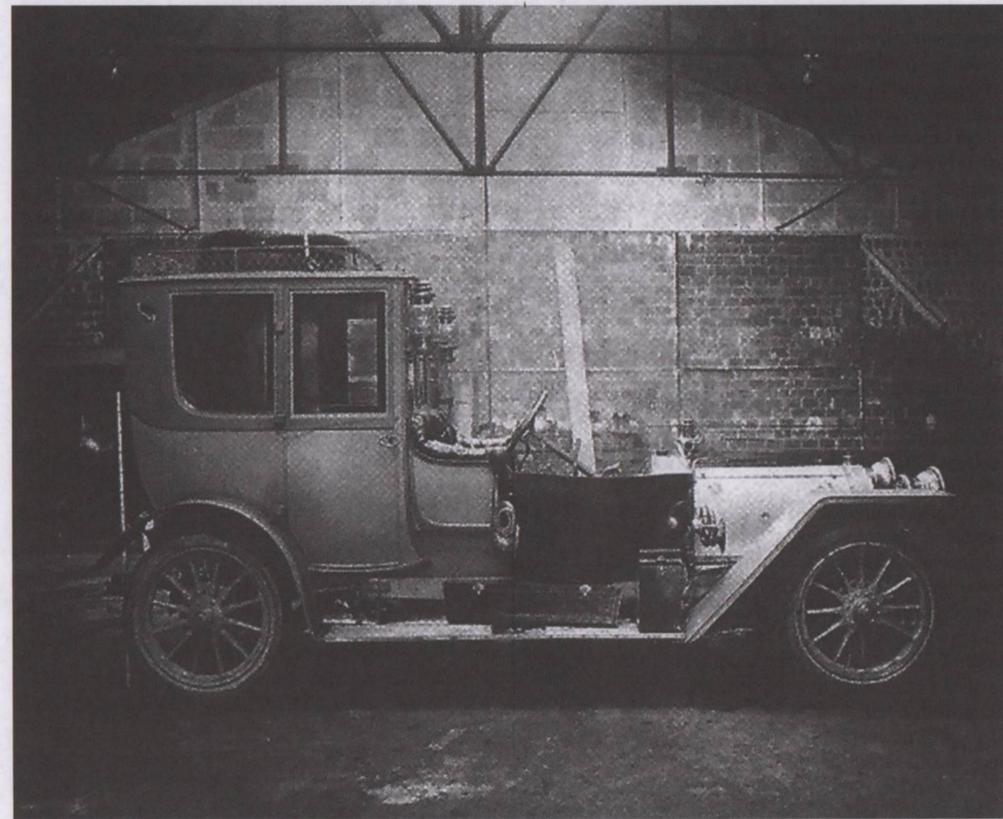
For egoists, the only consistent anarchist is the one who accepts no constraints, be they moral or political. This can be seen to sit in stark contrast to France's contemporary syndicalist (or social anarchist) movement that rationalised that individuals were obligated to each other in a society. Stirnerite 'unions of egoists' became the *modus operandi* for illegalists, with individuals collaborating to achieve their individual interests and disbanding or leaving once their aims were achieved.

The fashion for all things Stirner in late nineteenth century Paris led to the adoption of individualist trajectories in many of Paris's radical journals. The main Journal of individualism and latter illegalism was *L'anarchie*, and it became increasingly hostile to syndicates and unions with each issue.

In his excellent history of the illegalist 'Bonnot Gang' (who were accredited with the development of the 'getaway car'), Richard Parry elaborates on *L'anarchie's* position as proponents of the 'revolution of the self'. Parry's meticulous research shows a paper that viewed unions as reformist and reactionary capitalist organisations, which they argued maintained workers as workers, a relationship that they argued anarchists surely wanted to destroy. For *L'anarchie* and the individualists around them, syndicalists were wrong to place their efforts in workers, arguing it was wrong for unionists to invest value in the working class, for as long as they remained workers, this had little to do with their realisation as individuals. As such unions were held in contempt, maintaining the world as it was constructed by bourgeois reality, therefore unionists and other working class activists were seen as the unwitting dupes of capitalism. It's not hard to see why such ideas would foster resentment from those inside the labour movement, who also suffered persecution from a hostile bourgeoisie.

While illegalism grew out of a rejection of morality, criminal activity was practiced widely amongst the anarchist movements, including those who would define themselves as morally or socially engaged. The anarchist burglar Clément Duval (pictured left), who upon capture was denied a voice in court, published his defence in the anarchist journal *Révolution*: "Theft exists only through the exploitation of man by man, that is to say in the existence of all those who parasitically live off the productive class... when society refuses you the right to exist, you must take it... the policeman arrested me in the name of the law, I struck him in the name of liberty."

For Duval and others like him, burglary of the bourgeois – *la reprise individuelle* as it was to become known – was a morally informed act of class revenge. Influenced by Stirner's 'anti-essentialism', later 'illegalists' would abandon any attempts at an ethical



French illegalists the Bonnot gang were the first to use a getaway car, a Delaunay-Belleville, during their 1911 robbery of the rue Ordener branch of the Société Générale bank in Paris; below left, anarchist burglar Clément Duval; below centre, Bonnot gang member Octave Garnier; below right, 'night worker' Marius Jacob

framework, proposing and embracing criminality as a lifestyle, hence the beginnings of a recognisably different 'illegalism' to the variants prior.

Despite the rejection of a moral basis, it is hard to separate the open call for a generalised



out by both individuals and collectives. The most infamous group of the time were known as 'Les Travailleurs de la Nuit', the night workers, under the organisation of the anarchist Marius Jacob (pictured right). From humble beginnings, this loose association would swell to over 100 members. The group set itself the aim of expropriating wealth from those considered 'social parasites', targeting only bosses, judges, soldiers and the clergy, granting clemency to those they deemed socially useful. A percentage of all money was to be invested back into the anarchist movement, a code of non-violence was adopted, to be broken only in defence of life or liberty. The gang took the addresses of the wealthy through compiled who's-who of bourgeois society, obtained uniforms as disguises, practiced and developed safe-breaking and house entry techniques. Burglaries frequently resulted in attacks of arson if the occupier was deemed particularly obnoxious.

Amoralist motivations began to dominate French anarchist criminality and anarcho-communists sought to distance themselves, dismissing illegalist activity as an expression more in keeping with capitalism than communism. In 1913 the Federation Communiste-Anarchistes (FCA) publicly condemned illegalism.

The pages of *Freedom* would also lend criticism to the illegalists, a letter attributed to Kropotkin argued that "the simple-minded young comrades were often led away by the illegalist's apparent anarchist logic; outsiders simply felt disgusted with anarchist ideas and definitely stopped their ears to any propaganda." Nonetheless, politically motivated expropriation continued to be practiced by individuals who defined themselves as anarchist.

Political expropriation remains controversial because of its attachment and adoption by contested anarchist tendencies. Modern illegalism is commonly associated and championed by proponents of 'insurrectional anarchism' of which Bonanno is seen as a main theoretician. 'Insurrectional anarchism' has its largest social base in Italy and Greece, and opposes organisational structures as a means to achieve communism. Rather, temporary unions of individuals are advocated, to come together around a shared aim before dissipating. They also propose the generalisation of insurrectionary moments, such as rioting as a method of disrupting capitalist and state control.

Like 'egoist anarchists' before them, insurrectionists find themselves at the receiving end of criticism from within the movement. With emphasis on 'attack', it is clear why insurrectionary anarchism has taken hold in Greece, where street riots and insurrections have toppled military juntas within living memory. Detractors of illegalism are quick to condemn its practitioners as individualist adventurers divorced from the

class struggle. These criticisms resonate, but we must recognise that different contexts produce different methods of struggles. History does not repeat itself, but does have a tendency to rhyme. It could be argued that the conditions the current Greek movement face mirror those of their nineteenth century Parisian counterparts: a failed, yet generalised revolt has led to increased state hostility and repression. Greek anarchist groups have been forced to adopt clandestine models of organisation. Insurrectionary anarchism, with its close relationships to Stirnerite egoism, has adopted propaganda of the deed. Attempts have recently been made on policemen's lives.

Expropriation of capitalist property is also on the rise within the movement. Illegalism is a response expressed by anarchists in certain social contexts and under favourable conditions – when social tensions are declared and recognised. Self-proclaimed individualists are most active and support is widespread when society is in upheaval, this irony does not go unnoticed by social anarchists. Illegalist actions resonate beyond anarchists and into wider society, partly due to their often daring nature, serving to shock and inspire.

notesfrombelow

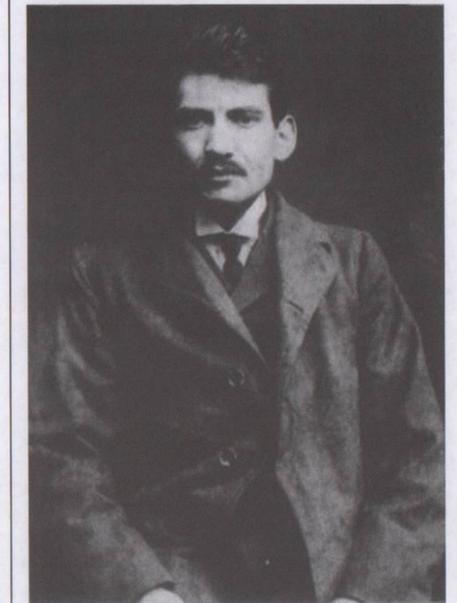
For a more in-depth history of illegalism and insurrectionary anarchism:

Richard Parry, *The Bonnot Gang* (Rebel Press, £4.95)

Pino Cacucci, *Without a Glimmer of Remorse* (Read and Noir, £9.99)

John Merriman, *The Dynamite Club* (JR Books, £18.99)

You can write to Alfredo Bonanno at: Tzamala 3, 33100 Amfissa, Greece.



COMMENT

ABOUT FREEDOM

ANGEL ALLEY

Apologies to all the comrades who got charged £1.08 by the post office for issue 7021 (7th November). We inadvertently used a batch of old envelopes for some of the mail out and the excess 1.5 cms made all the difference. If you didn't get 7021 then let us know and we'll send a copy along with the next issue. If you were heroic enough to tramp to the post office and pay the extra we will extend your sub by one issue on request.

Meanwhile, down in the shop we are having an early spring clean and re-arrangement of things to keep everyone on their toes. Make sure you visit us and get a big pile of books in to give to your friends, family and neighbours over the festive season.

The *Freedom* end of year party will be held in the shop on Saturday 19th December at 6pm, where we look forward to seeing as many of our readers who can make the journey. And for those needing to plan in advance, we will be open as normal up to 24th December and then closed until Monday 4th January.

SUBSCRIPTIONS

To work out if your subscription is due for renewal, look at the number above your name on the address label. This issue is vol 70, no 23, so if your subscription runs out with this issue you'll have 7023 above your name. If the number is 7023 or less, then your subscription is now due for renewal. See page 16 for the current rates and a renewal form or, if you don't want to worry in the future about remembering to renew your subscription to *Freedom*, just ask us to send you a standing order form by emailing subs@freedompress.org.uk or you can write to us at 'Subscriptions', *Freedom*, 84b Whitechapel High Street, London E1 7QX.

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NEXT ISSUE

The next issue will be dated 19th December 2009 and the last day to get copy to us for that issue will be Thursday 10th December. You can send your articles to us by email to copy@freedompress.org.uk or by post addressed to 'The Editors', *Freedom*, 84b Whitechapel High Street, London E1 7QX.

A sideways look

by SVARTFROSK

An unwelcome letter plopped through the door this week. After a 'consultation', the council is introducing controlled parking in my street. Perhaps someone we don't know in the street asked for it, but everyone we do know is against. The letter says that a majority of residents who replied to the survey in the affected streets wanted a Controlled Parking Zone (CPZ). I suspect if I ask to find out who I'll be told to go away.

The CPZs have crept across the borough, leaving fewer and fewer places for people to park, especially near the hospital. And in addition to the inconvenience for drivers, there will be a £60 a year charge for residents to park, plus we'll have to buy tickets for any visitors to use, enforced by the ever-growing parking bureaucracy contracted to the council.

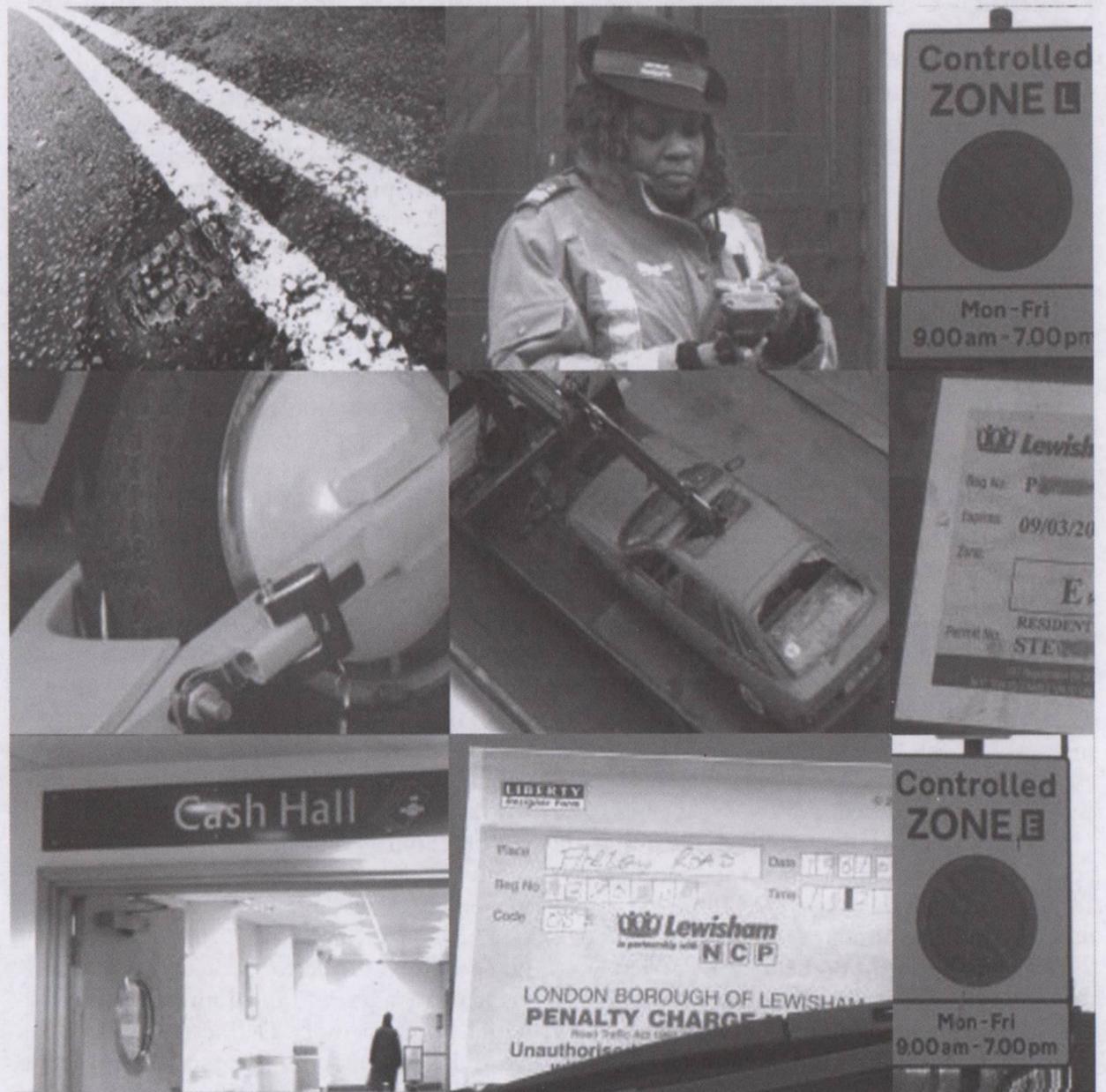
I'd normally be a bit sceptical of the idea that such restrictions are solely about raising council revenue, but in some places people can't park anywhere near their homes because so many commuters take up all the space, especially near stations. The council insists that the costs that car owners and householders have to pay reflect *their* costs. However, I think the council have been eyeing with jealousy other councils who have already made entire boroughs into a controlled parking zone.

The last decade has seen the slow creep of CPZs closer to where I live. The council have

used salami tactics: splitting neighbourhoods into streets then applying one CPZ – their neighbours slowly get strangled by the displaced cars and eventually agree to one as well. People who live further up my road are already braced to be the next extension. Several side roads have been left off as well, but there can be little doubt that phase two will include them. And no one who has ever dealt with a council on such an issue can imagine there won't be a phase two.

It's not just parking. Councils have been badly hit by the recession, both in terms of business rates and council tax and paying out more in benefits. Most of the council's other areas of revenue are down, so tracking motoring offences seems like a good bet for increased revenue. Drivers where I work were specifically warned about unmarked CCTV vans in particular parts of the borough.

Some readers might imagine why I would get exercised about parking fines and so on when all public services face cuts from all political directions. It is a common argument, particularly amongst many anarchists who are against private transport in the first place. However, this problem is much more about taxes – CPZs are a tax on owning a car, above and beyond the road tax, VAT, petrol tax, insurance tax and so on. The money raised is just used as part of general council revenue.



The Spanish Civil War

While I welcome Rachel Whittaker's review of our *Commemorative Booklet of the Spanish Civil War* (see *Freedom*, 29th August), I think there are one or two things that need clarifying. The swipe at Stuart Christie's introduction is not justified and suggests a scatter-gun approach. I did indeed criticise some aspects of Stuart's autobiography in an essay in 2005; in particular his memory of some of the events leading to his arrest for 'banditry and terrorism' in Spain, in 1964. But this difference of interpretation about some historical incidents in no way means we disagree in any fundamental way politically. At that time, in 2005, not having met Stuart for almost 40 years, I could treat Stuart abstractly as a caricature and not as a human being: this is often a necessary condition for effective brutal criticism. Rachel misses the point, the fact that me and Stuart can then go on to work together, despite my earlier criticisms, is totally to his credit and simply shows that some people can be grown up in their approach to politics. This kind of thing seems rare in left politics in this country.

Regarding the contents and production of our commemorative booklet, also criticised by Rachel, I would merely point out that we, the editorial panel that included several anarcho-syndicalists, had to work within certain constitutional restraints laid down by our fellow delegates on the Greater Manchester County Association of Trade Union Councils. In other words, this booklet was not conceived as a polemic nor as an academic tract, but as a commemorative document, hence we were not totally free agents. The two main constitutional requirements laid down required that:

1. We pay homage to those volunteers who went to Spain from the Greater Manchester area.
2. We depict these volunteers within the Spanish Civil War rendering the war itself into a balanced historical context.

Neither of these criteria require us to devote column inches to *Mujeres Libres*, and yet, we did stretch to coverage of the statutes of the first conference of the National Federation of *Mujeres Libres* in Valencia in 1937. We also gave over half a page to the Stalybridge nurse, Lillian Urmston, who went to Spain as part of a medical aid unit and, in the first edition (2006) which sold 600 copies, we did include articles, by the feminist Sheila Rowbotham and the anarchist Barry Woodling, on several other local nurses who volunteered for duties in the Spanish Civil War. These were dropped in the second edition (2007) for reasons of space owing to our coverage of the May Day events of 1937 in Barcelona.

I hope this clarifies some of the points raised in Rachel's review. The issue of what she calls the 'split', is that it was really a break-away of those on the original committee who merely wanted to pay homage to the local volunteers, and did not want to place this in the context of the Spanish Civil War. One side-result of this dispute was that I was suspended for a year as a delegate from my

County Association by the TUC Joint Consultative Committee – in our view this was a crude attempt to discredit the publication of our commemorative booklet by those opposed to a balanced historical account of the war. If it was, it failed. Perhaps what should concern us, and Rachel and Barry know this, is that a local 'anarchist' stood solidly with our more parochial breakaway critics throughout this conflict, and though this has been discussed in the Northern Anarchist Network, many anarchist organisations in the Manchester seem to want to close their eyes to what looks like an ugly, and unseemly collaboration.

Brian Bamford

Brian Bamford is editor of the Greater Manchester 70th Anniversary Remembrance Group booklet.

Photography and the police

I am an amateur photographer and I enjoy taking close ups of flowers, insects, etc. Not long ago I was standing in a public right of way photographing the flowers in a garden behind a private residence. There were no people in the garden and no personal articles which might identify those who lived there. I wasn't even leaning on the garden wall. I was accosted by a so called 'Police Community Support Officer' with the words "That's not right". He then intruded himself into my personal space and asked me if that was my garden, and when I replied that it wasn't he informed me that it was a private garden and I had no right whatsoever to photograph it. When I stated that I was only taking a photograph of a flower he replied that "Someone might take offence".

This is the pass we have come to. I cannot think of a more innocent pastime than photographing the flowers in someone's garden, so long as no trespass or other offence is being committed.

From the officer's reply the police now have the power to stop anyone from doing

anything whatsoever so long as they deem that 'Someone might take offence'. I shudder to think of the numbers who will be arrested on the beaches next summer for displaying their less than perfect bodies!

On a more serious note this indicative of a mind set peculiar to those with even the most marginal authority. They seem to instinctively seek to impose their own ideas of right and wrong on others, no matter what the law might be. As an amateur I was uncertain of my rights in this matter so I didn't challenge the officer. I wish now that I had, even if I were in the wrong. I have mentioned this incident to a solicitor and even she wasn't sure, although it was her opinion that I was in the right.

The freedom of self expression is meant to be enshrined in the law and is the basis of our other freedoms; it should be protected. Unfortunately governments all over Europe and in the United States are trying to curtail those freedoms where ever possible through the passage of draconian legislation in the name of anti-terrorism. For example, 'Commencement Order No 2, Feb 16 2009' could make taking photographs of police officers or members of the armed services a criminal offence. For those who doubt that such a law would be enforced in ordinary circumstances do an internet search on the name 'Peter Sallis', who is a press photographer registered with the NUJ, and read about his experience with the police.

Charles Wilson

Why no polecats?

Why have there been no pictures of Marbled Polecats in *Freedom*. The editors have chosen to publish a series of quite ridiculous creatures with only the flimsiest connection to anarchism, while ignoring the world's most attractive and revolutionary polecat. I suspect the State is paying you to suppress polecat-based struggle in favour of bourgeois animals.

Danny Vormela

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GETTING ACTIVE

PRISON NEWS

At the time of going to print, the Walton prison dispute is still not resolved. However it is interesting to note just what the claimed 'management bullying' relates to. There certainly is a dispute over the treatment of a prison officer who was moved to another nick on 'detached duty' by the governor following the screw's recent employment tribunal that severely criticised the prison management.

However, underneath this all is the simmering resentment surrounding the implementation of the Workforce Modernisation (WFM) and the latest prison officers' pay deal. WFM, which introduced new two-tier pay and skills structures designed to cut overall expenditure on pay and 'conditions of service', was seen as a direct attack on the POA, the screw's union, and initially rejected four-to-one by screws. As screws are banned from striking, resistance to both included working to rule by refusing to take place in suicide watch and (infirmary) bed watch. The Ministry of Justice responded by taking out injunctions against the POA. Interestingly, the two main jails where the work to rule occurred in were HMP Walton and HMP Birmingham, which has voted to support Walton screws if they come out again.

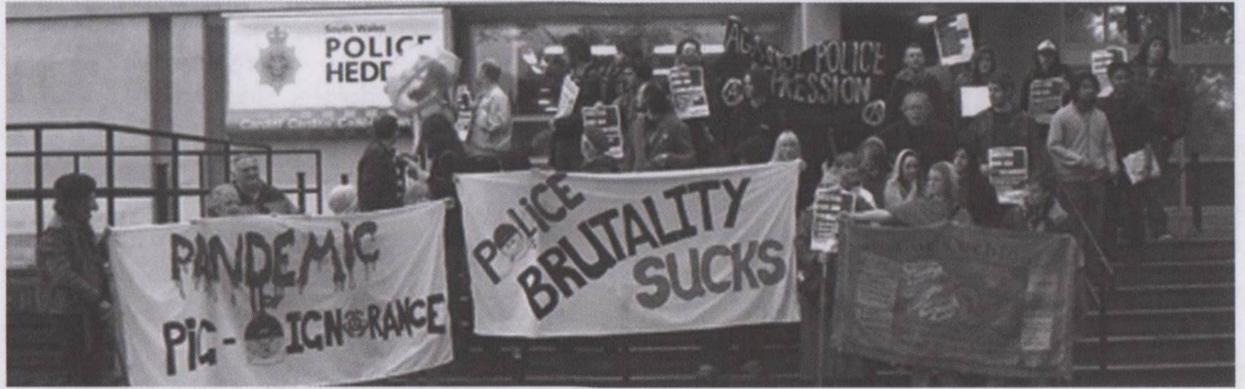
Marmite mule

In a move destined to dampen the spirits of most cons, access to Marmite, bags of sugar, tinned fruit and syrup, fresh fruit and juices from the prison canteen (shop) have been severely restricted to try and cut back on the making of the so-called 'super-strength' hooch 'Marmite Mule', which is being blamed for a recent increase in violent incidents so they have banned the major ingredients. As a result, even the sugar for cons' tea or cornflakes in the morning is being rationed.

Of course, anyone who's ever been inside knows that you can make hooch out of virtually anything, as long as it has sugar in it and you have a source of live yeast. Some of the latest sources have included cereal bars (packed with sugar), the anti-swine flu alcohol spray gel and even hair gel. Oddly enough Marmite itself contains no useable yeast and bread as a source, with the Marmite adding an extra-added kick to the fermentation process, probably because of the B Vitamins. In the States they swear by ketchup instead.

The swines...

And finally, a story we couldn't resist. The Supreme Court of the Philippines has upheld the decision to dismiss five court sheriffs from Iloilo City for illegally confiscating pigs and feasting on one of them in 2007. The court found the sheriffs guilty of grave misconduct after they illegally confiscated 675 heads of swine from Nueva Swine Valley Inc. and admitted roasting and eating one of the pigs when they served a writ of execution related to a civil confiscation case.



South Wales Anarchists make their views known on events at the G20 demo

A growing part of the anarchist movement is incorporated in locally organised groups, either by city, area or region. These can be essential as a tool in promoting anarchist ideas in the community and also pivotal in actively participating in locally based issues; understanding the things that most affect the area they actually live in and work around. Below is a brief outline of the more prominent groups.

- In London Whitechapel Anarchist Group, Walthamstow Anarchist Group, Camden Anarchists and Action East End form part of the **Radical London Network** promoting a collective strategy of building solidarity groups across the capital, with each organising locally in their area.

www.radicallondon.net/groups/

<http://actioneastend.blogspot.com/>

www.walthamstowanarchy.org.uk/

<http://whitechapelanarchistgroup.wordpress.com/>

- Bringing anarchists together from the area **Cambridge Anarchists** seek to promote social war against capitalism, the state and all other hierarchies. Involved in producing a free news-sheet, *The Cambridge Leveller*, grass roots union organising in IWW, ecological direct action, anti-fascism and traveller support

Cambridge_anarchists@googlemail.com

<http://cambridgeanarchists.wordpress.com/>

- **Yorkshire Anarchist Group** hopes to provide an umbrella for people and groups in the smaller towns in the area. To this end they intend to hold meetings across the region and in the New Year we will be producing a Yorkshire-wide newsletter.

yorkshire.anarchist@gmail.com

<http://yorkshireanarchist.wordpress.com/>

- **Glasgow Anarchists** encompasses the wide and varied anarchist milieu in Glasgow. They hold a weekly street stall on Buchanan Street as well as regular social events, are involved in a number of political projects around the city, active in their communities and workplaces.

glasgow_anarchists@riseup.net

<http://glasgowanarchists.wordpress.com/>

- A loose collection of people in Aberdeen who identify as anarchist, libertarian communists **Aberdeen Anarchists** hold regular stalls by St Nicholas Centre with members involved in activities across Scotland. They are keen to hear from other anarchists interested in getting involved with activism in the Granite City.

aberdeenanarchists@googlemail.com

<http://aberdeenanarchists.wordpress.com/>

- **Edinburgh Anarchists** are involved in a wide range of campaigns and projects, from campaigning against poverty-inducing measures imposed by the council and DWP to organising at work via the IWW. Other anarchists in Auld Reekie interested in getting involved in explicitly anarchist activity in and about the city.

<http://edinburghanarchists.noflag.org.uk/>

- The aim of **Lancaster Anarchist Group** is to raise anarchist ideas in struggles: local, national and international. Involved in environment campaigns, militant anti-fascism, local community and workplace struggles, organising local community events, socials, etc.

www.myspace.com/lancaster_anarchist_group

- **Reading Grassroots Action** was formed to challenge the councils, landlords and the bosses with a more pragmatic, strategic and organised approach to building class power. Involved in IWW, trade unionism, community unionism, community gardens, direct action casework, co-ordinating nationally, residents associations

rgacollective@hotmail.co.uk

www.rgacollective.org.uk/

- Members of **Ipswich Anarchists** have varying interests from community activism, anti-fascist action, syndicalism, disability advocacy, animal rights, feminism, eco-activism, queer activism, promoting anarchism in the community and working around anti-war, anti-nuclear, pro-green issues. Involved in Ribble food co-op, Random Camel Housing Co-op and May Day events.

ipswich-anarchist@yahoo.co.uk

www.myspace.com/ipswich_anarchists

- A network of autonomous collectives, **South Wales Anarchists** engage in direct action against capitalism and government, spreading information, and building resistance across the region. Activities include the infamous *Gagged* newsletter, anti-deportation campaigns/No Borders, fitwatch/anti-police organising, anti-militarism and other campaigns.

cardiffanarchists@riseup.net

<http://southwalesanarchists.org/>

- Although **Norwich Anarchists** no longer hold regular meetings they are still active in Norwich IWW and Section Six Social Centre. Norwich Anarchists organised the Norwich Anarchist Bookfair, the regular Free Shop and other demonstrations and actions.

<http://www.norwichanarchists.org/>

Copping the Bill

The HMIC report on protest policing – a new direction or a triumph of style over substance?

There is no denying that the latest report on the policing of protest by the HMIC (Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary) is hugely critical of the police. Throughout the 220-page document there are many polite ways of saying that the police screwed up. There was an "inappropriate" use of police powers. The use of force showed a lack of "clear standards". And the understanding of the law was, um, "inconsistent".

All of which is very gratifying for those thousands of people who have been on the receiving end of, um, 'inconsistency'. But the question everyone's asking is, of course, what is going to change? The answer is probably not much, although the HMIC would prefer it if the police didn't get caught with their trousers down again.

The most crucial change they want to bring about is that of public perception. The image of the police has taken a hell of a battering with all the coverage of G20, Kingsnorth, police databases, kettling etc. On page 1 the report states: "The police service is very much on display during these [protest] events and police conduct is subject to intense levels of exposure and scrutiny... This is important now and will be increasingly so as we move towards the Olympics in 2012 and beyond."

The government is clearly sensitive at the thought of pictures of British police hitting 'peaceful' protesters being beamed onto the world's television sets in 2012. It isn't really the image they want exported. And probably neither do the police themselves, who have a nice little earner at the moment exporting the 'British Policing Method' (surveillance, low level harassment and intelligence-led 'disruption') to countries across Europe.

The important thing, said top HMIC cop Dennis O'Connor in presenting the report, is to remember the importance of 'style'. 'Style' amounts to giving the police an image that they are 'approachable, impartial and accountable', not at all smug, superior, firmly on the side of capital, and accountable to no-one.

'Style' brings us a renewed commitment to 'communication' and 'negotiation'. "The police needs to modernise its approach and be more inventive in using new technologies to engage with hard to reach or resistant communities" says the report. One of these 'new technologies' has been the use of Bluetooth to try to communicate directly with protesters via their mobile phones, and which was used, with somewhat limited success, at the Tamil protests and, more



recently, at an anti-EDL rally in South Wales.

The strategy is to find ways to communicate directly to the 'peaceful majority' in any public order gathering, which has the added advantage of by-passing any organisers who don't particularly want to communicate with police. Public order strategy will be one of slow escalation, allowing time to persuade protesters to leave and avoid conflict. This isolates any determined 'troublemakers' that choose to hang around. Where people don't go, the use of force or containment is justified.

This divide and rule tactic is not a particularly new idea, but it may be seen more often if HMIC has its way.

Public order also looks as though it is going to become more consistent as training will be standardised across the 45 police forces in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. This means (at least in theory) that police from different forces will be able to work together without getting in each others way and screwing things up. But that seems a bit optimistic...

Although the report is mainly a public relations exercise, there are some minor, but genuinely useful, things in it. There is strong criticism of the police misusing stop and search powers, and powers to obtain name

and address. It also emphasises a right to protest which limits the use the police can make of restrictions, arrests for obstructing the highway and breach of the peace.

Remarkably, it also contains some very strong criticisms of the Forward Intelligence Teams, suggesting that their operations may not be lawful. They have been firmly reined in from their old practices of harassment and intimidation. And, if this report is implemented, they will no longer have the freedom to do what they want, but will have to justify all their intelligence gathering operations.

It isn't much of a change, but it is movement in our direction, and that's a rare thing, and something we should feel pretty good about. The 'domestic extremist' units run by ACPO also face change, as the report makes it clear that continuing to operate as private companies is not an option. This will make them subject to Freedom of Information requests – and it will be interesting to see what we can get out of them.

Although these nuggets are good to have, the overall direction for the future of policing in the UK is still one of increasing social control and manipulation, surveillance and intelligence-led policing.

The HMIC is not going to change that – that bit is surely up to us.

REVIEWS

WHAT'S ON

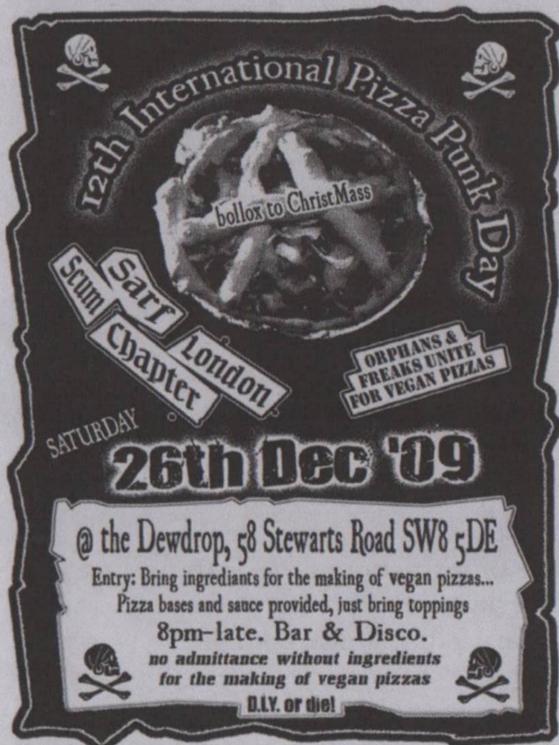
DECEMBER

7th to 18th COP15 climate talks in Copenhagen, coach travel available from Leeds and London, see climatecamp.org.uk/actions/copenhagen-2009/coaches to book your place, for more details of actions see nevertrustacop.org or climatecamp.org.uk

16th As part of a series of public meetings convened by the Anarchist Federation, 'War in Iraq and Afghanistan, War Against the Working Class' – the wars being waged around the world are costing millions and killing thousands. We look at their effects and how these wars are closely related to the economic crisis. Meeting starts at 7pm, the Calthorpe Arms (upstairs room), Grays Inn Road, London WC1, see afed.org.uk.

19th Freedom Bookshop end of the year party from 6pm at 84b Whitechapel High Street, London E1 7QX.

26th International Pizza Punk Day at the Dewdrop, 58 Stewarts Road, London, SW8 5DE, from 8pm until late, bring toppings for the making of vegan pizzas ... pizza bases and sauce will be provided, see eroding.org.uk/pizzapunx.htm



JANUARY

11th The illegal prison camp at Guantánamo Bay opened eight years ago on 11th January 2002, so join us as we demonstrate to mark the eighth anniversary from 12.30 until 2pm outside the US Embassy, Grosvenor Square, London W1A 1AE, call 07809 757 176 email london.gtmo@gmail.com or see guantanamo.org.uk for details.

14th As part of a series of public meetings convened by the Anarchist Federation, 'The Rise of Nationalism and Fascism' – the fight against war cannot be waged without taking a stand against nationalism and fascist ideas. We look at why their growth is being aggravated by the economic crisis. Meeting starts at 7pm, the Calthorpe Arms (upstairs room), Grays Inn Road, London WC1, see afed.org.uk or email london@afed.org.uk

TELEVISION

The Enemy Within

by Joseph Bullman

Channel 4 trumpeted this documentary (shown on 12th October) as exploring "the discontent which fuelled radical sentiment in the nineteenth century and the anger that fuels it again today," equating contemporary jihadism and anarchist insurrection in Victorian England. Its principal hook is persuading young British Islamists to parrot carefully chosen pronouncements of Old Bailey defendants a century ago, then gloating over the emotional similarities between these groups. Handily placed to exploit the fall-out are racist pundits Gary Bushell and Nick Ferrari relishing their early forebears' fostering of fear and hatred for immigrants and aliens. Unsurprisingly, the failure to contextualise either situation or investigate the manifold contrasts between their protagonists yields the worst kind of tabloid dishonesty – these spectacular transgressions primarily sharing amenability to early mass-mediated hysteria and current postmodern affairs, suiting the notorious budgetary pragmatism of intelligence agencies since the Cold War opportunistically clamouring for new targets and variously hyping dissidence of all stripes. And this is certainly no disinterested search for 'truth' – ominous consequences easily follow, like for the Serbian anarchists now falsely accused (despite no evidence) of bombing Belgrade's Greek embassy in protest at that country's government's increasingly draconian crushing of its youth.

Beneath its tantalising surface, this pitifully lazy and fundamentally pernicious programme panders to terrorology discourses paraded by academic spivs pimping themselves as media experts while propping up the state's mystifications justifying surveillance and repression in the name of public safety. Its 'message' resonates with many other groups you'd normally expect to disagree, similarly

interested in the obfuscation and reification of history and philosophy in plugging tired agendas. Adam Curtis exposed comparable confluences in the infinitely more thought-provoking BBC trilogy *The Power of Nightmares* (reviewed in *Freedom*, 13th November 2004), whose paralleling of neo-conservative and Al-Qaeda ideology intelligently questioned the entire basis upon which historical events and processes are interpreted and woven into policy to thus shape future action. The opposite is achieved here, narrowing down and misrepresenting every past and present phenomenon tackled, reinforcing the most simplistic, reactionary and damaging myths and fantasies that might be – and routinely are – trotted out to avoid understanding while bolstering power.

Beyond the pale

Joseph Bullman has made enjoyable documentaries – flaying *The Man Who Bought Mustique's* (2000) toff nutter, and *The Seven Sins of England's* (2007) modern ASBO chavs ventriloquising 1800s carnival-esque proletarians. The minimal sensitivity to class and culture, however, doesn't persist – apparently not even noticing here that motivations of both the 7/7 London perpetrators and the tiny minority of more indiscriminate propaganda-by-deed anarchist bombers of the past often reflect peculiarly middle-class disaffection. Irrespective of the spurious concentration on anarchism (with other ideological currents responsible for far more killing), ignoring wider social struggles and conflicts – especially the monstrous programmes of national states and capitalism – decisively cripples serious insight. *The Enemy Within* ultimately only demonstrates the intellectually and politically stunted parameters of debate among media-savvy chattering-classes – and their contempt for popular audiences.

www.tomjennings.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk
<http://libcom.org/blog/4271>



QUIZ ANSWERS

1. Voltaire – the play was called *Alzire*.
2. Dinamo Moscow, in 1923, supported by the Interior Ministry and the KGB during Soviet times.
3. When the Mensheviks left the Congress of Soviets in October 1917 in disgust

at the way in which the Bolsheviks had seized political power, Trotsky told them "Go where you belong from now on ... into the dustbin of history!"

4. Richard Nixon, about Spiro Agnew.

Corporate life

Robert Miller hits paydirt in a new book charting centuries of corporatist gold rush

Corporations are the dominant institutions of our society, controlling almost every aspect of our daily lives. Yet details of their structure and history are largely ignored and unknown. Just like the Party in Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, corporations rule us in secrecy. Perhaps because, like the Party, if we knew more about them we would realise that we don't want or need them.

Few people know that corporations are the creations of monarchs; first chartered as part of an effort to contain the largest peasant revolts in the history of Europe. These revolts took place between the eleventh and sixteenth centuries and they threatened to bring down the ruling classes. And in this day and age, how many of us are aware of the corporation Axiom? Axiom monitors everything we do, Big Brother style, and gives our information to other corporations, who then use this information to make advertisements that brainwash us more efficiently to buy their products. Corporations are shrouded in a veil of secrecy and most people know very little of their structure or history. Until now people who have wanted to learn about corporations have had to choose between two options: law books that go into great detail but are beyond the scope of the average person; or reports by groups like Corporate Watch that are accessible but are too short to give an in-depth analysis.

Now that has all changed. Earlier this year, Douglas Rushkoff (pictured) published *Life Inc.* – the result of 10 years of research. An excellent book, it explains the huge and complex topic of the structure and history of corporations in an accessible, readable and informative manner. It is written clearly and is concise and to the point. It traces the history and evolution of corporations from the thirteenth century, when the first corporations were chartered by monarchs, through the immensely profitable colonialist slaughters that monarchs, businessmen and governments have embarked on since the fifteenth century up until today, to the modern day where, for the last century or so, corporations have dominated our society and much of the world. And through it all, Rushkoff shows us the internal structure of corporations in a way that lets us understand the roots of the problem.

Throughout, Rushkoff traces how corporations disconnect us from the fundamentals of our lives. Each chapter explains a new disconnection that corporatism, and the elites who control it, has instigated to keep control over society.



There is the disconnect from commerce, as it is controlled by far-off elites and their corporations; the disconnect from community and place as our communities become lines on a map that are to be exploited for profit; the disconnect from the home as real estate and commercialisation make people's living spaces an investment to profit from; the disconnect from each other as public relations and extensive consumption keep us atomised, passive, alone and thus easy to control; the disconnect from choice as advertising and branding disconnect us from what we buy and instead focus us on the logo, using techniques that could easily pass for brainwashing to keep us buying more products; the disconnect from currency as centralised currency and economic control keep us from making basic decisions over how society is run; the disconnect from value as abstract, and centralised, money keeps us from making value for ourselves, so we have to rely on corporations to do it for us; and finally disconnect from the ability to truly resist, as to compete on the artificial playing field of corporations requires us to undertake PR campaigns and create bureaucratic and artificial institutions, such as national unions, that reinforce the corporate logic and disconnect us further.

Corporations are creating this disconnect so they can exploit our isolation and loneliness by connecting us to them, their

brands and their products. The logic, according to Rushkoff, is "isolate the target, then advertise to him." The aim is to "remove or devalue all meaning systems other than the one the brand can provide" so that we look to the latest products by our favourite brands to fill the emotional vacuum left by all this disconnection. Thus huge profits are made for the people who run the corporations – which, in an endless cycle, have to keep making more and more profit or they go out of business. Rushkoff writes that "as long as we could be isolated from one another, extracted from the real world, and immersed in a sea of emotionally compelling imagery, we could all be placed under PR's control."

Rushkoff uses relevant and often little known historical examples throughout to illustrate his points. He includes a brief history of colonialism, the history of suburban apartheid in the United States, the corporatisation of cities, the history of advertising and the history of the first centralised currencies and chartered corporations. Especially interesting, in my opinion, are the revisionist histories on the late Middle Ages and the Renaissance. Rushkoff shows how, in the late Middle Ages, as part of the peasants' revolt, there was a greatly improved quality of life for the poor in Europe, and that Europe was closer to anarchism than it has ever been since. Rushkoff writes that "the

WILDCAT

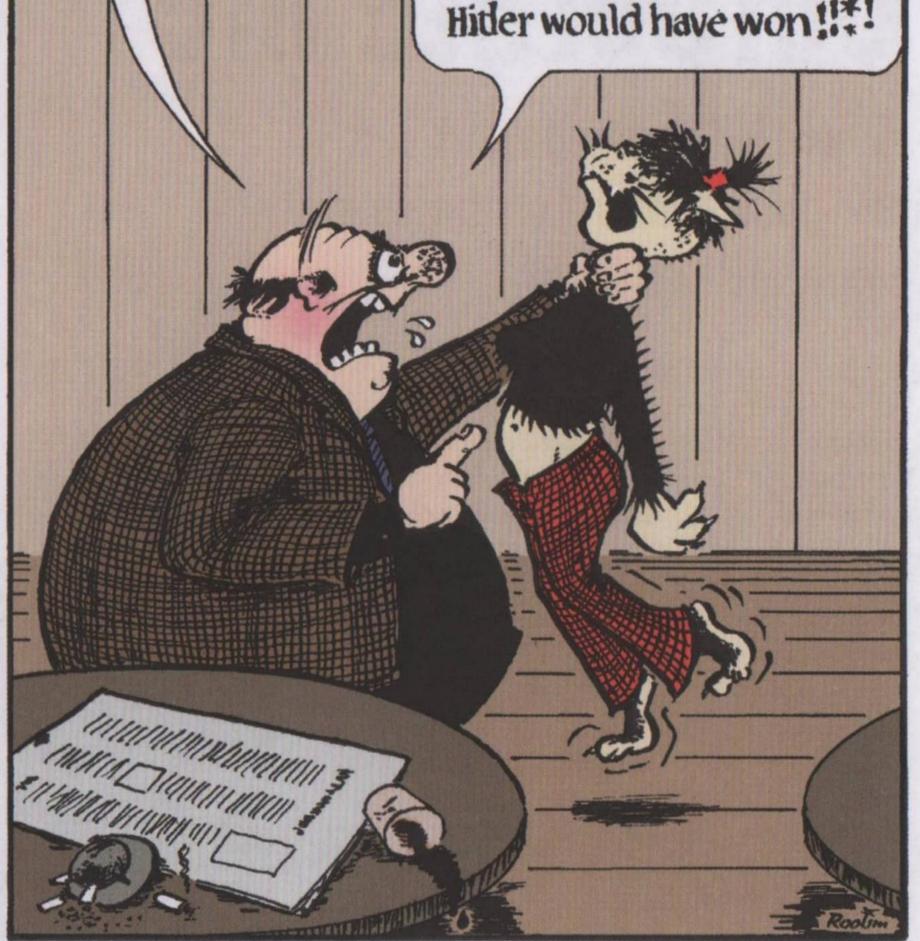
All drug dealers should be hung. Including cannabis and e. Drugs cause madness and death. And they're all addictive.

The drug that most causes madness and death is alcohol. The most addictive drug is tobacco.

Alcohol and tobacco are not drugs!!

Winston Churchill was addicted to whisky and cigars.

If alcohol and tobacco had been classed as drugs, Hitler would have won!!*!



Review

◀ page 15

renaissance was never about extending this prosperity but about monopolising it." These historical examples not only make Rushkoff's arguments more convincing, they are interesting to learn about in their own right. There is much forgotten history in *Life Inc.* that is important to an anarchist, and a critique of capitalism, and it has the best, and most accessible, history of corporations that I have ever read.

The book explains comprehensively the history of corporate capitalism, the inner workings and structure of corporations and how they developed, and how corporations took over our society. But *Life Inc.* does not simply offer a criticism of the corporate

structure of our society, it provides a clear and simple solution: ordinary people should take back the power in society and reconnect with each other. Rushkoff writes that "happiness doesn't come from the top down, it comes from the bottom up. Real people doing real things for one another is the very activity that has been systematically extracted from our society over the past 400 years through the local, day to day, mundane pleasure is what makes us human in the first place."

I would recommend *Life Inc.* to anyone who wants to truly understand corporations, capitalism and their history and who wants a great read in the process.

Life Inc: how the world became a corporation and how to take it back by Douglas Rushkoff, Bodley Head, £12.99

THE QUIZ

1. Which French writer, allegedly anti-slavery from a play he wrote criticising slavery in Peru, was "delighted" when a slave ship was named after him?
2. Which football team was founded by the top Soviet secret policeman, Felix Dzerzhinsky?
3. Where and when did Trotsky use his famous "dustbin of history" phrase?
4. Which US President said of his Vice-President: "No assassin in his right mind would kill me"?

Answers on page 14

The Anarchist Quiz Book compiled by Martin Howard with illustrations by Paul Petard is available from Freedom Press at £5 (post free) – see our website at freedompress.org.uk for details.



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