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COPYRIGHT IS THEFT

Ever downloaded a song from the internet or copied a tape or CD? Then you're a menace to society, according to draconian anti-piracy legislation passed by the EU last month.

The law was supposedly designed to target professional pirates, criminals and counterfeiters who make copies of goods such as perfume, designer clothes or CDs. During the debates, the directive was widened to cover any infringement of intellectual property. The directive allows companies to raid homes, seize property and ask courts to freeze bank accounts to protect trademarks or intellectual property they believe are being abused or stolen.

The European law was pushed through the European Parliament by MEP Janelly Fourtjou, wife of the boss of media giant Vivendi Universal. A similar law in the United States was introduced by senators who receive large contributions from the entertainment industries.

The bill grants frightening new powers to 'rights holders' (i.e. rich multinationals) to obtain personal information on people using programs such as Kazaa or Souseek to download music from the internet. An internet service provider's servers can be seized and destroyed with no hearing if one of their customers is alleged to have infringed a copyright. Then there are the Anton Piller orders: these enable rights holders to hire private police to raid a suspect's home.

It's not clear what the current status of the bill is - late amendments restricted its power against individuals downloading for personal use.

The Electronic Freedom Foundation (EFF) points out that now, anyone who infringes copyright - even unwittingly - may have his or her "assets seized, bank account frozen and home invaded."

Music industry surveys indicate that 18% (that's eight million) of us in the UK have downloaded music. Only 8% claim to be using legitimate pay-per-download services, with the remaining 92% downloading illegally. Many of us alleviate the boredom of office jobs by finding interesting music to enjoy for free during the work day.

According to the industry, 25% of software in use in the UK is illegal. It argues that reducing this to 15% would generate an extra £2.5bn in tax revenues and thousands of jobs in the IT sector. It claims that organised crime gangs have moved into software piracy on a large scale, and argues that tough legislation is needed to stop this. But isn't this really just another example of helping the rich get higher profit margins and forcing the working class

to buy back the things it produces at even more inflated prices? Won't 'tough legislation' really be used against other groups (in this case small scale downloaders) than the bogeymen that are used to manipulate the population into consenting to harsh laws, just as terrorists and football hooligans were the official targets of public order laws actually used against protesters and political groups?

The law has been passed but thanks to EU bureaucracy there's a problem - it's dependent on the EU copyright directive, not yet implemented in most member countries. Over here, unfortunately, the copyright directive has been in force since November.

As passed, the measure includes civil and administrative penalties for commercial piracy. Criminal penalties were dropped. Individual member countries are still free, however, to punish intellectual-property theft with criminal sanctions.

"The issue is to get it in people's minds that stealing intellectual property is like stealing a shirt," says Martin Selmayr, head of the Brussels office of Bertelsmann, one of the largest media companies in the world. But it's not. When you steal a track from a large corporation, they don't actually lose anything at all, except reduce the possibility that you might have bought it from them. Industry groups say they will continue to push for criminal sanctions against intellectual property thieves at the national level.

A few days ago, just after the passing of the new law, major record labels through their organisation the British Phonographic Industry, have been threatening freeloading music 'pirates' with legal action. Much in the vein of American corporate lawyers' persecution campaigns against small children for downloading pop songs.

Spain and Poland - one an EU member, one about to be - make the International Federation of the Phonographic Industry's list of the top ten countries with piracy problems, which also includes Russia, Mexico and China (just so you know where to go to get cheap copies of the latest films before they hit the screens). Ruling class interests needed to get the law in before the Eastern European prospective states joined the EU, as piracy is very common there.

The new law is part of two worldwide trends: one being the tightening up of property laws to allow the more effective exploitation of the world's people and resources. Examples include the patenting of people's own DNA by biotech multinationals and the

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French firefighters join the struggle to defend workers' pensions as they protest in Paris. The demonstration was viciously attacked by police with teargas and water cannon, injuring several firefighters, who began to fight back with rocks and bottles. More information and incredible photographs on paris.indymedia.org

NO BOSSES' EUROPE

On the 28th of April a three-day European Economic Forum comes to Warsaw. Presidents, prime ministers and ministers of foreign affairs will come from all over Europe - a total of 1,500 officials.

They may be followed by tens of thousands of protestors. Originally, the Forum was to take place in the Palace of Culture, situated in the centre of Warsaw, but security fears meant that this month the venue was changed to the hotel Sofitel Victoria.

"We have never had such a thing," says Lucjan Belza, director of the city office for security and crisis management. "The Palace of Culture is the worst place for security in Warsaw. There are no natural barriers to stop the antiglobalists."

The Polish government have stepped up security over the past few months, responding to concerns that they simply aren't prepared for large scale anti-globalisation demonstrations.

The mayor of Warsaw, Lech Kaczynski, told journalists he is seriously worried about the April economic summit. "The respective government bodies started preparations on the 11th of February. The situation requires substantial measures not only in Warsaw but at the borders, to minimise the number of demonstrators."

According to Kaczynski, attention should be paid to the fact that the anti-capitalists are organised worldwide and will act in small groups in many places across the city. "It is necessary to have

corresponding intervention units ready because big, even well armed police units can do nothing. They are unable to intervene in forty places at a time", he explained.

Interest in participation in the protests has been expressed by unemployed groups, several trade-unions and organisations abroad. It is also hoped there will be support from the local population, which currently lives with 20% unemployment and 60% of its population below the poverty line. 28th April: various events, street theatre. 29th April: main demonstration from 11am. 28th to 30th April: Alternative Economic Forum (lectures, discussions, workshops). More information on www.wa29.org source: Kolokol Publications' Poland Newsletter

FREEDOM

Volume 65 Number 07

Anarchism

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

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

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

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

Mayday

As many people will have noticed there will be no specifically anarchist action in London this coming 1st May. Our comrades in the Mayday Collective have released a statement explaining the reasons behind this, which is available to read and discuss on their website at www.ourmayday.org.uk. However do not despair since there are still many activities planned for International Workers' Day across Britain and Ireland. Several days of action will occur against the EU summit in Dublin, events have been organised up north by Lancashire anarchists and there will be a Libertarian Bloc on the London trade union march and marches in Edinburgh and elsewhere. For more info see www.enrager.net/mayday

New Group

As we go to press, the South West London Anarchist Group, SWAG, will have had its inaugural meeting. They intend to "organise around issues that matter to us and our neighbours such as housing, schools, transport, gentrification, etc."

Get involved with them on the London forum of www.enrager.net/forums or email them on swag@riseup.net

Contact details

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Next issue

Contributions are wanted for future Freedoms. The next issue will be dated 17th April 2004 and the last day for getting copy to us will be Thursday 8th April. See contact details above for where to send your letters/articles.

If you are interested in writing regularly for Freedom we want to hear from you!

News from inside

CAPS day of action

The Campaign Against Prison Slavery (CAPS) is calling on all groups and individuals who support the campaign to take part in a National Day of Action against Wilkinson's on Saturday the 24th of April.

Wilkinson's use the forced labour of prisoners in several prisons around Britain to pack their products, and so they are being targeted by the campaign. To take part just get a couple of mates together, print off and photocopy some leaflets (available from the CAPS website), visit the Wilko's website to find the nearest store and turn up on the day to give them out. More ideas and resources for action will be made available in the weeks leading up to the day.

If you decide to do an action you can either let the campaign know beforehand so that other activists near you can be informed, or turn up unannounced. Please let us know how your action went afterwards.

On Saturday March 20th, CAPS activists from Birmingham, Leeds, and Nottingham picketed Nottingham's main Wilkinson's store. Both entrances to the Parliament Street shop were leafleted, and a large banner reading 'Cheap Because We Use Slave Labour' was displayed. A number of members of the public also signed a petition

against compulsory prison labour, and some even made financial donations to the campaign. Despite some initial antagonism from Wilko's security, the picket passed off peacefully, and with a general good response from the public. The Nottingham group hope to hold further pickets of the store.

For more info see www.againstprisonslavery.org

New zine by political prisoners!

The Montreal Anarchist Black Cross Federation is happy to announce the first issue of 4strugglemag, an e-zine of writings by political prisoners on current issues. We're very excited about this project, which was created and is edited by Ohio Seven political prisoner Jaan Laaman.

The Winter 2004 issue, 'US War and Occupation in Iraq: Views, Thoughts and Analysis from Some of America's Longest-Held Political Prisoners' is now online at www.4strugglemag.org.

We encourage readers to respond, critique, and carry on the discussions in the magazine. Post your comments in the discussion forums on the site, or drop us a line. Additionally the addresses of each political prisoner will be posted with their article so you can directly communicate with them.

Hard copies are available free to prisoners and for \$5 (including postage)

to everyone else. Writings and graphics by outside activists are accepted and welcomed.

Send 'em to jaanaamaan@zipip.com or 4strugglemag, 2035 St Laurent Boulevard, Montreal, H2X 2T3, Canada.

US Anti-Fascist jailed

Two years ago neo-nazi and white supremacist groups assembled in York, PA. Claiming to support the Mayor of York, a cop from the 1970s who was accused of being linked to the racist murder of a black woman, these groups attempted to use York as a recruiting ground for their fascist agenda.

Anti-racists in the hundreds came out to protest and disrupt their plan. Physically confronting the white supremacists, anti-racists have generally marked York as a substantial victory in the fight against organised fascist white supremacy.

One protester, however, of many arrested that day is now in jail. Tim Fasnacht, member of the Industrial Workers of the World and the Anarchist Black Cross Federation, started serving a ninety-day jail sentence in February for a simple misdemeanor disorderly conduct charge.

Write to Tim at Tim Fasnacht #81647, York County Prison, 3400 Concord Road, York, PA 17402-9007, USA

Eco-prisoners

Earth Liberation Prisoners Support Network (ELP) have reported that eco-defence remand prisoner, Tre Arrow, is currently refusing food. A friend of Tre's has contacted ELP and said "he is fasting in solidarity with other people who are suffering at the expense of corporate greed and the resultant poisoning of food, pollution and unequal food distribution. Also, he is fasting to protest the lack of democracy within the US Government and lack of justice within the judicial system."

When Tre does start eating again, he follows a 'raw energy vegan diet' (a vegan who does not eat cooked foods). If Tre can not secure enough fresh raw fruit and veg to sustain his well-being, ELP will be asking all ELP supporters to write to the prison to encourage them to provide a full and complete selection of fresh raw fruit and veg to Tre and any other prisoner who wishes to follow the raw energy vegan diet.

ELP has also launched a new yahoo group to provide support for prisoners and victims of repression who fall outside of the current ELP remit, this is to be called ELP Extra. For more details contact Earth Liberation Prisoners Support Network, BM Box 2407, London, WC1N 3XX or email ELP4321@hotmail.com
For more ecological and political prisoners, see page 5

LISTINGS

Brighton

18th May Public meeting against water fluoridation, with invited medical and Human Rights speakers, at Hanover Centre, Southover Street, from 1.30pm to 4.30pm.

Dublin

1st May Join the anti-EU festivities on the streets with RTS parties, street blockades and forging links with Ireland-based activists. For more info, see www.geocities.com/eufortress or www.wombles.org.uk

Glasgow

24th April End the council tax! national demonstration, called by the SSP.
9th to 12th April Peace Walk to Faslane, leaving George Square at 1pm Friday and arriving at Faslane, 1pm, Easter Monday. Stopping in Clydebank, Dumbarton and Helensburgh with street events at each place.

London

3rd April Freethinkers' Book Fayre from 11am to 4:45pm at Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, WC1 (nearest tube Holborn), stallholders include Freedom Press, South Place Ethical Society, Chronos, and others. For info or bookings contact Black Cat Press, c/o 12 Lams Conduit Passage, London WC1R 4RH, call 0778 8945143 or email black_cat_pub@yahoo.co.uk
3rd April Orgy of Climate Destruction, Campaign against Climate Change benefit gig at Limehouse Old Town Hall, 646 Commercial Road, E14, 8pm til late. Suggested donation £10 or what you can afford, but booking in advance is essential. See www.campaignccc.org
4th April Justice for UK detainees,

Belmarsh prison is Britain's Guantanamo. Demo from 12 noon with speakers, live performance and signing of expressions of solidarity with the detainees being held without trial. Belmarsh prison is on Western Way, SE28. Campaign Against Criminalising Communities 020 7250 1315. See www.cacc.org.uk
5th to 9th April Protest photo exhibition from Genoa to Faslane with many London demos, including Dsei's, Fairford, etc., at Gloucester Friends Meeting House, Greyfriars, from 10am to 4pm. Contact mattarch@care4free.net
9th to 12th April London to Aldermaston march against the new generation of nuclear weapons. Register to take part at www.aldermaston.net
15th April BP Annual General Meeting, join the demonstrations organised by Rising Tide. See www.burningplanet.net
23rd April Seaside Tribe and Campaign Against Arms Trade present Peace and Revolution at The Brixton Telegraph, 228 Brixton Hill, Brixton, £5 before 11pm, £8 door after, call 07811 260359 or see www.seasidetribe.org
30th April Critical Mass bike ride: ten year birthday party. Starts 6pm at Southbank, Waterloo, in front of the National Film Theatre under Waterloo Bridge. See <http://cmlondon.enrager.net>
1st May Mayday Picnic from 3pm in St James Park. We should stress that this is genuinely a picnic and nothing else, so please bring what you would expect to find.

1st May Join the Libertarian bloc for the TUC march on International Workers Day. Provisional meet up 12noon, Clerkenwell Green
8th May Cannabis festival, somewhere in London
Every Monday Libertarian parent and

kid drop in from 4.30 to 6.30pm at the Autonomy Club, Freedom, 84b Whitechapel High Street, for info email libertarianparents@yahoo.co.uk
Every Wednesday the LARC Library from 1pm at 62 Fieldgate Street, E1.
Every Saturday Vigil for the release of Mordechai Vanunu from 12 noon to 2pm at Kensington High Street near the Israeli Embassy. For more info see www.vanunu.freeserve.co.uk or call 020 7378 9324

Manchester

16th April CDND benefit at the Longfield Suite, Prestwich, with Stanley Accrington, Manchester Community Choir, Bernie Murphy, Carol Batton (poet) from 8pm. Contact 70161 273 8283 or see www.gmdcnd.org.uk

Animal rights

All across the country hunt saboteurs are working directly in the field to protect wildlife from the huntsmen contact: Hunt Saboteurs Association, PO Box 5254, Northampton NN1 3ZA www.huntsabs.org.uk

Nationwide groups

Anarchist Federation
c/o 84b Whitechapel High Street, London E1 7QX
www.afed.org.uk
Class War Federation
PO Box 467, London E8 3QX
www.classwaruk.org
Earth First!
www.earthfirst.org.uk
Industrial Workers of the World
PO Box 74, Brighton, BN1 4ZQ
www.iww.org.uk
Solidarity Federation
PO Box 469, Preston PR1 8FX

www.solfed.org.uk
For details of smaller and local groups see www.enrager.net/britain

Social Centres

Autonomous Centre of Edinburgh (ACE)
17 West Montgomery Place, Edinburgh
www.autonomous.org.uk
The Cowley Club
12 London Road, Brighton BN1 4JA
www.cowleyclub.org.uk
Freedom
84b Whitechapel High Street, London E1
Kebele
14 Robertson Road, Easton, Bristol
B55 6JY
www.kebele.org
Lancaster Resource Centre (LaRC)
The Basement, 78a Penny Street, Lancaster
www.eco-action.org/lancaster
London Action Resource Centre (LARC)
62 Fieldgate Street, London E1
www.londonlarc.org
Occupied Social Centre
159 Fortress Road, London NW5
www.wombles.org.uk
SUMAC Centre
245 Gladstone Street, Nottingham
NG7 6HX
www.veggies.org.uk/rainbow/
Use Your Loaf
227 Deptford High Street, London SE8
www.squat.freeserve.co.uk/useyourloaf.html
1in12 Club
21-23 Albion Street, Bradford, West Yorkshire, BD1 2LY
www.1in12.com
56a Infoshop
56 Crampton Street, London SE17
www.safetycat.org/56a

Britain

IN BRIEF

Coach-napped

Anti-war protestors are to appeal against a judgement which ruled that the police acted lawfully in turning them away from a demonstration at RAF Fairford last March. The coach passengers won a landmark victory in last month's High Court judgement, which ruled that the police had acted unlawfully and breached their human rights by detaining them on their way to an anti-war demonstration. Although the judges ruled that the detention was unlawful, they also ruled that it was not unlawful for the police to turn the passengers away from the demonstration. The ruling as it stands means that any group of people could be turned away from a demonstration without evidence and based solely on the opinion of a senior police officer. The protestors hope that the Court of Appeal will overturn the ruling, which dates back to the Miners' Strike of twenty years ago, and will enable more compensation claims to be filed. For more info, or if you were one of the coaches, see www.fairfordcoachaction.org.uk

Who are the criminals?

Criminal damage charges were dramatically dropped last week against three women arrested while flyposting on an illegal billboard leased to Maiden Outdoor Advertising. The three north London women were due to appear at Tottenham Magistrates' court following their arrest by two van-loads of police last October on Green Lanes, Harringay. They had been publicising the anarchist bookfair, whilst distributing leaflets against the illegal hoarding, erected without planning permission, and their campaign to reclaim it as a community noticeboard.

Maiden was expected to claim damages of nearly £700, but a letter received from a Haringey Council's planning enforcement officer stated that the board did not have the required planning permission and that this was a criminal offence. Less than 24 hours before the trial, the Crown Prosecution Service dropped the charges.

The victory of the community-spirited flyposters over the corporate cowboys will be a tonic for subverters everywhere. Billboards blight our surroundings whether they have planning permission or not. Perhaps eventually we can get rid of these unwanted structures from our streets altogether, along with the exploitative companies which inflict them on us.

Haringey Solidarity Group
hsg.cupboard.org

Save the Roundhouse

Tony Wrench and his partner Jane Faith constructed a turf-roofed ecohouse on a small, self-sufficient farm. The house was discovered after two years when a survey plane spotted the reflection of a solar panel, and the Pembrokeshire National Park Planning authority has now ordered them to dismantle it. Meanwhile, in a blatant display of double standards, the Park's planning committee have given outline permission to Alfred McAlpine to erect 350 holiday chalets and 60 holiday flats in the very same Park.

Several days of action will follow later this month to try to save Tony and Jane's house. Call 07786 952037 or 07855 350164, or email thiocoregroup@egroups.com for more information.

Public sector strife

Disputes ranging across the public service industry over jobs, cutbacks and and poor pay

Higher Education

The dispute over pay modernisation in England's universities has been suspended while the Association of University Teachers' (AUT) ballot their members on the deal after its annual council meeting last week. Students can now expect to have their exams marked.

The AUT's change of heart came after talks between the employers and the union two weeks ago brokered by the TUC, following two days of strike action, reported in Freedom. An AUT member and anarchist commented "initially the employers said that they would ignore the AUT. The talks were a step forward and a result of our action. The strike had an impact". A point echoed by another anarchist who works in higher education "the reopened negotiations meant that the strike had an effect".

While strike action by AUT members seemed to have bought the employers back to the negotiating table activists in the union are raising a number of questions about the 'new' deal. The union itself acknowledges that there is no extra money attached. Natfhe, which represents workers in the new universities and who had already recommended the agreement before the AUT action last month, has told its members that the AUT deal is not different to the original one they have signed up too. A similar point has been made by the other HE unions including Unison. It seems that any improvements on the national agreement will need to be negotiated locally.

"This confirms our fears" a left activist said. "It does not mean that the threat of local bargaining has been lifted at all and the pay rise is no better than the rate of inflation, no catch-up element at all". One concern of AUT members has been that they have seen the value of their pay fall over the last

decade compared to inflation and other worker's pay. The deal will give 6.4% over two years. The AUT's claim that it has won 12.2% has been disputed by the employers who have said that the AUT are being treated exactly like the other unions in the settlement.

A number of left led branches had delegated their representatives at the union's council meeting to vote against the offer but were defeated. An anarchist who was at the meeting said "the pay rise is tied to a new 'modernised' pay scale and job evaluations. The mood here was one of cautious acceptance and concerns were raised and voiced at conference. However it's been decided that we will ballot on the offer and action is suspended for four weeks while the ballot takes place".

Activists will now be studying the detail of the agreement and deciding whether it meets their concerns: better pay, no local pay bargaining which sets one university against another and no performance pay. The suspension of action may mean though that HE workers have lost their biggest weapon against the employers the boycott of student exams. The National Union of Students had backed the union through out the dispute despite the employer's attempt to 'divide and rule'.

One thing seems certain though. The lack of unity between the six HE unions has weakened the fight for fair pay.

Childcare

The bitter dispute between Scotland's nursery nurses and COSLA, the Confederation of Scottish Local Authorities, continues as many workers remain on strike. COSLA have refused to negotiate with the staff, organised by Unison, and instead deals are being made on a council-by-council basis. As Freedom goes to press it seems as if the



Nursery nurses and supporters demonstrate in Dundee

pressure has forced all twenty-one councils still in dispute to come to talks to work out a Scotland-wide deal to end the appalling low pay of the nurses.

Civil Service

The government has announced budget cuts of a further 2.5% at the Department of Work and Pensions, which will see up to 30,000 job losses. Chiefs at the DWP have already been in hot water with their lower grade staff, who are expected to go on strike through their union, the PCS, in April over wages.

The PCS, in a response to the budget plans to 'cut waste', said: "Talk of waste is a disgrace and cheap politics... the waste we know of is the billions of pounds spent on management consultants, on IT failures and 229 separate pay negotiations."

The suffering, underfunded DWP can however afford to spend tens of thousands on a new, highly-paid executives however. Two jobs, advertised in the Times last week, were for new members on a new 'Pension Protection Fund' board.

Appointed by the secretary of state, the board's Chief Executive will receive an "attractive six figure package", while a Chairman would get £80,000 per year for a two day week.

The board, whose job would be to 'protect members of private sector defined pensions schemes', is the first of its kind in the UK, and will guarantee private pensions for the better paid civil servants.

Richard Griffin
Rob Ray
Alex Allison

Money talks

March saw a victory for open government. The parliamentary ombudsman forced Blair to reveal details of his meetings with commercial lobbyists. Downing Street has resisted this demand for a long time but the ombudsman found it guilty of unjustifiably keeping secret contacts between ministers and commercial companies who are seeking to influence them. This was due to pressure by the liberal democrats and the Guardian newspaper.

As a result, No 10 was forced to admit some strange coincidences. For example, Dr Paul Drayson donated £100,000 to Labour and Blair awarded his company (without any tender) a £32m contract to produce smallpox vaccine.

Downing Street never mentioned that Drayson was one of a select group of businessmen invited by Blair to a private Downing Street breakfast on 6th December 2001. At the time, the government was deciding which company should be awarded the contract, and within weeks, decided that there should be no tender.

Other businessmen who breakfasted with Blair include the chief executive of Business Post Group who wants Blair to open up the mail market as his company and the chief executive of oil and gas company BG Group wants the liberalisation of energy markets.

This is truly a listening government, if you are the right sort of person.

Iain McKay

Coca Cola

The Dasani debacle draws to a close this week with Coca Cola's withdrawal of their newest product from supermarket shelves.

Dasani, a highly carcinogenic version of Sidcup tap water, was laughed at when it was launched in Britain a few weeks ago by the drinks giant. But Coca Cola Chief executive Douglas Daft (that's actually his real name) insisted it would wash away competition from other more conventional types of water. The subsequent recall of Dasani from across Britain has been the final straw in a generally disastrous month for the company.

Pepsi, who were watching Dasani's project closely to see if they should introduce their own version, Aquafina,

have put European expansion plans on hold.

Look out for more new versions of the unsuccessful drink, which could include Black Plague and Dysentery flavours.

• As Freedom goes to press we have just received news that Coca-Cola workers on hunger strike for nearly twelve days in front of bottling plants in Colombia against job cuts have just won several concessions from Coke bosses. The deal includes no victimisation, two weeks paid recovery time for the hunger strikers, a statement on behalf of the workers is to be published in the national media, and unions are to be permitted to negotiate the reallocation of jobs after the planned plant closures.

After the blast

As the dust settles in Spain, and the Socialist Party come to power, had anything really changed, asks Miguel A.

Only a couple of weeks have passed since the attacks on the commuter trains in Madrid, and yet it seems to be a much longer time. Maybe it's the speed at which things have happened since then, or maybe it is the deep impression that the images of the carnage have had upon me. I know that for those living in the area the shock continues. A friend of mine told me that at first it was difficult to realise the true extent of the massacre. Only as days passed did they come to know what neighbours, relatives of friends and so on were killed or maimed. As the families of the dead mourned in solitude it was difficult to find out straight away, except for very close friends and relatives.

As such, only now can we start to draw conclusions on the things that happened that weekend, from the bombings on Thursday to the general election on Sunday. This seems to be a burning issue now, after the new president, Jose Zapatero apparently promised to withdraw Spanish troops from Iraq. There has also been much talk about whether terrorism has been able to change the behaviour of Western democracies – is there any truth in this?

While the interpretation of the events is still controversial, its chronology is more or less clear. The bombs went off in the trains at around 7.30am. They affected the main working class area of Madrid in its south west quarter, an area that has traditionally held a pride in its humble origins, with whole neighbourhoods starting as shanty towns in the sixties. Anyone planting a bomb in these trains knew perfectly well that they would affect only workers.

Minutes after the blast, ministers, politicians and the like went on air to blame the Basque separatist group ETA for it, although this was already very dubious. Not because it would be inconceivable that ETA would attack workers – they have done in the recent past in this very same area – but due to the magnitude and indiscriminate nature of the bombings. This would be the official version, to which members of the ruling conservative Popular Party, PP, would stick from then on. They even issued letters to their embassies abroad to order them to keep up this claim, despite the new evidence implicating Al Qaeda being found. This way they expected to gain political capital, since cracking down on ETA terrorism was their main plank of their electoral campaign. Had it been an Islamic group, everyone would know that the attack would then be due to the Spanish role in supporting the occupation of Iraq, and the PP politics on the issue would be to blame.

Demonstrations of condemnation were called by the government through the media and more than eleven million people turned up. But even this had a spin, since the slogan under which the demonstrations were called was “against the terrorism, for the constitution” which referred to the proposed reform of the Spanish constitution, which the PP opposes.

As the investigation went on and it was more and more likely that Al Qaeda was behind the bombings, the people became very angry at how the government was handling the crisis, since its electoral interests were too obvious. At this point spontaneous demonstrations started in front of PP offices all over the country. They were organised through chain SMS messages and emails, without any party or organisation calling for them. In Madrid they evolved into a more general protest with tens of thousands of people meeting in the town's main square, Puerta del Sol. The next day the Socialist Party (PSOE) won a surprise, but very tight, victory in the polls.

There are quite a few interesting points in all this: On a local scale, the outcome of the elections has shown that there is nothing like a parliamentary left in the country. Anyone considering the Socialist Party as leftist really needs to have a doctor check their hyperoptimism glands! In addition, the coalition of left parties, IU, won only 3,000 more votes than in the previous elections and has been left a very marginal role in government. So basically the people voted for the Socialists as the only alternative possible to the Conservatives, but even then the latter still kept more than nine million votes. Considering its handling of the crisis, its politics on Iraq and the authoritarian nature of its rule in recent years it is very worrying that they still keep about 40% of the vote.

That the people organised spontaneous demonstrations would be very encouraging, especially as they didn't seem to be linked to any party. But the fact that they only consisted in walking up and down the street, banging a few pots, etc., and then walking back home to wait for the elections is very disheartening. Considering the events of the nature of the ones only two days before, and also that the police were very reluctant to attack the protests, I would have expected the people to burn down the PP offices. That nothing at all happened only shows the lack of will and commitment in the people to achieve change, linked with what I said before about IU vote showing that there is no left of any kind in the country.*

On an international level, the main issue is whether Spain will withdraw its troops from Iraq. This is a promise that the socialist candidate made a few times during the campaign, but then he never

expected to win. In fact they were so sure that they would be in the opposition benches the next year, that they never bothered putting together any proper program or government team. They just promised everything to everyone – which they obviously will be unable to deliver. The withdrawal of the troops is probably such a thing.

Zapatero will have to show the world now how much of a real politician he is, so he'll want to fulfil Spanish international commitments. But at the same time his situation is not solid enough to be able to ignore the voters, as the PP could do. That's why he has skirted around the issue, saying that if there is a UN mandate on 30th June, as is scheduled, the situation would be different and the soldiers would stay. Seeing as 30th June is the date he has set for the withdrawal of troops it is clear what game he is playing. Last week Zapatero was asked to write down his exact policy on the issue but he refused to, never stating why. So we'll have to wait and see what happens in the end, but doesn't look very good for the peace option – especially seeing as he has already pledged extra Spanish troops for the occupation of Afghanistan during his meeting from our illustrious leader Tony Blair.

It has also been said that if troops were pulled out it would send a very dangerous message to terrorists all over, showing them that they can change the policies of a Western government through violence. This may or may not be true. But what is certainly true is that the whole process has sent a message to Blair, and many other politicians in these same Western countries, that they can not get away forever with doing what they want, ignoring the people's will. In Spain a survey showed a year ago that 90% of the population opposed the war, and now 80% want to see the troops back. Demonstrations against the war took two million people out in the streets, people who remained when they were ruthlessly attacked by riot police who left hundreds injured. Regardless of this, the Spanish government provided as much support to Bush and Blair as they could, and was seen as instrumental in the path to war. Now this government has fallen due to its policies on this issue, which can only be seen as a very 'democratic' outcome of the crisis, and Blair is probably getting very worried. In the meantime the media are reflecting on a change brought about by terror, while no one is saying anything about the people getting fed up with being snubbed by the governments they endure. That probably suits the BBC more than acknowledging that there is a basic flaw in the representative system that makes democracy a farce.



New government, same shit – PSOE supporters celebrate victory

On the other hand, the answer of the state to the terrorist threat has been to reduce the freedom of its citizens, pass new powers and laws and restrict liberty in general as after 9-11. As shown in Madrid, the result of this is that we get less freedom and still get killed in the hundreds. From the point of view of the citizens, we need to stop being the victims of our politicians' decisions as much as of terrorist attacks, especially since these decisions are always taken in the interest of a few powerful corporations, and never those of the people. We need to put in place a free society that allows us to take

control of its actions, that puts in our hands all the decision making tools, and the power to implement them. One that breaks the boundary between political and economic life, ending the dictatorial nature of our working relationships (and capitalism as a consequence) and the madness of the wage system. A free society, not linked to any form of cultural imperialism or religious oppression, without nationalism, racism or any form of prejudice. We basically need an anarchist society to prevent terrorism.

* Apart from a bunch of revolutionary anarchists, but we can't consider them left, anyway.

Copyright

page 1

US's Digital Millennium Copyright and PIRATE Acts (the latter includes penalties of up to ten years for file sharing). The second is the integration of new technologies into the state/market, increasing surveillance and repression and allowing for this with new laws like this one and the various 'anti-terrorism' laws – pioneering new invasions of privacy and curbing individual independence, while increasing our dependence on the state.

Resistance is growing though, in the sphere of information just as in others

– the free software movement has been a major thorn in the side of grasping software giants like Microsoft, new independent musicians appreciate and benefit from distributing their music as MP3s for free. There are many internet-based grassroots groups protecting freedom of information, attacking governments and corporations online and subverting the concepts of ownership that dominate the modern world. These include the new Hacklab at Freedom Bookshop, a space for learning how to use, sharing developing free technology and software, and independent media which is under development.

Matt Adams

Green and Black Bulletin

Farewell Freedom

The final instalment from the Wildfire Collective urges solidarity and support for eco-prisoners around the world

This is going to be the last time that the Green and Black Bulletin will be edited by the Wildfire Collective. With the changeover from an editor willing to encourage debate we appear to be

moving towards editorial-infantilism as highlighted by the layout of the previous Green and Black Bulletin. I'm sure this decision will be welcomed by most Freedom readers and is definitely favoured by the junior editors keen to stamp their own agenda on the paper.

Freedom has received more correspondence about the Green and Black Bulletin than about any other page in the history of the paper. It is also (apparently) responsible for an increase in sales. The page was never meant to convert or corrupt diehard red and blackers, it was meant to cause a stir and challenge the readership with some ideas not re-packaged from the vaults of 1930's anarcho-communism. We have had a mix of well-argued criticism, vitriolic attacks and even one or two supportive letters.

Rather than being specially privileged, the Wildfire Collective was only one of the many anarchist groups approached by the out-going editor of Freedom to have a regular page. Apparently, we were the only group to take up the offer. Hopefully some other groups do attempt to do something new in Freedom in the future.

We could have a long rant about the current editors but we will save that for the pub. Their consistent attempts to sabotage the page have succeeded in our withdrawal and have shown that friendship and mutual respect are merely barriers in the way of editorial ambitions.

We have decided to fill the rest of the page with prisoner support information. We have focused mostly on people fighting ecological terror, from indigenous tribes in the South Pacific to those attacking its heart in the west.

We look forward to arguing with many of you in other forums.

West Papua prisoner support

West Papua, the Western half of a large and diverse island shared with Papua New Guinea, has been under Indonesian military rule since the 1960's. Indigenous Papuans, traditionally living balanced and autonomous tribal lives, have continuously been displaced, tortured and killed, and their land exploited by corporations. West Papuans are demanding their freedom and have been resisting the Indonesian army for over forty years. The repression against them is severe.

The following political prisoners are being held in the Lembaga Abepura prison (LP Lembaga Pemasarakatan, Abepura, Jayapura, Papua, Indonesia, tel: +62 967 581705, head of prison is

Bapak Sudarsono Klapas, the head guard is Salim Maretma).

- Ilion Murib, arrested 2nd December 2002, age 34
- Allius Tabuni, arrested 19th December 2002, age 36
- Kornelius Tier, arrested 6th December 2002, age 20
- Yulius Pisy, arrested 6th December 2002, age 22

The following political prisoners are being held in the Lembaga Manokwari prison (tel: +62 986211387):

- Bosa Rawo, employee at University Papreta
- Keliopas Penetruam Kepala Desa Pabo (Pabo Village Head)
- Frengki Rawo
- Karel Kosona, works for Kelapa Sawit (Coconut Oil Plantation)
- Dominggus Anto
- Bernadus Ajomy
- Rudy Beney
- Manof Balumy, works for Kelapa Sawit
- Zet Dimara, ex policeman, arrested for flag raising in Manokwari
- Ronal Ramandey
- Martikus Densue
- Amelia Konik

You can phone Indonesia from UK for 15p per minute by first dialling 0905 306 0197, then the international number. The most important thing is just to say their names a lot, even if they don't understand English, and make it clear you are phoning from abroad.

Rest of the world

- Dave Blenkinsop EM7899, HMP Bullingdon, Oxfordshire OX6 0PZ England. Serving ten years. The sentence is made up of three parts: three years for a stove attack on the Managing Director of HLS, eighteen months for rescuing 600 guinea pigs from a lab supplier and five and a half years for planting incendiary devices under abattoir vehicles.
- Dr Yuri Bandazhevsky, Ul. Kalvarijskaya 36, PO Box 35K, Minsk 220600, Belarus. Serving eight years for whistle-blowing about the nuclear radiation around Chernobyl.
- Marco Camenish, Hörnlstrasse 55, 8330 Pfäffikon/ZH, Switzerland. In the 1970s and '80s Marco carried out a number of anti-nuclear bombings in Switzerland for which he was sentenced to ten years. After two years, he escaped from custody with a number of other prisoners and was on the run for ten years. While on the run Marco carried out a number of other eco-bombings. However his luck ran out and he was eventually discovered in Massa in Italy and after a shoot out with the police he was re-arrested. After serving a twelve year prison sentence for eco-bombings in Italy, Marco was finally extradited back to Switzerland where he is to finish the remainder of his ten year sentence. Plus he is to face trial on additional charges relating to his prison breakout.
- Hanna Ekegren, Box 1005, 718 92 Frovi, Sweden. Serving ten months for an accountable animal rights action that saw the damaging of a hatchery egg conveyor belt and the destruction of thousands of eggs.
- Iñaki Garcia Koch, Carcel de Pamplona, C/San Roque. Apdo. 250, 31080 - Iruñez - Pamplona, Navarra (España), Spain. Serving just under five years for sabotaging a dam construction site.
- René Riesell, n° d'écrou 4612, Maison d'Arrêt, 37 chemin Séjalan, 48000 Mende, France. Serving seven months for destroying GM crops at a farm in Novartis and also for destroying crops in the CIRAD laboratory, in the south of France in 1998.
- Jeffrey Luers, #13797671, OSP, 2605 State St. Salem, OR 97310, USA. Serving 22 years eight months for burning three SUV's in the summer of 2000. He was also framed for the attempted arson of an oil truck. His case is currently on appeal.
- Craig Marshall, #13797662, SRCL, 777 Stanton Blvd, Ontario, OR 97914 USA. Serving five years five months for conspiracy to commit arson and possession of incendiary devices, having used the devices to destroy SUV's to raise attention to the environmentally destructive nature of these vehicles.
- Fran Thompson (93341), 1107 Recharge Road, York NE 68467, USA. An eco-activist serving life for shooting dead, in self-defence, a stalker who had broken into her home.
- Helen Woodson, 03231-045 FMC Carswell, POB 27137, Fort Worth, TX 76127, USA. Serving a total of 27 years for three separate actions. She robbed a federal reserve bank of \$26,000 before setting fire to the money whilst distributing a statement denouncing the materialism and obsession with wealth and power that caused environmental destruction. She mailed warning letters with .38 calibre bullets affixed to various government and corporate officials. These letters stated that their actions were like bullets fired into the heart of creation. Using a jackhammer, she carried out a Ploughshares direct disarmament against a missile silo.
- Mordechai Vanunu, Ashkelon prison, Ashkelon, Israel. Serving eighteen years for telling world media about Israel's nuclear capabilities.
- Sue Brackenbury HT6792, HMP Eastwood Park, Wotton-under-Edge, Falfield, Gloucestershire, GL12 8DB, England. On remand accused of breaking into a nuclear submarine base with a hammer.
- Sister Carol Gilbert, #10856-039,



FPC Alderson RI, Box A, Alderson, WU24910, USA. Serving 33 months for anti-nuke action.

- Sister Jackie Hudson, #08808-039, FPC Victorville, PO Box 5100, Adelanto, CA 92301, USA. Serving thirty months for anti-nuke action.
- Sister Ardeth Platte, #10857-039, FPC Danbury, Route 37, Danbury, CT06818, USA. Serving 41 months for anti-nuke action.
- Leonard Peltier #89637-132, PO Box 1000, Leavenworth, KS 66048, USA. An American Indian Movement activist, serving life after being framed for the murder of two FBI agents.

MOVE Prisoners

MOVE is an eco-revolutionary group. There are currently eight MOVE activists in prison each serving 100 years after being framed for the murder of a cop in 1979. The ninth defendant, Merle Africa, died in prison in 1998.

- Debbie Simms Africa (006307), Janet Holloway Africa (006308) and Janine Philips Africa (006309) all at: SCI Cambridge Springs, 451 Fullerton Ave, Cambridge Springs, PA 16403-1238, USA.
- Michael Davis Africa (AM4973) and

- Charles Simms Africa (AM4975) both at SCI Grateford, PO Box 244, Grateford, PA 19426-0244, USA.
- Edward Goodman Africa (AM4974), SCI Camp Hill, PA 17011-0200, USA.
- William Philips Africa (AM4984) and Delbert Orr Africa (AM4985) both at SCI Dallas Drawer K, Dallas, PA 18612, USA.
- Mumia Abu Jamal (AM8335), SCI Greene, 175 Progress Drive, Waynesburg PA 15370, USA. In 1981 Mumia, was framed for the murder of a cop. Currently awaiting re-sentencing.
- Matthew Lamont, #T90251, CSP/A5-116, PO Box 901, Imperial, CA 92251, USA. Remanded on four counts for allegedly making, transporting and using an explosive device.
- Tomasz Wiloszewski, Zaklad Karny, Orzechowa 5, 98-200 Sieradz, Poland. Serving fifteen years for accidentally killing a neo-nazi whilst defending himself.
- James Borek LL6803, B4-14, HMP Wandsworth, PO Box 757, Heathfield Road, London SW18 3HS sentenced in January 2004 to four and a half years for injuring a cop during the 18th June 1999 'Carnival against Capital' riot in London's financial district.

Editorial

Life is mundane, but war is sexy? Interchangeable slogans for Bush and the gang and the single-issue antiwar movement. Reminds me of some recent ecstasy we've seen in the news. "One down, two to go." Aznar's been booted out of the land down under, and hey, maybe this antiwar thing is working and Bush and Blair will be out on their asses soon?

The antiwar movement is tremendous in numbers. But the message behind it? Yeah, it sure feels good to blast our least favorites demigods, 'yeah fuck you Bush, you're a punk'. But boy trust me when this whole Iraq deal is over, you're not going to be feeling much better. Wars will continue and the poor will get poorer.

Sure, Aznar's successor probably won't be so hot on bombing Baghdad. No, he's smarter than that. But it's cool, as long as he's got the antiwar thing under his belt making you all sleep nicely, he'll take care of business.

Heard about that strike up north at the women's textile plant? You know, the one place that keeps that town near the Picos de Europa still inhabited? No? Huh, well what you probably heard that the Madrid mass transport system is getting the shaft. Why? Well, in these days cities are really out of date. We're improving the capability of EU summit hopping bureaucrats to get a fast train to France? Not heard that either? Well, I guess that makes sense. What, with your debt, with your dead-end job, with the estate being torn down next door ...

Life is mundane and war is sexy only because we make it so. Every little last thing in our life is a reflection of what's out there. Our poor pay, our poor housing, our poor health care, our poor public transportation, everything, is a reflection of something bigger. Our poor 'leaders'. We create so much for so many, but why is there not enough to go around? How?

Viewing your world as antiwar, anti-Bush, antiAmerica, antiAznar, is deadly. You will take your hat off, reveal your big fat forehead because you've been worrying your brain too much, and start banging against that brick wall. 'Damn, the war is over but immigrants are still getting treated like dirt. And hey! What happened to my raise?'

Life is really very simple. But life is not antiBush. Life is respect, honesty, kindness, all the buzzwords, that's what makes life worth living.

So live your life for the moment. Take direct action in your life and live, don't wait for any group or politician to do it for you.

Quiz answers

- 10,000 – twice as many.
- It's the basis for life on this planet, as it's just another way of saying water. The motion banning it was dropped.
- It allows someone who previously had the right to do something to continue doing it even though the law forbids it to others. The term originated in the southern United States in the nineteenth century, when laws requiring property and literacy qualifications to vote were passed which included a clause exempting someone if their grandfather could vote. The effect of this was to disenfranchise illiterate blacks while privileging illiterate whites.
- Gung ho, a shortening of 'gongyehzhoushe'. The phrase came from the industrial co-operatives which were widely established in China in the 1930s. A US military attaché took the phrase back home with him.

Commentary

Local news

Your front page article about the antiwar movement rightly sums up and restates a basic, age-old truth ('Blair: Poodle of the rich', 20th March). The challenge we all face, it says, is "reclaiming control over our own lives" and building "organisations in our communities and workplaces by which we can resist the powerful until such time as we can get rid of them once and for all." I couldn't agree more. It's great to read the improved coverage of workplace disputes. I look forward to hearing much more about what people are actually doing in their localities.

My previous article (Solidarity forever, 7th February) outlined some of the grassroots, independent activities which anarchists and others have been involved with in Haringey over the last twenty years up till now. There are many similar groups based in neighbourhoods and towns all around the country, doing some amazing stuff, distributing hundreds of thousands of local newsletters, participating in local campaigns and community events, and spreading libertarian ideas and example.

But, most importantly, they're participating in, encouraging and supporting a huge range of wider, positive activities and movements around them. We all know the incredible potential for dissent and opposition in our society. Such inspiring day-to-day efforts are laying the basis of the kind of movement that's needed if people are to effectively challenge the structures of power and profit, and to build up the general awareness and solidarity which is the basis of a real counter-power and alternative.

In my article I suggested that there were key questions to grapple with. For example, how community and class issues intermix; how to respect and be part of the community rather than just trying to push a line and recruit; how to work effectively with other local groups and campaigns without compromising our revolutionary ideas; how to avoid being a marginal clique; focussing on local versus (inter)national issues; and why aren't we achieving so much more when there's so much fucking potential out there?

It would be great if Freedom was packed full of reports from all over the country, as well as accounts and thoughts about a whole range of current local community struggles and issues. Let's focus on relevant, topical issues and struggles that affect the daily lives of millions of people – and what's being done to try to build up working-class and community resistance and mutual aid. Local activists, please send in your news, reports and thoughts.

Dave M.
Tottenham, North London

Donald's itch

'Scratch an anarchist', as the old saying goes, 'and find an authoritarian'. Iain McKay writes, and Freedom publishes, an article rebuking the government for not banning a harmless product (Gullible morons, 20th March). Yes, in this country there's a widespread belief, not supported by evidence, that genetically modified foods are poisonous. But it's unusual for anarchists to advocate banning things on account of superstition. In the USA, it's widely believed that the theory of evolution is a dangerous falsehood. Do we therefore side with those who demand a ban on the teach of evolution in American schools?

The full effects of any gene transfer

aren't known in advance, so before any GMO (genetically modified organism) is passed to the public, it should be subjected to rigorous safety tests. And this happens. GMOs in development have been scrapped because unwanted effects appeared, but there's never been one case of a person harmed by eating GM food.

The anti-GM lobby was cock-a-hoop in 1998, when it was announced in the popular media that rats fed on GM potatoes by Dr Arpad Pusztai had suffered stunted growth and shrinking brains. It was, said the Daily Telegraph, "the first example of [a GMO] being found harmful to health." But when Dr Pusztai's research paper was published in The Lancet the following year, there was nothing in it about stunted growth or shrinking brains (the rats were all adults, fed for only ten days). And in any case the experiment was invalid. If Iain, or anyone, wants to check I can supply a copy of the paper.

Having failed to find evidence of poisoning, the anti-GM lobby turned to another contention, that GMOs damage the environment. Experiments were set up to test this hypothesis. People who didn't want their convictions confused by facts trashed fields of trial crops and issued a pre-emptive libel that the scientists engaged in the research weren't proper scientists but liars in the pay of GM companies. Of the three GM crops tested, it was shown that two are marginally more harmful to the environment than conventional crops, while the third (fodder maize) is marginally less harmful. So there was no reason for the minister not to issue a licence for GM maize.

What arguments remain against GM food, when it's proved harmless? Ah yes, let's try the anti-capitalist ploy. "The key issue of whether we want our food to be copyrighted products of corporations" is unfortunately not an issue at all. Plant varieties can't be copyrighted, only patented, and patents last for a much shorter time. I believe that there are only nine years to go before the inventors' monopoly lapses, on the licensed GM maize.

Vast profits are made from GM maize by global corporations, and even vaster profits are made from non-GM maize, notably by the world's biggest global seed merchant, Pioneer Hi-Bred International (which doesn't interest the anti-GM lobby). By all means write against the global seed trade, but don't pretend it makes a difference whether the seed is GM or not.

We're left with vague arguments ('until we know more about it ...'), false arguments (the pretence that 'terminator genes' exist), weird arguments (like Prince Charles's "it's time our Creator had some rights too") and gut feeling (personally I prefer to think with my brain so that my gut can concentrate on digestion). It's just not true that "the more people knew about GM the more worried they became." Those who bother to find out about it want its applications to be considered cautiously, one at a time. The chief worriers are those who only know the anti-GM propaganda. It's reasonable to ask, why should anyone pay for anti-GM propaganda? Who profits from it? And there's a credible answer.

When it's revealed that imported soya products contained GM soya, without anyone being told, people were justly annoyed. Greenpeace and other environmental NGOs, which were voicing the public anger, found their income increased. The new money was used for saving whales, preventing oil dumping

and other worthwhile environmental projects, but fear of GM was mostly what produced it. To keep the money flowing, some professional fundraisers for the NGOs have become full-time anti-GM campaigners.

They encourage the fear with terms like 'contamination', 'pollution' and 'Frankenstein foods', with the object of securing funds for their employers and salaries for themselves, and the incidental effect of keeping anti-GM superstition alive. "It is clear," Iain writes, "that it is the government that is swallowing the PR of the GM lobby." Iain himself may be suspected of being taken in by anti-GM professionals.

Fashions in radical campaigning come and go. Anarchists joined the campaign against nuclear weapons when that was all the rage, and currently join the fashionable campaigns against global capitalism and the American conquest of Iraq. These are recognisable as anarchist causes. But there's no good reason for anarchists to jump on the anti-GM bandwagon.

Donald Rorum

Provocative

It was with disconcerted regret that I read of the ending of the excellent Green and Black Bulletin (Feature, 20th March). A decision, it was reported, taken by the Wildfire Collective themselves, with no reason given. What a shame they couldn't tell us why. One can only hope they didn't succumb to the verbosity of the anarcho-establishment – that is, those never at a loss for something to say and who seemingly never have any difficulty in acquiring the latitude in the paper to say it.

Provocative Green and Black may have been, controversial no doubt, but I for one found it a breath of fresh air each and every time the column was printed. Anarchism, if it is to be worthwhile, has to be about diversity, a plurality of ideas leading to the best practice for one and all, including the health of the plant we live on and not a narrowed-down focus around the tired old dogma of a class uprising off its apathetic arse to save the day courtesy of an, as yet unidentified, motive. A class that only rarely exercises its faculties beyond the worship of vulgar celebrity, ignoring what's going on in the wider world unless it directly impacts on their immediate selves. Talk about Rome burning ...

Very clearly, green-minded anarchists think deeply about and care enough about the conditions of the world to want to change it. This is of fundamental importance as revolution – the ending of capitalism – will only be made by people passionate and committed enough to pursue it. Can the same be said of a class scarcely aware of its own existence? Plainly not, otherwise the point where permanent exploitation was ended would have been reached long ago. It hasn't happened and it won't happen like the class antagonists predict, because those assumptions were developed in and from an age long past. Like everyone else, anarchists too have to move on.

While readers are entitled to express their preferences for this or that kind of life, primitivism is almost certainly not the solution (apart from as a consequence of devastating global warfare) or a practical way forward out of the present morass. But 'green' is quite definitely of ultra-importance to any future there is to be for planet and population. The Green and Black Bulletin was an honest contribution to

helping the world extricate itself from the mess it's in. I'm sad to see it go. Please continue to embrace and include an equitable coverage of green issues in Freedom.

Frankie Dee

Gone elsewhere

Your sub renewal has been sitting on our kitchen table for a few days now. It's made me aware of how disappointed I've become with the new regime at E1. I do object having to be beholden to the supposed supremacy of class-struggle ideology. Thank you for publishing my letter (Commentary, 6th March). The subject of radical publications and what responsibility they have towards their readers is something I've frequently written about.

I note your (if I may say so, rather lame) response to the letter. Well, we're all busy, I suppose, but why downgrade customer care before other duties? And what kind of trustworthiness does it offer the concept of free and voluntary labour? The old business adage applies. If you tell a customer you're too busy then they'll go elsewhere. And that's what I'll do. No more copies of Freedom, please.

Peter Good

Power of love

Before I answer Harold Barclay's letter (Commentary, 6th March) I need to point out a misprint in my original contribution, which you published on 21st February. The word 'case' was omitted from the last sentence, which should have read: "That seems to imply that the 'potentiality' [for a will to power] is as ineradicable in humans as it is in animals, in which case we're stuck with the state for ever."

Now to Harold. He writes, "I'm not very optimistic that we'll ever abolish the state, but I didn't suggest that we're stuck with it forever." I stand by my comment that he seems to imply this. He also accuses me of improperly failing to quote the rest of his sentence, in which he wrote that the human psyche, in addition to a potentiality for a will to power, has "a potentiality for a will to submit and a will to freedom."

Well, the state will obviously never be abolished by a will to submit. And a will to freedom is merely a reaction to oppression – it offers nothing to put in place of the state. It may destroy a state by revolutionary action, but only to make way for another, as has happened regularly throughout history. So Harold's position still seems, at least to me, to imply that we're stuck with the state forever. That said, I regret shortening the quotation. It would have been much better to deal with the whole thing. I apologise to Harold for this error of judgment.

I'm not against animals. They're as lovable as any humans, despite their faults. But there may be something about humans that enables them to go far beyond animals. As I tried to indicate in my letter, I think humans have another kind of potentiality, which distinguishes them from all other living organisms. This is a capacity for insight into the operations of the psyche. It's not a matter of will or desire. Nor has it anything to do with mutual aid. I think it's the only factor that can liberate us from the state and every other form of power. It shows us that all power is evil, except what may be called the power of love, which is involved in this insight.

Francis Ellingham

REVIEW

Neither its director nor its critics have acknowledged it, but *Dogville* is a con trick, argues Tom Jennings

Lars Von Trier claims to tackle the big themes. In this film alone he covers, among other things, religion and humanism; a community's treatment of refugees; forgiveness and revenge; and the nature of modern (American) society.

And if this isn't enough, we're also saddled with various devices and genres – a starkly-lit, minimal, Brechtian set with white outlines painted on the floor instead of walls and roads; Dickensian chapter titles and all-knowing European voiceover; the American tradition of literary fables and parables, and its cinema of small town life (from the Western and Frank Capra through to David Lynch); all filmed in jerky digital video with realistic sound effects bearing little or no relation to the visual aesthetic.

Despite vast over-egging, the pudding's artifice unexpectedly works, in the sense of fully engaging viewers with emotional power and immediacy for all its three hours. This justifies Von Trier's ambition, in artistic terms at least. In the calibre of its philosophy and politics, though, the film narrative suffers a similar fate to the mainstream bourgeoisie culture it sets out to parody. It barely even raises the questions it purports to explore. Nevertheless, unlike the director's previous pretensions to profundity – such as *Breaking The Waves* (1996), *The Idiots* (1998) and *Dancing In The Dark* (2000) – this heroic failure still gives more food for thought than most entertaining provocations could ever aspire to.

A glamorous Grace (Nicole Kidman) seeks refuge from a carload of heavies in a bleak Rockies village where a selection of stock stereotypes eke out an impoverished living. Middle class Tom (Paul Bettany) persuades the town meeting to grant her sanctuary in

exchange for her communal labour, as part of his omnipotent fantasy of fashioning noble meaning in his life.

The superb ensemble acting (particularly Kidman's open-hearted humility) makes believable the defrosting of *Dogville*'s chilly conformist piety into something like loving collectivity, making its subsequent cruelty to her when the authorities close in all the more shocking. Once Grace exposes Tom's motives he grasses her up and, after a lofty confab with her bigshot father, his henchmen massacre the townspeople.

In effect, the structural trickery and cliché characterisation conceal *Dogville*'s underlying dishonesty. Grace is no outsider of equal status – she is not only posh, but specifically represents those historically responsible for the townspeople's miserable grind. The twists and turns of the melodrama hinge on their response to this history, which is displaced on to her since active struggle against oppression has long since disappeared from their consciousness, just as the elite and their money have absconded over the mountain passes.

This comprehensively compromises all talk of faith, arrogance and redemption among ordinary people, leaving the film as merely a meditation on the duplicitous malevolence of institutions whose pious pontification is ably backed up by their cultural lap-dogs – in this case the megalomania of cinema, recalling Paul Virilio's metaphor of it as a (class) 'war machine'.

Dogville certainly isn't the anti-American tract many have supposed. It could have been set anywhere, though local idiom and provenance was obviously necessary; and box office returns would have suffered if it had been set in the director's native Denmark.



So the harrowing final credits sequence, with its photographs of the effects on American life of the 1930s Depression, documents the contemporary reality of *Dogville*'s period. The clear implication is that its contrived horror can in some way illuminate or explain the human condition and the real tragedies of history.

But the hysterical hubris of the director, along with the great cultural traditions he references, merely exemplify the ascription of evil to the weaknesses of us lesser beings, which it is then the godlike responsibility of power to clean

up (the state, capitalism or other gangsters in the political economy; and their religious and artistic apologists in the imaginative realm).

Like many former New Left utopians, Von Trier delights in focusing his misanthropy on the potential for solidarity among us hapless ordinary dogs and bitches, which fails miserably due to our venality. Meanwhile, in their moral superiority, the rich and powerful create spectacular havoc.

Responding to this pessimism, we could guess that the former is, to a

large degree (and whether by accident or design), sedimented and structured into our lives precisely by the activities of the latter. And, adding insult to injury, this is then subsequently interpreted as evidence of our unworthy status. Yes, we're reminded of what a vicious doghouse we're in, but how to get out of it is trickier still. Unfortunately, amongst its other agendas and subtexts – which are accomplished most impressively – this is a tale that *Dogville* refuses to tell.

www.tomjennings.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk

BOOKS

General Franco Made me a Terrorist

by Stuart Christie
Christie Books, £35
www.christiebooks.com

Stuart Christie, for those who don't know, is probably Scotland's most famous anarchist. This is the second part of his autobiography, *The Christie File*. The first volume, entitled *My Granny Made Me an Anarchist*, recounted how he became an anarchist. It ended with him leaving Britain to aid the anarchist resistance against the fascist dictator of Spain, General Franco.

This volume picks up where the last one ended. Christie was actually arrested by Franco's secret police long before he completed his mission to give the explosives he'd smuggled into Spain to those who were planning the assassination. Here he recounts his experiences of being arrested and his time in various Spanish prisons with assurance, humanity and wit.

He isn't afraid to talk about the

failures and cock-ups, the bickering and the surreal, along with the bravery and dedication. As such, it's a real treat to read, giving the human side which history books never really manage to do. His account of the characters he met and the life of political prisoners in Franco's regime is engrossing.

Three things particularly resonated with me. Firstly, the dedication of the anarchists he met in the resistance both within and outside prison. That they were willing to keep struggling in the face of such odds is inspiring. Secondly, how prison made Christie aware that someone's politics and personality don't automatically match.

For some reason, I found his comments on how surprised he was to discover that people with extremely obnoxious politics could be nice people on a personal level quite significant. Why? Because I've met a few anarchists who could do with a personality transplant? Who knows. But I think how we relate to each other as comrades is important. I've seen too

many abusive attacks between comrades and know the hurt it can cause. Being more civil to each other would be a first step towards the revolution.

Lastly, his account of the Stalinist prisoners he came across was deeply disturbing. They organised themselves into a tight little hierarchy, with the ordinary members banned from talking to their fellow political prisoners (particularly the anarchists). Clearly, the leadership knew they could only maintain their position if they had a loyal and obedient membership and that meant isolating the party rank and file from such dangers as alternative points of view and, of course, reality. Given the utter distortions of anarchist ideas which I've come across in various Trotskyist journals over the years, I can see that this mentality hasn't yet gone the way of the USSR.

One thing which Christie's book brings out is the sick morality of statism. Stuart was branded a terrorist for trying to assassinate Franco, yet Franco, as Christie himself points out in his intro-

duction, reigned over "an unbroken chain of mass murder, repression and unimaginable suffering". This state terrorism has been quietly ignored, with every Spanish government (including socialist ones) turning a blind eye to the murderers and fascists in their midst. This continues to this day.

Spain's prime minister until very recently, José Maria Aznar, was a junior member of Bush's 'Coalition of the Killing'. When Saddam was arrested, he made it quite clear that the Iraqi dictator should pay for his crimes against humanity. Aznar, like Bush and Blair, was altogether less outspoken about crimes nearer home. When it comes to Franco's crimes against humanity the resolute champion of human rights and historical accountability for Iraqis became the craven hypocrite we'd all expect to find among Coalition leaders.

In Spain, as Christie reminds us, Franco's dead were left to sleep in their mass graves. Things are slowly changing, but Aznar and his right-wing

Popular Party did their best to stop them. The Association for the Recovery of Historical Memory is trying to locate and excavate mass grave sites. Aznar's government refused to help in any way.

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His was also the only party in the Spanish Parliament to boycott a recent ceremony honouring Franco's victims. Its parliamentary spokesman called the ceremony "a return to the past" which contributed "nothing positive." Saddam couldn't have put it any better. But Aznar was concerned about some of Spain's dead: he authorised payments to exhume the bodies of the Division Azul, Spanish volunteers who fought for Hitler on the Eastern Front.

We shouldn't be surprised at this. Aznar's People's Party was founded after Franco's death by one of his cabinet ministers, who later picked Aznar as his successor. The party is Francoism's ideological heir, and many of its functionaries are the offspring of officials who staffed Franco's government.

Aznar's government contributed taxpayers' money to the National Franco Foundation, which is run by the dictator's daughter and, as well as maintaining fresh flowers on the Caudillo's grave, conducts many pro-Franco activities. So obviously Aznar was highly selective in which mass murdering tyrant he denounced. He happily protected the legacy of an even worse dictator and war criminal.

Franco died in his bed a decade after Christie was arrested. Was the struggle of which Christie's imprisonment was part worth it? Of course. As Stuart puts it now, "the anarchist creed is simple ... only struggle determines outcome, and progress towards a more meaningful community must begin with the will to resist every form of injustice." We can never be sure of success, but if we don't try then failure is guaranteed.

Christie's autobiography is a testament to this truth as well as to the struggle of our comrades to end Franco's reign. In addition, Christie was released early due to an international solidarity campaign which, on the face of it, looked unlikely to succeed. This means that his autobiography serves to remind us that our activities can make a difference. In these grim days, that makes it a worthwhile as well as a wonderful read.

I'm really looking forward to reading the third volume. That, I think, indicates why you should read this book. As in the first volume, this volume expands quite considerably on the original Christie File (published in 1980) and includes lots of pictures and appendices covering background details. And like the first (equally good) volume of Christie's memoirs, this book had been published as a limited edition. It costs so much because it aims to fund a bigger (so cheaper) rerun. If you can afford it, please buy a copy or order a copy from your local library. It should definitely be made available to more people and buying this edition will help bring such a happy situation about. Available from Freedom Press for £35 (add £3.50 towards postage and packing in the UK, £7 elsewhere)

By Theft and Murder
by Ted Curtis
Spare Change Books, £6.50

A book such as this is problematical. Most political histories and theoretical texts are written by people who have no real writing skills. Their subjects are usually large and abstracted, so it becomes difficult for the reader approaching the subject for the first time to grasp the real meaning of ideas in application.

Conversely, the personal memoir – while being one way in which the vast sweep of political ideas can be assimilated and made flesh – runs the risk of narrowing matters down into a single personal experience, without a wider context, offering a view that is, at best, one-sided; at worst, blinkered and closed.

So how does a writer avoid this? Ted Curtis may have found a way. This book is partly a personal memoir and, through the aegis of appendices that take up nearly half the text, a glimpse of other views via the reprinting of a number of email texts that appeared on Yahoo newsgroups from those involved with Palsolidarity, the Palestine Solidarity Campaign.

Curtis, with a strong interest in history and a need to 'do something' about the situation in Palestine, travelled there as a peace activist. By his own admission, his initial knowledge of the situation was sketchy and we learn as he does. He has a good technique and places the reader in the situation, seeing through his eyes, without falling into the trap that plagues most 'travel' writing of any kind.

His ego, although there to explain who and why he is, is kept in check and the text concentrates on conveying a real sense of the people and the place. The consequences of political ideology in action are brought home to the reader by showing what it does to human beings ... and their reactions are then contextualised skilfully to illustrate how the situations arise.

In the best writing about travel – the idea of a stranger in a strange land – the reader is able to visualise both the similarities and differences in cultures that make humanity remarkable. Curtis is able to convey this, and to show the warmth and hospitality of a people who live under siege conditions that most would find unbearable. This helps the reader to come to terms with the litany of oppression and destruction that consumes the appendices, giving them a verity that their relentless despair may otherwise lose.

In an age when the idea of travel writing has suddenly become a money-spinner for publishers, the notion of a book using the form as a vehicle for presenting an otherwise hidden case (after all, how Israel-centric is the mainstream media?) is appealing.

Whereas travel writers were once a window on the world, the new generation of Bryson-clones are concerned with promotion of ego, placing themselves in an unfamiliar context – the 'funny foreigner' syndrome. Ted Curtis neatly sidesteps this trap. In a sense, his



memoir section of the book harks back to the best of old travel-writing. He is indeed a stranger in a strange land.

The political and social landscape he presents is as unknown as any far-flung continent to a Victorian readership. He is there as Everyman and, through his carefully judged prose, we become him, seeing this brave new world through his eyes. If travel-writing is the new rock 'n roll for publishers and booksellers, is it too much to hope that this book will therefore be able to reach a wider audience than any polemic and become, perhaps, important?

Andy

Available from Freedom for £6.50 (add 65p postage in the UK, £1.30 elsewhere)

Talking Anarchy

By Colin Ward and David Goodway
Five Leaves, £6.99

Colin Ward is one of the most famous writers on anarchism in English (and a sometime editor of this newspaper). In over thirty books, most notably *Anarchy in Action* [published by Freedom Press], he has consistently challenged and pushed the boundaries of anarchist thought.

Talking Anarchy, originally published in Italian, is part biography, part autobiography. The biography is in the introductory section, supplied by David Goodway. The autobiography comes in the rest, a transcript of interviews Goodway conducted with Ward.

But this book isn't just for the Colin Ward Fanclub. I'd happily give it to anyone who wanted an introduction to the themes and ideas Colin has pursued over a lifetime of commitment. And, like all his writing, it gives an excellent sense of the man himself.

Johnny M.

Available from Freedom for £6.99 (add 70p towards postage and packing in the UK, £1.40 elsewhere)

A sideways look

The ejection of the conservative government in Spain has implications for relations between European Union states. Aznar was a natural ally of the British government – right wing, pro-US and fanatical about being seen to be tough on terrorism. He was also dead-set against the new European constitution, pulled together by former French president Giscard D'Estaing, which was delayed last year by Britain, Spain and Poland acting together. Spain and Poland's complaints were about voting weights. The Nice Treaty gave medium-sized countries heavier weighting. Britain's objections, orchestrated by but not confined to the right-wing press, centred around that elusive beast, sovereignty, and the loss of veto rights on certain issues.

One of the first acts of the new Spanish government has been to signal its willingness to make concessions on the constitution. This issue has now blown up for Blair in a way he may find difficult. There isn't a natural constituency in this country that's massively into a European constitution. The fact that a lot of people can't get worked up about Giscard's plan was reflected in some of Labour's rhetoric last year: it's just a tidying-up operation, it was claimed. But, however little some people may care, others are passionately against it. Unfortunately, a lot of them are the sort of people who think if you speak loudly foreigners will be able to understand you. This is a pity, as they're right to be opposed to it.

Firstly, there are some myths about constitutions. One is that Britain doesn't have one. It does, it's just not written down all in one place. For that matter, neither is anywhere else's - all are a mixture of treaties, charters and laws and the interpretations placed on them, mixed up with custom and practice. Some of what is effectively the British constitution consists of the various Treaties such as Rome and Maastricht that the British government has signed.

The Human Rights Act was an example of legislation to clear up a grey area that had evolved in part from the European Court. Almost all talk of constitutional legislation involves the fiction that the British people can decide about things. A good example of this is the treatment given the Magna Carta, one of the foundations of the constitution at least in England, where a pressurised king agreed to codify his relationship with a bunch of warlords ('barons', as our history books whitewash them). In this context, it's hard to see why a referendum should be denied on an issue like the new constitution, particularly if we can have one on whether

Hartlepool or Hackney should have an elected mayor. I can never remember which one elected the monkey.

Should we be fighting on this issue, then, despite the uncomfortable bedfellows? The answer has to be yes. The European Union is a project of big capitalism. Big multinationals like it – it tends to be smaller businesses who complain about the regulation. Its expansion is both to open up new markets and to bring in cheap labour. The euro will be entrenched as most of the new countries joining will have to use it. I recently asked friends in Spain and Italy what difference it had made to them. The answers were the same. Everything was more expensive. Someone had done well out of it, they were sure, but it wasn't ordinary people. And all of them still thought in pesetas or lire, just like some people still think in pounds, shillings and pence nearly 35 years after decimalisation.

Svartfrosk

Words we use

STRUGGLE

The most basic form of struggle, as most contemporary anarchists see it, is the class struggle. This is usually seen to encompass the struggle against the state.

But the notion of class struggle is a tricky one. It needs to be carefully handled. It would be easy to be facile, to accept the two-class model without thinking too hard about it.

Like religion, politics often attracts those who want easy answers. Anarchism is no exception.

Let those of this persuasion rest content with a simple mantra of 'workers versus the bosses' (though most of those who do are middle class, as a large chunk of the British anarchist movement is middle class).

But if they're ever to convince, proponents of class must think more deeply. Yes, there's such a thing as class struggle. But until we've refined our understanding of what 'class' means, our understanding of struggle will be equally easy, ergo wrong.

The quiz

1. There are approximately 5,000 tigers in the wild. How many are there in captivity in the United States?
2. City councillors in Aliso Viejo, near Los Angeles, recently took steps to ban the chemical dihydrogen monoxide. What does this chemical do?
3. What is a grandfather clause in a law and where does the name come from?
4. Which Chinese phrase meaning 'work together' became a motto for US marines?

Answers on page 6

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