

# FREEDOM

25 OCTOBER 2003

50P ANARCHIST NEWS AND VIEWS

## GAS WAR TO CLASS WAR

On 17th October, after successive days of violent civil unrest, Gonzalo Sánchez de Lozada acquiesced to popular demands and resigned as president of Bolivia. Demonstrations flared up originally in response to the government's announcement of plans to sell the country's resources of natural gas to the US and Mexico under an IMF-imposed deal. Popular feeling was incensed that Bolivia stood to gain only 18% of the profits from the sale, and that little would be done to alleviate the country's widespread poverty. Protests met with brutal state repression: military deployment of planes, helicopters and tanks, tear gas and machine gun fire left over seventy dead and hundreds injured. The new president, Carlos Mesa Gisbert, has described himself as a fervent admirer of his predecessor, leaving little hope for a quick resolution to the civil conflict or any marked improvement in the conditions of Bolivia's poor.

The following is an eyewitness account of the demonstrations at the height of the state repression.

A human tide, coming from El Alto, is already in the centre of the capital La Paz. They hurry towards the Palace. Marching through the streets near government headquarters, more rebels appear, residents of the area, adding to the marching, with clubs and stones. It is the people, humiliated and massacred with machine guns and rifles for more

than 48 hours. It is the people that have decided to kick out the government of millionaire Gonzalo Sánchez de Lozada.

The neighbourhoods of the north, of the east and of the west are already in the hands of the people. In the city centre, at the government's headquarters, workers, unemployed and students control the main streets, awaiting the arrival of the residents of El Alto before occupying the Praça Murillo, home to the Government's vast Palace, protected by a ring of fire and machine guns.

The military, heavily armed, are holding on to the symbol of power. The president, a recluse in his official residence in the South of the city, is alone and desperate, meeting with those who still back him. Journalists already speculate on his dismissal, which seems imminent.

The human tide continues to move forward. Everyone is screaming, everyone is furious. Some say that there are 20,000 – others calculate more than 30,000. But it is certain that there are more than ever intent on avenging the massacre, they cannot forget the thirty plus who have died and the 150-odd wounded in the last 48 hours.

From the city of Oruro, in El Alto, the padrecitos of the Church bless a countless crowd of shopkeepers, workers, miners, and students who have decided to march on La Paz, leaving behind their children, their brothers and sisters, to remove Sánchez de Lozada.

'Goni, murderer, we want your head', screams the crowd coming from El Alto.



They are men, women, children, it is the people that are getting rid of the democracy of the rich. They are two kilometres from the Palace. The millionaire in the south of the city follows in silence, a car with diplomatic plates waiting at the door.

Anton Pawluk

Source: Econoticiasbolivia.com

Solidarity actions have already been held in Argentina – another Latin American country in the middle of a social uprising – where 3,000 people took the streets, and demonstrations have been held outside embassies around Europe. As the protests intensify, so will the State repression, and we must be ready to provide

practical support and solidarity to the insurgents.

The situation in Bolivia is changing rapidly, so we recommend that for more up-to-the-minute news on events you check the excellent Indymedia websites at [www.indymedia.org.uk](http://www.indymedia.org.uk) for English language news or [bolivia.indymedia.org](mailto:bolivia.indymedia.org) if you can speak Spanish.

## BOSSSES' WAR

The US/UK governments' war on Iraq has greatly benefited US-owned corporations, since they stand to profit from the 'reconstruction' of the infrastructure, as well as taking over most of Iraq's public services under WTO-enforced privatisation. It has screwed over the mass of Iraqi workers – by killing tens of thousands of civilians and conscripts and maintaining an authoritarian regime.

What is a little less obvious is how it has harmed ordinary people in the West too. Apart from the wholesale destruction of 'civil liberties', the wartime censorship and the ability to denounce any striking workers like the fire-fighters as 'traitors' or 'unpatriotic', the somewhat foolish workers who signed up to the military are not getting much thanks for their sacrifices.

Apart from the slowly-escalating numbers of dead British and American troops, over 6,000 US servicemen have had to be evacuated for medical reasons, including more than 1,500 injured – many very seriously. Not only that, but they are even being given bills

on leaving hospital for their food, sometimes for hundreds of dollars!

In addition, the Pentagon has slashed the wages of the 148,000 soldiers in Iraq by blocking promised pay increases of \$225 a month as it claims it cannot afford them – despite the billions being made by American bosses.

It is becoming increasingly obvious to all that this war is not in the interests of any working people – the bosses only care about how much money they can squeeze out of us. The US government is already fearing more US troops going AWOL as they realise this, and it is 'encouraging' them to take their leave in Germany rather than the US where they could more easily 'disappear'.

We at Freedom would positively encourage all squaddies in the Gulf region to desert and mutiny, like so many of their predecessors did in Vietnam. This would bring a swift and bloodless end to a brutal occupation and show the Western governments that we know whose side they're on – and it sure as hell isn't ours!

Alex Allison

## NO TO TOP-UP FEES

The government has announced plans to charge 'top-up' fees for university education. This will involve allowing universities to charge thousands of pounds a year extra on top of current tuition fees, effectively this will mean that elite universities will be able to charge more than others and a two tier system will be created. The increased financial burden will also act as a further obstacle to working-class youth.

Because of more radical student unions the NUS has been forced, at its annual conference, to campaign against their introduction, but yet again, the future government ministers of the NUS national executive committee have failed to fully throw their weight behind this campaign. Instead of the traditional weekday march in Central London, they have instead called for one on a Sunday, when disruption will be minimal. If we as students are serious about stopping this blatant attack on working-class education then a return to the student militancy of the

late '60s and '70s is required, and we must also make links with higher education workers.

As anarchists we are against the whole concept of paying for an education, an education is not a privilege, it is a right. Since the introduction of tuition fees and the abolition of student grants it has been getting harder and harder for poorer students to enter higher education. Only direct action can stop this.

A new network is currently being formed by anarchist/anti-capitalist students to allow greater communication and co-ordination of struggles between different student societies and groups. A meeting has been called by the Anarchist Youth Network to take place at the Anarchist Bookfair (5pm, room 2E). For a list of supporting groups see [www.anarchistyouth.net](http://www.anarchistyouth.net)

For the march there will be an anarchist/direct action bloc, the march meets outside ULU on Malet Street (nearest tube Goodge Street) at

12:30pm on Sunday 26th October (which is the day after the anarchist bookfair).

For more information contact the Goldsmiths Anarchist Society on [goldsmiths@anarchistyouth.net](mailto:goldsmiths@anarchistyouth.net)

INFLAMMABLE MATERIAL

STALLS MEETINGS WORKSHOPS FOOD BAR VISUALS GIGS INTERNET ACCESS PLAY & FREEDOM GREGGIE EVENING EVENT AND MORE

THE ANARCHIST BOOKFAIR 2003

SATURDAY 25 OCTOBER 2003 10AM-7PM

ULU MALET STREET LONDON WC1

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

# Britain

## FREEDOM

Volume 64 Number 20

### 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 online

More in-depth information, more news, more debate!

From this issue of Freedom all articles in the paper will be put online at [www.enrager.net/newsire](http://www.enrager.net/newsire). This will mean that readers will be able to search for articles, find more in-depth information and more stories which we couldn't fit in the paper, comment on and debate each story – and more!

Other anarchist and community-oriented news will also be up on the site, and people are encouraged to contribute their own.

Enrager.net is now officially live, and also contains listings of Britain-based libertarian groups, introductions to anarchism and more in-depth articles, practical organising materials, discussion forums, a people's history database and an online shop raising money for political prisoners, wildcat strikes and struggling '3rd world' groups and more. It needs your input!

[enrager.net](http://www.enrager.net)  
anti-authoritarian resource and community

### Anarchist art

Ten artists have been invited to respond, negotiate and debate the ideas, history and politics of anarchism. Indeed in many ways anarchism offers the perfect base from which artists can challenge the many preconceptions about the way contemporary life is negotiated. The often diverse reaction of the artists will be testament to this, from Michelle Fletcher's paintings and musings over Emma Goldman's possible reactions to the London in which we now live, to Jesse Thorn's explorations of the autonomy of the individual and their economic systems. This will be a show not to be missed, and runs from 30th October to 29th November here at 84b Whitechapel High Street. The private view will be on 29th October from 6pm to 8pm.

### Next issue

The next issue will be dated 8th November and the last day for copy will be Thursday 30th October. You can send articles to us by snail mail or at [FreedomCopy@aol.com](mailto:FreedomCopy@aol.com)

# Notes from inside

Just to let you know that I am back at HMP Woodhill after my sojourn at HMP Full Sutton. Whilst I was there I was in segregation and went on hunger strike over being told I would be transferred to HMP Manchester for accumulated visits and then having the rug pulled from beneath my feet by the governor saying there was no secure cells at HMP Manchester.

Keith Pringle arrived from HMP Whitmoor on the 22nd August and started a 'dirty protest' over the 'over the top' security measures. The next day Stephen Lawler joined the protest.

On the 26th I came off my 'hunger strike' and joined the 'dirty protest' and we were joined a few days later by Gin Pooni. We all demanded immediate transfers out of Full Sutton.

During the protest at HMP Full Sutton by Keith, Stephen, Gin and myself were subjected to various forms of abuse. All water supplies were turned off, (were they trying to prevent us from flooding the cells, as if we would). When our meals were brought to our cells, the trays were turned upside down on the cell floors and stamped on. Gin who is Asian and Stephen an Irish Traveller were both subjected to racist abuse by the screws.

On Wednesday 17th September a POA

was assaulted and almost immediately the repression started. Phil Simmons who is of mixed race was beaten up and placed in the 'Box'. The next morning it was Gin's turn for a good hiding leaving him severely bruised. Phil got another hiding and was shipped out, don't know where to. Michael Stone was also attacked by the screws for speaking out over the treatment we were receiving.

As I was shipped out on the following Monday so I have only got word of mouth what happened after. Sometime towards the end of that week Stephen was rushed to hospital suffering malnutrition and dehydration. Gin at some stage was found unconscious; he too was rushed to hospital found to be suffering same as Stephen.

When Gin and Stephen were returned from hospital they continued with the protest. (At the time of writing this letter on Tuesday 7th October they are still on hunger strike).

It is not just Wormwood Scrubs' where prisoners are regularly given a hiding, it is happening all the time, it is normal practice in any dispersal segregation block, yet it all goes unnoticed, unreported...

None of us received any mail during the protest, though it was logged in.

Robbie Stewart, HMP Woodhill

P.S. Since May I have been having a go at the Prison Service over the level of unemployment pay (fixed at £2.50 a week in 1992), bogging them down with correspondence for the last 6 months. It went right to the prison Ombudsman who deafed it out. One small thing I did get was that in the end the governor has said he will write to the Prison Service asking them to review PSO 4460 and give consideration to raising the minimum rate or unemployment pay. Robbie Stewart, DH 4408, HMP Woodhill, Tattenhoe Street, Milton Keynes MK4 4DA

#### Bigger cages

With the number of people inside soaring David Blunkett is planning two super-size jails, each one capable of holding up to 1,500 inmates in a new prison building programme. They are part of a package of six new prisons which will increase the prison capacity by 5,400. These will be the biggest prisons to be built in modern history, one of these jails is likely to be situated near London, the other in the Midlands. The prison service has traditionally felt that facilities of this size have been too difficult to manage. Let's hope so!

#### Prison resistance

An inquiry has been launched after 25 to 30 inmates rioted at HMP Lewes,

injuring one officer and damaging property. The disturbance started on the evening of Tuesday 7th October just before inmates were to be locked up for the night, sadly all prisoners were back in their cells after six hours. It has led to twenty inmates being transferred from the prison and there is a possibility that some may face criminal charges. The independent watchdog, the Board of Visitors has said some cells at Lewes were "reminiscent of dungeons".

#### Even poorer treatment

Ray Gilbert, a Close Supervision Unit (CSU) inmate is currently being held in a High Control Cell at HMP Full Sutton. He spends 23 hours a day in a very cold cell, gets only one hour a day exercise alone in the yard, hands handcuffed together whilst being escorted to and actually using the phone if he actually manages to access it, and this is only some of the shit he has to put up with.

For more information contact Miscarriages of Freedom. You can send a message of solidarity to Ray: Ray Gilbert H10111, HMP Full Sutton, Stamford Bridge, Yorks YO4 1PS

## LISTINGS

### Berkshire

**13th November** Big Noise Demo from 10am outside Bayer's Newbury office in Strawberry Hill. Bring whistles, horns, drums, etc. Tickets for transport from Brighton from The Cowley Club, London Road. For transport from Leeds email [leedsf@leedsf.org.uk](mailto:leedsf@leedsf.org.uk)

### Leeds

**8th November** On the anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall, members of Leeds Coalition Against War will demonstrate in graphic form what should happen to the wall erected by the Israeli government between Israel and the Occupied Territories. The event will take place at 12 noon on Briggate in Leeds city centre. For more info see [www.togetherforpeace.co.uk](http://www.togetherforpeace.co.uk)

### London

**25th October** Anarchist Bookfair 2003 from 10am to 7pm, ULU, Malet Street, WC1. See [www.anarchistbookfair.org](http://www.anarchistbookfair.org)  
**25th October** National demo against deaths in police custody. Assemble Trafalgar Square at 1pm for march to Downing Street. Please wear black. Further info from [www.ufc.org](http://www.ufc.org) or call 07770 432439

**25th October** Mumia's Lawyer Speaks, showing of this 80-min video plus discussion from 3pm to 5pm at the Anarchist Bookfair, Room 3b, ULU, Malet Street, WC1.

**25th & 26th October** Southern Blues, an evening of dance, drama and poetry in celebration of Black History Month, 7.45pm at Anna Scher Theatre, 70-72 Barnsbury Road, N1.

**26th October** Anti-Systemic Library project meeting from 12 noon to 5pm at LARC, 62 Fieldgate Street, E1.

**27th October** Protest against corporate

invasion of Iraq outside Restructuring Iraq conference at 1 Whitehall Place from 8.30am onwards. Further info see [www.voicesuk.org](http://www.voicesuk.org) or call 0207 837 0561.

**30th October** South London Radical History Group presents The Witch Trials 1560-1690, what happened and why? at Use Your Loaf, 227 Deptford High Street, SE8, from 8pm.

**31st October** Zapatista action, protest against the expulsions of indigenous peoples in the Montes Azules. Meet 11am outside the Mexican Embassy, 42 Hertford Street, W1.

**1st November** Rabble Collective benefit party at Eton Mission Social Club, 91 Eastway, Hackney, from 8pm to 7am, with two rooms of bands, DJs and cabaret plus cheap bar and veggie cafe.

**1st November** The true story of GM food, BSE and foot and mouth, talk by Andrew Rodwell at the cafe Diplo, French Institute, 17 Queensbury Place, SW7. Call 0709 2348726 or email [monde-diplo-friends@mondediplo.com](mailto:monde-diplo-friends@mondediplo.com)

**2nd November** Should all illegal drugs be decriminalised? Open debate, 3pm at South Place Ethical Society, Conway Hall, 25 Red Lion Square, Holborn.

**5th November** Viva cabaret, Mad Pride bonfire night special from 11pm to 3.30am at Gossips, 69 Dean Street, W1. See [www.geocities.com/vivacabaret](http://www.geocities.com/vivacabaret)

**5th November to 24th December** Leo Baxendale exhibition at The Cartoon Art Trust Museum, 7-13 The Brunswick Centre, Bernard Street WC1, and on 11th November at 6.30pm Leo Baxendale with give a talk. For details call 020 7278 7172.

**8th November** Smart Bombs Dumb Wars, one-day conference examining changing conditions of war and peace in the age of global terrorism, at the

Institute of Education, 20 Bedford Way, London WC1. For further info email [p.a.cohen@ucl.ac.uk](mailto:p.a.cohen@ucl.ac.uk)

**10th November to 24th December** Billy Childish exhibition We Are All Phonies at The Aquarium, 10 Woburn Walk, WC1. See [www.aquariumgallery.co.uk](http://www.aquariumgallery.co.uk) or call 020 2387 8417.

**11th November** Conference on asylum seekers and human rights at The Great Hall, King's College, The Strand, WC2 from 9.30am onwards. Further info from 020 7593 0043 or 020 7608 7305. Every Wednesday the LARC Library will be open from 1pm at 62 Fieldgate Street, E1.

### Manchester

**1st November** Anarchist youth benefit gig at the Mumbo Arts Centre, 86 Princess Street, from 8pm. For more info see <http://www.anarchistyouth.net>

**8th November** Immigration Laws: The Disable Us! conference at Le Meridien, Victoria & Albert Hotel, Water Street, Castletield, organised by Greater Manchester Coalition of Disabled People (GMCDP). Details from [mike.higging\\_gmcdp@blueyonder.co.uk](mailto:mike.higging_gmcdp@blueyonder.co.uk) or 0161 273 5155 or 07968 56060

### Newcastle

**2nd - 26th October** Jeremy Hardy versus the Israeli Army showing at the Side Cinema (near the Crown Posada pub on Dean Street on the quayside). See [www.sidecinema.com](http://www.sidecinema.com)

**28th October** Mad Film Night at the Side Cinema (near the Crown Posada pub on Dean Street on the quayside). Films on mental health from 7.30pm. See [www.sidecinema.com](http://www.sidecinema.com)

**5th November** The Animals Film, with much covert footage inside labs and factory farms, showing at the Side

Cinema (near the Crown Posada pub on Dean Street on the quayside), 7.30pm. See [www.sidecinema.com](http://www.sidecinema.com)  
**19th November** Manufacturing Consent: Noam Chomsky and the media, showing at the Side Cinema (near the Crown Posada pub on Dean Street on the quayside), 7pm. See [www.sidecinema.com](http://www.sidecinema.com)

**3rd December** My Feminism, showing at the Side Cinema (near the Crown Posada pub on Dean Street on the quayside), 7pm. See [www.sidecinema.com](http://www.sidecinema.com)

### Oxfordshire

**25th October** Close Campsfield refugee detention centre demo at main gates, Langford Lane, Langford Lane, Kidlington, 12 noon to 2pm. See [www.closecampsfield.org.uk](http://www.closecampsfield.org.uk)

**29th November** Tenth anniversary of demo at Campsfield refugee detention centre, Langford lane, Kidlington, with guest speakers and music. Contact 01865 558145 or 01993 703394. See [www.closecampsfield.org.uk](http://www.closecampsfield.org.uk)

### Swansea

**22nd November** Beyond TV, annual video activist festival at Swansea Environment Centre, Pier Street. For further info call 01792 455900, email [helen@videonetwork.org](mailto:helen@videonetwork.org) or see [www.undercurrents.org/beyondtv/index.htm](http://www.undercurrents.org/beyondtv/index.htm)

### Worthing

**25th October** Animal Aid Autumn Fair, from 10am to 12.30pm at Heene Community Centre, 122 Heene Road.

### Sabs please note

**1st November** The fox hunting season begins. Contact Hunt Sab Association on 01273 622827 for more info.

# Britain

## On the picket line

### Strikes, occupations, ballots and direct action in the workplace from 4th to 16th October

This is the first of a regular round-up of industrial action compiled by the Anarchist Workers' Network, along with StrikewatchUK.

#### Strikes

Workers in the Transport and General Workers Union at manufacturing company Trelleborg in Leicester strike over 'Big Brother' monitoring system. Factory workers are taking strike action after bosses introduced a Big Brother-style monitoring system forcing them to wear red tags on tea breaks.

Another wildcat strike at the post office. An unofficial strike by postal workers last week disrupted mail deliveries in the Hamilton area. Royal Mail say seventy posties and sorting staff at Hamilton Delivery Office walked out on Saturday after an employee refused to work as instructed and was told to go home.

Dockers at the Appledore Shipbuilding works, who occupied their workplace along with the local community in September against closure, had continued to work with the Shop Stewards running the yard. Now unionists from Amicus and the GMB are still helping apprentices finish their training despite none of them being paid. Over 550 people have lost their jobs so solidarity funds are urgently needed. Send cheques payable to 'Appledore Shipbuilders Welfare Club' to Freedom for forwarding. More info at their site on [www.work-in.blogspot.com](http://www.work-in.blogspot.com)

More London-weighting strikes 55,000 council workers organised by Unison struck across the capital on Thursday 16th October, together with thousands of posties in pursuit of £4,000 London weighting. They currently receive between £1,500 and £2,800. GMB and TGWU members had officially agreed to the employers' previous offer – which they withdrew in response to the strikes. All the unions condemned this spiteful action.

Geoff Martin, Unison's London region convenor said that the union may link up with tube workers who are also considering strike action (see below). Support amongst Unison members for the strike was also up – with 80% in favour as opposed to 70% in May last year.

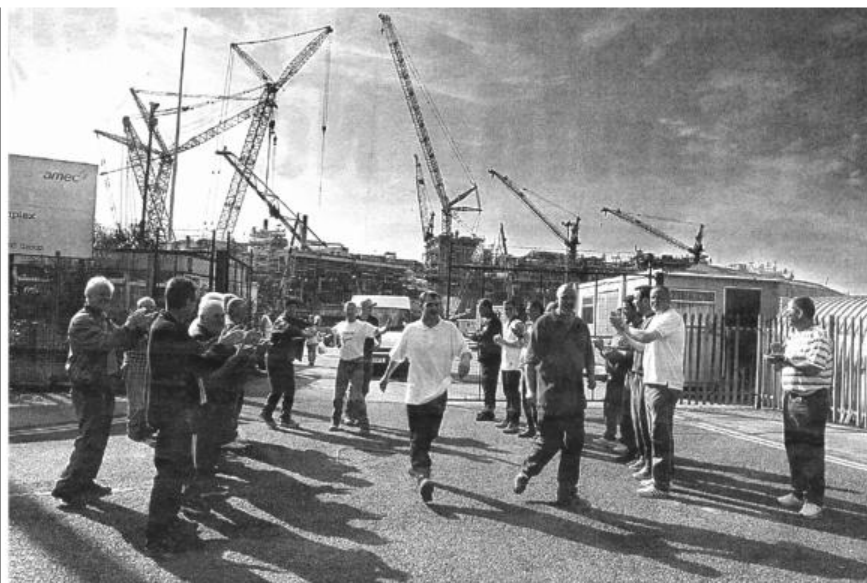
Councils seem to have no problem paying coppers £6,000 a year weighting, so they should cough up to pay workers who actually do something useful!

#### Strike-Ballots

Threat of strike at Blindcraft factory in Edinburgh about the delayed introduction of a 'more profitable' production scheme.

'£5/hour-Fair Deal' (sic) – campaign for cleaners in Birkenhead. The cleaning staff, who work for Mitie Managed Services, currently receive £4.50 an hour and are now demanding £5 an hour.

Strike-Ballot of financial workers at Direct Line are to be balloted on



Downing tools: pickets cheering workers walking out of the AMEC shipyard on Tyneside

strikes. Finance union Unifi said more than 150 jobs were at risk in Croydon, Surrey, and Pudsey, near Leeds, under restructuring plans.

Three hundred Staff at Fruit of the Loom in Bunrana have told bosses that they are to go on strike for first time in the company's fifteen year history in Donegal, beginning on Wednesday 22nd October.

Union drivers on the London Underground's Hammersmith & City Line are considering a strike, which could disrupt travel for 160,000 commuters, over the dismissal of a union activist.

Tube workers may strike over a pay dispute, a move that could disrupt the journeys of more than three million Londoners. The RMT plans to ask

members to consider a strike over the refusal by the companies responsible for Tube maintenance to backdate a pay rise.

Train cleaners employed by the Carlisle Group are being balloted by RMT in response to a pay offer of just 2%.

Visit the Anarchist Workers Network at [www.awn.org.uk](http://www.awn.org.uk)  
Also see editorial on page 7

## Our workplace strategy

Anarcho-syndicalists seek to create militant opposition to the bosses and the state controlled by the workers themselves. What follows is an anarcho-syndicalist strategy for the workplace. This can apply equally to those in the official trade unions who wish to organise independently of the union bureaucracy and those who wish to set up other types of self-organisation.

#### Rank and file control

Decisions should be made collectively. This means they are made by mass meetings, not by officials in union offices. These mass meetings include all those in the workplace, regardless of union membership (other than managers and scabs). Anyone we elect to negotiate with management should have a mandate from the workforce that gives them clear guidance on what is and is not acceptable. Mass meetings of workers need to be able to recall all those elected to any position in the union. In effect we should not be electing delegates *not* representatives who can act as they see fit.

#### Direct action

Direct actions at work mean strikes, go-slows, working-to-rule, occupations and boycotts. We are opposed to 'partnership' with bosses. Workers can only win serious concessions when industrial action is used or when bosses fear it might be.

#### Solidarity

Solidarity with other workers is the key to victory. Workers should support each other's disputes, despite the anti-trade union laws. We need to approach other workers directly for their support. 'Don't cross picket lines!'

#### Control of funds

Strike funds need to be controlled by workers themselves. Officials will refuse to fund unlawful solidarity action. Union bureaucrats use official backing and strike pay to turn action on and off like a tap.

Unions use their political funds on sponsoring Parliamentary candidates. Backing the Labour Party is not in the interests of workers. We should also not fall into the trap of backing the so-called

'socialist' candidates. The Parliamentary system is about working class people giving up power and control, not exercising it.

#### Social change

The interests of the working class lie in the destruction of capitalist society. The whole of the wealth of society is produced by the workers. However a portion of this is converted into profits for the shareholders and business people who own the means of production. When workers make wage demands they are simply trying to win a bigger share of what is rightfully their own.

#### Our aim

Our ultimate aim is a self-managed, stateless society based on the principle of from each according to their ability, to each according to their needs. It is a society where we are no longer just to be used as a means to an end by bosses wanting to make more money from our labour. Written by the Solidarity Federation, part of the International Workers' Association. See [www.solfed.org.uk](http://www.solfed.org.uk)

## In Brief

#### Victory to the Bintifada!

In Ireland resistance continues against the newly-introduced 'green' bin tax, forcing all households in certain counties to pay up to hundreds of pounds per year to have their waste removed.

The 'environmental' veil is very thin – as the tax is a blatant attempt to make the bin service an attractive prospect for corporations when it is privatised.

Non-payment of the new tax is very high, and more direct action began when residents began blockading rubbish collection vehicles in estates and depots – sometimes for days at a time. Mass meetings of communities, demonstrations and a Reclaim the Streets! party also occurred.

The State has responded in the only way it can – with force, jailing twelve people, but the resistance to this new tax on workers and the poor continues.

The Cardiff Anarchist Network with others picketed the Cardiff Irish Consulate in solidarity with the struggle.

For lots more up-to-date information on the fight against the bin tax see the

Workers' Solidarity Movement website at <http://struggle.ws/wsm/bins.html>

#### No to Uniformity!

Plans to introduce school uniform into the Trinity School in Royal Leamington Spa were met by a mass walkout on 7th October organised by pupils.

Hundreds of kids held a demonstration instead of going to class, and not for the first time either. In 2001 similar plans by the school governors were beaten back by direct action.

Students and many parents believe that a uniform would contradict the school's supposed belief in individuality.

#### Big Issue Banned in Liverpool

Half of Liverpool's Big Issue sellers have been arrested, allegedly for drug dealing, and the sale of the paper banned.

Coincidentally most sellers of the magazine sold it in the area policed by the new private cops covered in the last issue of Freedom (11th October), where the council wished to "remove the riff-raff element ..."

## International

# Anarchism in Greece

The poster at the airport says there's a bit of Greece for everyone, and the same applies to the Greek anarchist movement

**A**narchism in Greece is a recent phenomenon, only appearing as such in the last twenty to thirty years. The relevance it's gained in this short time is the most surprising thing of all, considering how solid the movement has become.

For years the Greek political scene was monopolised by the Communist Party (KKE), ruthlessly Stalinist in its methods. It was the KKE, for example, which repressed non-communist, including anarchist, partisans during the German occupation. But it was also the KKE which lost the civil war which followed liberation and which failed to organise proper resistance to the military junta that ruled until 1974.

Because they'd been so successful in getting rid of anyone to their left, though not to their right, the Stalinists became the focus for anyone repressed by the military, whether they needed help or wanted to organise the struggle against the junta. They were all to be bitterly disappointed. The generals, with the open support of the American government, ruled the country through terror and torture while KKE leaders refused to stage any real opposition at all.

Because of this failure, and particularly after the Polytechnical Institute students' revolt on 17th November 1973, many began to turn to anarchism for its more radical approach. The bureaucracy of the KKE and its unwillingness to act was slowly replaced by a movement based on open, participative, assemblies as well as on militancy and resistance. Unsurprisingly this appealed to the youth and a few years later, the new movement had grown to number thousands.

This was even more true in the years which followed the fall of the junta. Some

areas of Athens, particularly around Exarhia Square, and many university buildings became almost entirely free of state rule.

Although these heady days soon gave way to repression – this time at the hands of new, democratic institutions – the seeds were sown. The anarchist movement has been a solid presence ever since. This has been despite increasing repression from the state, opposition (again) from the communists and other leftist parties, and smears from the mainstream media.

Today the anarchist movement seems to be in good health. But the imprint of its early days remains strong, hence the emphasis on violent direct action and confrontation. Fighting the dictatorship, anarchists learnt only too well that freedom isn't a thing to ask for, but something to seize in the streets and to defend against the state. Internationally, this emphasis has won Greek anarchists a reputation for being prone to rioting and violence, but it can only really be understood in light of its origins.

A large section of the Greek population, even if they aren't politically committed, still support taking on the police. Many non-anarchist Greeks also have little sympathy for parliamentary politics. For them, today's democratic institutions are just the heirs of the junta's own. They can't easily forget the repressive role of the police and judiciary during those terrible years.

Together with the usual appeal, to some, of violence in itself, their active resistance makes anarchists respected by the population at large. They're seen as the ones putting up real resistance to institutions nobody has faith in. This is why Greek anarchists can carry out actions which would immediately discredit anarchist groups anywhere

else. In their case, it's seen as proof of their commitment and seriousness. But don't try it at home!

In any case, rioting and demonstrating are only part of the anarchist programme in the country, though an important one. Activists always take care to stay close to other workers and the general population. They're active in their neighbourhoods and the universities, setting up campaigns, hosting meetings, getting organised within the community, promoting groups and making propaganda.

The fact that they're organised in hundreds of affinity groups allows them maximum flexibility when working on various issues. It enables them to cover almost everything and be almost everywhere.

When these groups get together they can run campaigns, usually against repression or on wider issues, like the invasion of Iraq, based on points they all agree on – though usually each group produces its own propaganda. They can flood towns with posters, graffiti and leaflets overnight. If we add to this their ultra-militancy we can easily understand why they've become a force to reckon with.

While in many countries the anarchists are a bunch of guys and girls going to the people, in Greece they're the most conscious, organised, militant and (very) angry section of the general population. There isn't the big gap between them and the non-political population that you find in Britain.

This happens particularly on issues such as the distrust of politicians and parliament, dislike of cops and the military, and others – such as their pronounced anti-Americanism (the junta only stayed in power so long because of American support). But there are also



important disagreements with popular prejudices, particularly regarding religion and the role of women in society. What will come out of this close linkage between anarchists and people remains to be seen, but it's currently our best hope for a mass movement like the one in Spain during the 1930s.

Of course not everything is going as well as anarchists in Greece would like. Though various groups coordinate their efforts and work together, they've been unable to build up a higher level of organisation. This is because they've been unable to agree even a minimal basis for it. They seem to see the two levels, minimal and maximal, as opposed to one another. The minimal organisation they've generally adopted is more out of necessity than desire, as each group works on sometimes unconnected issues and is unwilling to compromise with others.

This means that any opportunities to devise a more general political strategy have been lost and, though groups do win victories over the state, they can't break out from the circle of activism to progress further in building an effective social alternative. In this atmosphere it isn't surprising that personal and (small) political differences turn into big splits. In addition, the lack of any anarcho-syndicalist organisation deprives the Greek anarchist movement of a powerful tool in the workplace. With such an important aspect of everyday life left uncovered, the movement has to content itself with a general criticism of work and wages.

To some extent, these issues can be found in the whole anarchist movement, all round the world. It might be unfair to focus on the Greek example in particular. But Greek activists play an increasingly important role in the global anarchist scene, and it's urgent that they consider these issues if they're to progress. If they

want to benefit from the identification between anarchist ideas and popular attitudes which they're lucky enough to enjoy, they need to resolve this problem.

Certainly the commitment and the militancy of comrades there should be an example to us all, particularly in light of the harsh repression they face daily. No matter how much we hate the surveillance we're subjected to, it's far removed from the indiscriminate arrests and beatings that Greek anarchists endure.

But their environment is very different to ours, and this includes the frame of social ideas in which they work. There isn't much we can do in this respect as it's not in our hands to change political perceptions amongst the British working class, at least not overnight.

What we can learn is that, for an anarchist movement to thrive, it must adapt its politics to reality. This doesn't mean surrendering our ideas or making concessions. But we will only have a hope of success when we can truly describe our views as following through people's natural perceptions and feelings.

The Greek anarchist movement is proof that interesting things can happen in a place without big traditions of anarchist struggle. It's impossible to say how things will develop in the country. It could well be that, with the new impetus given anarchist ideas by anti-globalisation, the number of activists will increase. This will probably lead to a more confrontational period, in which Greek comrades will need all our support and solidarity. They've certainly got mine.

I've been asked by Greek friends to point out that every opinion they've offered me was their own, and not at all intended to represent the whole of the movement. Much of the time the opinions I heard conflicted. I'm sure they wouldn't agree with most of the opinions I've expressed in this article either, which are mine and not theirs, but consider it said. Many thanks to all of them.

## First APOC conference

**B**etween 3rd and 5th October, around 140 Anarchist People of Colour convened in Detroit for the first APOC conference. The event, the first such conference ever held in the USA, was by far the most inspiring and moving conference in my twelve years of anarchist organising. Attendees came from all walks of life – young, old, queer, women, men. Maybe twenty of them identified themselves as punk/hardcore, a dynamic that's grossly reversed in the general anarchist movement, which of course begs the question why.

There were people who came from twenty or more years of revolutionary struggle as well as those who had never heard the word 'anarchism' before. There were even a few old Black Panthers.

There were workshops on a number of topics, including resistance to the prison-industrial complex, organising against the US criminal justice system, Palestine solidarity, afro-punk and critical race theory.

Most attendees, while recognising a movement's birth, at best felt sceptical about forming an organisation at this conference. So a proposal was made for an APOC Network, which turned into a discussion around what we need to do to create a coherent movement in the future. The questions posed were about what we can do in our communities now, what we need in terms of support and networking with non-anarchists, and where we go from here.

The workshop closed with the

formation of at least five organising groups, aimed at arranging regional APOC conferences within the next year. These would lead to another National APOC conference, hopefully to be held in New York in 2004.

The first ever Anarchist People Of Colour conference was set up in a short time but has definitely given birth to a new revolutionary anarchist struggle that will bear fruit in due time. The energy level, the inspiration, the support and the building of solid relationships within our movement has taken hold and without a doubt our struggle will build. "It is our duty to win".

Angel Gonzalez

Check out the Anarchist People of Colour website at [www.illegalvoices.org/apoc](http://www.illegalvoices.org/apoc)

# Green and Black Bulletin

# Primitivism

The first of a regular series of anarcho-primitivist news and views from the Wildfire Collective

**W**elcome to the first Green and Black Bulletin. Before his death, the late John Moore had been planning to produce a regular page in

Freedom to discuss anarcho-primitivism or 'green' anarchism. Unfortunately this inspiring poet and critical thinker passed away before the project could commence. Now we are using the pages of Freedom to produce a similar offering.

We've no idea of the exact plans Moore had for this page and, rather than try to work in his shadow, we plan to explore our own politics and dreams. However, as a good introduction to primitivism and as a small tribute to him, we've decided to publish an expurgated version of his *A Primitivist Primer*. We hope this will help to lay the foundations for what the Green and Black Bulletin is all about and, hopefully, dispel some of the usual nonsense that's thrown at those of us coming from this perspective.

We hope to bring a different perspective to the pages of Freedom. We want to break away from the class-blinkered focus and consider where power originates and how we can all live in more organic and inspired ways. For primitivists taking control of the factories (workers' self-exploitation) is never going to be enough. We don't want workers' councils, committees or any other form of mediation between ourselves and freedom.

The Green and Black Bulletin aims to be a place to discuss and debate these ideas and more. We're looking for contributions, so please send us news of actions and tales of insurrectionary madness. We also want essays from a green/primitivist/insurrectionary perspective; fiction; poetry; artwork and anything else you might want to send. We want this page to be a place to revel in acts both of rebellion and joy, destruction and creation, desire and despair, anger and love.

Contributions to Wildfire c/o Freedom or londonwildfire@wildmail.com

Anarcho-primitivism is a shorthand term for a radical current that critiques the totality of civilisation from an anarchist perspective, and seeks to initiate a comprehensive transformation of human life. Strictly speaking, there is no such thing as anarcho-primitivism or anarcho-primitivists. Fredy Perlman, a major voice in this current, once said, "The only -ist name I respond to is 'cellist'." Individuals associated with this current do not wish to be adherents of an ideology, merely people who seek to become free individuals in free communities in harmony with one another and with the biosphere, and may therefore refuse to be limited by the term 'anarcho-primitivist' or any other ideological tagging.

## Why the term 'anarcho-primitivist'?

In 1986, the circle around the Detroit paper *Fifth Estate* indicated that they were engaged in developing a "critical analysis of the technological structure of western civilisation, combined with a reappraisal of the indigenous world and the character of primitive and original communities. In this sense we are primitivists ..." The *Fifth Estate* group sought to complement a critique of civilisation as a project of control with a reappraisal of the primitive, which they regarded as a source of renewal and anti-authoritarian inspiration.

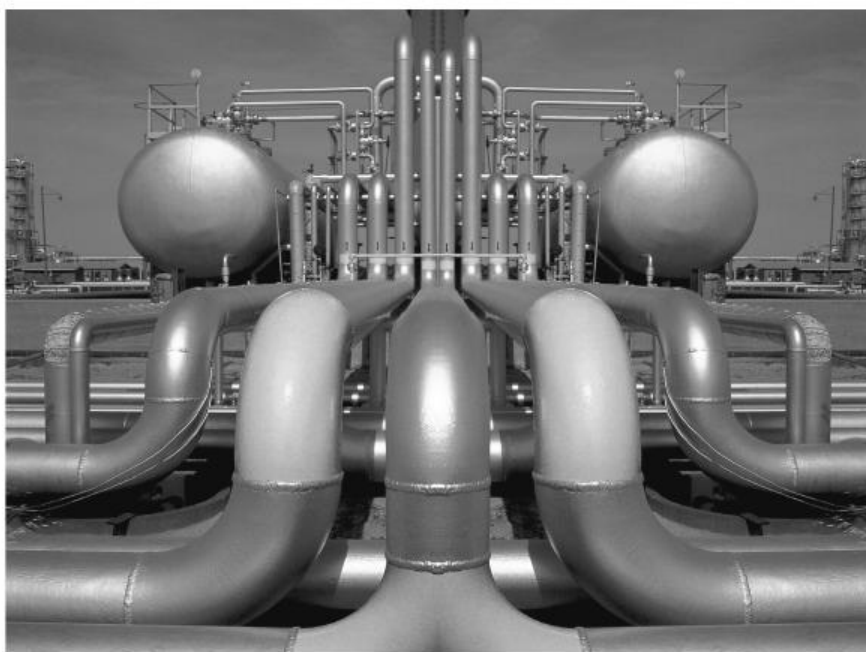
The aim is to develop a synthesis of primal and contemporary anarchy, a synthesis of the ecologically-focussed, non-statist, anti-authoritarian aspects of primitive lifeways with the most advanced forms of anarchist analysis of power relations. The aim is not to replicate or return to the primitive, merely to see the primitive as a source of inspiration, as exemplifying forms of anarchy.

For anarcho-primitivists, civilisation is the overarching context within which the multiplicity of power relations develop. Some basic power relations are present in primitive societies – and this is one reason why anarcho-primitivists do not seek to replicate these societies – but it is in civilisation that power relations become pervasive and entrenched in practically all aspects of human life and human relations with the biosphere.

Civilisation – also referred to as the megamachine or Leviathan – becomes a huge machine which gains its own momentum and becomes beyond the control of even its supposed rulers. Powered by the routines of daily life which are defined and managed by internalised patterns of obedience, people become slaves to the machine, the system of civilisation itself. Only widespread refusal of this system and its various forms of control, revolt against power itself, can abolish civilisation, and pose a radical alternative. Ideologies such as Marxism, classical anarchism and feminism oppose aspects of civilisation; only anarcho-primitivism opposes civilisation, the context within which the various forms of oppression proliferate and become pervasive – and, indeed, possible. Anarcho-primitivism incorporates elements from various oppositional currents – ecological consciousness, anarchist anti-authoritarianism, feminist critiques, Situationist ideas, zero-work theories, technological criticism – but goes beyond opposition to single forms of power to refuse them all and pose a radical alternative.

## Anarcho-primitivism versus anarchism

From the perspective of anarcho-primitivism, all other forms of radicalism appear as reformist, whether or not they regard themselves as



revolutionary. Marxism and classical anarchism, for example, want to take over civilisation, rework its structures to some degree, and remove its worst abuses and oppressions. However, 99% of life in civilisation remains unchanged in their future scenarios, precisely because the aspects of civilisation they question are minimal. Although both want to abolish capitalism, and classical anarchism would abolish the State too, overall life patterns wouldn't change too much. Although there might be some changes in socioeconomic relations, such as worker control of industry and neighbourhood councils in place of the State, and even an ecological focus, basic patterns would remain unchanged. The Western model of progress would merely be amended and would still act as an ideal. Mass society would essentially continue, with most people working, living in artificial, technologised environments, and subject to forms of coercion and control.

## The anarcho-primitivist future

The envisioned future is not 'primitive' in any stereotypical sense. As the *Fifth Estate* said in 1979: "Let us anticipate the critics who would accuse us of wanting to go 'back to the caves' or of mere posturing on our part – i.e., enjoying the comforts of civilisation all the while being its hardest critics. We are not posing the Stone Age as a model for our Utopia[,] nor are we suggesting a return to gathering and hunting as a means for our livelihood." As a corrective to this common

misconception, it's important to stress that the future envisioned by anarcho-primitivism is sui generis – it is without precedent. Although primitive cultures provide intimations of the future, and that future may well incorporate elements derived from those cultures, an anarcho-primitivist world would likely be quite different from previous forms of anarchy.

## How might this future arrive?

There are no hard-and-fast rules here, no blueprint. The glib answer – seen by some as a cop-out – is that forms of struggle emerge in the course of insurgency. This is true, but not necessarily very helpful! The fact is that anarcho-primitivism is not a power-seeking ideology. It doesn't seek to capture the State, take over factories, win converts, create political organisations, or order people about. Instead, it wants people to become free individuals living in free communities which are interdependent with one another and with the biosphere they inhabit. It wants, then, a total transformation, a transformation of identity, ways of life, ways of being, and ways of communicating. So new forms of action and being, forms appropriate to and commensurate with the anarcho-primitivist project, need to be developed. This is an ongoing process and so there's no easy answer to the question: What is to be done?

At present, many agree that communities of resistance are an important element in the anarcho-primitivist project. The word 'community' is bandied about

these days in all kinds of absurd ways (e.g., the business community), precisely because most genuine communities have been destroyed by Capital and the State. Some think that if traditional communities, frequently sources of resistance to power, have been destroyed, then the creation of communities of resistance – communities formed by individuals with resistance as their common focus – are a way to recreate bases for action. An old anarchist idea is that the new world must be created within the shell of the old. This means that when civilisation collapses – through its own volition, through our efforts, or a combination of the two – there will be an alternative waiting to take its place. This is really necessary as, in the absence of positive alternatives, the social disruption caused by collapse could easily create the psychological insecurity and social vacuum in which fascism and other totalitarian dictatorships could flourish.

The kind of world envisaged by anarcho-primitivism is one unprecedented in human experience in terms of the degree and types of freedom anticipated ... so there can't be any limits on the forms of resistance and insurgency that might develop. The kind of vast transformations envisaged will need all kinds of innovative thought and activity. This essay originally appeared, in full, in *Green Anarchist*.

To get a copy of the complete essay please send a stamped, self-addressed envelope to Wildfire, c/o Freedom, 84b Whitechapel High Street, London E1 7XQ

# Editorial

Over the last ten years, top bosses have awarded themselves pay increases worth six times as much as their workers have achieved, according to independent pay researchers from Incomes Data Services (IDS). While bosses' salaries have risen by 288% in the last decade, the average worker's pay packet has grown by just 45%, barely keeping pace with inflation.

But this isn't the end of the story. On top of their 'fat cat' increases, bosses have also seen sharp rises in the value of share options, bonuses and incentive schemes. IDS also found no link between executive pay and profitability. They looked at companies where profits had slumped and found that in three quarters of them bosses' pay had actually risen!

"Such findings go a long way towards reinforcing the impression that in a significant number of companies, pay is not closely linked to corporate performance" the IDS report said. An anarchist who works in the rail industry commented more bluntly. "Fat cat bosses are getting fatter", he said. "This report shows the obscene difference in pay between workers and bosses. Workers need to get organised to get the fat cats off our backs".

This is something train drivers working for Heathrow Express have been trying to do. Almost half of them belong to Aslef but the company, which runs the most expensive rail service in Britain, has been refusing to recognise the union. Around 60% of Aslef members voted for a series of one day strikes, the first of which was held at the start of this month. This was enough to persuade management to talk to the union.

Elsewhere on the railways, drivers have turned down a 4% pay offer with strings that was made by Gatwick Express. They're currently being balloted on industrial action, the results of which are expected next month. It isn't only drivers who are fed up with poor pay and conditions. Train cleaners, all members of the RMT employed by the private sector Carlisle Group, are now voting on industrial action following a pathetic 2% pay offer. RMT assistant secretary Pat Sikorski described the offer as a "disgrace". He went on to say "Carlisle Group can afford decent pay rates. They have contracts worth £110 million and they can afford to pay their director's six figure sums".

We have our own issues with highly paid union bureaucrats like Sikorski, of course, but on this occasion we can hardly disagree with what he says. The most pressing task of anarchists in this country is still, we suggest, to find a way of linking our struggles with those of workers.

## Quiz answers

- Iceland. The Swedish SAC, Norwegian NSF and Danish Union for Syndicalist Propaganda are all founder members. During the late 1980s and early 1990s the SAL (Finnish Anarchist Federation) briefly joined.
- 'Unite Proletarian Brothers!' - a call for unity between workers, regardless of their union affiliation (CNT or UGT).
- He was sacked for being a member of a trade union. Thousands of his colleagues went on strike and he was reinstated. The authorities then prepared to smash the growing police union, provoking a strike in 1919 in which they sacked the thousand or so who came out.
- Allegedly to protect the stones from 'new age travellers', people who were brutally attacked by the police in 1985's Battle of the Beanfield.

# Commentary

## Class warfare?

Apart from revealing that he has an ego big enough for two ("I was the only one who said the SWP would destroy the specialness ... of the peace movement." Really?) Monsieur Dupont seems unable to recognise the contradictions of his own position ('Endless circles', 11th October). According to him, the revolution won't be the product of the struggle to defend ourselves from 'present conditions' but will 'arrive like an angel from outside', a pro-human communist spontaneity.

He therefore also thinks that the anarchist milieu shouldn't corrupt itself with the dirt of the everyday by 'pretending' to be made up of 'ordinary person' but should simply act as a pure, closed group, disrupting the leftists and waiting around as a 'welcoming committee' for the revolution. But if the milieu really is irrelevant to the revolution, why bother with the milieu at all? Why not simply sit back and wait for that angel to come knocking on the window?

Aside from suggesting that Monsieur Dupont has been reading too much Derrida, all this reveals only that spontaneism and Leninism are two sides of the same coin - the passive versus active positions of the isolated middle class militant. He has to contend that, in order to discuss anarchist ideas with the working class, we have to 'pretend to be ordinary people'. This in itself reveals the nature of the class contradiction within the anarchist movement/milieu - some of us are working class, rather than just pretending to be, and we find the posturing of the dilettantes both alienating and embarrassing.

The revolution doesn't 'arrive like an angel from outside' (the future might do, but only in the sense that tomorrow is always tomorrow). It arrives as a result of the struggle and sacrifice of working class people against capital in all its everyday manifestations, and through the realisation that the oppressions of the everyday can't be overcome through piecemeal reform but only by wholesale renunciation of the master-slave relations that capital imposes.

Some of us who are working class militants and who live within working class communities think that the 'tumult and rupture' Monsieur Dupont claims to want might best be accelerated by focussing on building a working class anarchist movement - one that's alive and active within our class, rather than a sectarian milieu that celebrates its distance from it. The spontaneism he applauds is only 'spontaneism' from the perspective of the middle class spectator.

It's telling that Monsieur Dupont has so little faith in the anger and disillusion within working class communities that he believes the only way anarchists could get an audience within them is by 'pretence' and by 'not speaking about what's on our minds'. Perhaps those of us who want an anarchist movement that focuses on the working class and lives within the working class will only get it by accelerating the class contradictions within the 'anarchist milieu'?

We have to leave him and his ilk to the playground of his desires, recognising that his 'milieu', as his letter makes clear, is content to look for angels on the horizon. His being 'ready for revolution' means pretending that arguing with the SWP about which pinhead the angel might land on is 'anarchist activity'. Maybe the choice is class or milieu?

Paul Maguire

## Liberal

It was a shame Freedom had nothing better to offer the huge anti-war demo in London than crude anti-Americanism and tacit support for the Trots ('Message to Blair: Troops Out', 27th September). Withdrawal of troops now would create more misery for Iraqis. Infrastructure being built with the aid of the military is intended to get at the oil, but secondary result will be that local people will have a clean water supply and other basic services. An immediate handover to local people could take a long time to effect. We have to ask to what extent would such work be delayed and how many lives would be lost in the process.

Although anarchists are anti-militarists, we know of the chaos that follows when the soldiers leave too soon. In Afghanistan, political thugs, warlords and tir-for-tat killings are still rife. In Kosovo things aren't much better. Previously suppressed ethnic conflicts erupt once regime change has been enforced.

Not that the 'liberators' give a damn. A cynic might say that the longer the coalition forces stay in Iraq, the more hope there is that there will be no more colonial adventurism. Wishful thinking. Most Americans learned nothing from the Vietnam war or 9/11. But Freedom's front page naïveté shows a paper increasingly leaning to dogma over logic. Consistent with this trend was the picture on page 2 of a man with a catapult. How immature is this paper going to become?

Martin Gilbert

## Confused

Brian Morris's over-compensating response to my comments on the cult of long-dead anarchists ('Dichotomies?', 13th September) was peerless and passed from pillars of the anarchist establishment to newer anarchists I'd never heard of. What was obvious was that the anarchist establishment (as represented by Brian) and I inhabit different worlds and use different languages.

But putting all this aside, I'm attempting to make a serious contribution to anarchist debate. My beef with many anarchists, and now with Brian, is that they write, as I see it, anarcho-babble. Their feel-good platitudes take us nowhere. My argument, doubtless a worn one, is that the anarchist establishment is holding back progress in anarchist thinking by clinging so rigidly to established views and in not being prepared to countenance advances in the understanding of the individual.

This may be arrogance on my part but fortunately this doesn't alter the argument. To a great extent the conservatism of anarchists and people in general stems from a mistrust of science. At the risk of sounding oversimplistic, I wish to make my point with a single example (but there are many more): there's no such thing as 'the state'. This is, at best, a concept. Yet the term is used by anarchists as though we know what the state is and that arguments can be based on this understanding.

Since it doesn't exist it can't be overthrown. It's a collection of individuals and these behave as such. Some anarchists might respond to this apparently trite statement by saying that the state operates as the collective belief of the individuals and that, by changing their belief, one annihilates the state.

Unfortunately, this raises the still more difficult problem of whether

there's any such thing as a collective belief. The simple answer is that there isn't. The state is not held together by a single attitude, belief or ideology.

Remove these from the equation and what we're left with is what people, anarchists and others, loathe most of all - our genes.

These, unlike the state, are real and dictate the way we behave. People can't stomach the idea that we're automata lacking effective free will. By having little or no ability as a species to control our destinies we must, then, be doomed! On the contrary, it may be our salvation. I'm attempting to point out how people in reality operate, and this is no more mystical than describing how a flush lavatory functions.

Flushing doesn't depend on concepts but uses levers and water pressure. The concept of a lavatory as a mechanism for disposing of shit has very little to do with its function.

Many anarchists may feel my argument is all a load of shit. But the reality is that we're not living as anarchists because it isn't in most peoples' interest to do so. I remind you that many anarchists own property, have stocks and shares and behave as good capitalists because, as individuals, this is in their interests. With a better understanding of how individuals are put together and how they function, there's an increased chance for realising anarchism. Anarchists aren't in competition with a hypothetical state; we, as individuals of a species, are in competition with one another and only by reducing this evolutionary necessity can anarchism ever come about.

Peter Gibson

## No nations

In the past few years a new tendency has appeared, called 'National Anarchism'. Its proponents claim that 'traditional anarchism' made a serious error in ignoring the needs of ethnic and cultural communities. But this criticism is only true of certain anarchists, not of 'traditional' anarchism as a whole. So why the need for a specific 'national' anarchism? National anarchists want the freedom to form their own self-governing ethnic communities. Fine. But there's nothing in traditional anarchism that opposes this desire, and since there's no opposition, there's no need to combine anarchism with nationalism or ideas taken from nationalist ideologues either.

For Proudhon and Bakunin all self-defined groups, ethnic, cultural or whatever, have the right to live in autonomous self-governing communities.

Libertarian thinkers such as Johann Huizinga, Leopold Kohr and George Orwell have also influenced anarchism. Huizinga and Orwell (like Proudhon) spoke of 'patriotism', contrasting it with nationalism, which they saw as authoritarian and implicitly imperialist. For them, patriotism meant love of place and one's culture and, in the case of Orwell, this love had a class basis as well, rooted in working class sensibility. Leopold Kohr sought to break up big states, all of which are prison houses of nations, as various cultures were hammered into a centralised nation state by bloody conquest.

The 'Panarchist' variety of anarchism expounded by P.D. de Puyd, and Max Nettlau in the nineteenth century and John Zube today even has a solution to the problem of what to do when several cultures or ethnic groups claim the same territory. Their solution is to form

voluntary, non-territorial or sociological governments. There would be a minimal agreement not to engage in coercion and people would join the society or government of their choice (or remain independent individuals). It would be analogous to joining a church or fraternal association.

Words such as 'nation' and 'nationalism' are problematic. True, there's the Native American sense of nation, which means tribe. National Anarchists claim that this is how they use the word. Trouble is, their definition isn't the regular one and the use of terms like 'nation' and 'nationalism' might help perpetuate statism, centralisation and imperialism - the true legacy of nationalism. Then there's the problem of the nationalist thinkers that National Anarchists seem to approve of. What does an anti-Semitic, Nazi apologist like Francis Parker Yocky have to do with anarchism? Ditto fascists and reactionaries like Julius Evola and Oswald Spengler.

This leads one to question the anarchist credentials of the National Anarchists. Can 'traditional' anarchists be blamed for suspecting that they're really closet Nazis? They claim not to be racists, yet many of them are racial separatists. This may not be the aggressive racism of the Nazis or the Klan, but it's still an obsession with ethnic identity. Of all the bases for association, 'race' is the least important.

Far more important are culture and levels of education. No one cares about 'race' apart from the ideologues of racial separatism and losers who have nothing going for them other than the fact that they can shout, "I'm white" (as though this makes them special). Through their obsession, racial separatists can't help but keep a germ of racism alive. Someone will always think, if we shouldn't associate with 'them' perhaps we ought to go all the way and eliminate them. (Racial separatism affects me personally, since I'm partly of Native American ancestry and several of my family members are black).

Fascism developed out of the Marxist left in Italy. The working class wasn't behaving the way many radical Italian Socialists wanted so they jettisoned their cult of the proletariat and adopted a cult of nationalism instead. With National Anarchism the process seems to be in reverse. Many of its theoreticians were once fascists who have since realised that party dictatorship, statism and centralisation are wrong and dangerous. But what's to stop some National Anarchists returning to the fascist fold, particularly when they run into problems, as long as they have this thing about racial identity and nationalism?

My suspicion and criticism of National Anarchism ought not to be dismissed as leftist sectarianism. I believe in working with other people for common goals, regardless of ideology (well, up to a point, but out-and-out Nazis - no way). Movements aren't built through exclusion, but in the manner of trade unions and cooperatives, through uniting as broad a section of the population as possible. In order to confront statism and globalism we must unite everyone who shares our opposition, no matter how much we might disagree with their prejudices or theories. This said, I also have the right to object to such beliefs being mixed up with anarchism.

Larry Gambone

# REVIEW

## Exiled Aisha's jazz, blues and scat really has something to say this Black History Month

As part of this year's celebration of Black History Month, held every October, the City of Liverpool commissioned exiled Black African-American singer Aisha to perform in the Bluecoat Chambers. Knowing both Aisha and her partner, Bankole Irungu, through the political work they do on behalf of black American prisoners, I was invited along.

What I witnessed was utterly stunning. At ease with jazz, blues and scat, Aisha gave out an incredible couple of hours of riveting song linked to political polemic. Accompanying herself just on the piano, she laid on the rapt audience a standard rarely seen in these days of manufactured pop. It was no exaggeration on my part when I later told her that her gifts placed her comfortably right up there between black women soul icons like Aretha Franklin and the recently deceased Nina Simone.

If this was the 1960s, Aisha would have been deservedly sharing the same stage as artists of that calibre, no mistake about it. But sadly this is the age of the contrived and the synthetic, and there's much less opportunity for an artist expressing herself politically than there was back then. More's the pity, not least because it's needed and this

woman surely has something to say.

She's no clone or substitute for people gone before us either. Aisha is her own guiding light, uniquely individual and mesmeric in delivery, imitative of nobody, writing much of her own material based around the contemporary black experience in post 9/11 America. As libertarian black political activists, Aisha and Bankole have been hounded into exile, banished from freedom-loving Amerikkka (and Canada!), stalked and shadowed by the FBI wherever they go, to the point where they find it almost impossible to put down roots anywhere at all.

No sooner do they tentatively get their feet under the table, as it were, than the rug is pulled from under them by the all-powerful American political machine. The neo-fascists in the Bush regime don't just wreak vengeance on countries like Iraq and Afghanistan: they pursue anyone, man or woman, who dares to challenge the continuing racism of America and its declared aim of political and economic hegemony.

Aisha, a singer, and Bankole, a community worker and activist, know only too well that this is reality. It's exactly these experiences that Aisha transforms into song, on stage and on disc. It's a music that's evolving right out of the now of black people's and dissidents' lives. This reviewer only



understands music and performance in terms of meaning, expression, passion and commitment. Aisha has these qualities by the sackload. Go see her if you can. You won't be disappointed. If

you can fix up a gig or two, so much the better.

Frankie Dee

Aisha and Bankole Irungu have a website. Visit [www.geocities.com/exiledone2002](http://www.geocities.com/exiledone2002).

An in-depth overview of their political situation appears at [www.catalystmedia.org.uk](http://www.catalystmedia.org.uk). Two books about black exile, as well as Aisha's several CDs, are available by email from [bankoleirungu@hotmail.com](mailto:bankoleirungu@hotmail.com)

## BOOKS

**The Angry Brigade: a history of Britain's first urban guerrilla group**  
by Gordon Carr  
Christie Books, £15

Gordon Carr's excellent investigation, *The Angry Brigade: The Cause and the Case*, was first published in 1975. It remains the most complete and balanced account of the Brigade's development, activities and decline. This new, second edition benefits from the addition of several new documents, including prefaces by Stuart Christie and John Barker, and a chronology of the period, the 'Angry Decade', which puts the rise of armed struggle around the world into context.

As well as an interesting postscript by retired Special Branch Sergeant Roy Cremer (the Metropolitan Police 'anarchy expert' at the time) there's also a reprint of a less than favourable review of Tom Vague's book on the subject, the only widely available account of the Angry Brigade since the first edition of the present book went out of print. Unless those involved in the activities of the Angry Brigade publish their memoirs or otherwise give their version of these events, Carr's book will undoubtedly remain the most valuable account.

He traces the Angry Brigade's development in the radical ideas of the 1960s and takes the reader through the influence of the ideas of the 'New Left', the Situationist International, the Anti-Vietnam War movement and particularly the 1968 events in France. Rather than focusing solely on these international

movements Carr also illustrates the influence of homegrown struggles, notably the one against the Industrial Relations Bill, and the situation in Ireland.

Perhaps most importantly he looks at the early lives of some of those accused of being in the Angry Brigade, looking at their political development at university and the influential 'campaign against assessment' which culminated in their ripping up exam papers and dropping out of college places to move to London.

Carr looks at how they became involved in the squatting movement, political pranks and organising within claimants' unions, and how this activity brought them together with others who were dissatisfied with accepted 'protest' and who wanted to move towards resistance. Matters came particularly to a head at a meeting of the International Black Cross held at Freedom Bookshop. He charts the rise and demise of the New Left, describing how marches became training days for cops and how the hopes of 1968 were lost as the state and the traditional left clawed back control.

The idea of the Urban Guerrilla gained popularity in this period, not only through well-known Marxist-Leninist groups such as the Red Army Faction (the Baader-Meinhof gang), the Red Brigades, the Palestinian PFLP and, of course, their ready-made martyr-hero Che Guevara; but also with Libertarian groups which were often involved in anti-Franco actions, notably the international 1st May group. After half-bricks and barricades had failed, the development was towards bullets and

bombs. Carr ably illustrates this process.

He doesn't use the actions of the Angry Brigade as propaganda for or against armed struggle, which allows the subject to be covered in a full and objective manner. This works to his advantage and gives the reader a much greater insight into the group's ideas and actions. The objectivity is clear in the obviously wide-ranging research, both in radical 'angry' circles and amongst the forces of the state. It exists to the extent that, on occasion, Carr has to tell two opposing stories about the same event.

The interrogation of James Greenfield is an excellent example. First the police version of the (alleged) confession is detailed, then Greenfield's own version of police 'interrogation' techniques. Carr reports that "one policeman called him a 'fucking long haired shit cunt' and threatened to 'bottle' his pretty face through the back of his head."

On balance, Carr continues, "whatever the truth was about events at Albany Street that evening, the various versions are as irreconcilable as the lifestyles of the people who gave them." As well as giving a sense of objectivity, the presentation of various viewpoints helps to illustrate the complete separation between the ideas and lifestyles of the opposing sides in this little confrontation between libertarians and the state.

Although the short-lived activities of the Angry Brigade are interesting, this book doesn't see the bombs and bullets as the most important aspect of the group. Instead, to his benefit, Carr spends an equal amount of time covering the

background to their development, their activities, their final capture and the conspiracy trial(s). First came the trial of Purdie and Prescott, then followed the more dramatic trial of the 'Stoke Newington 8'.

It was this latter which provided the political show trial of the Angry Brigade, but one which went badly wrong for the authorities. Through being able to select an all working class jury and being able to question the police in person and in depth, the accused managed to turn the conspiracy on its head, presenting it instead as a conspiracy to frame them for Angry Brigade activity.

The greatest victory probably lay in their being able to select the jury, two of whom (according to Carr) showed a great sense of class solidarity and sympathy, deciding from the outset not to convict any of the defendants. When they couldn't convince other jurors to dismiss every charge, they managed to argue a plea for leniency. The failure to convict all those in the dock and the ability of the defendants to cross examine investigating police effectively left a bad taste in the mouths of Special Branch bosses.

Carr's book is head and shoulders above any other work on the Angry Brigade. The inclusion of writings by two of the Stoke Newington 8 lends it an added insight. Of special interest are their views on particular actions, seen with hindsight, which I won't spoil for you.

The Angry Brigade were a fascinating group. Their ability to take up armed

struggle without turning into Bolshevik psychopaths in some wannabe revolutionary vanguard was important, though the extent to which they had a positive effect upon working class struggles at the time remains questionable.

Not only is this book an interesting account of a fascinating period, there's also much that can be (and has been) learnt. As a contact of Carr said at the time of the Angry Brigade trial, "the significance of what they've done won't become clear for some years. I think, in, say, three or four years time, even longer, people will relate to what they've done now, and will think about it, and think it's important." The Brigade may be gone but the anger still remains.

Sam Bellamy

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# Grey Power!

Retirement and pensions are not things younger people tend to think about much, but with an ageing population and an increasing wealth divide what life will be like after we have been given the carriage clock and our final pay cheque is something that affects us all. There was a time when working-class people were expected to work until, quite literally, we could work no more and then our families were expected to take care of us. Then with the creation of the welfare state and a national state pension linked to average earnings we were supposed to be given the dignity and independence we deserved after a lifetime of toil. It was Maggie Thatcher who decided to change the way pensions worked and today the state pension is tied to average prices instead of average earnings the effect this has had on the lives of pensioners has been a creeping one but it is clear that today's pensioners are finding that their disposable income is declining and for them life is getting worse. As if this loss of income in relation to the working public isn't enough the above inflation rises in Council Tax year on year is also making it increasing difficult for pensioners to make ends meet. Since the introduction of the Tax some ten years ago as a replacement for the much-hated Poll Tax it has risen in cost by 80%, the rise in pensions is nearer 40%. As such, working-class pensioners are being forced into greater poverty.

One weapon working-class people have always had at our disposal to gain better living standards from the bosses and those in power is the threat of or the actual withdrawal of our labour. Working people are used by the bosses to create their profits, without us working for them there are no profits and their power diminishes. It has been our best weapon in effecting small changes, and it is a good one but it is not available to people out of work or living on pensions. Even deprived of this tactic pensioners are not taking this lying down. Murmurs of discontent have been heard in the pubs and clubs up and down the country for years and a nascent movement is slowly beginning to take shape. Local groups have been set up from the Isle of Wight to Cumbria but their focus has been on convincing the government by logical argument or compassion or by collecting petitions. This approach simply will not work. Governments are not compassionate animals. There have been demonstrations both by individuals and en masse but while being good as ways of highlighting a problem the government has shown time and time again they do not listen to mass demonstrations either. Pensioners could learn a lot from the experience of the battle against the Poll Tax they already have groups set up but what is needed is a campaign of non-payment, on direct action, on confrontation and support for each other. The big advantage pensioners have is numbers, our

population is ageing; pensioners are a growing group in society and they can use this for their own benefit.

The problems of pensioners are increasing, life is getting harder and harder and Government seems not to care. If we want to get them to change we have to take our anger out on the streets and make life difficult for them. We can occupy the places where they make the decisions that effect our lives without any input from us. We can refuse to pay their taxes on us, clog up their punishment system. We can block their roads, disrupt the economy, cost them some money then maybe, just maybe, they'll listen. The Poll Tax shows we can beat them, if we work together and cause them problems. We can make them change their minds but in the end, looking at the bigger picture, if we didn't have these people in power making decisions about us in the first place, if we made our decisions about how life should be collectively then these problems wouldn't occur and we could look forward to a life after work of happiness and not poverty. It's time for the pensioners to revolt.

Ferd!

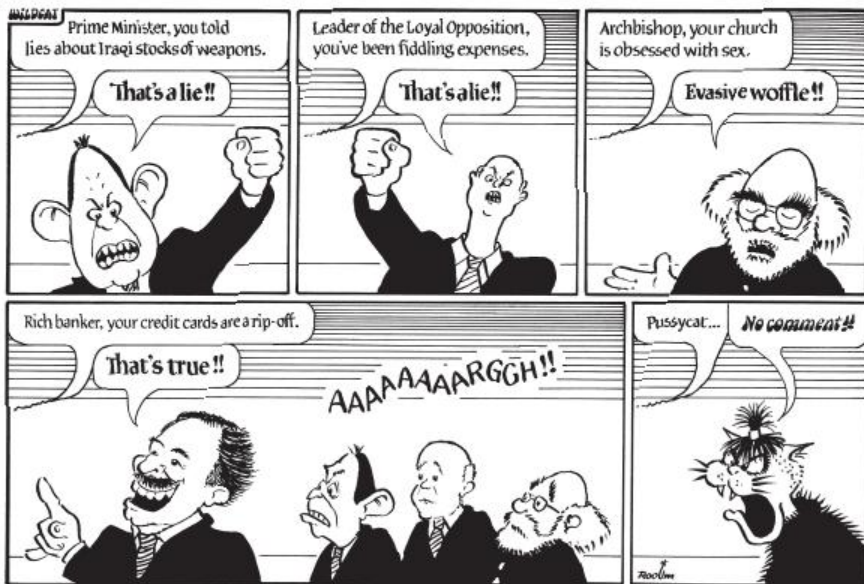
## Pension Conflicts

- Ballot on strike action at Rolls Royce Engineering over 20% pension scheme cuts for 58,000 people.
- About 34 meter readers in Yorkshire and the east Midlands lost the right to remain in their final salary pension scheme after being transferred from MeterPlus from AccuRead. The workers would be forced to delay their retirement by several years, but are now threatening industrial action.
- Former steelworkers on the Isle of Sheppey who are seeking compensation for the collapse of their pension schemes are taking their fight to the European Court of Human Rights.
- A hundred pensioners took to the streets in protest when the Government's controversial Pensions Credit scheme was introduced yesterday, claiming it should be replaced by an increase in the basic pension.

## Profit cheats

Torfaen Council and Job Centre Plus have teamed up and launched a campaign against 'fraud'. By grassing-up fellow members of our class we can help them 'Beat The Cheats'. An emergency 'Hotline' is provided on glossy posters together with idiotic fluffy toys with a phone number tag attached! (Presumably this is aimed at children who no doubt will be honoured to serve the State by telling on their 'criminal' parents or on a grandad who sells an odd bag of runner beans down the Workingmen's (sic) Club?) That such a spying campaign was used by the Hitler Youth under the Nazi regime shows how low Torfaen Council and JCP have stooped!

By sneakily making a phone call we



can sink to the level of a quising against our class! If Torfaen Council and JCP actually put their rather warped brain cells together they would realise that for many people in Torfaen existing on or below the poverty line is a way of 'life!' The 'choice' is to try and exist on the pittance of unemployment benefit or a crap State pension or you can 'work for your dole' in a low paid job! Therefore it comes as no surprise that some people choose to 'cheat' the system to make ends meet by for example doing the odd job on the side!

By supplementing their meagre benefits they can actually try to enjoy life without relying on the misery of debt through plastic or loan sharks! This is not because such 'cheats' are evil criminals that they defraud the system but because of need.

So why doesn't Torfaen Council and JCP actually target the real cheats and fraudsters who create unemployment and mass poverty? They conveniently ignore the fact that the capitalist system is based on the daily exploitation or working class people by the ruling boss-class elite who own the means of production, distribution, and wealth!

When profits fall workers are sacked. Capitalists survive at the expense of laid off workers. Unemployment also helps to keep wages low and profits high! It is unemployed people who are the victims of a system based on greed of a few over the needs of all. That Torfaen Council and JCP choose to attack a poor section of our community is perverse and reflects an authoritarian sado-masochism based on wilful intent and thuggery!

If we as a class wish to 'beat the cheats' that rip us off on a daily basis through the capitalist system of wage-slavery we should take collective action to get rid of this parasitical class once and for all! See [www.afed.org.uk](http://www.afed.org.uk)

## A sideways look

Those crazy Americans! First we had the spectacle of Bush junior winning in his brother's state after black Americans were systematically disenfranchised and the vote was rigged. Then, Democrats from Texas streamed over state lines to stymie a vote that would have redrawn electoral boundaries in favour of the Republicans. And this is the country that lectures the rest of the world on democracy! And the latest mockery is that the most populous state, the fifth largest economy in the world (as we keep on being reminded), has elected as Governor a rightwing actor with a fondness for groping women, a past that includes praising Hitler and possessed of an intellect even smaller than that of George W. Bush himself.

Of course Arnie has had to learn his lines, but if you ever sit through any of his films they're usually delivered in soundbites any way. He's been a gift to the media, with some praising him as the very antithesis of the aptly-named Gray Davis, a career politician with the charisma of a root vegetable and whose recall (launched by the state's electorate) sparked the Governorship race.

Many have concentrated on the dodgy elements of Arnie's past while a few, mainly the ones outside California I suspect, have concentrated on what he's actually said he'll do, namely cut taxes while boosting the economy and maintaining expenditure. One such essential matter is the prison-building programme, of course, currently in full swing for all those lifers who steal pizza slices or \$12 worth of videos. Cutting this is unlikely to be high on the Governor's agenda.

But in the midst of all the hilarity about Schwarzenegger, a lot of media coverage has given the impression that recall isn't a good idea. I mean, look who you might end up with. Well, I think the recall system in California stinks - a simple majority on recall, then whoever gets the most votes out of the candidates wins. Hardly democratic, but not surprising.

Nor do I particularly care who's Governor of California (or president of Britain for that matter). But the process of recall, of holding someone accountable in however imperfect a manner, is important and interesting. One slogan doing the rounds in the United States at the moment is, "if it's good enough for Davis it's good enough for Bush."

Of the seven main demands made by the first mass working class movement in Britain, the Chartists, the only one that stayed unfulfilled was the one for annual parliaments. With communications the way they were in the mid-nineteenth century, this was effectively a call for accountability.

Obviously, it didn't go far enough, because accountability shouldn't be a

reactive thing that only responds to particularly bad politicians. It should be proactive, and people who currently represent should be delegated. When politicians talk of a mandate, they're claiming the electorate has given them carte blanche for any of their wacky schemes just because they were warned in advance and just over one in four people put an 'x' in a box next to their particular party's name. When anarchists talk of mandates, they talk about a set of positions agreed by the constituents that their delegates must adhere to. It's a world of difference.

I don't want to improve the electoral system, but would definitely like to see more accountability. To borrow a term from one of Schwarzenegger's own films, the only answer to politicians is: Total Recall.

Svarffrosk

## Words we use

### CLASS

We are the working class, we are the people who have built everything around us, who made all the buildings, who made all the roads, who drive the busses, who connect the calls, who cure the sick, who teach our children, who grow our food, and who make this society work.

Our bosses, investors and landlords (the capitalist class) produce nothing. They become rich because we work for less than the value of our labour. The difference between the value of what we produce and what we're given in wages they steal from us as 'surplus value'.

To maximise this surplus value our bosses try and make us work longer hours for less money when we want to work shorter hours for more. When we try to do this by shirking, sabotage, or collective action this is class war.

Jim M. and Alex A.

## The quiz

1. Which is the only Scandinavian country never to have had an organisation affiliated to the International Workers Association (IWA)?
2. As well as the more obvious CNT, FAI and UGT, Spanish workers regularly painted the initials UHP everywhere during the Revolution. What does this stand for?
3. On 30th August 1918, Police Constable Tommy Thiel was sacked. Why? What happened afterwards?
4. After a fifteen-year gap, people were finally allowed free access to Stonehenge for the Summer Solstice in 2000. Why had this been denied in the first place?

Answers on page 6

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