

FREEDOM

80P ANARCHIST NEWS AND VIEWS

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INSIDE ►►

Littlewoods lay offs page 3

Disastrous relief plan page 4

Your G8 law guide page 7

Svartfrosk column page 8

400,000 HOMES TO BE DESTROYED

What this country's poorest really need is higher house prices. That's the basis of the government's Housing Renewal Pathfinder schemes – demolishing 400,000 houses across the North of England to build more expensive homes.

"The aim of the £500 million housing market renewal Pathfinder programme is to turn whole communities around by improving the quality of private, local authority and registered social landlord housing. This will involve clearing poor quality houses for which there is little or no demand, building attractive, good quality new homes, and upgrading existing home to push up their market value" claimed the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister in February.

So this means housing market renewal, of course, rather than the renewal or renovation of existing homes. In the 1980s the Tories brought in laws to put far higher tax on repairs than new build, and so far Labour has been happy to stick with them.

Who else is happy with the Pathfinder schemes? The construction companies, for one. Housebuilders have welcomed the programme as a means of maintaining their output. Well known firms such as Bellway Homes (responsible for many other socially and environmentally 'contentious' schemes) are being brought in by the government to build the new private houses.

The other main winners are the companies that usually follow regeneration

grave trains – consultants, accountants and 'outsourcers' such as Capita, the infamous privatisation junkie and PFI contractor.

Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) are also in on the act. The fluffy, family-oriented term actually conceals a range of (private) housing associations and companies which are registered with the Housing Corporation and pay no shareholder dividend. Many of them are involved in the government's transfers of council housing stock, and they are equally happy to be part of various Pathfinder schemes, shuffling out their tenants to make way for the demolitions.

"They completely forget that they are totally smashing community interest, and the essential assets of an existing area" said Anne Power, Professor of Social Policy at the London School of Economics.

And it's the demolitions that are causing the most concern – with one of the scheme's founders fearing a 'social upheaval' like that which accompanied the 1960-70s slum clearances.

Pathfinder schemes will demolish 400,000 houses, and may thus involve the eviction of thousands of families, mostly private and RSL tenants, and also home owners. They are suffering now, and the tenants and home buyers of the future will suffer later, due to the increased prices and dearth of social housing. The housing charity, Shelter, has estimated that 167,000 currently affordable homes will be demolished and



'thousands of families may be pushed out of buying or privately renting their

home which could have contributed to homelessness rising twice as fast in the

north of England than in the south.

source: Corporate Watch, www.corporatewatch.org.uk

CAUGHT ON CAMERA

Of the 1,806 people arrested during the mass protests against the 2004 Republican National Convention in New York the police fabricated charges against nearly all of them. According to The New York Times (12th April), of the 1,670 cases that have run their full course, "ninety-one percent ended with the charges dismissed or a verdict of not guilty after trial."

That's right, a whopping 91%. The high rate can be explained by one fact – the use of hundreds of people to videotape their arrests. This evidence proved that the cops were systematically lying.

The newspaper noted that these video tapes offered "little support [for police] or actually undercut the prosecution of

most of the people arrested" and cited the case of Dennis Kyne, the first arrestee.

At Kyne's trial for "inciting a riot and resisting arrest," NYPD officer Matthew Wohl testified that he had been forced to pick up the defendant "while he squirmed and screamed," grabbing "one of his legs because he was kicking and refusing to walk on his own."

Videotape, however, "showed Mr Kyne agitated but plainly walking under his own power down the library steps, contradicting the vivid account of Officer Wohl, who was nowhere to be seen in the pictures. Nor was the officer seen taking part in the arrests of four other people at the library against whom he signed complaints."

The prosecutor "abruptly dropped all charges."

The police already tape demonstrations. In one particularly innovative use of their own footage, they censored their own tapes to remove evidence of police lying. Alexander Dunlop, charged with pushing his bicycle into a line of police officers and resisting arrest, was seen

on a police tape before the incident in question and sitting in handcuffs after his arrest.

The District Attorney's office had simply deleted "parts of the tape that show him calmly approaching the police line, and later submitting to arrest without apparent incident."

Given that the anti-RNC demonstrations were massive, and covered by the media the fact that the police were willing to lie on such a large scale about events witnessed by hundreds of people in broad daylight in front of the cameras is extremely significant.

Combine this with the fact they held arrested protesters in conditions so bad that the locations were nicknamed 'Little Gitmo' we have a situation where the police clearly considered themselves able to do what they like when they like it – and expect the media to ignore their actions.

Perhaps the American people should think about creating democracy at home before allowing their rulers to impose it by means of bombs elsewhere?

HIV DRUG SCANDAL

Artificially high costs are making it impossible to make readily available a drug with an 80% success rate in preventing HIV. Post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP) was okayed for use in 1997, when guidelines for health staff introduced to HIV stated it should be used to prevent infection. But the high cost of treatment – around £1,000 – has made it unviable as a means of general public protection.

A study in the British Medical Journal showed that out of 151 people exposed to the virus, only one contracted it after the course of treatment.

PEP has been successfully manufactured in twelve different countries including India and South Africa, but due to the commercial enforcement of international intellectual property law remains expensive.

The drug combination is further complicated as several manufacturers have control over separate parts. GSK, Bristol Myers Squibb and Boehringer Ingelheim each have a stake in the finished product.

The drug seems unlikely to be

introduced, as cutbacks, rather than extra funding, have been policy since April 2004 when post-infection retroviral courses had their NHS funding removed for long-term visitors, and any migrants without a work permit.

This is in stark contrast to South Africa. The drug has been readily available there since international pressure forced companies to grant generic drug producers the right to make large quantities of the retrovirus to combat a national AIDS epidemic. Production costs have been shown to be minimal.

According to the Terence Higgins trust: "The UK has the worst sexual health in Western Europe, with higher levels of sexually transmitted infections than at any time since the creation of the NHS."

The trust began a campaign to raise awareness about PEP last year having failed to persuade the government to look at more widespread introduction of the drug. It is thought over 51,000

► page 6, column 5

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Home and away

FREEDOM

Volume 66 Number 9

Anarchism

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

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

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

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

Freedom's editors wish to present a broad range of anarchist thought, and as such the views expressed in the paper are those of the individual contributors and not necessarily those of the editorial collective.

Angel Alley

Another day, another batch of sawdust coming down on our heads – the Advisory Service for Squatters must be moving in.

The top floor of Freedom, which was for so long a repository for tonnes upon tonnes of archived Freedoms surrounded by piles of books, is being transformed in a way similar to Changing Rooms, but with far hairier plasterers.

The group are busy so it's not known how long it will be before their office is finished, but we'll keep you posted.

Meanwhile the rest of the building still desperately needs doing up, by people who know what they are doing (hint, hint), and unfortunately we also had a window put through the other day, by persons unknown – I don't know, bloody kids these days...

Also down Angel Alley, the Media Hacklab continues to go from strength to strength. Feel free to drop in any day between 12noon and 6pm. There is usually a skilled technician on hand to help you out if you really can't get to grips with the computers. To find out more about this valuable resource either visit in person or take a look at their website at www.hacklab.org.uk

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Next issue

Contributions are wanted for future Freedoms. The next issue will be dated 28th May and the last day to get your copy to us will be Friday 20th May (see contact details above for where to send your letters/articles). If you are interested in writing regularly for Freedom we want to hear from you!

News from the inside

Freedom for prisoners

As many of you may know, Freedom provides free subscriptions to anyone in prison. If you have friends or family in prison, or regularly write to a prisoner, if they are interested we will be happy to send them a free sample issue or sub. If you are a prisoner yourself we can provide subs to any of your fellow inmates if they wish. Please also feel free to write to us with any news about your imprisonment, developments in your case or anything else!

Russian anarchist needs support

Aleksander 'Miller' Tomenko is a 20 year old Russian anarchist who has been locked up for allegedly assaulting a fascist. Miller is from a poor family, who are struggling to pay not only for lawyers, but also, since the Russian authorities do not provide it for prisoners, his food.

Financial assistance is urgently needed. For more details on the case and how you can make a donation see www.avtonom.org/news/miller.html or www.antifa.org.uk

Keith Mann back inside

Veteran animal rights activist and former ALF prisoner Keith Mann is currently back inside. Keith was up in court for liberating nearly seven hundred mice, which were being used to test botulinum toxin on behalf of the cosmetics industry. After being convicted, he initially escaped a prison sentence and received community service, but moments later was charged with contempt of court after allegedly threatening the head of the vivisection lab involved as he left court, and sent down for six months.

Letters of support can be sent to Keith Mann, HMP Winchester, Romsey Road, Winchester, SO22 5DF.

American anti-war prisoner

As previously reported, Brendan Walsh received a five year prison sentence for petrol bombing a US Army recruiting office. You can write to him at Brendan Walsh, 12473-052, FCI Allenwood Low, Federal Correctional Institution, PO Box 1000, White Deer, PA 17887, USA.

Dark nights ahead

The people who produce the anti-prison/anti-repression magazine 325 are hoping to supplement it with a more regular news bulletin in the form of Dark Nights. A pilot issue has been produced, and hopefully this will lead to another successful project. More info from dark_nights@hush.com

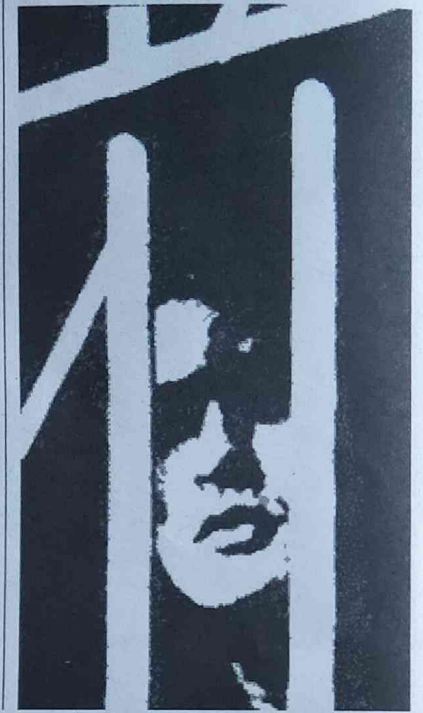
Harry Roberts

Harry Roberts, who shot three cops in 1966, is taking his case to the House of Lords, after repeatedly being denied parole, and denied access to the supposed 'evidence' keeping him inside. The thirty year tariff imposed after his conviction expired in 1996, but he has remained locked-up. Roberts will be 70 years old this year.

US cops arrest five year old girl

In America, an unruly 5 year old was forcibly handcuffed by three cops and arrested at her school. After being placed in the back of a police vehicle, the girl was eventually released after prosecutors said they would not be

bringing any charges. A video of the incident can be seen at www.officer.com/article/printer.jsp?id=23119&siteSection=1



LISTINGS

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

Every Friday The Loaf has arisen – Use Your Loaf café from 7pm to midnight at the Ragged School, Hales Street, Deptford, London SE8

until 28th May Brighton Fringe Festival, see www.cowleyclub.org.uk for more info and event listings

18th May Open seminar series at the Institute for Autonomy, 76-78 Gower Street, London WC1, at 5.30pm, topic International Financial Institutions and Globalisation.

20th to 22nd May Action Medics training in Manchester, be prepared for G8. For more details of this, information on other locations in June or shorter action medic trainings see www.actionmedics.org.uk

21st May Anti-Nestlé demo, for details see www.babymilkaction.org/action/demo05.html

25th May Open seminar series at the Institute for Autonomy, 76-78 Gower Street, London WC1, at 5.30pm, topic Precarity, Subjectivity and Class Composition.

26th May Anarchist Communism and the politics of the AF, a discussion with the London Anarchist Federation at 7pm, Freedom, 84b Whitechapel High Street, London E1. All welcome, get involved.

30th May Kingston Green Fair at Canbury Gardens, Kingston upon Thames, from 11am to 8pm. Family environmental event. 020 8546 5202 or www.kingstongreenfair.org.uk

1st June Open seminar series at the Institute for Autonomy, 76-78 Gower Street, London WC1, at 5.30pm. Topic will be Critical Theory and Technology.

4th June Strawberry Fair, for more info see www.strawberry-fair.org.uk

7th June Battle of the Beanfield talk at The Pullens Centre, 184 Crampton Street, London SE17 at 7.30pm

8th June Open seminar series at the

Institute for Autonomy, 76-78 Gower Street, London WC1, at 5.30pm, topic Anti-Civilisation and Class Struggle.

9th to 18th June Art Not Oil exhibition at the Institute for Autonomy, 76-78 Gower Street, London W1. For more info see www.artnotoil.org.uk

11th June Norwich's second annual anarchist bookfair from 10am to 7pm, For info call 07941 657485, email norwichanarchists@hotmail.com or see www.norwichanarchists.org

4th July Big Blockade at Faslane, for info see www.tridentploughshares.org

15th to 17th July Guilfest, for info see www.guilfest.co.uk

International

21st May Global Boycott Proctor & Gamble, see www.uncaged.co.uk/pg.htm

11th June World Naked Bike Ride, protest against oil and clothes dependency. Go on, do it! For info see www.worldnakedbikeride.org

6th July Global day of action at the opening day of the G8 Summit. See www.agp.org or www.dissent.org.uk

Nationwide groups

Anarchist Federation
Network of anarchist-communists
Box 2, 84b Whitechapel High Street, London E1 7QX
www.afed.org.uk

Antifa
Militant anti-fascist organisation
Box 36, 84b Whitechapel High Street, London E1 7QX
www.antifa.org.uk

Class War Federation
Class struggle anarchist group
PO Box 467, London E8 3QX
www.classwaruk.org

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

Earth First!
Ecological direct action network
www.earthfirst.org.uk

Industrial Workers of the World

Revolutionary DIY union
PO Box 74, Brighton, BN1 4ZQ
www.iww.org.uk

Solidarity Federation
Anarcho-syndicalist organisation
PO Box 469, Preston PR1 8FX
www.solfed.org.uk

See also www.enrager.net/britain

Social Centres
Autonomous Centre of Edinburgh (ACE)

17 West Montgomery Place, Edinburgh
www.autonomous.org.uk

The Basement
24 Lever Street, Manchester (contact mustsocial@yahoo.co.uk or 0161 237 1832)

The Common Place
23 Wharf Street, Leeds LS2 7EQ
www.thecommonplace.org.uk

The Cowley Club
12 London Road, Brighton BN1 4JA
www.cowleyclub.org.uk

Freedom
84b Whitechapel High Street, London E1 7QX
www.freedompress.org.uk

Institute for Autonomy

76-78 Gower Street, London WC1
Kebele

14 Robertson Road, Easton, Bristol BS5 6JY
www.kebele.org

Lancaster Resource Centre (LaRC)
The Basement, 78a Penny Street, Lancaster
www.eco-action.org/lancaster

London Action Resource Centre (LARC)

62 Fieldgate Street, London E1
www.londonlarc.org

The Ragged School
Hales Street, Deptford, London SE8

The RampART
15-17 Rampart Street, London E1 2LA
www.rampart.co.nr

SUMAC Centre
245 Gladstone Street, Nottingham NG7 6HX
www.veggies.org.uk/rainbow/

1in12 Club
21-23 Albion Street, Bradford, West Yorkshire, BD1 2LY
www.1in12.com

56a Infoshop
56 Crampton Street, London SE17
www.safetycat.org/56a

AN APOLOGY TO OUR READERS

As you may have noticed, this issue has been late. Really late. So late in fact that this apology is being written over a week after Freedom should have hit the streets.

We'd like to be able to just shrug our shoulders and say 'we're an anarchist news collective, you should expect us to be a bit irregular', but we can't. Previous editors were able to put the paper out on time, so we should be able to as well, and we haven't. In fact the number of timely issues brought out this year can be counted on the fingers of one hand. It's unacceptable behaviour to take subscribers' money and not deliver on time, even if we are breaking exclusive stories every other issue now.

In the next month or so, the editorial collective is going to have a proper sit-down and sort all the problems out.

We will also be looking for a new editor to join our team, so if you are interested in this get in touch with us by emailing info@freedompress.org.uk. Full training will be given to get you up to speed with copy-editing techniques, how to structure an article, legal considerations, and how we're currently organised. The minimum commitment we're looking for is one full day a month (Saturday or Sunday), plus maybe the day after getting phone calls regarding final tweaks.

The editors

News

In Brief

Labour fights for longer hours
MEPs have voted to scrap the UK Working Time Directive opt-out, which allows British businesses to sidestep European legislation limiting the working week to 48 hours. Labour MEPs controversially voted for the move, defying the demands of the British government. Blair's administration sided with the Conservatives, Liberal Democrats and business leaders in opposing the legislation that they claim will make the UK less competitive.

Employment Minister Gerry Sutcliffe, said, "We are very disappointed that they have taken this decision. We think it is fundamental. We don't want to have the high levels of unemployment there is elsewhere in Europe."

Around one in six workers have signed the working time opt-out, which is often presented along with the employment contract when workers are first employed. British workers are subject to the longest hours in Europe and do £2.3bn worth of unpaid overtime.

Equally underpaid

City council workers in Coventry have voted for three days of strike action on the 19th, 24th and 25th May over a disputed 'single-status' offer designed to reduce pay gaps between men and women and between office and manual workers.

The single-status agreement was signed in 1997 between national trade unions and local government employers. In the wake of several successful tribunal cases over pay discrimination, unions agreed to cease raising individual cases at industrial tribunal in exchange for the equalisation of terms and conditions.

The implementation of the offer at Coventry City Council came with severe drawbacks. Instead of dragging all workers upwards to what pay would have been without discrimination, the offer will cut the pay of 1,600 workers, in many cases by thousands of pounds a year.

Bonus is in the post

Adam Crozier, chief executive of the Royal Mail, has become the highest paid public sector employee in the country after receiving a personal pay package of nearly £3m for 2004.

The Royal Mail is still a state-owned organisation run by an executive board with pay decided by the remuneration committee of the same board. Most of Crozier's package will come in the form of share-award. The Royal Mail made £500m profits last year but was the subject of ever increasing complaints of poor service, late, lost and stolen letters.

Customer complaints have risen 300% in the past two years. Royal Mail workers have previously complained of a culture of overwork and management bullying in the service.

Other board members have also received generous payment packages with Elmar Toine, a former executive deputy chairman ousted in October receiving £1m.

libcom.org
libertarian community & organising resource for Britain

On May 1st 2005, we changed libcom.org. After a year and a half, a lot of changes and massive increase in traffic, we decided it was time for a change.

libcom.org is a constantly growing resource for all people who wish to fight to improve their lives, their communities and their working conditions.

Check out the newswire, forums, listings, organise tips and much more at <http://www.libcom.org>

We've evolved!

Littlewoods job cull

A catalogue of errors led to employees picking up the bill, reports Chris Strafford

The Union of Shop, Distributive and Allied Workers (Usdaw) state that up to four thousand jobs could be lost because of upcoming closures at Index, the major retail chain.

Chris, a worker for the chain, explains what is going on: "Like most Index workers I went into work on Sunday assuming that it would be a normal slow Sunday. Soon after everyone became worried after a BBC reporter came in and told us we were losing our jobs and that 126 stores will be closed, along with the head office and the distribution depots at Wednesbury.

"Some parasite in head office decided to take money to let the media break the news to us, sending Index staff and customers into chaos and worry."

Eight hundred jobs have been saved after GUS (the owners of Argos) brought up the properties and sites of 32 former index stores which will be turned into Argos outlets. This is a welcome relief for some workers.

Many more are thought to face uncertain futures, as it is the more profitable and easier run internet and mail order service of the business which bosses Sir Frederick and Sir David Barclay want to develop.

The majority of Index employees are facing redundancy, many employees without statutory redundancy pay.

Index employs a lot of students and young workers. These employees work part time and will not be entitled to full redundancy pay because they have either not been at the company long enough or turned 18 only recently (work before the age of 18 doesn't



count).

This is a terrible blow for many young people, as at this time of year lots of people are looking for summer jobs, and it will be hard to find work in retail.

At the other end of the scale, some are too old to get another job or to retrain because of discrimination in the labour market. These people have families to support and futures to save for.

The bosses have chased profit before

people time and time again. If you go into any Index store you will see a lack of investment in infrastructure and technology.

Whilst Index's biggest rival Argos have high-tech equipment and innovative lay outs, the owners of Index tried to be the cheap alternative, which just ended up looking run down, and poorly organised.

At many outlets there are too few staff to run the store, and often people are overworked. There have been gross

safety concerns, and there has been constant theft from many stores - there can be as few as two people on my shop floor at times.

This is not an isolated case, all over the retail sector the lack of strong union activity means workers end up doing jobs which are insecure, as the collapse of Alders showed recently. What is needed is for people to stand up for themselves, or time and time again we will see jobs being slashed for bigger profits without any resistance.

A tale of two atrocities

It is a truism that the crimes of the official enemy had been exaggerated freely and without concern for correction while those of 'our' state and its allies will be dismissed or ignored. The Iraq war provides a striking example of this at work.

Take the mass graves being uncovered in Iraq. According to Tony Blair, over 400,000 bodies had been found in 270 sites. In reality, only 55 of these sites had been searched and only 5,000 bodies had been found. That does not stop the US and UK states and journalists stating the far higher estimates as facts. Yes, Saddam was a monster (Human Rights groups estimate that 290,000 people are 'missing' during the decades he was in power) but the job of the media is, in theory at least, not to propagate government lies.

Compare this to the way the media covered the Lancet paper on the number of Iraqis who have died as a result of the war. Taking its lead from the governments responsible for the deaths, this report was mentioned in passing and dismissed as inaccurate. Thus a statistically sound survey is

essentially ignored or, at best, treated with scepticism while estimates of government officials are respectfully repeated as if they had been proven true beyond reasonable doubt (how could even the most honest politician know how many people are buried in a site before it is investigated?). This is unsurprising, as the Lancet paper suggests that the US/UK are responsible for one-third as many deaths in a year as Saddam clocked up in two decades.

Clearly, journalistic standards in reporting Saddam's atrocities are more lenient than those employed in reporting ours. This is not an isolated case, of course. It is merely one example of a consistent pattern and a striking confirmation of Chomsky and Herman's 'Propaganda Model' of the media (as discussed in their classic work, *Manufacturing Consent*).

Showing the reality of power is not on the cards simply because that is not how the media operates. Hence the disparity between how Saddam's crimes are reported and how US/UK ones are.

Iain McKay

IWW meet in Scotland

The 2005 assembly of the Scottish Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) celebrates both a year of growth and the union's centenary. Union members from Edinburgh, Clydebank, Dumfries, Inverness, Stirling, Falkirk and Grangemouth were present for discussions about the way ahead for the IWW in Scotland.

In the course of the Assembly, Edinburgh Branch Secretary Eddie Murray gave an outline of the history and development of the IWW (popularly known as the 'wobblies') across the world but with particular emphasis on the IWW in Scotland and the rest of Britain.

The militant international labour union was founded in 1905 in Chicago and has an extraordinary history in organising workplaces and resistance groups internationally.

The Assembly also heard about the growth of the union since its relaunch in Scotland in the early 1990s and the organising efforts being made in various areas at the moment. Special emphasis was placed on the organising of 'precarious' workers, those in temporary,

short-contract, cash-in-hand and un-unionised workplaces, particularly in the service sector.

The IWW has historically organised the 'unorganisable' with much success and nobody today needs militant direct action unionism more than those workers.

Emphasising the internationalist nature of the union, a message of solidarity with the Federation of Workers Councils in Iraq, the Union of the Unemployed of Iraq and the Southern Oil Company Union was agreed and sent.

At the moment the IWW has two general membership branches, in Edinburgh and Clydebank and an Industrial Union job branch which organises administrative and support staff at the Scottish Parliament. Recent activities have included building solidarity with New York IWW Starbucks workers through informational pickets, mobilisations around May Day and publishing our news-sheet, *Burning Issue*.

IWW
17 West Montgomery Place
Edinburgh EH5

If we rule the world

Louis Further exclusively reveals a US plan to hijack natural disasters for capital interests

Something which happened in the middle of the North American equivalent of the 'silly season' last August, and which has aroused next to no media interest until now, should cause alarm.

A US government office was quietly established to enforce pre-emptive intervention of capital both in areas hit by disaster (earthquake, tsunami, flood); and also ones 'softened up' – by US military forces.

On 5th August 2004 Bush created the Office of the Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilisation. Its chief is Carlos Pascual, a former US Ambassador to the Ukraine. Its official mandate is to draw up 'post-conflict' plans for two dozen as yet unnamed countries which are not yet 'in conflict'. These are officially secret, though Nepal is known to be on the list.

Pre-emptive

This latest development confirms that multinationals will be pre-signing reconstruction contracts. This, according to Pascual, will make them able to coordinate up to three full-scale reconstruction operations in different countries simultaneously. Each should be able to last five to seven years.

Partners are to include the World Bank (presumably this is one reason for Paul Wolfowitz's recent appointment there – 25% of the banks budget now goes to this type of reconstruction, a 1,000% increase since 1980), regional banks, G8 and the IMF. The Office will work in close co-operation with the National

Intelligence Council and keep 'high risk' countries on a watch list. The teams – according to an address Pascual delivered last October to the Center for Strategic and International Studies – are made up of private companies, non-governmental organisations and members of think tanks.

Remaking nations

The S/CRS plans to change "the very social fabric of a nation," to "tear apart the old" and replace it with "democratic and market-oriented" nations, selling off "state-owned enterprises that created a nonviable economy" and to foment disaster, war and social engineering for financial gain.

The S/CRS said: "The Office was established to Lead, coordinate, and institutionalise US Government civilian capacity to prevent or prepare for post-conflict situations, and to help stabilise and reconstruct societies in transition from conflict or civil strife so they can reach a sustainable path toward peace, democracy and a market economy."

The S/CRS will select new countries for 'intensive planning' every six months before the Humanitarian, Stabilisation, and Reconstruction Team (HSRT) is deployed "to Combatant Commands to participate in post-conflict planning where US military forces will be heavily engaged."

New found land

There are few if any blank slates left, few unknown lands with markets waiting to be tapped. So old fashioned colonialism



with its concomitant push for Lebensraum is dead. In its place neo-imperialism, which has to first destroy in order for these pre-signed contracts to be lucrative.

This is exactly what the likes of Bechtel and Halliburton have been doing there: according to the Los Angeles Times recently, all of Bechtel's allegedly rebuilt water plants have started to break down. In Afghanistan even President Hamid Karzai has criticised "corrupt, wasteful and unaccountable" foreign contractors for "squandering the precious resources that Afghanistan

received in aid."

In practice, the countries most hard hit by the December tsunami have seen almost no debt relief; most of the World Bank's emergency 'aid' is in the form of loans. The people in Sri Lanka need practical help to survive.

Instead the World Bank is insisting on an expansion of tourism. It is insisting that the repair of the physical infrastructure such as transport systems essential for local residents had best be handled by 'private financing'.

It is also being made a condition of aid that some of the hundreds of

thousands of people in Sri Lanka, Thailand, Indonesia and India relocate from the coastal areas in order for hotels, resorts, casinos, shrimp farms and other tourist facilities to be built by foreign investors.

Sources

American Enterprise Institute: www.aei.org
Center for Strategic and International Studies: www.csis.org
Office of the Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilisation: www.state.gov/s/crs/c12936.htm
Project for the New American Century: www.newamericancentury.org

In brief

No news is good news...

Long-term readers of Freedom may remember that last year we reported how the US State Department issued and then corrected a report on acts of terror worldwide. The initial report was inaccurate, stating that such acts and numbers killed had declined significantly during 2003. It was seized upon by the Bush administration to show that Bush was winning his 'war on terror'.

The revised version showed that, in reality, there had been an increase in acts of terror during that year. No conclusions about Bush's competence were to be drawn from the accurate report.

A spokesperson stated that the initial report was based "on the facts as we had them at the time. The facts that we had were wrong."

Significantly, both versions of the report did not count any of the hundreds of attacks on US troops in Iraq. Which was strange, as these attacks are regularly described by the administration as

terrorist. Does that mean these acts are considered as standard military operations between two warring parties?

But such concerns need not bother us any more. A year later and the new State Department has decided not to publish its report. Could this have something to do with the claim of one former State Department terrorism expert that the report showed that there were 625 'significant' attacks, making 2004 the worst year for terrorist attacks than in any year since 1985, the first year the publication covered?

Hypocrisy unbounded

The sight of Bush denouncing the Syria presence in Lebanon after he invaded and occupied Iraq is truly staggering. That the media can report his comments with a straight face says a lot about its role in society.

In April Bush again reiterated his demand that Syria must "get completely out of Lebanon." Rather than state the obvious ("we'll get out once you get out

of Iraq"), the Syrian state is withdrawing its forces from that country. The US is remaining firmly entrenched in Iraq.

While Bush demands that Syria withdraws its "military forces" his military forces number 260,000 troops in Iraq and are busy building 14 permanent bases costing \$4.5 billion there.

While Bush urges Syria to "not only get out with your military forces, but get out with your intelligence services, too" his intelligence service, the CIA, is part and parcel of world's largest diplomatic mission he is building in Iraq.

While Bush demanded that the withdrawal should include people who "have been embedded in parts of government" the advisors appointed by Paul Bremer, to oversee Iraqi ministries stay for the remainder of their five-year term of office.

And Bush has the hypocrisy to state that the Syrians "need to get completely out of Lebanon so the people of Lebanon can decide the fate of the country, not

another government, not agents of another government, but the people"!

Osama bin private

Judicial Watch is an American conservative organisation which claims to fight government corruption. At the end of April it announced some staggering news. It obtained a document through the Freedom of Information Act which the FBI invoked privacy right protections on behalf of Osama bin Laden.

Yes, the leader of al Qaeda and America's most wanted man. The declassified September 2003 FBI report obtained by Judicial Watch was subjected to Exemption six of the Freedom of Information Act on behalf of bin Laden.

This allows the government to withhold all information about US persons in "personnel and medical files and similar files" when the disclosure of such information "would constitute a clearly unwarranted invasion of personal privacy."

So the privacy of Osama bin Laden has a higher priority for the Bush Junta than the public's right to know what happened after 9/11. This, it should be stressed, follows the usual pattern of Bush and enquiries into that atrocity. You could start to think they had something to hide.

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Feature

General election

Iain McKay finds that it's just the same old, same old ... there is no such thing as a legitimate government

Across Britain there has been a general election. A government was elected. It happened to be a Labour one. Next time it is likely to be a Tory one. So much for the result what is really interesting about the 2005 general election though is that Labour got into power on the lowest popular vote ever. Just 36% of those bothering to vote voted for Labour. Even more strikingly only 21% of the 44 million people who were eligible to vote (and four out of ten of them didn't) put their cross next to a Labour candidate. For the first time ever more people did not vote (39%) than voted for the government. Non-voters are in the majority.

Calls in the Guardian and elsewhere for proportional representation in response to this crisis of legitimacy completely misses the point. Tinkering with the system won't improve anything. Proportional representation won't deliver a more democratic government. 'Winner takes all' is probably as good as way as any to run a general election. The point is that an increasing number of people realise that the whole system that is wrong.

Turnout in working class areas was below the national average of 61%. Turnout in four of the five Glasgow constituencies, for example, was below 50%. There was a similar pattern in Liverpool with turnout in Liverpool Riverside just 41% and in one Manchester constituency 42%. This isn't apathy. Working class communities know that politicians have abandoned them so they have turned their back on them. Walk around any working class area in the run-up to 5th May and you were struck by the complete lack of election posters in people's windows.

Despite this the authoritarian left in Britain remain obsessed with electoral

politics. From the IWCA (2.3% of the vote in Oxford East) to the Socialist Labour Party (0.6% in Manchester Central) to the WRP (0.4% in Liverpool Garston), to the Green Socialists (1.4% in Pontefract), Socialist Unity (1.5% in Nottingham East) and the Communists (0.5% in Pontypridd) the workers certainly had plenty of choice of parties claiming to represent them. And without exception they ignored them. The SSP in Scotland, for example, polled very poorly (getting 2% or less in all five Edinburgh constituencies).

George Galloway's Respect did though achieve some notable successes. Galloway, the left's answer to Robert Kilroy-Silk, was elected in Bethnal Green beating Labour's Oona King by 823 votes. Respect also scored second place in Birmingham Sparkbrook and East and West Ham. Predictably these results are being heralded as the dawning of a new era by Galloway's partners, the SWP. The reality though is different. Respect gained support on the back of Muslim anger over Blair's bloody war in Iraq not because of its policy on women's rights or renationalisation. Outside areas with large Muslim populations its results were pretty much in line with other far left parties - 1% in Cardiff and in Cambridge, 0.5% in Dorset, 0.8% in Plymouth, 1.2% in Bristol, 1.3% in Bradford, 0.7% in Neath and 3% in Walsall. Rather than a progressive force Respect has aligned it self with reactionary tendencies, something that is likely to cause tensions for Galloway and his motley crew.

There are some results from the election that should concern anarchists. In Barking the BNP came second, getting 17% of the vote, and in Dagenham they received 9%. The BNP is feeding off the fears of poor working class communities and their disillusionment with the political establishment. There



picture by Julian Gibson

is a real risk though of the BNP now gaining a foothold in the south, something they have not achieved before. In many seats out side of London the BNP came fourth frequently achieving more than 4% of the vote, well ahead of UKIP and the Greens. The more hardcore National Front also did relatively well getting 975 votes in Feltham for instance.

Jean-Jacques Rousseau wrote in *The Social Contract* "the English people think they are free. They are badly

mistaken: they are only so during the election of Members of Parliament. Once they are elected the people are slaves, they are nothing." Rousseau's words ring as true now as they did three hundred years today. Kropotkin, in his classic *Anarchist Communism*, said "it is becoming evident that it is merely stupid to elect politicians and trust them with the task of making laws."

While the discontent that Kropotkin sensed the people had in the parliamentary

elections it has taken longer for this discontent to grow than he might have expected. The relentless decline in electoral turnout and the lack of trust in politicians is though now creating a crisis in liberal democracy.

Last week Tony Blair stood outside of Downing Street, elected by fewer than two out of ten of the citizens of this country aged over 18 and said that he would listen to the people. He hasn't be listening for the last eight years, why should he start now he's elected?

Capitalism and inequality

If there is a common belief in the right, it is the love of inequality. On the authoritarian right, this is expressed in racism, hierarchy and leader worship. On the so-called 'libertarian' (free market capitalist) right, racism is usually eschewed in favour of class (wealth) inequality along with hierarchy and leader worship - the cult of the businessperson.

Anarchists, like other socialists, have long pointed out that wealth inequality and a class system in which a few own the means of life makes a mockery of freedom for the many who are reduced to little more than picking masters.

When faced with this obvious objection, the free market right have tended to reply

in two ways. First, they argue that capitalist societies tend to be more egalitarian than 'caste' societies (like Stalinist regimes) and, second, that market based systems have more social mobility, i.e. people are more likely to improve their position over a short period of time and rise in the social ladder. For some strange reason they fail to mention that upward mobility automatically implies downward mobility too. These two 'facts', it is claimed, show that we need not worry about social inequality.

The first argument in defence of capitalist inequality is not found that much these days, for an obvious reason: it was rubbish. Popularised by Milton

Friedman in his book *Capitalism and Freedom*, like most of his ideas it has proven to be without basis.

He suggested that the more free market a society was, the more equal it was. He pointed to the example of the USA and compared it to Soviet Russia. He conveniently forgot to mention the role of such New Deal policies as high levels of taxation and social spending in producing that equality.

Ironically, these policies were the very things Friedman spent most of his time fighting against and by the 1970s and 1980s his ideas went mainstream and were applied by politicians like Reagan and Thatcher. Inequality exploded to record levels (and way beyond Soviet

levels), as it did when free market ideology was imposed on Eastern Europe in the 1990s.

In effect, Friedman refuted his own claims and provided his critics right by having his ideas applied in practice. Needless to say, the right still hold this 'old fraud' in high esteem.

As for the second argument, the claim that free market regimes have higher social mobility, that is just as baseless. In fact, numerous studies have shown that the opposite is the case. Researchers at the London School of Economics, on behalf of the educational charity the Sutton Trust, are the latest in a long line to show that the more free market a country, the worse is its levels of social mobility.

In a report published at the end of April, they have found that Britain has one of the worst records for social mobility in the developed world, beaten only by the USA out of eight European and North American countries. Norway was the best followed by Denmark, Sweden, Finland, Germany and Canada.

This means that children born to poor families in Britain are less likely to fulfil their full potential than in other countries and are less likely to break free of their backgrounds than in the past.

In other words, we find it harder to earn more money and get better jobs than our parents. Moreover, not only is social mobility in Britain much lower

Editorial

The Cardinals, with the election of Joseph Ratzinger to be the new Pope, have shown the world that the 21st century is just not for them. Pope Benedict XVI, as Ratzinger has chosen to call himself, has a track record of being sectarian, authoritarian and conservative.

Ratzinger enforced the old Pope's agenda on such matters as homosexuality (the "legalisation of evil" supported by politicians who are "gravely immoral"), freedom of information (the government should "avoid exposing young people to erroneous ideas about sexuality and marriage") and adoption by gays ("allowing children to be adopted by persons living in such unions would actually mean doing violence to the children").

He even denounced rock music ("the vehicle of anti-religion" and an "expression of the elemental passions, and at rock festivals it assumes a sometimes cultic character").

And just as the Vatican downplayed the American clergy child sex abuse scandal, so did Ratzinger (stating the "constant presence in the press of the sins of Catholic priests, especially in the United States, is a planned campaign").

Should we be that surprised? It is no mistake that Ratzinger has chosen Saint Benedict as his namesake. Benedict founded the monastic tradition in Catholicism, an attempt to present the church as a refuge from an inherently sinful world.

The key was submission to the church hierarchy for, as he put it, "the first step of humility is unhesitating obedience, which comes naturally to those who cherish Christ above all."

The Benedictine legacy is one of submission to authority and the new Benedict has already indicated that this obedience must be expanded. This explains his warnings against the "dictatorship of relativism which does not recognise anything as definitive and has as its highest value one's own ego."

In other words the attempts of people to think for themselves and work out what is right and wrong based on their own intellect and shared humanity.

It is this last factor, the sense of equality, which ensures that any decent system of non-absolutist ethics does not allow oppression and exploitation to be tolerated. It is precisely this sense of equality which a hierarchical organisation like the Catholic Church cannot appeal to.

In this attack on individual freedom and equality, the current hierarchy of the Catholic Church is not alone. The desire for obedience can be found in all forms of fundamentalism, whether Islamic or Evangelical Christians.

The aim is the same, to produce an 'Eternal Authority' which can provide the basis for a moral life and so relieve people from thinking for themselves.

Ultimately, the new Pope shows that the struggle of authority and the individual still goes on and that previous conquests of liberty need to be continually defended against those who would destroy them. It is one of the ironies of the 21st century that those who are leading the onslaught on freedom get proclaimed to be 'champions of liberty' by their fellow authoritarians.

The atheist message is still as relevant today as it was in the past and it is no coincidence that anarchism and atheism go hand-in-hand. The struggle for liberty must be waged not only against economic and political authorities but also spiritual authorities. The new Pope has done us the great service of reminding us of this.

Commentary

Coca Cola

An update on the Coca Cola in Kerala article in the last issue (23rd April). Despite a decision by the local governing body the 'Gram Panchayat' to again deny Coke a license to use the factory for the next five years, the Indian High Court has decided to allow Coke to restart work at the factory. This is from a press release from the protesters:

"Palakkad: The protest against Coca Cola is intensifying in the context of the permission granted by the High Court to Coca Cola to function. The protesters are firm that the company would not be allowed to operate even if the authorities make all the arrangements for its operation. While appeal against the High Court judgement would be filed in the Supreme Court, the agitation against coca cola would be intensified. Activists of AIYF would march to Plachimada Coca Cola plant on Monday."

And a more recent release talking about the march, entitled Clashes During AIYF's Anti Coca Cola March:

"Palakkad: The march by AIYF to the Plachimada Coca Cola Company on Monday ended in clashes. Skirmishes with the police erupted when the activists tried to forcibly enter the plant. Satyapal, the District President of AIYF, led the protest march that began at 11am from Kannimari in the context of the High Court judgement. E.K Selvakumar, Secretary, P. Manikantan, O.K Saithalavi, and T.A Rashid, Executive Committee members. The Adivasis who have kept up their agitation for 1,085 days saluted the AIYF activists. A massive police force fully armed including with tear gas led by C.A Antony, Circle Inspector of Kollangode was present at the gate of Coca Cola."

No more specifics, sorry, especially regarding the dates of the marches/actions/clashes - the e-mail was unclear.

Andy Williams

Art Not Oil

Art Not Oil is an annual event aimed at encouraging artists to create work that explores the damage that companies like BP are doing to the planet, and the role art can play in counteracting that damage.

It is designed in part to paint a truer portrait of an oil company than the caring image manufactured by the BP Portrait Award, a search for the year's 'best' portrait which also helps to divert public attention and indignation from BP's actual activities.

Climate chaos is set to have a catastrophic effect on all of us, while hitting the poorest hardest. Oil is a curse that also fuels war, poverty and environmental destruction. Yet the companies most responsible are profiting handsomely, and they are still welcome it seems in many of our most prestigious public galleries and museums.

Art Not Oil 2005 will include paintings, photos, sculpture and other creations that address issues like climate chaos, corporate greenwash and the suicidal madness that proclaims 'profit is king' and 'money can solve any problem'. We also warmly welcome work dealing with the cancerous impact of the oil industry on the planet, and of course work that dares to imagine what solutions to these serious but not insoluble problems might look like.

Art Not Oil 2005 will begin as a virtual gallery at www.artnotoil.org.uk, progressing to a physical space at the Institute for Autonomy in London (see page 2, listings) from 9th June. We will

also be holding an event outside the National Portrait Gallery on the evening of the Portrait Award presentation ceremony on Monday 13th June. Then Art Not Oil 2005 will move, we hope, to Scotland since the G8 will be there in July, as will many thousands of protesters calling for justice, freedom and a fossil fuel-free future. As well as returning to London, we also plan for the exhibition to be present in Sunderland and Edinburgh in autumn/winter 2005/6, since the BP Portrait Award exhibition will tour to these cities.

Do you know a great place for an exhibition like this, either this year or in years to come? Could you put any time into helping make it happen? Or do you have something you'd like to exhibit? If so, it would be great to hear from you.

Contact us on 07708 794665, email info@artnotoil.org.uk, write to Art Not Oil, c/o 62 Fieldgate Street, London E1 1ES or see www.artnotoil.org.uk, www.nationalpetroleumgallery.org.uk or www.londonrisingtide.org.uk

The Art Not Oil Collective

For war, not back

This election campaign is hard to get enthusiastic about, particularly for die-hard anti-parliamentarians. The two mainstream parties with any chance of winning are basically running on the same platform and quibbling on the details. As for the Liberal Democrats, they could promise a lot more because they are in no position to 'deliver' (i.e. betray those promises).

The Tories campaign seems to amount to playing the race card and can be summed up as "if you don't want people like Michael Howard's grandfather getting into the country then vote for Michael Howard."

Blair's campaign amounts to "don't mention the war" - perhaps they should reconsider changing their campaign slogan to "For war not back"? As it is, both are running on a neo-liberal platform and like the Democrats and Republicans in the US, emphasising different aspects of it to get people to consider them the least likely to mess-up their lives.

The parties' manifestos were unleashed and the newspapers took them seriously in spite of them being simply ignored once in office. If we had a real media they would have prefaced their coverage with "Last election, New Labour's manifesto promised not to impose tuition fees..." When push comes to shove, election promises wither under the heat produced in the greenhouse of big business and the state bureaucracy.

As for the fringe parties (like the Greens and Respect), it is doubtful that they

will gain significant results as any anti-war feelings will be directed towards the Lib Dems (who are in a position to actually win seats).

Respect, in particular, will suffer most as the usual SWP hyper-hype will make even the unlikely event of moderate success seem like an anti-climax and, consequently, a defeat (although no matter what, the post-election rhetoric will proclaim any result, no matter how bad, as a victory of earth shattering proportions).

Hopefully the descent of party leadership into the most crass opportunism and reformism may give any genuine socialists remaining in the party cause for concern - and thought.

As for those seeking to express their opposition to Blairism and its wars, may we suggest a spoilt ballot paper as the logical course of action. A large increase in spoilt ballots gives a message that we are not apathetic, but angry; not apolitical, but anti-politics.

One noticeable aspect of the campaign was the undercurrent of concern over turnout. The Sun even decided to make a campaign about it. There seemed to be an awareness that more and more people were seeing through the game of politics and recognising that no matter who you vote for, they will put the interests of state and capital first and foremost. That is healthy, in as much as its shows that you cannot fool all of the people all of the time.

However, as long as this expresses itself in cynicism rather than the creating of genuine alternatives which use direct action to achieve change then the elite can happily tolerate it.

As such, the concern raised about 'apathy' should not be considered as sincere. Actual turnout is utterly irrelevant to how a party governs or whether it claims a mandate for its actions.

The US state has happily survived decades of around 50% of eligible people voting. As long as the non-voters leave it at that, then they will be as ignored as those who bothered to go to the polling station. To state the obvious, the level of abstentions has no relation to 'the level of anarchy' a given country has unless there is a large and active anarchist movement present. We have no interest in apathy and while the current alienation with the political system is good, unless it turns into a positive agenda for social change we will not expect much to change.

That means looking seriously at building anti-parliamentarian alternatives which will inspire those who, while turned off from politicians, are actively interesting in changing the world for the better.

And that is the task any serious libertarian movement should be looking into. It means tapping into the current disillusionment with politicians in order to present a positive alternative based on what many people are doing already or logical extensions of it.

It means encouraging militant rank and file unionism against bosses, producer and consumer co-operatives against capitalist firms, credit unions against rip-off banks, community groups against local state bureaucracies, in general direct action against bosses and politicians.

We have a positive message and a means to make the world a better place. We are saying to people that they, and they alone, can make their lives better. That direct action not only can be used to fight the current system, it can also create a new, better, one to replace it.

I.M.

HIV

page 1

people are living with HIV in the UK, around a third are undiagnosed.

The government is being taken to court over its failure to provide the drug by two HIV-positive men who believe the failure to introduce PEP nationwide on the NHS has led to their condition. If successful the case could allow thousands of other people to sue.

The cost for a lifetime's supply of anti-AIDs drugs for one person is over £1m, a factor PEP campaigners believe should be taken into consideration when planning the drug's deployment.

But the government has argued it would be impossible to introduce the drug on a widespread basis, fearing it would simply lead to more unprotected sex and a mounting bill for preventative treatment.

Rob Ray

Capitalism

page 5

than in other advanced countries, it is actually declining and has fallen markedly over time.

The findings were based on studies of two groups of children, one set born in the 1950s and the other in the 1970s. In the UK, while 17% of the former made it from the bottom quarter income group to the top, only 11% of the latter did so.

Mobility in the Nordic countries was twice that of the UK. While only the US did worse than the UK in social mobility, this may not last as the divide between rich and poor in Britain was getting deeper while in the US the situation was static.

The findings effectively demolished the idea that America was a 'land of opportunity'. In reality, the upper reaches of US society had been cut off for most of the worse off since the 1960s (i.e. before Friedman's ideas started to be applied).

Rather than produce a 'classless' society of opportunity for all, the rise of free market capitalism has resulted in an increasingly unequal and rigid society.

Growing income inequality has seen the rich got richer while the poor struggle to break the cycle of poverty. So after 25 years of Thatcherite and neo-Thatcherite governments, social mobility has fallen while social inequality has risen (so much for the 'classless' society).

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

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Quiz answers

1. It was so precious it should be rationed.
2. Plotino Rhodakanaty, born in Athens in 1828 he migrated to Mexico in 1861.
3. It's the north-eastern name for an eider duck, so called because early conservationist St Cuthbert decreed they be protected because of the valuable down that was harvested from their nests.
4. Woody Guthrie. Much as I approve of the subject matter, it's not his best.

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REVIEW

Will the movie of the classic anarchist comic V for Vendetta miss the point, asks Iain McKay

Alan Moore's classic graphic novel (i.e. comic for grown-ups) *V for Vendetta* is being made into a movie as I write. Its opening date is planned to be this year's Guy Fawkes night, befitting the fact that V, the hero of the book, dresses like him and succeeds in blowing up the Houses of Parliament.

Why should you be interested? Simply because, in Moore's graphic novel, V is an anarchist fighting a fascist state in a grim post-world war III future. It made compulsive reading when it came out in late 1988, inspired as it was by Moore's disgust of Thatcher's Britain.

It also included some excellent anarchist propaganda (such as V's television appeal to the people to take responsibility for their own lives and get rid of the criminals they allow to have power or his 'discussion' with the statue of justice at the beginning of the book).

While its glorification of 'propaganda by the deed' is troublesome and no guide to action (and why should it, it is a comic book set in an imaginary fascist future after all!), V was no mindless terrorist. His targets were carefully selected and included sources of power (both real and symbolic) as well as state criminals. His actions, therefore, express the best aspect of 'propaganda by the deed', the holding to account of those in power for their oppression and repression.

As such, given its political nature and its grim account of both the rise of British fascism and life under such a regime, it is of interest to libertarians. Like

Watchmen (also, incredibly, being made into a film), it is a modern classic.

Making a movie of it was inevitable and we can only hope it will be good (the people who made the Matrix are involved so the special effects may be good). Unfortunately, Alan Moore's comics have generally been butchered when made into films. This seems to be happening to *V for Vendetta* as well. The following is the movie's plot synopsis: "V for Vendetta takes place in an alternate future in which Germany wins WWII and Great Britain becomes a fascist state. A terrorist freedom fighter known only as 'V' begins a violent guerrilla campaign to destroy those who've succumbed to totalitarianism, and recruits a young woman he's rescued from the secret police to join him."

So does our anarchist hero become simply a 'freedom fighter'? As for "Germany wins WWII" that utterly misses the point of the book, which is about home-bred fascism. Moore obviously believed that Britain could become fascist – and with Thatcher in office who could blame him? In the book, we did it to ourselves and that puts V's struggle in a slightly different light – if a fascist regime is created or supported by a majority, does that make struggle against it 'terrorism'?

Not from an anarchist perspective, of course, but under Thatcher rebels were constantly subjected to the argument that direct action was 'undemocratic' as the people had voted for her authoritarian agenda.

Perhaps 'V for Vendetta' will fare better than those works by Moore which have



already been turned into films. Let us hope so, although I'm not holding my breath. In today's climate, an anarchist hero may be too much. V may be turned into a generic 'freedom fighter' who liberates the masses who are too repressed, stupid or apathetic to do it themselves.

The potential elitism of V's tactics

(imposed by the necessities of the superhero comic book genre and the nature of the regime V is fighting rather than expressing any core idea of anarchism) may be brought to the fore while his redeeming belief that people can govern themselves without bosses and politicians of any sort, is consigned to memory. His anarchism may become

transmuted into a general plea for 'liberty' (even 'democracy!') and against the totalitarian form of government only. The real message may, therefore, be lost or, at best, mentioned in passing.

If so, it would be a great shame. But at least the film may get people reading the original graphic novel which is still a masterpiece by a master of his craft.

YOUR GUIDE TO DEALING WITH LEGAL PROBLEMS AT THE G8

We at Freedom want our readers to be safe, and indeed free. Here is a cut-out and keep guide to dealing with policing and legal problems you could face if you plan to be one of the several thousand people protesting the next meeting of the G8 group of nations at Gleneagles.

Public order policing tactics

The police favour close contact public order policing. The main tactic is to divide very large groups of people into smaller groups and surround and contain them, sometimes for hours, before dispersing one by one. When they fail to divide groups, riot police are sent in lines to break up and disperse crowds, by hitting out with batons at peoples' heads.

The police often use teams of snatch squads to make arrests. These consist of six officers in a triangular pattern, with the outer police protecting the arresting officer.

The police also make wide use of photographers, video camera operators, helicopters with video cameras and evidence gatherers, who record a running commentary.

Scottish law

There are important differences between the Scottish law and the law in

England and Wales. We have been busy putting together An Activists' Guide to Scots Law, which is currently available to download from our website. Due to limited space here we will only deal with some key issues. Anyone going to Gleneagles should read the Guide.

Stop and Search

There is no general right for the police to search you. The police will often try to get people to co-operate where they have no legal power to compel anyone to do so. If you allow them to search through your bag, for example, anything they find may be used as evidence against you in any trial, even if they had no legal power to compel you to submit to a search.

Giving Your Name and Address

In general you do not have to give your details to the police or answer their questions, but giving a false name or address can be an offence. We advise you not to give your name and address, as this will be added to their intelligence database, and to say 'no comment' to any other questions.

There are three circumstances when you are required to give your name and address:

1. If the police reasonably suspect that

you have committed an offence, or have potentially witnessed an offence.

2. When you are detained or arrested (see below).

3. If you are stopped when driving a motor vehicle – you may also be required to produce a driving licence, insurance certificate and MoT certificate within seven days at a police station. Passengers need not give their details.

Detention and arrest

The police in Scotland have two separate powers: detention and arrest.

Detention

You may be detained if you are reasonably suspected of having committed an offence that is subject to imprisonment (an example would be breach of the peace). You need to be told that: a) you are being detained, and b) what you are being detained for. You cannot be held in the legal state of 'detention' for more than six hours, after which time you must either be released or arrested.

If you are detained this may be because there is not sufficient evidence yet to have you arrested, and that they wish to question you. You do not have to give any information apart from your name and address.

Arrest

The general power of the police to arrest is defined as 'common-law' so there are no certain criteria. As a working rule if they reasonably believe you have committed an offence you may be arrested. This is the practice where you are caught in the act. Otherwise it is usual to detain you.

You should be cautioned and anything you say after that point, to any police officer, can be used as evidence. You do not have to give any information apart from your name and address. You may want to give your date of birth as this can speed up release, but this is not legally necessary. You have the right to have a person informed of your place of detention. You also have a right to have a solicitor informed of your arrest. We advise you to contact a solicitor and to say 'no comment' to any questions until you have spoken to your solicitor. A list of solicitors will be available from us nearer the time.

If you have been hurt at all you should demand to be seen by a doctor. If you are on any medication or have a medical condition which could require it, then make sure you tell the custody officer.

You will be fingerprinted, photographed and they may also take a DNA sample

(using a mouth swab). They have a right to use reasonable force to do all of these.

You may also be questioned and we advise you to say 'no comment'. You will be either released, asked to sign an undertaking or held until the next working day for court.

Arrest can be a very intimidating experience. It can also be a very boring and slow-moving one. Stay calm, relax when you can, remember your rights and you'll soon be out.

Juveniles

Anyone aged 16 or over is treated as an adult in Scottish law. If you are under 16 and are arrested then the police will inform your parents. They may also (especially if you live abroad or your parents cannot be contacted) inform Social Services. They may refuse to release you until your parents come to pick you up.

If you are coming to the protests with an adult other than your parents it's worth that person bringing a letter from your parents authorising them to act on their behalf – the police don't have to accept this but it can help.

G8 Legal Support Group

Contact us at g8legalsupport@riseup.net and see our website at www.g8legalsupport.info

Review

If it was easy they wouldn't call it 'struggle'
by Mark Barnsley

This pamphlet contains a talk Mark gave in Lille, France, last year, with the question and answer session that followed. Also included is a question and answer session from a similar talk Mark gave the previous month in Barcelona.

This pamphlet covers a lot of prison issues, from the brutalisation of prisoners to the ever-increasing prison privatisation scheme, however the main theme throughout is Mark's belief in the importance of resistance.

Mark's determination and defiance should be an inspiration to all anarchists, regardless of whether they are inside or not. This pamphlet is jam-packed with anecdotes from Mark's resistance and those of other prisoners.

Despite the odds, these prisoners have refused to be broken, in fact the opposite is true, what the prison system has thrown at them has made them stronger, made them even more determined to keep their integrity. Here, Mark illustrates the kind of strength some prisoners have shown:

"I know one prison comrade who only drinks water, he never drinks coffee or tea, so that the guards have nothing to take away from him. This guy told me, he was in segregation for a long time, this man is a real fighter, and he won't back down to any extent, even in the segregation unit he fought back.

"The guards tried everything to break him. One day after a long time, one of the senior guards came to see him, and he said to him, 'Listen, when you were first down here in segregation, we carefully monitored what you spent'. Every week my friend had made one phone call to his family, and he had bought one Mars bar.

"The guard said to him, 'Why not start conforming, and you can have that again?' My friend stood away from the door, he pointed to the window ledge, and he said, 'A Mars bar? Like that one there?' It had been there for nine months, he didn't eat it as a sign of resistance. He told me the next thing ten guards ran into the cell with riot shields to seize the Mars bar."

Sadly, not all prisoners are able to display this degree of strength. For many the harsh conditions and lack of political consciousness has resulted in them succumbing to a 'living death'. Mark highlights the difference prisoner support can make to those inside.

Letters are an important part of this, it helps alleviate the isolation prisoners are feeling, plus it shows the guards that these prisoners belong to a movement, that they are not alone. However, letter writing should only be a starting point for prisoner solidarity. Raising funds to help a prisoner's family visit them, sending them books, money, etc., are just some of the things we can do to support them.

We should also be sending demonstra-

tions to the prisons when a comrade inside needs our support, whether they are in struggle or have been brutalised. This kind of solidarity has had a real effect on prisoners' treatment in the past.

This pamphlet is an excellent starting point for those who want to learn about prison resistance. Highly recommended.

TW

If it was easy, they wouldn't call it 'struggle': Mark Barnsley talks about repression and resistance in British prisons, £2.50 (including UK postage, add 50p elsewhere in Europe, £1 outside Europe) from Mark Barnsley, JFMB, PO Box 381, Huddersfield, HD1 3XX. Please make cheques payable to 'Mark Barnsley RF'.

Imagine if...

Pope Benedict stood at his balcony, heavily swathed in the most stunning textiles the great technology of his servants could provide.

His silver hair had grown brittle with age, his kindly demeanour, so long held for the crowds and the cardinals, had relaxed into his more common horrified rictus.

At his side stood Darth Vader, who had ever been in the shadows.

"What do you require my master?" The old man grimaced at a bird that had flown past in an offensively unclothed manner.

"We have much to do Vader. Somewhere out there are millions of souls yet to be conquered." A blue lance of lightning shot out from Benedict's finger as he grew more excited.

"Imagine, the filthy dirty heathens, screwing... bumming each other..." A stray bolt hit Vader's chest box, causing a minor short and bringing the dark Sith's wheezing back.

Haw Sss
"Sorry, I just get a bit frustrated. I am but a humble worker tending the Catholic garden you know." He straightened his golden robe, and leaned more heavily on his solid silver sceptre for emphasis.

"You shall rule beside me Vader. Together we shall destroy the republics, and I shall assume my rightful place as ruler of the galaxy. I have already become pope, it is all going according to plan."

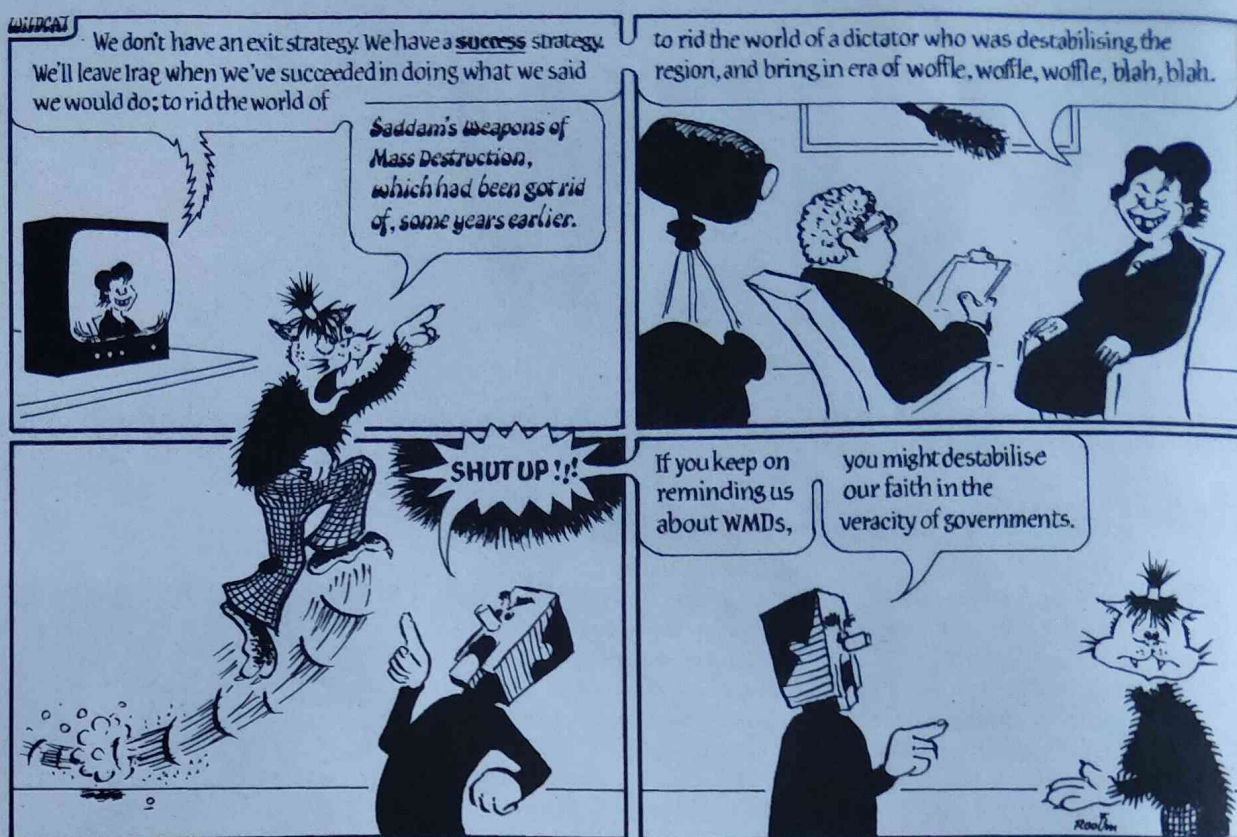
Haw Sss. Vader banged his chest a few times and turned a few knobs. "Haw... I feel a presence... one I haven't felt for... Sss" Benedictine nodded.

"Yes I too feel a disturbance in the force. The death of Darth John Paul has left a vacuum, but we will bring balance. The cardinals are weak, and stupid, or corrupt. They will not stand in our way." Darth Vader shifted uncomfortably.

"When you say balance master" His mentor snapped at him.

"I mean a balanced scouring of all non believers, the establishment of conservative Catholicism as unassailable and the total destruction of the Liberation theology rebellion!"

Vader sighed. Perhaps he should have stayed with the Emperor.



A Sideways Look

A friend tells me of a project he is running with his kids' primary school. He already helps run the organic vegetable garden they have, but encountered the problem of what to do about keeping it watered over the summer holidays. He came up with the idea of running a project with some of the classes to engineer a solution.

He tells the kids that engineering is about making something you need out of things you can get hold of. Put simply it's community engineering - dealing with everyday matters rather than sending rockets into space. The idea is not just to get the kids involved, but to expose them to some basic concepts of engineering and problem solving in a hands-on way.

The school has extensive flat roofs, so the design, which everyone worked on, funnels rainwater from the roofs into reclaimed storage tanks which have been cleaned up. A solar panel powers a pump which then slowly feeds the water into the vegetable beds.

The project is part way through and the children have helped in bidding for sponsorship and coming up with ideas - some of which are being followed up in addition to the project. My friend tells me that the academically-oriented kids have not been the ones most involved, while children in other classes who he doesn't know have asked him if they can do some engineering too.

The current demand for Polish builders in Britain isn't solely because they are cheaper. I've heard enough tales of them taking meticulous care and a craftsman's pride in their work to recognise there's something else going on. The Stalinist system might not have provided much, but it did do basic training, the sort of thing that used to be called apprenticeships here and was seen off under Thatcher. My brother

left school effectively when he was 14 - a combination of indifferent teaching and a desire on his part to do something practical. He learnt to be a builder the practical way, having gained little from his secondary modern school. Ironically, that school, now closed, was meant to specialise in teaching trades as any academically inclined children had already been filtered out by selection.

This comes as no surprise to anyone, except perhaps policy-makers and opinion formers. Children, like the rest of us, have different aptitudes and potentials. The education system we have refuses to recognise that. The reasons why aren't hard to fathom - anything that isn't academically-oriented is looked down on by our class-ridden society. Even the alleged meritocrats in New Labour think it's okay for children of dustman to become accountants, but not for children of accountants to become dustmen. Until this attitude changes and we recognise that actually a cleaner is worth more than an advertising copywriter, kids will continue to be forced down a path crammed with exams, rather than given a chance to make something of their aptitudes.

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Blast from the Past

Taken from Freedom of May 1989, written by Brian Bamford and entitled The Triumph of Thatcherism:

After more than ten years of Thatcher Government, the political pundits are cashing in by publishing books analysing the Thatcher era. Hugo Young in his book *One of Us* has said Thatcher promises to stay with us "into an indefinite future," and one critic recently admitted he'd given up writing her obituaries.

For Hugo Young the triumph of Thatcherism is a personal one: "There was no corner of British society to which 'Maggie' could not sooner or later turn her hand: no problem which she could not solve, no governmental triumph that failed to be peculiarly hers." In politics staying the course is important, and being on top is even more important. Because of this ability to stay on top the aura of greatness, and even genius, sticks to Thatcher, as they say, like shit to a blanket...

His success is not in doubt. John McIlroy, a marxist writer on trade unionism has recently claimed: "Thatcherism still holds the stage and the future of trade unionism remains uncertain and insecure."

The quiz

1. Lenin thought liberty was precious. How did he qualify this most un-Leninist thought?
2. Which Greek-born activist was the first advocate of anarchism in Mexico?
3. What is a cuddly duck?
4. Who made an entire album dedicated to anarchist martyrs Sacco and Vanzetti?

Answers on page 6

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