

FREEDOM

80P ANARCHIST NEWS AND VIEWS

www.freedompress.org.uk

10 FEBRUARY 2007

INSIDE ▶▶

Virtual riots page 2

Masters of war page 5

Favela Rising review page 7

Svartfrosk column page 8

WSF: NOT FOR THE POOR

The 2007 World Social Forum (WSF) is facing heavy criticism for its most recent financial planning, which denied access to the poor. The Secretariat of the Forum, which this year was held in Kenya, has been charged with hypocrisy by media groups after its decision early on in the process to charge heavily for entry and food while simultaneously taking on hefty corporate sponsorship.

Around 60,000 delegates attended the event, which was organised by the Secretariat and the International Council, a 150-member body which has taken on a role of 'giving continuity' by defining WSF policy guidelines.

The council, which has among other members national Trades Union Councils, major NGOs and activist groups, effectively acts as the nucleus around which funding, outreach and organisation of the World Social Forums takes place.

The growth of the International Council as a de-facto centre of control for the Social Forums has come alongside increasing concerns over the accountability and direction of the events themselves, and the turnout this year is the lowest since the Social Forums began.

The WSF calls itself: "An open meeting place where groups and movements of civil society opposed to neo-liberalism and a world dominated by capital or by any form of imperialism, but engaged in building a planetary society centred

on the human person, come together to pursue their thinking, to debate ideas democratically, formulate proposals, share their experiences freely and network for effective action."

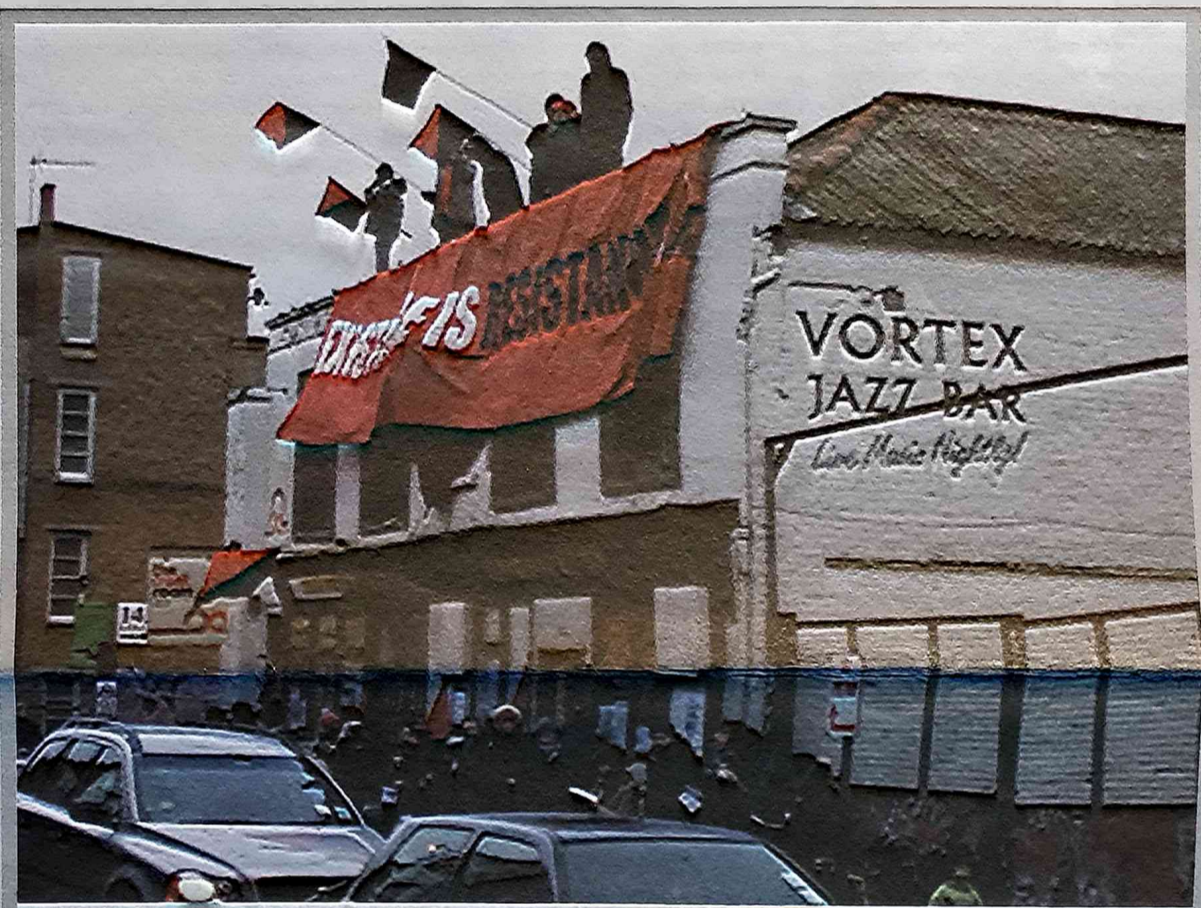
The WSF began this year by charging \$7 entry for individuals from Africa to attend the get-together, which was held in the hugely expensive Moi International Sports Centre.

The cost of a single ticket to the event amounted to around a third of the national minimum monthly wage in Kenya - a level which itself is routinely ignored by both the government and private employers. If that person was to act as a delegate the price rose to \$21.

The price also rocketed for anyone outside Africa, at \$110 per individual, though this was somewhat mitigated by money from the Italian government, support from the International Trade Union Confederation (a new union body which anarchist groups condemned in *Freedom* last year when it was formed) and a tie-in deal with Kenya Airways for cheap flights.

Kenya Airways had been threatened just weeks before the agreement with a strike from workers complaining about anti-unionist measures and racism in the company which, it was alleged, saw white employees paid more and promoted faster.

However no criticism was made of the company by the WSF organisers, who happily accepted 20% discount deals from the company for delegates'



Locals turn out in force to support the occupation of the Vortex Social Centre in Stoke Newington, London, which was threatened with eviction (see below for full report)

flights, the bulk of which came from Europe.

The food meanwhile was provided by a five-star hotel, charging \$7 a plate

until local children took the initiative and launched a raid.

The registration fee (which was also initially used to try and rent out phone

lines to participants in another corporate tie-in) was waived after a demonstration launched by locals who

▶▶ page 6, column 4

FREEDOM TO SPEAK?

Contempt proceedings against Robert Cogswell and Mel Broughton, the co-founders of the animal rights campaign SPEAK, started Monday 29th January at the Royal Courts of Justice. Solicitors from Oxford University, whose construction of a new primate research facility has made them the targets of SPEAK, attempted to force the defendants to provide details of the campaigns email list which contains the details of the company that is building the lab. Oxford University, and its un-named building contractor, have taken out a high court injunction under the Protection From Harassment Act 1997.

The injunction makes the naming of the company building the lab, or its suppliers a criminal offence.

SPEAK describes the purpose of the injunctions as a clear "attempt by Oxford University to silence SPEAK from telling the truth about what goes on at the university's vivisection departments and to curtail legitimate protest against them."

On 16th October 2006 an article naming the company believed to be the general contractor for the laboratory was posted on the SPEAK website. That same day solicitors representing Oxford University were granted a hearing with the high court behind closed doors and with out any representation from SPEAK present. At this hearing the university was granted an order to force SPEAK to remove the article, and to provide to Oxford University an electronic copy of SPEAK's email list. The article was removed but the email list was not provided. SPEAK claims that the order violates their rights to freedom of speech

under the European Convention on Human Rights.

The court proceedings are sat over by a judge who not only obtained his degree at Oxford, but has given lectures at the university. The SPEAK defendants request for legal aid have been denied, but the government has been picking up the tab for Oxford University.

Robert Cogswell, one of the defendants, speaking about the case said that: "The [court proceedings] will be a significant landmark for the future of protest in the UK. In a country once acclaimed for its democratic principles, individuals no longer have the right to protest against something with which they disagree. Those rights have been systematically eroded and replaced by an increasingly fundamentalist/conservative approach to problem-solving."

On the 1st of February Oxford University dropped the complaints against Mel Broughton, and Robert

▶▶ page 6, column 4

SOCIAL CENTRE

From 8.30am on Friday 26th January, around 70 to 80 people, the majority local residents, turned out to support the resistance to the threatened eviction of the Vortex Occupied Social Centre. The owner, Richard Midda, a well known thug and property developer, threatened to use force to evict the occupiers if they did not leave by 9am.

But like the saying goes "they make plans we make history". After seeing such a response, composed of all age ranges, and faced with no fewer than fifteen film and video cameras, the police intervened thereby starting a debate on the finer points of law. With the cops in the middle of this legal debate a decision was made to send one person from the social centre and the owner, Midda, to Stoke Newington Police station where independent legal advice is now being sort.

This occupation has its roots in both the trajectory of occupations from the Radical Dairy (Stoke Newington) in 2002 and the subsequent spaces

(Occupied Social Centre in Kentish Town, Ex-Grandbanks in Tufnell Park, Institute of Autonomy in Bloomsbury, The Square in Bloomsbury), and also in last years occupation of Francesca's Cafe on Broadway Market in Hackney and Dalston theatre in Dalston.

It shows that radical political interventions in the form of occupied social centres can resonate with pre-existing social tensions and antagonisms, especially around gentrification and 'community' issues and activate people to self-organise and take some control on how their environment (and quality of life) are shaped.



ISSN 0016-0504



9 770016 050009

Vol 68 No 03

Home and away

Welsh pipeline

The protest against the construction of a 150 mile long, high pressure gas pipeline is heating up in South Wales.

The proposed liquefied natural gas (LNG) pipeline is being constructed to run from Milford Haven in South Wales to Gloucestershire; if complete, this will become the UK's largest gas pipeline. Since construction began in March 2006 there has been constant resistance.

In November, activists squatted one of the main sites and have been broadly supported by locals who do not want a pipeline to destroy their community. There are worries about the potential devastating impact on the environment as the route of the pipeline goes through some of the most beautiful Welsh countryside and has already damaged part of the Brecon Beacons National Park fragile ecosystem. Another huge concern is that – despite running at an unprecedentedly high pressure – the pipeline goes over the only earthquake faultline in UK and through areas considered unsafe even for mains gas supply. Although campaigners from the Swansea valley won a minor victory in November 2006 to not permit the use of any explosives in pipeline construction, the struggle continues.

Currently, protestors have set up a treehouse squat and are fighting on to stop the pipeline.

EU rules on bust pension schemes

Thousands of people in the UK who lost their pensions when their employers went bust may have moved a step closer to securing compensation. The European Court of Justice said that under the European Union Insolvency directive, the UK government pension protection regime is "inadequate".

But the ruling fell well short of saying people should be compensated.

The case will now go back to the High Court, which may rule that people who have lost out should be compensated. Paying compensation could cost hundreds of millions of pounds.

"The Court appears to have given a steer that damages may not be payable, but this is now a matter for the High Court to decide" said a Department for Work and Pensions spokesman

Tough on crime...

Radical measures for tackling crime – ranging from monitoring the behaviour of the mentally ill with radio chips to hormone injections for sex offenders – are to be considered by the government in a wide-ranging policy review ordered by Tony Blair.

The Prime Minister said that Labour had to renew its sense of leadership and energy as voters were getting bored with the party after 10 years in power.

He disclosed that he intended to stay in power until at least June to oversee a policy review aimed at ensuring that a "new New Labour" agenda would take the Government into the next election after he had left No 10.

The controversial paper dealing with law and order acknowledges that there will have to be "trade-offs" between liberty and security as technology and profiling are used to reduce crime.

The policy paper confirmed the government's objective of creating a surveillance society despite Mr Blair's denials of a "Big Brother" state. It said new anti-crime measures include face and voice recognition, a DNA database, identity cards, microchip monitoring and satellite surveillance ... and confirmed that Britain has the most public CCTV systems in Europe.

Around the world

USA: Most people mourn death, but not in Florida when Castro dies... City officials in Miami are planning to hold a party at a sports stadium following that event. A city planning committee has been holding meetings to discuss its logistics. That's not all in that part of the country: earlier last month a female college student reported that she was raped; she was then arrested by Tampa police, denied contraceptive (a second dose of the morning-after medicine) and kept behind bars for two days.

If you don't like these events? You protest. But there's a good chance that your internet activity is being watched: CNET reported last month at *Freedom* deadline time that FBI surveillance is much more extensive than previously admitted and involves a massive database collecting huge quantities of names, e-mail addresses or keywords.

Or you get arrested. This happened last November when fifteen human rights activists mounted a peaceful protest against the School of the Americas (renamed 'the Western Hemisphere Institute for Security Cooperation') for its known training of terrorists, torturers and assassins. In the last week of January the resisters were sentenced to between two and six-months.

On the same day in Washington, nine peace activists were arrested when they gathered in a House of Representatives office building. Their crime? Reading the names of Americans and Iraqis killed in the war. Or take Diane Baker, one of 71 people arrested in September last year during a peace protest in Washington DC. She has myoclonic epilepsy, a degenerative muscle condition. Her 'punishment'? Sweeping the streets of that city for eight hours in temperatures below freezing. She's 60.

GUINEA: Guinean unions have called off a general strike that has crippled the nation and led to deadly clashes,

after a deal was reached with the government.

Nearly sixty people have died in protests since the strike was called on 10th January to demand government reforms. President Lansana Conté agreed on Friday to cede some powers to a prime minister who would head the government. On Saturday the unions said the president's concessions were sufficient for them to end the strike.

"The union association has decided to suspend the strike this Saturday, 27th January, and invites all Guineans to return to work," said Ibrahima Fofana, leader of the USTG union. The deal reached on Saturday also provided for a lowering of fuel and rice prices, Reuters reported.

ONLINE: Violent clashes have erupted in an online world over the arrival of Le Pen's national front.

The streets of Porcupine were tranquil yesterday; a handful of locals strolled through its shopping malls, the sun was shining, and a light breeze blew in from over the hills. There were few hints of the fact that, only days before, the neighbourhood had been the scene of violent clashes between rightwing extremists and anti-Nazi protesters – running battles involving gunfire and bombs that might easily have cost lives were it not for the fact that Porcupine does not, in most commonly accepted senses of the term, exist.

A lesson you quickly learn upon entering the online virtual world of Second Life, however, is that non-existence is less of an impediment than might be supposed.

It hasn't stopped the development of a fully-featured alternative universe in which Second Life's 2.4 million registered users build houses, set up businesses, form clubs and societies, hold parties and have sex. And it did not prevent protest from spilling over into aggression when the Front National,

the far-right French group led by Jean-Marie Le Pen, became the first European political party to open a headquarters within Second Life.

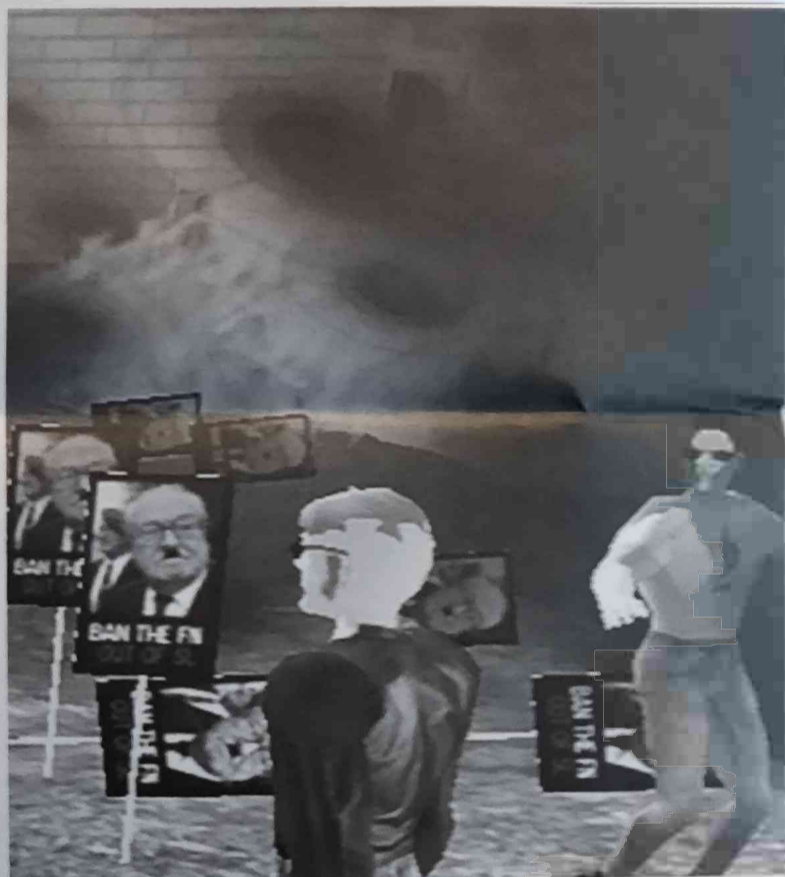
"The first night I arrived at the protest ... it was ringed on all sides by protesters with signs to wave and statements to distribute," wrote James Au, whose website, *New World Notes*, reports on events in Second Life. "By the second night I came ... the conflict had become more literal, for many residents had armed themselves. Multi-coloured explosions and constant gunfire shredded the air of Porcupine." Some activists threw exploding pigs.

"This nationalist idea that Front National is advocating is something that has spread all over Europe like a

virus," a protester, using the name Bob Jackson, told Mr Au. "It's just the history of the twentieth century has already been forgotten, it's time to say enough!"

A group calling itself Second Life Left Unity issued press releases explaining that it had purchased land near to the Front National office, and would be "manning a protest zone until FN go or are ejected. Whenever fascists are, we will ensure they get no peace or corrupt and be no decent people".

A few days later, the Front National building had vanished altogether, leaving only a few protest placards showing Mr Le Pen – who made it through to the final round of the last real-world French presidential election in 2002 – wearing a Hitler moustache.



Prison news

Scathing verdict on jails

In her fifth annual report, the Chief Inspector of Prisons, Anne Owers delivered a scathing verdict on the current state of British prisons. In the report she depicts jails as stretched to breaking-point by the number of people being locked-up. More than 80,000 people are now imprisoned in England and Wales, a higher proportion than in any west European country. Ms Owers warns that prison staff are finding it hard to cope with mentally ill and drug-addicted inmates and raises the alarm over the numbers of women locked up for minor offences such as shoplifting. The report also expresses concern over the number of people who are handed indeterminate prison sentences, which mean they can be held in custody indefinitely.

In anticipation of the publication of the report, the International Centre for Prison Studies at King's College London, disclosed that the

imprisonment rate in England and Wales was 148 per 100,000. It compares with 145 in Spain, 139 in Scotland, 128 in the Netherlands, 121 in Portugal, 105 in Austria, 104 in Italy, 95 in Germany, 91 in Belgium, 85 in France and 83 in Switzerland. The US has the world's highest prison population rate, 738 per 100,000, followed by Russia with 611.

Clandestine communique

In 2001, a number of prisoners at a high security prison in Arles, France managed to gain access to some video equipment. Having done so, they secretly recorded a film in which three of the prisoners read their collective statement. This video was then smuggled out of the jail, and released to coincide with the twentieth anniversary of the abolition of the French death penalty.

While the three prisoners are heavily disguised, and the filming techniques used are primitive, the film nonetheless

makes powerful and compelling viewing, and had a big impact when it was shown on French national television. Much of what the prisoners have to say has ramifications that go way beyond the borders of France, applying throughout the whole of the European penal gulag, and indeed throughout the world. The film is now being made available on DVD by Leeds ABC. It is in the original French, with English subtitles added by the French anti-prison group La Breche. Copies cost £4 including postage from Leeds ABC, PO Box 53, Leeds, LS7 3HB. Please send well-disguised cash or a blank postal order. As with all Leeds ABC projects any profits made from sales of the DVD will be used for the direct support of anarchist prisoners.

Campaign Against Prison Slavery After a prolonged absence from the net, the Campaign Against Prison Slavery website is now up and running

again, although parts of the site are still under construction. Check it out at www.againstprisonslavery.org

New prison pamphlets

The latest pamphlet published by Leeds ABC is an A6 pocket-book, *Wab A Smile And A Turnle In My Eye! An Interview With Anarchist Ex-Prisoner Mark Burnside*. The pamphlet can be ordered directly from Leeds ABC and costs £1 including postage. Leeds ABC, PO Box 53, Leeds, LS7 4WP. More information from LeedsABC@riseup.net

The Kate Sharpley Library also have a new prison-related pamphlet out in the form of *Alcatraz - Uncle Sam's Devil's Island: Experiences Of A Conscientious Objector In America During The First World War* by Philip Gossett. The pamphlet costs £3 including postage, and can be ordered directly from KSL, 80M Harrington, London, WC1N 3XX.

compiled by Mark Burnside

News

Feminist health or patriarchal disease?

A report from the recent Feminist Health Gathering and discussion of why it is necessary to engage in radical feminist politics today

This is both a report back from the Feminist Health Gathering, which was held in Leeds in January 2007, and a general discussion of why it is necessary to engage in radical feminist politics today.

Let's start with the local and concrete: women working as prostitutes are being murdered in Ipswich, the feminist library in London is being threatened with closure due to lack of support and pro-life rhetoric continues to dominate government discussions regarding the reform of abortion law. The UK government has recently been debating how to make abortion harder, which aligns it with many other states, to name but a few: in Poland the government are trying to integrate pro-life positions into the constitution, whereby the state would support 'life' after conception, which means fighting to make abortion legal again will be even more of an up hill struggle; in Ireland abortion is still illegal and in Uganda, as in other countries, women are unaware of their rights and access to abortion is related to how much money a woman has, meaning many women die from 'backstreet' abortions.

At the Feminist Health Gathering, there was no discussion about what 'feminism' is in the abstract and I'm not interested in that indulgence. It is clear that it is the fight against patriarchy, which oppresses women and men in different ways, there's no time for academic faffing with second-wave or third-wave feminist theories. The need for the gathering seemed clear to me: women's issues are mentioned here and there (in the new *Observer Woman* monthly supplement,

in *Woman's Hour* on Radio 4, etc.), but what about radical feminism in the form of practical solutions? It still feels like feminism is not as central to anarchist struggles as it should be. I don't want to unnecessarily repeat arguments that have been made time and time again about how women's struggles are marginalised, but I'd like to draw attention to the dire situation of women in the UK today. If radical feminism is more than simply aiming at 'equality' in an unequal society, it is about realising how such 'equalities', such as equal pay, can be used to further the struggles for women's and men's liberation. For example, fighting for access to sexual and reproductive health care in the UK may not seem radical or even relevant. Has this battle not been won, so that we can focus on struggling for other freedoms? No. Can we not simply find quick, DIY alternatives? No. (Would you be comfortable with using or suggesting a herbal abortion? Do you know anything about it?) If we ask the state to provide easily accessed NHS abortions and rely on it to not suddenly take that option away, we're falling into a trap of reliance. However, it is important to realise issues that all too often fall prey to reformist demands are often the crucial issues to focus on to enable a healthy struggle. For example, if struggles for abortion 'rights' are ignored we'll continue to regress to a pre-1967 situation of numerous fatal backstreet abortions. We could go to the demo on Saturday 3rd March in London about abortion rights, which scares me to even consider, because it seems disempowering, but what else can we do?



"The Crimes against Women are Ancient as the Hills" (quotation from Mary Quintana, in *The Raven* no. 21)

What direct action can be taken on sexual health? A start would be a more open dialogue about sexuality and creating something that can legitimately be called sex education. The Feminist Health Gathering was an opportunity for this. Women shared their experiences of: different methods of abortion, sexual experiments, DIY pornography, working in women-only

collectives, being mothers, working as health carers in the NHS, mainstream mental health 'care', amongst other things. Practical projects came out of these discussions, such as continuing radical mental health care projects, such as the Icarus project, and an abortion solidarity network to support, in many ways, women coming to the UK from Ireland to have abortions

and to generally support women suffering due to abortion law within arbitrary state borders. The Feminist Health Gathering was a start, but if it remains an isolated one-off, the situation whereby individuals have to deal with their health issues alone will continue. See www.feministhealth.org.uk for ways to get involved.

John Taylor Caldwell

With the death of John Taylor Caldwell aged 95, we have lost the last significant link with an anarchist anti-parliamentary form of socialism/communism which flourished in the first few decades of the last century, and was part of a tradition of libertarian socialism going back to the days of William Morris and the Socialist League – a socialism based on working-class self-activity manifest in workers' councils and direct action rather than in reliance on political parties, whether social democratic or revolutionary.

This kind of anarchism is assumed to have become extinct during the inter-war period, crushed between the pincers of the Parliamentary Labour Party and the Communist Party. But in a few places, notably Glasgow, it continued to flourish, thanks to individuals like John and his mentor, Guy Aldred. Aldred was the main organiser and theoretician of this movement. John's first encounter with him at the Glasgow May Day demonstration in 1934 left such a deep impression on him that later in the year he joined

Aldred's United Socialist Movement (USM).

In 1938, John left his seafaring employment to work, full time but unpaid, for Aldred's movement. For almost three decades he devoted himself to printing the movement's paper *The Word* (plus a veritable mountain of pamphlets) and turned his hand to whatever needed doing. The USM took an important part in all the political actions of its time, from support of the Spanish revolutionary cause in 1936-8, through the anti-war struggles of 1939-45 (in which John himself was a conscientious objector), and on to the anti-militarist and peace campaigns of the '50s and '60s.

All this was achieved against a background of ever-present poverty, with barely enough money to eat, never mind provide meeting rooms or publish its propaganda. The most intense period of activity was undoubtedly 1936-38 in support of the Spanish revolutionary cause. Meetings were held every night and funds had to be raised to send two comrades (Ethel MacDonald and Lenny

Patrick) to Spain. But the group was in desperate need of a printing press. Amazingly, Aldred persuaded a 'Roneo' salesman to let them have a duplicator on approval, which was immediately pressed into service to produce a broadsheet, *Regeneracion*, giving uncensored news from Spain.

In the post-war period Aldred was a candidate in a number of General Elections and by-elections – not in the hope or expectation of being elected, but purely as a propaganda exercise, a cost-effective way "to expose the farcical and false nature of parliamentarism," as John put it. In all of these, John acted as Aldred's election agent, handling key aspects of the campaigns from organising the nocturnal squads of bill-posters and street-chalkers to booking meeting-halls to printing and delivering 10,000 handbills and election addresses.

Despite this frenzy of activity, in Aldred's lifetime John took a background role. After Aldred's death in October 1963, however, he stepped

Factory stormed

Workers sacked by a Scottish electronics firm have stormed the factory in protest. Simclar has just announced that it will be closing two of its plants, in Irvine and Kilwinning in Ayrshire, causing 420 people to lose their jobs. This follows 200 job losses in November.

During a demonstration outside the Kilwinning site, the factory doors were opened and around thirty workers ran inside while another thirty continued to protest outside of the gates. The demonstrators, members of the trade union Community, said they were holding a peaceful protest over their "disgraceful" treatment by the company.

Willie Paterson, Scottish regional secretary of Community, said from inside the plant: "During the process of the Kilwinning protest, the factory gate was opened and the workforce took an instant decision to occupy the factory. Simclar appears to have no shame about how it is treating the loyal, highly-skilled workforce in Ayrshire, many of whom have up to 18 years'

Simclar has blamed the closures on pressure from low-cost economies, falling orders and increased uncertainty within the Scottish manufacturing sector.

On 29th January, workers arrived for their day shifts to find the gates padlocked. They were then told they were being made redundant and were escorted off the premises.

Two MSPs, Tommy Sheridan and Rosemary Byrne, both with the Solidarity Party, said they were taking part in the demonstration. Miss Byrne said: "In no other European country could a firm like Simclar get away with the callous treatment of the workforce. Since we have been in the factory, we have discovered that this company has plenty of work and is likely sacking the workforce prior to either transferring the work abroad or getting cheap labour in to complete it."

Parent company Simclar Group Ltd will continue to employ around 300 workers at its headquarters in Dunfermline. The firm also has manufacturing plants in China, Mexico and the US, with a global

Zalmay Khalilzad

Jason N. Parkinson takes a look at the career of the new US ambassador to the UN

The world breathed a sigh of relief in December 2006 when John Bolton, the notoriously hard-line United States ambassador to the United Nations, handed in his resignation.

But the calm was short-lived. The calm before the storm possibly. On 4th January, President George W. Bush nominated Zalmay Khalilzad, the US ambassador to Iraq, to replace Bolton. For most Khalilzad brings no recollection. You probably could not even put a face to the name, but his political history and meddling dates back to the Reagan era.

The 55-year-old Khalilzad is the highest-ranking native Afghan and Muslim in the Bush administration. His father was an aid to King Zahir Shah of Afghanistan.

Prior to his role in Iraq Khalilzad was special envoy to Afghanistan. His relationship was already set with president Hamid Karzai, as both worked for US oil company Unocal. Whilst at Unocal, Khalilzad drew up risk analysis proposals for the gas pipeline from Turkmenistan, across Afghanistan and Pakistan, to the Indian Ocean.

He also participated in talks between Unocal and Taliban officials in 1997 to implement the 1995 western Afghanistan pipeline agreement. Unocal was the lead company in the formation of the Centgas consortium, whose purpose was to market natural gas from the Daulatabad Field in south-eastern Turkmenistan, one of the world's largest natural gas fields.

This pipeline agreement was controversially signed within a week of Karzai being appointed interim Afghan president in 2002 by the US administration.

Khalilzad began his political career by joining the Council of Foreign Relations in 1984, serving under Paul Wolfowitz. In 1985 he became a special adviser to Ronald Reagan's State Department and was a key link between US military forces and the Mujaheddin during the Afghan-Soviet war. He lobbied successfully for accelerated US military aid to the Mujaheddin, including hand-held Stinger anti-aircraft missiles.

He served as Assistant Deputy Defence Under Secretary for Policy Planning in the Bush senior administration and was promoted to Under Secretary of Defence during the 1991 US war against Iraq.

From 1993 to 1999 Khalilzad became Director of the Strategy, Doctrine and Force Structure program for the US national security think-tank RAND Corporation. He also headed the Bush-Cheney transition team for the Defence Department and advised incoming Defence Secretary Donald Rumsfeld in 2000.

The final irony of Khalilzad's UN nomination is both he and his predecessor were members of the now defunct political think tank Project for the New American Century (PNAC). Bolton was one of four PNAC directors.

PNAC is history now, mainly because the largest players in that think tank

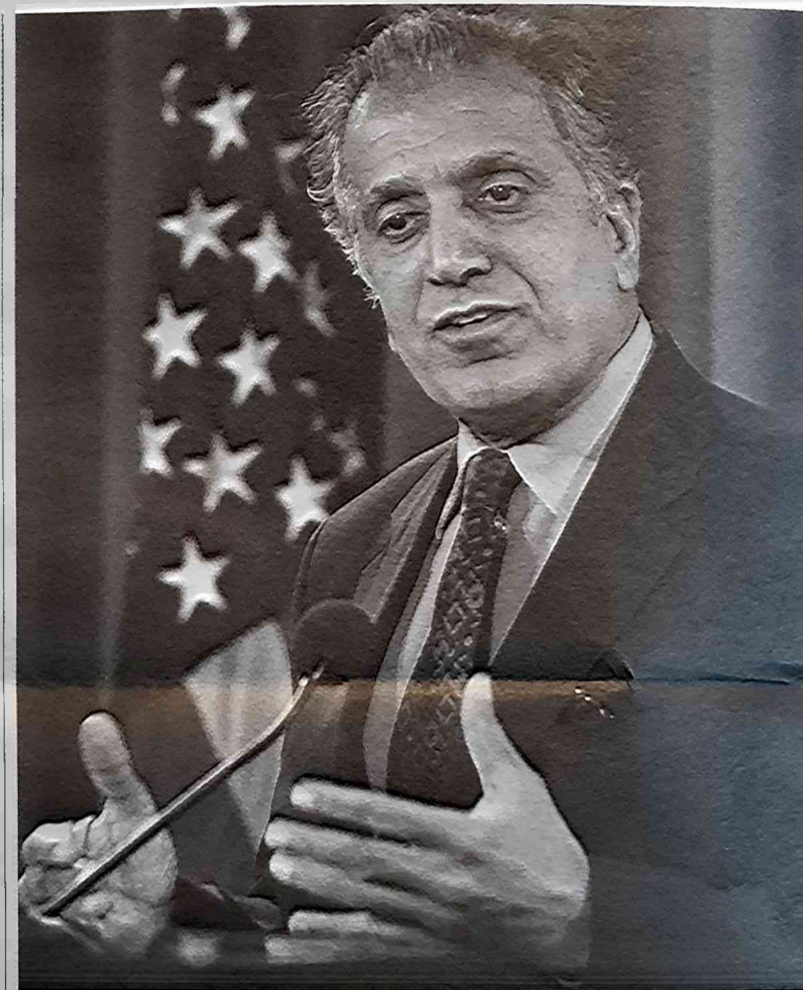
now hold some of the highest positions in the Bush administration. Those members included Dick Cheney (vice president), Donald Rumsfeld (ex-defence secretary), Paul Wolfowitz (Rumsfeld's deputy, now head of the World Bank), the president's brother Jeb Bush (Florida governor), Lewis Libby (Cheney's ex-chief of staff) and Elliot Abrams, an El Salvador death squad sympathiser and major player in Iran Contra (pardoned by Bush Senior), who now is Bush's Deputy National Security Adviser.

The PNAC goal was to implement the 1997 military doctrine, Rebuilding America's Defences (RAD), which was originally drafted as the 1992 Defence Policy Guidance by Bush senior's outgoing defence department, namely Cheney, Wolfowitz and Libby.

RAD named Iraq, Iran, Syria and North Korea as potential military targets four years before the 'axis of evil' list existed, and named its prime goal as the democratisation of China.

The doctrine also called for huge increases in military spending, the repositioning of US forces globally from 'old Europe' to 'new Europe' and total US dominance of space.

The post 9/11 conspiracy theorists loved PNAC because of one paragraph on page 51 of the 92-page document. It stated: "Further, the process of transformation, even if it brings revolutionary change, is likely to be a long one, absent some catastrophic and catalysing event - like a new Pearl Harbour."



Khalilzad's nomination to the UN could not come at a better time. All the PNAC policies are now in full swing, 9/11 is six years gone, 21,500 more US troops are destined for Iraq

and Iran is drawing closer to becoming the next US military target every day. Although, mainstream media coverage, or lack of it, would have us believe otherwise.

Exceptional

Even amongst some of the most sensitive and thoughtful Americans, there is an almost 'built-in' view that the country - geographically isolated, too large and disparate for comfort and apparently invincible - has special rights and privileges in the world. Push someone in government, 'law-enforcement' or merely in a commuter discussion and you'll often hear that the country differs qualitatively from other developed countries. This 'exceptionalism' is usually justified in their minds by The United States' historical roots and rich natural resources, its christianity and industrial and technological prowess.

Why? A book published in January by Chris Hedges actually called *American Fascists: The Christian Right and the War On America*, explores one prominent rationale for 'American Exceptionalism' - the belief that 'God' gave Americans a 'city on a hill' for other people to try and emulate. Hedges (who also participated incognito in the life and work of the aggressive and militant, sexist,

homophobic, nationalistic, exploitative and violent religious fanatic groups in North America) reveals more starkly than ever disturbing trends which suggest that - unless effectively resisted - the United States is likely to become a de jure apocalyptic theocracy in a few years, if it is not one already de facto.

For example, ten per cent of all US children are now home-schooled: the perception is that state schools cannot provide a sufficiently godly and 'conservative' set of values into which children need to be inducted. Certain currents of the apocalyptic elite, Hedges finds, are quite happy for American foreign policy to hasten the purging (that is, the destruction) of the (rest of the) world in order for the values of the religious right - the survival (or at least the beatification) of a self-selected chosen minority - to prevail.

What's also interesting about Hedges' analysis is the extent to which working class families in particular have turned to cultish religious and

analogous social bodies because of a (n all too understandable) despair at the political process and parties, governments and the capitalist infrastructure of which they can never be a part. A sure lesson for anarchists.

Decree

The US is certainly a country becoming more centralised: at the end of last month Bush moved further to consolidate White House and junta control over government agencies; he signed a directive to give him greater influence over the rules and policy statements that the government develops on health and safety, the environment, civil rights and privacy. From now on each agency will have to a regulatory policy office run by a political appointee. It will be their job it will be to oversee and direct the development of rules, and to make sure that the agencies carry out the president's priorities. That's already been happening, of course, in departments dealing with probably the most serious threat to life on earth,

climate change.

In the last week of January the House of Representatives Committee on House Oversight and Government Reform heard testimony from a number of scientists whose work to try and inform government policy on climate change has been either subverted and/or ignored and suppressed by the White House.

Around the country

A look around the country confirms other trends of greater intolerance, violence and ignorance: Dan Till, an 81 year-old man in Pennsylvania, for example, was questioned by Secret Service agents last month after writing a letter to the editor of a local paper to the effect that when Saddam Hussein was murdered 'they hanged the wrong man'.

In January the Pentagon released with pride details of a new heat-ray gun designed to make targets feel as if they are about to catch fire. Although this shock in itself is harmful and could induce death, the main purpose

of the weapon, called the Active Denial System (ADS), is apparently not death, but pain. The weapon works by firing an invisible high-energy beam from a dish mounted on an army vehicle. The beams penetrate clothing and travel less than half a millimetre into the skin, heating it to nearly 50 degrees Celsius.

And it seems increasingly likely that US aggression will spread to Iran: yet another source, the Sofia (Bulgaria) news agency Novinite, claims that Bush is readying an attack on Iranian nuclear plants by the end of April - new US Air Force bases in Bulgaria and Romania are to be used as backup. This ties in with the more widely publicised American build-up along the Black Sea and the positioning in January of two US aircraft carriers off the Straits of Hormuz. This as John Bolton, former US ambassador to the United Nations said in a recent interview with the French newspaper *Le Monde*: "The only real solution [in Iran] is regime

Feature

Masters of war

Robert Walsh looks into the world of arms dealing as pressure piles up on BAE systems

A second major investigation into arms sales from BAE looks likely to run aground as South African government authorities have blocked investigators looking into the sale of Hawk Jet trainers and Gripen fighters to the state.

These developments come shortly after an international scandal saw investigations into deals in Saudi Arabia were called off by the UK government to 'protect British jobs' – effectively placing BAE above the law if the deal is big enough.

The UK is one of the world's leading arms dealers and takes a central role in the global arms trade. When questioned about the need for such major involvement in the arms trade, we're usually told 'it protects British jobs' or 'it's an essential and major part of our economy and makes a lot of money for us'.

Only one of these reasons, that of jobs, bears any real scrutiny and neither explains or even mentions the real reasons for the UK being such a major player in the arms trade. One is that the pace of weapons development is such that if our arms trade were dismantled, or even severely disadvantaged, the arms companies of other nations would have a major advantage that our own arms companies wouldn't be able to recover from.

Another is that of global realpolitik. Arms as a commodity are worth far

more than money. Their supply to (or withholding from) weaker nations afford the government covert influence in dictating policy. In the event of the UK having an exclusive deal with a weaker country, either by negotiation or because no other nation will supply weapons, the government is able to force a certain degree of compliance with British interests by withholding supplies as suits their interest.

A prime example of such practice occurred during the Spanish Civil War. According to esteemed historian Antony Beevor, the Soviet Union demanded that the Republican government export its gold reserves to the USSR to guarantee payment for arms supplies desperately needed against General Franco. Not only did they succeed in gaining the gold reserves and agree arms shipments, they were in a position to dictate policy as no other nation, apart from Mexico, was prepared to supply the Republic with arms. The Republican government had no choice but to agree to the terms laid down by the USSR or the arms shipments would have ceased and the Civil War would have been lost. In the event it was lost anyway, and the USSR gained nearly \$800 million in bullion as Spain had the fourth largest gold reserves in the world at that time. Further evidence is supplied by George Orwell who wrote in *Homage To Catalonia* that the policy of the USSR towards the Republican government seemed to be



“Prevent revolution or you get no arms”.

Conversely, arms supplies can be used as a bribe for favours or a payment for services rendered. A prime example of this is the Iran-Contra scandal of the 1980s, in which the US government made secret arms deals with Iran, delivered via Israel, in return for the release of American hostages held there. The deals were not only illegal, but also showed that even the US government isn't immune to having its hand forced when an opponent has something it wants. The deal was funded with drug money from the Contra rebels of Nicaragua as well as being illegal under US law. President Reagan claimed no knowledge of any such deals and on Robert McNamara and Colonel Oliver North were heavily punished for their role in the scandal.

So, arms deals offer a means for powerful nations to bribe or bully others, depending on which is needed arms deals with taxpayer's money so that, if a deal fails or a debtor pays late or not at all, the banks and companies involved in the deal will have their losses covered by the taxpayer. But do British arms deals really guarantee British jobs and bring sizeable profits to the British economy? Answer: No, they

don't. It is at best speculative to say that arms workers could not be given work in other sectors, and the British arms industry is one of the most heavily subsidised industries in the country via the Export Credit Guarantee Department (ECGD). As far as profits go, the arms deals account for only 2% of visible UK exports, while arms subsidies account for around 30% of ALL ECGD support.

The ECGD acts as an underwriter for British arms deals, among various other industries, and it can be argued that many British arms deals would be too risky to go ahead without its assistance. The ECGD underwrites arms sales, among various other industries, in case the buyer either defaults or is late in making payments, so that the banks and companies involved have their losses covered. So, not only does the taxpayer have no choice in whether or not to pay their taxes towards illegal wars such as Iraq, we also have to subsidise the industry with our own money. A fine racket indeed, as if the arms trade generally wasn't bad enough already.

There is also the issue of national security to consider. Having our own indigenous arms industry means that we are not wholly dependent upon other countries for a supply of

weapons. That means that we can, insofar as the US allows us, pursue our own foreign and domestic policy without fear of suddenly being made defenceless by having weapons supplies cut off. We are spared the fear of having other countries dictate to us on grounds of security, but we still allow the US to effectively dictate foreign and domestic policy via the so-called 'special relationship' instead.

So, we've established that the customary defences for our having the arms trade are at best disingenuous and at worst a blatant fraud. The arms trade, like any other capitalist enterprise, is really about money and power and not about security for the British people. We are being lied to, and we are being forced to pay through the nose for the privilege.

We can do some small things to combat this trade. We can join or assist groups such as CND, CAAT, Trident Ploughshares and others to make life as hard as possible for those who profit from war and see nothing wrong in doing so. We can arrange protests outside arms fairs, arms factories and related businesses. Because not only are the profiteers profiteering, they are probably laughing at us as well.

And doing both using our money and our unwilling consent.

ALTERNATIVE EMPLOYMENT

Billions of pounds wasted on the development of a new set of nuclear submarines could be spent on much-needed other things. It doesn't need much imagination to think how such money could be spent. But imagination is needed to create alternative employment for the 3,000-plus workforce at the Barrow-in-Furness shipyard where these death machines are built.

Almost totally dependent on MoD (Ministry of War Preparations) contracts, the yard is rather like an obsolete nationalised industry, only owned by BAE Systems shareholders. Alternatives include work like the two fully equipped hospital ships 'Amazon Hope' and 'Amazon Hope 2' that were refitted in recent years at Barrow.

They help to make friends with people instead of frightening them with nuclear destruction – a problem that has contributed to some Muslims feeling so humiliated that they have turned to the authoritarianism of fundamentalism – and worse.

There are other kinds of submarines apart from nuclear: they can be used for filming, research, tourism, the leisure

industry, and to harvest manganese on the sea bed. Some of these are a niche market, but cars, telephones and computers were once novelties. Drilling platforms for oil and gas are other alternatives, as are off-shore technologies to make power from wind, waves and tidal energy. Ironically, the wind turbines near Barrow, in Morecambe Bay were made at the Belfast shipyard (talk about wasted miles!).

All these products could be sold internationally. Barrow has time to recruit and train a research, development and sales team. Even BAE Systems cannot go around trying to sell nuke subs!

All this only offers a reformist remedy. But according to Barrow borough councillor and chair of the pro-nuke 'Keep Our Future Afloat' campaign, Terry Waiting the only worry is about jobs; not economic or moral concerns. But this stance forgets what happened in the mid-80s at the planning of the first set of Tridents. Instead of the secure job which had been promised, after a few years the work force was cut from 17,000 to 3,500.

Martin Gilbert

Commentary

FREEDOM

Volume 68 Number 03

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

Apologies for the late arrival of this issue. This is mainly down to the mailout and the desperate need for volunteers to help, so please get in touch either at the shop or by email to subs@freedompress.org.uk and let's make the mailout a social event – your paper needs really needs you.

Many thanks to those of you who have renewed your subscriptions for 2007, many of whom have included generous donations. If you're not sure if your subscription to Freedom is up for renewal or not, here's how it works. Above your name on the address label is the issue that your sub runs out at (for example, this issue is vol. 68 no. 3, which would appear as 6803 above your name). If the number above your name on the address label says 6724, then this will be the last issue you will receive unless you renew now.

And yet another appeal for help: anyone who's interested in helping out the editorial team would be welcomed with open arms before our very overstressed editors burn out. Get in touch at copy@freedompress.org.uk if you can assist.

Contact details

Freedom Press, 84b Whitechapel High Street, London E1 7QX
Tel/fax: 020 7247 9249
www.freedompress.org.uk
Enquiries: info@freedompress.org.uk
Copy/Letters: copy@freedompress.org.uk
Subscriptions: subs@freedompress.org.uk
Bookshop: shop@freedompress.org.uk
Freedom Press Distribution:
distro@freedompress.org.uk

Next issue

The next issue will be dated 24th February 2007 and the last day to get copy to us for that issue will be Thursday 15th February. Send articles to us by email to copy@freedompress.org.uk or by post addressed to The Editors, Freedom, 84b Whitechapel High Street, London E1 7QX.

ASBO reply

Ta for carrying the article about the government aiming to give Tenant Management Organisations the power to apply for anti-social behaviour orders (in 27th January 2007 issue).

The interview with myself was as a member, not a 'prominent' member as printed, of Haringey Solidarity Group, speaking for myself rather than for the whole group. The aim was to convey a complex picture of government plans:

- To use an important and 'populist' issue to try to ingratiate itself with communities angry about cuts in services, and also to increase state intervention within working class communities;
- To encourage increasingly assertive grass-roots residents groups to adopt a government-led rather than a radical agenda – to use tenants' desire for more control over their housing to encourage TMOs in order to try to fragment and undermine Council Housing.

So while communities are seeking ways of empowering themselves and dealing with real problems, the government is trying to manipulate the situation to its own advantage. This is particularly so with Council Housing where there are strong local campaigns throughout the country to defend public housing from the government's ideological and financial assault on it as part of their obsession with privatisation.

A further important point, unfortunately not included in the final edit, is that the government and media focus on small scale anti-social behaviour in order to deflect anger over the much more serious, widespread, and systematic anti-social behaviour of landlords, debt bailiffs, private developers, billboard erectors, the traffic system, repressive policing, workplace bullying by bosses, cuts in local facilities and services and other institutional crimes against society ... not to mention wars and industrial pollution.

In Haringey there is a growing residents' movement involving around 150 local residents associations which communicate and co-ordinate through a Federation, and 30 'Friends of Parks' groups which network through their own 'Friends Forum'.

Despite a widespread acceptance of the status quo in many ways, they are in fact making a real difference here insofar as they are spreading the principles of self-organisation, co-operation and mutual aid, speaking for themselves, raising a range of key community issues, and defending and demanding the resources and facilities their communities need.

In fact the only Haringey TMO so far is one being set up by the Residents Association on Broadwater Farm, one of the strongest residents' groups in Haringey and one who have succeeded in improving the environment, facilities and management of the famous estate over the last twenty years.

Questions that anarchists should be asking are: how can we help develop a movement of strong, independent, grass roots residents' groups in every street, block of flats and neighbourhood in the country? How can we contribute effectively to try to ensure that such groups avoid being co-opted into state structures, but instead increasingly choose radical and libertarian ways of working, ideas and agendas? How can such a movement stimulate a wide-spread culture of empowerment and

resistance, and a popular counter-power to the institutions of the State and big business?

It would be great if there were more in-depth articles in the anarchist press about these kind of issues from around the country. Many local anarchist groups, the backbone of our movement, between them produce and distribute tens of thousands of their own newsletters regularly covering such matters. It is the relationship between local anarchist groups and local communities, community groups and issues, which is the key to creating the successful pre-conditions for the successful libertarian transformation of our society.

Dave

Haringey, North London

Feedback

In response to your request for feedback, firstly, thank you for your continued efforts in producing Freedom. I perish the thought if Freedom stopped publication!

Secondly, some thoughts. The quality of Freedom has improved immeasurably since the change. It has been brought out of a time warp.

Encompassing as much as possible in what is going on in the anarchist sense is the best way forward. A balance of theory and practice and current trends.

Some theoretical articles can be too long for the average reader and they don't bother reading any of it. Consequently, the amount they read in Freedom is reduced. The recent interview style about the IWW was excellent – it maintained your interest throughout and was full of vitality even though it was quite lengthy!

Do advertise your publications/books more in Freedom. It generates interest and hopefully sales.

And do keep up the excellent work. GH

With regards to Freedom reporting on events, I would like to make suggestion. My suggestion is that with each report, as far as possible, there should be a comment by a local anarchist about how they see the way forward in each situation.

If this was done I think it would help develop constructive ideas rather than just moans about capitalism or 'come the revolution' talk.

This leads me into another area, the dilemma of the anarchist in a pluralistic society. If one considers a person as being in a network of relationships in modern society, it is obvious that there are large areas of coercion in some of these relationships.

For example accommodation is attained by entering into a landlord/servant relationship. The alternative could well be sleeping in the streets. In the workplace, livelihood is attained by accepting the various rules of the workplace.

There is a plurality in modern society with immense numbers of social groups with great diversity among them. All this defies reducing things to monolithic principles. This makes me think that anarchism is probably a permanent transitional process with many different economic/social forms.

Even if the state and capital were abolished there probably would still be forms of coercion in a society. In a society there have to be ways of dealing with certain forms of deviant behaviour. Justice itself involves some form of

coercion if the offender is unwilling to cooperate with the rest of society.

Violent revolutions tend to leave a power vacuum which is filled up by another group, which becomes the new ruling elite. In societies such as Britain and Western Europe, I feel change, to be effective, will have to be non-violent. This would be an encroaching non-violent libertarian process.

D. Dane

WSF and poor

page 1

felt they were being priced out of the process, and cheaper food vendors were also subsequently allowed in.

But the process overall has been heavily ridiculed, with one Kenyan paper remarking on the "tremendous business opportunities".

"Hotels in the city, for example, were fully booked, some for the first time in a long time. Restaurants and other food vendors did roaring business. When the curtain fell on the conference, there were many business people, small and big, who were laughing all the way to the bank."

Around 1,500 workshops were held at the five day event on a huge variety of topics, and youth participation was higher than at previous events thanks to a specific youth gathering which ran alongside the main event.

SPEAK freedom

page 1

Cogswell was found not guilty. The Judge ruled that because the email list was hosted in the United States, and the webmaster resided there, that Cogswell could not have provided the email list if he had wanted to.

The public gallery of the courtroom was filled with supporters of the SPEAK Two, and support demonstrations took place out front. Despite the far-reaching impact of these trials, and the amount of interest in them the mainstream press has been mostly silent on issues surrounding animal liberation, and the erosion of freedom to express dissent in the UK.

Faithless

Caldwell

page 3

forced to keep the movement going. Virtually single-handedly he continued to publish *The Word* (later transmuted to *The Word Quarterly*). But the USM fell into decline, and by 1968 John was forced to close its printing press and bookshop.

Stirl refused to be silenced. He devoted the rest of his long life to "guarding the movement against oblivion", depositing archival material in libraries such as the Mitchell Library and the libraries of Strathclyde and Glasgow Caledonian Universities, and editing a collection of Aldred's works for World Microfilms. In addition, Luath Press published his biography of Guy Aldred, *Come Dungeons Dark* (1988) albeit in abbreviated form, and subsequently Northern Herald Books published his two important volumes of autobiography, *Severely Dealt With* (1993) and *With Fate Conspire* (1999). The former, a vivid depiction of his harsh upbringing in Belfast and Glasgow, was well received and was a

bestseller for three consecutive months at John Smith's historic bookshop in central Glasgow (now also, alas, defunct). Most recently, about eighteen months before his death, John had made an important contribution to a forthcoming film about 'The Spanish Pimpernel', Ethel MacDonald.

In addition, John was always willing to speak at events in Glasgow, trying to bring alive the history of the movement for a new generation of anarchists and direct actionists. This he did well into his nineties, for example speaking at Glasgow's John Maclean Centre three or four years ago.

Bob Jones and Gina Bridgeland

John Taylor Caldwell, seaman and anarchist, born 14th July 1911; died 12th January 2007.

The Land

page 7

topic. There is also a small piece on how BMXers have built their own tracks. I could go on listing all the interesting items I found in *The Land*, but judge for yourselves.

For me the strength of *The Land* is that it emphasises that the struggle for land is democratic, anti-imperialistic and anti-globalisation. It is for the peaceful transformation, but reports widely on direct-action that campaigners across the world are using in their struggles to take back our rights to land. It also stresses the principle of using land self-sustainable way. From journal's manifesto is the following statement: "Rome fell; the Soviet Empire collapsed, the stars and stripes are fading in the west. Nothing is forever in history, except geography. Capitalism is a confidence trick, a dazzling edifice built on paper promises. It may stand longer than some of us anticipate, but when it crumbles, the land will remain".

Ellen Kemp

FREEDOM
ANARCHIST BOOKSHOP
84b Whitechapel High Street
London E1 7QX
tel/fax 020 7247 9249
OPENING HOURS
Monday to Saturday
from 12 noon to 6pm
The shop is staffed by volunteers and the opening hours are subject to change so it's a good idea to call first to check we're open.
You can also use our mail order service or order books online via our website
www.freedompress.org.uk

Quiz answers

1. Joseph Lane.
2. While addressing an open-air meeting on Parliament Hill Fields, London.
3. A very small group called ANORG in Norway made a resolution in 1983 which said they had to choose between NATO and the Warsaw Pact, and had chosen NATO. They were denounced for this by almost every anarchist who heard of it.
4. 2006! Which bodes well for London.

REVIEW

Tom Jennings is disappointed at *Favela Rising's* focus on its founder's personality rather than Brazilian Afro-Reggae's grass-roots potential

Screened on cable/digital channel More4 on 24th January, the Oscar-nominated *Favela Rising* documents the development of the Afro-Reggae cultural movement in Vigário Geral, one of 600-odd illegal shanty settlements (favelas) perched precariously among the hills behind Rio de Janeiro's Copacabana beach which together house over 20 million inhabitants in desperate poverty. They have experienced forty years of barbaric repression, with massacres repeatedly perpetrated by a brutally corrupt military police controlling and profiting from the drugs trade while battling the shadow criminal dictatorships within. The 1993 Afro-Reggae newspaper and videos chronicling police violence were followed by music workshops, weaving a powerful syncretism of African drumming, hip-hop, dance, martial arts, politics and spiritualism. Original member José Junior (JJ) explains: "Nothing could be left up to outside authorities ... It was the beginning of a new consciousness ... We are destroyed people infected by idealism. Shiva is the Goddess of destruction and transformation. We are a Shiva effect".

Initially resourced by begging, borrowing and stealing, long-term funding from a US charitable foundation (1997) and an international record deal with Universal (2001) helped the group expand – all income being ploughed back (likewise any profits from *Favela Rising* itself). With thirteen programmes now in Vigário, the support of Rio city council is facilitating the spread into neighbouring favelas. However, "movement has to come from the community itself ... we'd be applying our solution to their problems. If we become McDonalds, putting one everywhere, we've lost the essence" (founder Anderson Sá). Afro-Reggae's integrity and inspiration in preaching unity among the favelas quickly led to immense local enthusiasm, with drug soldiers crossing over and their leaders showing respect and even tacit, if fitful, protection in the war zone: "Why [do we] take these risks? Because ... our ideology won't allow us to live passively, in comfort" (AS).

This fascinating film expertly blends edgy digital video techniques, sharp editing and pacing, and the saturated colour and energy of the Latin

American new-wave – a winning formula for independent festival hype and MTV-friendly urban-style commodification, and a labour of love for US co-directors Jeff Zimbalist and Matt Mochary. Yet, despite their reservations, the narrative neglects wider grass-roots perspectives, centering on the messianic figure of Sá and his rhetoric of "respectable, hard-working" favelistas: "Now all the favelas must start to move for the first time. We must all begin to show that we are able. That we can lift our own arms. That we can raise our heads" (disclaimers notwithstanding; e.g. "What we create and destroy doesn't end with me [JJ] or Anderson. It is passed through the generations. All life is a karmic process. Our actions will be infinite"). Sure, the film-makers couldn't sidestep their hosts' agendas, being completely dependent for safe passage – but the resulting deficiencies highlight the limitations of documentary activism, and positively invite recuperation by capitalism and its neoliberal state handmaidens.

Rioredemption songs

In 'Slumpsloitation' (*Mute* magazine, Vol. 2, No. 3, 2006 – also at www.metamute.com), Melanie Gilligan persuasively details the promotion of 'favela chic' in Brazil's booming media – with populist President Lula's culture minister Gilberto Gil (himself an internationally-renowned musician) courting foreign investment for electoral legitimacy and to short-circuit resistance. While colonising the boot-strap entrepreneurialism of the ghettos, the governing Workers' Party policies also continue to starve them of infrastructure and plan intensified assaults on their security and autonomy in line with IMF/World Bank 'structural adjustment'. Translated onscreen, the hackneyed Hollywood Manicheanism of evil drugs gangbangers versus heroic charisma celebrates talent transcending humble roots – erasing history, class, economics, oppression and collectivity. True, this may satisfy fashion-conscious better-off youth, reinforcing the desirous exoticisation which betrays their distanced complicity with the status quo. But whether assimilating or critiquing its mediated representation, *Favela Rising* and Gilligan both inadvertently downplay the lived significance of the street-level



phenomenon to its immediate audience.

After all, Brazil's 1960s/70s military dictatorships incarcerated thousands of leftists, whose militancy heavily inflected the rise of prison networks and drugs cartels originally as self-organised welfare and defence institutions. Similarly, even if Afro-Reggae proclaims itself "directly against the drug armies" (SA), the proliferation of gang member sympathisers suggests far more complex intercourse. The longer-run resonance of its bottom-up, practical, expressive formations simply can't be judged from above and outside – which should already be crystal-clear from the contradictory persistence of US hip-hop despite its magpie aesthetics, get-rich-quick artists, corporate debasement, choruses of detractors, and generally dishonest co-

optation into sundry elite discourses. Further, as the performances in the film demonstrate, this new genre itself draws strongly on other popular Brazilian musics (samba, capoeira, baile funk, etc.) which themselves have little explicit political potential – the production of superstar egos being incidental.

As in other times and places, the shifting tectonics of culture provide incomparable food for thought and action, knitting together and/or dividing suffering populations according to specific circumstances, and circumscribing what can be achieved. Salutary examples of radical struggle often turn out to hinge on the room to manoeuvre furnished by the imaginative renewal and creative singularity of cultural patterns which are constitutionally opaque to conventional political analysis.

In the present context this doubtless includes the magnificent Abahlali baseMjondolo shack dwellers' movement in Durban, South Africa (see Richard Pithouse's crucial 'Thinking Resistance in the Shanty Towns', also in *Mute* 2:3), or the recent insurrections in Oaxaca, Mexico, reported in *Freedom*. So, what will transpire in the favelas is (to understate) uncertain. But not for nothing did philosopher Slavoj Žižek suggest, in characteristically global terms ('Knee-Deep', *London Review of Books*, 26:17, 2004), that "The new forms of social awareness that emerge from slum collectives will be the germ of the future".

www.tomjennings.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk

Favela Rising (in Portuguese with subtitles) is also available on DVD, priced £19.99.

PUBLICATIONS

The Land

Subscriptions £10 per annum, (£7 unwaged) from The Potato Store, Flaxdrayton Farm, South Petherton, Somerset, TA 13 5LR, Tel 01460249204

While researching for a piece that I wrote on the land issues in the UK for *Freedom* back in February I obtained much information from the campaigning group The Land is Ours. Now this campaigning group has launched a

new magazine *The Land*, which they hope to publish three times a year. Each issue is 56 pages and is packed full of interesting material. The first issue used some drawings by Woody Guthrie to illustrate the front cover.

Land is an anarchist issue and is of course part of the English anarchist tradition dating back to the middle ages; and more recently with Colin Ward's books and essays on housing, planning, squatters and allotments

have kept this tradition intact. *The Land* is not an anarchist publication, but is a campaigning and political journal calling fundamental changes in land ownership and usage. It shows how the state and the landowning class act in concert on land issues. And perhaps more importantly it highlights the fight for the control of land by ordinary people across the world. It is also a great read and I would recommend to everyone.

The first two issues contain a wealth of articles covering a range of issues, campaigns and history. To list some of the coverage. The Land is Ours squatted a farm in an attempt to try and stop the Liberal Democrats of Somerset County Council selling off publicly owned farmers, the campaigns by canal boat owners in Oxford to stop the closure of the local boyardard by British Waterways.

There is an analytical piece on the

economics of bio-fuels – that is they take up more energy to manufacture than you get back – and how big agriculture firms are getting in on the act for tax breaks. The international coverage is also excellent with pieces on Nigeria, Venezuela, China, Mexico and Brazil. The piece on China highlights the cost to peasants of China's economic boom. And of course with Brazil the landless movement is the

page 6, column 5

A Sideways Look

I've recently spent a few days staying with a friend. We played some music together, much like we use to twenty years ago when we shared a flat and were in a band together.

While it was a good experience for me, it could have been better - if I'd had the time to prepare what I was doing; if I'd practiced more; if I wasn't always so tired. The truth is that most of us have a spurt of creativity and energy in our teenage years, extending into our twenties. The pressures of work and the daily grind then slowly squeeze that creativity out of us.

I think perhaps I was luckier than most - when I was 18 there were student grants and even mass unemployment had its upside. When almost everyone your age was unemployed, a student or on some fake training scheme, the ridiculous prices charged today for gigs and other entertainment couldn't happen. And, of course, people had the time to create their own entertainment. There were several musicians and performance collectives in London alone with their mainstays all on the dole or some community programme. And when you had to sign on once a month (which was the case in some South London dole offices during the '80s) you had time to do that mini tour or hitch to the other end of the country to see bands play.

Once unemployment started falling and the Job Seekers Allowance came in, designed to force people into low paid jobs regardless of whether they wanted them, one big pillar of this lifestyle was under threat. That meant the only way to have the time to develop your creative ideas was to become a student. This avenue, too, came under attack from the abolition of grants, and then the introduction of first loans and then fees. In addition, courses changed so that they were much more oriented towards employers, rather than anything that might be of value to the individual.

School leaving age is to be raised to eighteen, in one of Gordon Brown's initiatives. No young person will be allowed to be anywhere except work or training - unless they're rich or an asylum seeker I suppose. Can it be any coincidence that the regimentation of the lives of students and young workers comes with a sharp rise in depression affecting the same age group?

I'm not going to say that these changes have stopped anyone from a working class background from having the space to follow and develop their creative ideas. I am sure there are still people out there dedicated enough to endure the hardships that come with it. But I am equally sure that it has limited the people who can do so. To follow such a creative agenda now is much more likely to be the preserve of the already well off. I can't help think

that we will all suffer for this in the long run.

Svrtfrosk

Bookworm notes

I usually have a few pamphlets in the bag I take to work. I could lie to you, and tell you that it's because - as a tireless propagandist for anarchism - I whip them out at opportune moments in order to win new converts to the cause. More truthfully, it's because I find pamphlets are a useful way to restore my flagging will-to-live on the way to work in the morning.

The Kate Sharpley Library's *The Couriers are Revolting* by Des Patchrider deserves a mention - and a plug - as my most-read pamphlet, and will-to-live restorative. It's an honest, funny and inspiring account of an attempt to set up a union run along anarcho-syndicalist lines in the despatch industry in the late 1980s, the victories (and defeats) the workers had, and the painful decision to wind up the union in 1992.

I can think of no better recommendation for this pamphlet than the words of the authors themselves. As they say, "starting a union can be exciting, risky, hard work and a right good laugh. The financial rewards might be little or none, but the satisfaction of getting some justice can be enormous ... Of course our unionisation efforts were small potatoes compared to epic social events such as the Miners Strike, the Poll Tax rebellion, etc. But we hoped that we could provide an example or inspiration for workers to organise similarly in other industries. Workers like you! Read on..."

As well as being available from Freedom and direct from the KSL, this pamphlet is also available online, as part of a recent deal between KSL and libcom.org. You can find it at <http://libcom.org/library/the-couriers-are-revolting-the-despatch-industry-workers-union-1989-1992>.



The quiz

1. Who wrote *An Anti-Statist Communist Manifesto*?
2. Where did Welsh anarchist Sam Mainwaring die in 1907?
3. Which 'anarchists' supported NATO?
4. When did Montreal finish paying for the 1976 Olympic games hosted by the city?

Answers on page 6



Imagine if...

Tony loped into his office to find Gordon sitting in the Big chair, feet on the table.

"Gordon, Gordon, something wonderful has happened!"

Gordon looked up at him. "You found your ball?"

Tony paused for a moment - was that sarcasm? Of course not, this was faithful old Gordon.

"No even better than that. George has mentioned climate change in his State of the Union speech!"

Gordon looked unimpressed. "Yes?"

"We could be set for a new Kyoto protocol, he's going to cut emissions so he's clearly ready for change!"

Gordon sighed. "Tony, he actually said nothing. Like your speechwriters actually say nothing. He promised no more than a switch from one polluting fuel to another to cut down on oil dependency. He wants to threaten that anyway now he's been fighting with some of the big oil concerns over Iraq. In terms of admitting or acting on climate change it's about as useful as a chocolate teapot."

Tony stopped bouncing and sat down thoughtfully. "I see."

"But we can still make the same political capital out of it."

Tony looked up expectantly.

"If we say what you just said, and pretend we think his administration is about to do something, it will make us look greener. The best thing about it is we come out as green warriors when we know nothing's going to happen, and we don't worry big business."

Tony bounced up delightedly "Gordon that's even better! I'm going to go tell everyone!"

As Tony bounced out, Gordon looked back down at his notes. Where was he, ah yes, chapter 4 of *How to Avoid Confrontation*.

Listings

Until 4th March Art Not Oil exhibition at the Pogo Cafe, 76 Clarence Road, Hackney, London E5, phone 0208 533 1214, open Wednesday to Sunday, 12.30 to 9pm, see pogocafe.co.uk

17th February London Anarchist Forum presents 'Political Linguistics: Take Back the Language', a free talk and discussion from 3pm at the Autonomy Club, Freedom Press, 84b Whitechapel High Street, London E1, for info email antines@yahoo.co.uk, see eventsandissues.bravener.com

24th February No Trident/Troops Out of Iraq, a national demonstration, assemble at 12 noon in central London (exact location to be announced later) for rally in Trafalgar Square, for more info see cnduk.org

25th February The South London Radical History Group will be setting sail up the river Fleet, meet 12 noon at Blackfriars Bridge, north bank, east side, right above the river...

10th March The Sixth International @lternative Bookfair in Gent at De

Centrale, Kraankindersstraat 2, Gent, Belgium, from 10am-8pm - as well as books, etc., there will be a programme of conferences, workshops, video showings and performances, for info see www.aboekenbeurs.be or contact aboekenbeurs@yahoo.com

17th and 18th March The Twelfth Bay Area Anarchist Bookfair at SF County Fair Building, Golden Gate Park, 9th Avenue & Lincoln Boulevard, San Francisco, USA, from 10am until 6pm (on 17th) and 11am to 5pm (on 18th) - this year back at the old location with all the space needed to walk around, to talk with other visitors, to look, to enjoy the programmes and the cafe, and over two days. Contact The Bookfair Committee, c/o Bound Together Books, 1369 Haight Street, San Francisco, CA 94117

19th March Global Day of Action against the 'War On Terror', on the fourth anniversary of the invasion of Iraq, to find out what's happening see <http://m19.wiki.pbwiki.com>

The Anarchist Quiz Book

Who said "I shit on all the revolutionary vanguards of this planet"? Find out in the new *Anarchist Quiz Book* from Freedom Press, compiled by Martin Howard and illustrated by Paul Petard.

Some say that it should not be the highest priority of a revolutionary movement to ask itself obscure questions, but it's good fun and if it encourages an enquiring mind to find out more, than all the better. So agitate, educate and organise, all in this very handy question and answer format!

Get your copy now for £5 (post free) by mail order from Freedom Press, 84b Whitechapel High Street, London E1 7QX (cheque/PO made out to Freedom Press) or from www.freedompress.org.uk



SUBSCRIPTION FORM

Send to Freedom Press, 84b Whitechapel High Street, London E1 7QX

- Please start a NEW subscription to Freedom for _____ issues
- Please RENEW my subscription to Freedom for _____ issues
- I enclose a donation
- I'd like to pay by Standing Order and have completed the form (see right)

I enclose £ _____ payment (cheques payable to Freedom Press please)

Name _____

Address _____

Postcode _____

STANDING ORDER FORM

Please return to Freedom, 84b Whitechapel High Street, London E1 7QX

To the manager (your bank)

Bank name _____

Bank address _____

Postcode _____

£ _____ each month/quarter/year (delete as appropriate) starting on (date) _____

Name(s) of account holder(s) _____

Account number _____ Sort code _____

Signature _____

For bank use only

Please pay this sum to Freedom Press, account number 82946905, sort code 72-00-05, Alliance & Leicester Commercial Bank plc, Bridle Road, Bootle, Merseyside GIR 0AA

SUBSCRIPTION RATES

	Irland	Europe	outside Europe (surface)	outside Europe (airmail)
--	--------	--------	--------------------------	--------------------------

Freedom (24 issues) half price for 12 issues

Claimants	16.00	-	-	-
Regular	20.00	29.00	29.00	41.00
Institutions	28.00	36.00	36.00	46.00
Supporter	48.00	60.00	60.00	72.00

Get in touch with us for details of bundle rates.

Note that we have a new 'supporter' sub rate.

You can also use the Standing Order form to ensure that your subscription always gets paid on time, or if you want to make a regular donation to Freedom.

All prices are in £ sterling.

You can now subscribe online at www.freedompress.org.uk

FREEDOM fortnightly ISSN 0016