

FREEDOM

80P ANARCHIST NEWS AND VIEWS

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ZIMBABWE: ONGOING CRISIS

Zimbabwe gets a disproportionate amount of media coverage in the UK. State repression is equally brutal across Africa; for example Nigeria, Ethiopia, Angola have seen similar violence against activists and forced evictions but have received considerably less media coverage. Mugabe massacred tens of thousands in Matabeleland in the mid-1980s to little response from Western leaders or media. It is only since his policies have impacted on the white ruling elite that he has begun to face criticism.

To distract attention from the harsh effects of structural adjustment in the early 1990s, Mugabe began a long overdue land reform process. At this time white farmers made up just 1% of the population but controlled over 70% of the agricultural land.

Thirty years ago, Britain (the ex-colonial power) used promises of hundreds of millions of pounds for the country to negotiate an 'orderly' transition to black majority rule with the armed wings of the social movements. These financial pledges also aimed to provide a resolution to the land distribution problem by allowing the Zimbabwe government to purchase land from farmers willing to sell. However as the money never materialized the ZANU government's land reform efforts were substantially limited. When New Labour took office in 1997, they reneged on previous agreements and refused to provide any funding for the process. This has led

to unsuccessful Zimbabwean policy which has become increasingly erratic and violent as the economic situation worsens.

There were demonstrations this week in Harare and Mutare, against the murder and brutal beatings of pro-democracy activists. Grace Kwinjeh, a single mother active on women's rights was beaten around the head with an iron bar while in police custody and lost part of her ear. Police opened fire with live ammunition on a crowd of mourners after the funeral of Gift Tandare, who was shot by police in riots in a Harare township. Morgan Tsvangirai, a veteran MDC pro-democracy activist, was beaten unconscious three times while in police custody, fracturing his skull. When asked about Tsvangirai, Mugabe responded "Of course he was bashed".

The summit of southern African leaders in Tanzania on the 29th March publicly backed Zimbabwe against international pressure. The South African Development Community (SADC) failed to criticise the Zimbabwean president's actions and called for an end to international sanctions against the country. President Mbeki of South Africa is said to be engaging Mugabe in "quiet diplomacy". However, regional leaders, especially Mbeki are responsible for the situation. South Africa is Zimbabwe's largest trading

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The Fourth Reclaim the Future (inset, before the party) was a well organised, well attended and very successful event until, as night fell and April Fool's Day approached, a few cops decided to stop anyone else joining those inside. Despite this provocation, the people outside remained calm, while those inside were allowed to leave at a very slow trickle. Meanwhile the police set up road blocks along Holloway Road – in a repeat of the ridiculous over-reaction of Anarchist Bookfair 2005 – the riot squad turned up and, without warning, piled into the people outside the gates as they violently cleared the area with batons raised, pushing the small crowd up the road away from the gates.

UNITED IN CONDEMNATION

A police and local press 'crackdown' has begun on prostitutes in the Ipswich area just months after a series of murders prompted promises of progressive solutions.

Ipswich police, the local council and regional paper the *Evening Star* joined forces to announce the package of new measures, which include:

- A sustained attack on 'punters', involving heavy police presences in the red light zone aiming to arrest customers, which is then to be followed up by their 'outing' in the *Star* in court and heavier sentencing.
- Police letters to be sent to any men seen on CCTV walking the red light

zone 'too often' warning them to stay away.

- A 'clean-up or jail' approach to prostitutes, offering rehab to arrested prostitutes, but tied in with the imposing of Asbos and lengthier prison sentences should they be caught again.

Police used the opportunity presented by the red light killings, which saw them set up a text helpline for prostitutes, to gather details on more than 100 women thought to be involved in the trade, which they are now using to help inform the campaign.

Around £260,000 is to be set aside by police for high-visibility patrols and other surveillance operations, while Ipswich Borough Council will spend £300,000 on gating alleyways, more lighting for the red-light zone, £65,000 on CCTV for the area.

Suffolk County Council have set aside £400,000 over two years for programmes expected to include "education and better lighting".

Although all three authorities have

pledged to help prostitutes to "overcome drug addiction", no money has as yet been pledged towards this.

Although the measures are being presented as an indirect means of 'cleaning up the streets' not targeting prostitutes directly, the measures have been attacked by the English Collective of Prostitutes (ECP), who say it will drive prostitutes further underground and away from better-lit, safer contact zones as their clients become more wary of surveillance.

In a statement, the Safety First coalition, part of the ECP, noted: "The proposals replicate almost exactly the policies in place before the murders. Once again no lessons have been learned. Women will have even less time to check out men fearful of arrest. Instead, they will be pushed into more isolated, less well-lit areas where they are more vulnerable to attack. Whatever anyone thinks about men paying for sex, safety should be the priority. It is not even mentioned

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UNGDOMSHUSET

The past few years have seen an intensive struggle develop over an occupied building in a working class area of Copenhagen called Norrebro. In the early '80s a number of houses were occupied by a militant movement inspired by the German 'autonomous' activists. The Youth House, 'Ungdomshuset', was the last squat to remain from this cycle of struggle.

After Copenhagen's mayor decided to sell the building to a Christian fundamentalist sect a few years ago the low intensive struggle has attracted a number of new sympathisers, and when the police decided to evict the fifty or so activists that permanently guarded the building on the morning of the first of march all hell broke loose. After a week of street fighting unequal to anything that has happened in Scandinavia for at least fifty years the situation seemed to calm down.

Over 700 were arrested, the building was demolished and police harassment reached levels that seemed impossible

to imagine – but still the movement born in the struggle is growing stronger and mobilising new forces in demonstrations, short term occupations, reclaim the streets parties and street happenings, as well as militant actions against the groups and corporations behind the eviction and demolition of the Youth House.

From being a question that concerned only quite small group of sub-cultural activists only a few years ago the whole Danish left has been revitalised in this cycle of struggles. Everyone from some of the most famous Danish artists to lawyers critical of illegal police methods, groups of parents supporting their kids in jail and certain trade unions and political parties has backed the anarchist led initiative and defended the rights of the Youth House Activists.

With the Youth House now gone forever this movement instead demands "more liberated spaces", a

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Beans meanz finez

A council is set to use secret cameras hidden in baked beans tins to catch residents putting rubbish out on the wrong day.

Ealing Council in London will also put the tiny CCTV bugs inside house bricks, reports the *Sun*.

Householders caught breaking strict new rubbish rules will be fined up to £1,000.

It follows a £2m scheme adopted by six councils to put the devices in wheelie bins.

A spokesman for Tory-controlled Ealing said the £200 movement-sensitive bugs would become a vital tool in catching wheelie bin mis-users and graffiti artists.

He said: "To catch vandals and enviro-criminals, cameras disguised as anything from tin cans to house bricks will instantly email images to the council's CCTV control centre."

He added that people who put their rubbish out at all times of the day and night will be targeted.

The Ealing Tory councillor responsible for environment Will Brooks said anyone who broke the laws would be considered a fly-tipper.

But local resident Danny Christie, 64, branded the scheme as "utterly insane".

He said: "I've lived here all my life and have never heard of anything so screwed-up. Since when did forgetting to put your rubbish out make you a criminal?"

Reid defends Home Office split
John Reid's plan to split the Home Office into an interior ministry and a ministry of justice was yesterday attacked by his predecessor as "irresponsible".

Charles Clarke, home secretary until May last year and a possible challenger for the Labour leadership, said the reorganisation would delay reform of the criminal justice system and undermine government policy.

Mr Reid said the split would refocus the department "towards the priorities of today's world and the priorities of today's people" - terrorism, organised crime and mass immigration.

An Office for Security and Counter-Terrorism would add "huge capacity" to the fight against extremism, with 300-400 officials redeployed to strategy and 'hearts-and-minds' operations, he said.

This beel-up 'strategic centre' would bring political oversight, strategic planning and better analysis to counter-terrorism efforts.

Other Whitehall departments have resisted an enlarged Home Office role. Mr Reid eventually prevailed, with Gordon Brown's backing. But he will not take command of the Secret Intelligence Service and intelligence will still be co-ordinated by the Cabinet Office.

Links between private security firms and Whitehall departments would be strengthened with the creation of a body to represent major suppliers, trade associations and academics.

The Security and Resilience Industry Suppliers' Council would identify technological gaps in the counter-terrorism arsenal and accelerate research and development, leading to the manufacture of products to thwart terrorist attacks.

The Department for Constitutional Affairs will be renamed the Ministry of Justice and take over prisons and

Around the world

EU IDs to have photos and fingerprints by 2009

European Citizen Card offers security for travel, e-government and e-commerce. Giesecke & Devrient has showcased its advanced smartcard technology at this year's CeBIT show in Hanover, where identity theft has been a major theme.

The company said that all EU member states will have equipped their electronic identity documents with facial images and fingerprints by 2009. Giesecke's smartcards will offer security for travel, e-government and the internet.

Giesecke was one of the first players to implement the Extended Access Control (EAC) protocol in national ID systems, and EAC-online now provides secure access to websites as well.

The firm foresees the EU adopting a single card standard, by which citizens will identify themselves in many parts of the real and virtual world.

The future European Citizen Card (ECC) can be fitted with an e-passport function and an electronic ID.

As such, users will be able to chat on websites, shop on the internet, or even change their official residence and confirm their identities online throughout Europe.

All of these activities use the same underlying technology. First, the online

provider is given a certificate that authenticates it and tells the user what information to supply in order to complete an internet transaction.

During the transaction, the online provider sends the certificate to the citizen's card, which verifies the certificate. Essentially, the card acts like a bouncer. Importantly, it only lets data enter the internet if it is absolutely necessary for the transaction.

For booksellers, that might include the customer's name and address. For a kid's chat room, it might be the user's age. That way, children can only log in if they are under 16 years old, which helps protect them on the internet.

Hans Wolfgang Kunz, group executive at Giesecke, said: "If you want similar applications in the EU member states to be interoperable across national boundaries, you have to ensure compliance with the ECC standard."

Powerful encryption ensures that the sensitive data on the card can only be read by authorised parties with special authentication certificates using card readers.

Giesecke is one of the first companies to roll out the EAC protocol for passports and the EAC-online protocol for national ID cards in order to protect electronic business processes.

The ECC supplies the basic services

for modern and secure ID cards, and contains a chip that holds not only personal data such as the holder's name, date of birth, height, and eye colour, but an electronic photo and two fingerprints.

At the same time, these ID documents will also be used for e-government applications. Individual countries will be free to add more features, including a digital signature if they desire.

Big oil spending up

The world's five largest fully publicly traded oil firms are planning to invest billions of dollars more this year but extra spending may not translate into higher production.

Exxon Mobil Corp., Royal Dutch Shell Plc, BP Plc, Total SA and Chevron Corp. plan up to a total of \$97 billion in capital spending this year, up around 9% from 2006.

BP, Chevron and Shell have also said output may fall in 2007.

"Most companies have dressed down their volume growth estimates," said Jason Kenney, analyst at ING in Edinburgh, referring to the European oil sector. "Essentially, they are spending more and getting less."

Violence in Nigeria has cut supply for companies such as Shell and Total. Higher costs for rigs, steel and wages are soaking up much of the spending

boost, and some companies have said the costs surge might delay projects.

Exxon's Chief Executive Rex Tillerson said at the company's analysts meeting on 7th March that it had seen a 9% to 10% rise in drilling prices over the past year or so, although costs may have hit a plateau.

Kenney at ING estimates that average capital spending per barrel of oil equivalent of supply among the European oil firms he tracks has risen to \$4.75 from \$4.35 since December 2006.

Adding to the challenge of rising costs, countries such as Venezuela and Russia are grabbing more cash and control from companies that work their oil and gas fields, a trend dubbed resource nationalism by some analysts.

In addition, oil and gas resources are increasingly in places where production is technically more difficult, such as offshore the Gulf of Mexico. The oilfields of top reserves holder Saudi Arabia are off limits for foreign companies.

"The international oil companies are facing a tough challenge," said Fatih Birol, chief economist at the International Energy Agency, adviser to industrialised countries.

"Their existing fields are declining and they do not have access to major oil reserves."

Prison news

Sea containers to be used to house prisoners

Overcrowding is so bad in British prisons that there are plans to house prisoners in converted sea-containers imported from China. The Home Office plan to have the modules installed in five prisons by June, at a cost of £3.5m each. Prisons earmarked for the new units include Stoke Heath Young Offenders Institution in Shropshire and Wayland Prison in Norfolk. According to Harry Fletcher of the probation union Napo, "using containers to house prisoners, even for short periods of time, is extraordinary. There are clearly health and safety and environmental issues which would have to be addressed. The units are likely to be cramped so there will not be much room for activities such as education. No decisions appear to have been made on staffing and it is unclear where the money will be coming from."

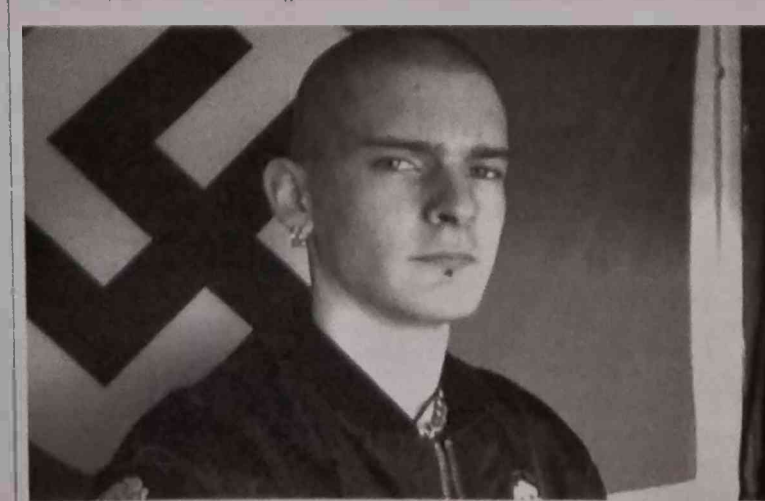
The prison population in England and Wales is now over 80,000, and is expected to reach 'crisis point' in June.

ABCF spring update out

The latest issue of the American ABC Federation's quarterly update is now out. The spring 2007 edition focuses on the recent arrests of the San Francisco Eight and the continued harassment of the accused. There are also a range of other news articles, including an update on the Daniel McGowan case, a piece about the work of Los Angeles ABC, and a certain amount of international news. You can download a copy from abcf.net/abcf.asp?page=pdfs.

Yorkshire police informer unmasked

Robin Steele (pictured below), a young Leeds man, from a Jewish background, has had a chequered political history. Originally involved in animal rights, he joined the Socialist Party, and then later started sporting Anarchist symbols, and trying to join Antifa. After being rebuffed by Antifa, Steele then changed his politics completely, embracing fascism and joining the neo-Nazi 'British People's Party'. While his conversion to fascism is apparently genuine, Steele was also working for the cops as an informer, something which came about as a result of his arrest on bomb-making charges. While Steele seems to have had little genuine information about Anarchists and antifascists, this did not stop him from making it up, or from attempting to act as an agent provocateur. While Steele's days as a useful state-asset may be at end, we should not forget the



lengths that our enemies will go to in order to fit up activists.

Read the full extraordinary story on Indymedia at <https://publish.indymedia.org.uk/en/2007/03/365587.html?c=all>
Listen to recordings of the grass in action at <https://publish.indymedia.org.uk/en/2007/03/365802.html?c=on#comments>

Fourth issue of 325 magazine now out

The latest issue of the anti-prison magazine 325 is now out. Issue 4 contains interviews with Japanese Anarchist 'Rebel Jill' and former Catalan long-term prisoner Patricio Pallares Beyona; a letter to the FAI from Gabriel Pombo da Silva; an article, 'Society, Reformism and Insurrection'; 'International Resistance News'; and much more. Forty pages for only £1!

Contact 325collective@hush.com and check out their excellent website at 325collective.com

Green Scare sentencing dates

During a US federal court hearing on 2nd March 2007, the following sentencing dates were finalised for the eco-sabotage defendants from the District of Oregon 'Operation Backfire' cases:

- Tuesday 15th May at 10am: Oral arguments on application of the Sentencing Guidelines 'terrorism' enhancement for all defendants (which could add up to twenty years to sentences).

Dates for 'cooperating defendants'

- Tuesday 22nd May at 9am: Stanislas Meyerhoff
- Thursday 24th May 24 at 9am: Kevin Tubbs
- Friday 25th May 25 at 9am: Chelsea Gerlach
- Tuesday 29th May at 9am: Darren Thurston
- Thursday 31st May 31: Suzanne Savoie and Kendall Tankersley

Dates for 'non-informants'

- Friday 1st June at 9am: Nathan Block and Joyanna Zacher
- Monday 4th June 4 at 9am: Daniel McGowan
- Tuesday 5th June 5 at 9am: Jonathan Paul

Addresses for support

- Nathan Block, #1663667, Lane County Jail, 101 W 5th Ave, Eugene, OR 97401, USA.
- Joyanna Zacher, #1662550, Lane County Jail, 101 W 5th Ave, Eugene, OR 97401, USA.

Daniel McGowan and Johnathan Paul are currently out on bail.

For more background information see: portland.indymedia.org/en/topic/greenscare/cldc.org or greenscare.org/

News

London calling

If you're setting up a local solidarity group or network, then the Haringey Solidarity Group is here to lend a hand

As regular readers of *Freedom* will know, the Haringey Solidarity Group has been organising with relative success, in the London borough of Haringey, for nearly 15 years. Like any group we have our highs and lows, but generally we reckon we have been a positive contribution to libertarian politics in Haringey, London and further afield. Without groups like us, all that's left for people pissed off with the main parties are groups like the SWP. This alone is a good reason to keep going, but we want to be more than just an example of what community activists can achieve. We want to encourage other people to get active on a community level all over London.

As anarchists and anti-authoritarians, we often see our ideas as being different from the rest of society's, yet on every street there are people who despise authority, are sick of their shit working conditions and tired of watching their area turn into a yuppie playground or gated wasteland.

Groups from the far left and right are trying to move into the vacuum left by the main political parties, but they have little to offer local communities. They seek power for themselves rather than encouraging people to take control of their own lives.

Only as anarchists, working together and alongside others, can we dismantle the isolated existence of modern capitalism and build on our common dreams. As anarchists we know we can't change society on our own – nor do we want to. Any movement for real social change can only come from working class people organising in their own communities. We need to

develop community-based and workplace groups, linked together to improve our lives and to try to bring about the total transformation of society. We often talk about it. Loads of words are written about it. But, it doesn't happen very often. There are a number of shining examples. But it needs to happen all over.

Getting our hands dirty

If you live in London and these words strike a chord, but you are not involved in a local group then isn't it about time you were? The worst that can happen is you get to meet like-minded people around where you live. There are already groups in Haringey, Walthamstow and Hackney and initiatives in other areas. So why wait?

We are happy to act as a co-ordinating point. Where there is a local community-based group, we can put you in touch with them. Where there isn't a group, there may be one or two (or dozens of) individuals who are thinking there should be – in fact we already have contacts for many areas of London. If you don't feel confident in starting a group by yourself, some of us from HSG would be happy come to help out or act as a contact point for people to give us their details. Then we can put people from the same area in contact with each other.

Once a couple of people have taken the plunge and decided to form a group, there will be things like contacting others in your area, writing and distributing leaflets/posters, organising a meeting, etc. If you need practical support and encouragement to get started, HSG is willing to try and provide it.



One of the coldest days of the years without doubt, yet a good group turned out on Saturday 24th March to give Starbucks the welcome it deserved as it opened a new store in Whitechapel. Locals enjoyed free tea and cake and discussed the dark deeds of Starbucks and their ilk before Food Not Bombs turned up with hot food and music. The police eventually waded in but the cakes and biscuits had all gone by then so they left empty handed.

We know setting up a local group can be daunting – we have all been through it. But if we really want to

change society what's the alternative? If you like the idea why not get in touch with us at PO Box 2474, London

N8, email us at info@haringey.org.uk, see our website at haringey.org.uk or call us on 0845 223 5270

Anti-pipeline campaign in full flow More jam tomorrow...

As the corporations and authorities press on with their ridiculous and outrageous pipeline project, activists from both South Wales and further afield continue the campaign to stop it. The proposed 150 mile pipeline pumping liquefied natural gas at a dangerously high pressure is intrinsically wrong on many levels.

The jetty under construction at Milford Haven hasn't had an adequate risk assessment by the harbour authority. Ex-pilots for the harbour have expressed severe concern for the positioning of the jetty, which is so far out into the channel to accommodate the enormous ships bringing in the gas tanks, that a serious risk is posed to other ships trying to navigate into dock. In the last six months there have been 1,200 reports to the health and safety executive of leaks by tankers owned by a single operator. The risks involved with the construction of the pipeline and it's associated reprocessing stations has been called into question several times. In the USA a pipeline of this

pressure isn't allowed to be laid within ten miles of houses, due to the risk of leaks and explosions. But here it runs through villages and past schools.

The environmental impact is massive, as the pipeline slashes through ancient woodland including parts of the Brecon Beacons national park flattening everything as it goes. Despite government greenwash and public recognition of the very real threat of climate change £7m is being spent on a project which only serves to increase our dependence on fossil fuels.

This is terminal!

On Wednesday 14th February activists blockaded the main entrance road to the South Hook LNG terminal construction site. Five people locked onto heavy arm tubes in a circle, blocking the road, which is owned by Esso. The police arrived within a few minutes (basically, they were expecting us) and aggressively attempted to pull the people in arm tubes apart. The large police presence dragged away those support-

ing the protest and illegally holding them in a worker's bus for hours, finally releasing them with a warning and a ban from the area.

The blockade continued for six hours despite police threats to use pepper spray and to lift people locked-on, risking broken arms. Police played good cop/bad cop depending on whether their cameras were on. The blockade resulted in a tailback of over 50 lorries unable to enter and many vehicles unable to leave the construction site. This resulted in an estimated loss of £700,000 for Esso/South Hook LNG.

More and more people are realising that our governments aren't to be trusted and that the only way to maintain a world for our children and grandchildren is to take matters into our own hands and take responsibility for our own future.

Taken from *Gagged!* South Wales anarchist newsletter. For more details see fightthepipe.co.uk www.safehavenpembis.co.uk or risingtide.org.uk/bristol/pipeline

So the issue has been decided ... by 413 votes to 167, a majority of 246. On 15th March the motion to replace Trident was carried in the House of Commons. I'm a Commoner but I wasn't there. I wasn't invited. Notwithstanding the commendable courage of conviction of the 95 Labour rebels, nor the help of the Tories, upon whom Blair was forced to depend in order to secure his precious 'legacy', nothing in any of this was the least bit surprising. In spite of the dead-headed posturing on both sides of the floor and the Blairite high-command's angst over partisan regress, whether actual or perceived, into the bad old 'loony-left' unilateralism of the '80s wilderness years, the ultimate result was never in doubt.

Make no mistake, the replacement of Trident was a foregone conclusion, perhaps even as far back as the Trinity test. The sick economic logic of the US-led military-industrial complex, under the jaundiced guise of our

mystical (mythical?) 'special relationship', demanded and guaranteed it. The puppet-masters in Washington and the Pentagon will tolerate nothing less than total obedience and fidelity from their Whitehall puppet in the execution of their geopolitical economic masterplan. GE and Lockheed's shareholders even more so, in terms of the loyalty to their profit margins and dividends demanded of their captive 'valued' customer. Blair's legacy is now complete on all levels. The sorry wretch must be having orgasms right now at the prospect of his impending tenure on the payroll at Carlyle, which will no doubt commence in just a couple of months' time. His reward for delivering up Britain's commitment for another 30-50 years to a ruinous and entirely un-independent strategic 'defence' system, is now assured. But again, make no mistake: there is now more reason than ever to fight and to oppose this abomination.

Macq Jonz

Not so green

Sam U explores why biofuels will lead to further deforestation in South East Asia and threaten wildlife

This month, Chancellor of the Exchequer Gordon Brown produced what was promoted as a 'green' budget, but in its own promotion of south-east Asian sourced biofuels, the spending plans are anything but environmentally friendly.

The 2007 budget maintained a 20 pence-per-litre 'differential' on biofuels, which is essentially a subsidy for such fuels, and it is a move which has prompted Friends of the Earth to express concern that "Government is promoting biofuels before robust sustainability criteria are agreed for the sourcing of biofuels."

Much of that fuel will be derived from palm oil and will be sourced from south-east Asia. Malaysia, where a 2005 Friends of the Earth report found that 87% of deforestation had been due to the expansion of palm oil plantations, and Indonesia – where palm oil production rocketed under the Suharto dictatorship in conjunction with the World Bank – will be the major beneficiaries. Together, the two nations accounted for 84% of global palm oil production in 2004.

Endangered species, including the orangutan, are directly threatened by this expansion. A report released this month by the United Nations Environment Program entitled *The Last Stand of the Orang Utan: State of Emergency*, finds that 98% of the rainforests of Indonesia and Malaysia will be erased by 2020, with the

lowland habitat of orangutans disappearing much sooner.

With their rainforest homes converted into palm oil plantations, orangutans are becoming an agricultural pest and are suffering because of it. As Michelle Desilets of the Borneo Orang Utan Survival Foundation UK, told the *Observer's* David Smith, "they become easy targets. Some plantation owners put a bounty of \$10 or \$20 on the head of orangutans, which is worth a few weeks' salary for the workers ... We've seen them beaten to death with wood sticks or iron bars, doused in petrol and set on fire, trussed up in nets or tied up with wire which cuts through their flesh."

The rights of indigenous groups are just as threatened by the expansion of biofuels plantations, with an epidemic of evictions reported in the Malaysian province of Sarawak and in Sumatra and the Indonesian colony of Irian Jaya, the western portion of New Guinea.

There is also no guarantee that biofuels are a better means of fuelling vehicles than petroleum. Intensive production requires huge amounts of energy to grow the crops, process and transport them, while the clearing of forest to create the plantations has resulted in massive emissions of carbon dioxide due to forest fires. A November 2006 study by Werlands International also found that palm oil cultivation results in carbon emissions from drained peat bogs which are



preferred by farmers due to their high fertility. Put together, the bogs and fires amounted to 8% of global carbon dioxide emissions, the study found.

According to biologist Jeffrey Dukes of the University of Massachusetts,

"By converting these forests, we are essentially taking that buried sunshine and wasting it. It's a terrible decision. Whether or not it's consciously made, it's society going in reverse."

British imports of biofuels from the

two nations has doubled since 1995 to one million tonnes per year, a figure that is set to rise rapidly if biofuels take off as an alternative to petroleum in the both Britain and the European Union.

Peace activism in the US

Peace activism in the United States at the beginning of the fourth year of its war on Iraq is taking place against a background of new data on the toll of the war and ever more vicious insistence by the Bush junta that US aggression will continue.

Australian scientist Gideon Polya reported, for example, that the number of Iraqis killed since 2003 is close to one million. The refugee crisis as Iraqis flee to neighbouring countries is thought to approximate to two and a half that number. Meanwhile 'Defense' Secretary Robert Gates advised that the United States does indeed hold plans to keep a presence in the Middle East for

decades.

And the backwash from the succession of repressive legislation enacted since 11th September 2001 continues to adversely affect people: The Lawyers Committee for Civil Rights reports that an increasing number of businesses are using the Treasury Department's terrorist 'watch list' which has over 6,000 names on it with the result that customers are being deprived of access to services such as credit bureaux, health insurers, car dealerships, employers and landlords. Sometimes only because (potential) clients or customers have similar names to those on the list. For example a man in California man was refused a home loan after his credit report flagged his middle name, 'Hassan', which is an alias for one of Saddam Hussein's sons.

This is not to give the impression of anything more than a lukewarm indifference on the part of most people in the United States; those schooled into getting their 'news' from the main corporate propaganda outlets do find it hard to see things from any other than a rather isolated, self-centred, 'might is

right' perspective. For the peace movement itself the focus has, for the moment, passed to sit-down actions and the occupation of elected representatives' offices – particularly those who refuse to cut off war funding, which is seen by many as an effective way for legislators to take action: no money from central government would mean either no war and/or a major constitutional crisis.

So peace vigils, protests and civil disobedience actions continue at various locations throughout the United States. In mid March a hundred activists were arrested in New York and San Francisco when they lay down in front of those two cities' stock exchanges. There does seem to be a shift towards a more openly anti-capitalist message on the part of the mainstream peace movement: the aggression against Iraq is revealed as much in aid of war profiteers and US manufactures of weapons of mass destruction as the absence of an 'exit strategy' or a way to take US forces 'out of harm's way'.

Louis Further

Direct action in India

At 2pm on 22nd March, 62 activists from Action 2007 were arrested at the Planning Commission Office. The group, including activist Medha Parkar, were having a symbolic protest against the privatisation and appropriation of water resources by large dams, coke and pepsu bottling plants and other unsustainable forms of development, leading to deprivation and water scarcity faced by a large population in the country on World Water Day.

The police and Rapid Action Force did not allow the activists to make an appointment with the Deputy Chair of Planning Commission and arrested the activists while waiting in the compound of the Yojana Bhavan (Planning Commission office). Unnecessary force was used during the arrests, many of the activists were manhandled and many female activists had their clothes torn.

The activists were then taken to the Parliament Street Police station and were asked to sign blank arrest memos. There were procedural delays

and only after 9pm were they presented to the judicial magistrate who was called to the police station itself.

The magistrate has remanded all of them to judicial custody for 15 days until 5th April. This is completely disproportionate and excessive police and legal action against peaceful protestors who went to have a dialogue with the Planning Commission members on World Water Day!

The authorities have explicitly stated that they "want to teach the protestors a lesson". These arrests were not about violations of the law; rather they are a coordinated and concerted attempt to prevent the democratic protest of anti-people policies and an effort to discourage others who dare to raise their voice. The action has been ostensibly blacklisted by the media as no coverage has taken place.

Get in touch with us call 9910345405 or email action2007@gmail.com / See action2007.net for more information.



A 'die-in', San Francisco, 19th March

Feature

Policing the pollution

Oscar Beard reports on the situation at the Shell pipeline at Bellanaboy Bridge in County Mayo, Ireland

I entered County Mayo with four others, under the security of nightfall, in a car driving at high speed along dangerously thin roads that snaked across barren and deserted bogland in what is known as the Wild West.

The reason for the speed was the driver, a lunatic from Dublin council. The cloak of darkness was because we were warned the Garda could be waiting in roadblocks, in areas where there was no mobile phone reception. There would be no way to call for help.

The driver, having been to the area before, explained what to do if we were pulled by the Garda. Lock all doors, wind down the windows only enough to talk and only give your name and address. The most important instruction was under any reason do not get out of the car.

I expected to be covering a story on local resistance against a multinational oil company, who had come up against vicious police brutality.

The pipeline and gas terminal at Bellanaboy Bridge was still two years away from production, but the environmental destruction had already begun. The drinking water source was being polluted with aluminium and the culprit was the Shell Corrib Gas Project.

As the national 'call to action' dispersed on Friday 16th February, local and outside activists became frustrated with the lack of 'action'. Many had travelled hundreds of miles, others had crossed borders.

"We didn't come all this way to march along a road," said one protestor.

So, 120 people spontaneously invaded the construction site, shutting down operations for the day. Five paddy-wagons, two squad cars and two coach-loads of Garda were sent into remove them.

Constituting over 10% of the local population, 170 Garda are continuously stationed in the area to police the construction site. Reports of drunken Garda pub-brawling had increased on the weekends in Belmullet, where most of the police stayed in bed and breakfast residencies. But not the top brass. No, they dined and relaxed in the luxurious surroundings of Broadhaven Hotel.

In the 6th November 2006 edition of *Garda Review*, police operations chief, Superintendent Joe Cannon stated there was a strategy not to arrest anyone: "We did not want to facilitate anyone down there with a route to martyrdom. There has been that policy ever since," he said.

Police intimidation was regular according to the locals. Paddy-wagons patrolled the roads during the day, people were stopped and questioned, especially new faces, and slow drives past the front of homes of prominent

Shell to Sea members occurred every other day.

So it came as no surprise to this journalist to be questioned by Garda on a near daily basis. Within the first week the van I was travelling in was pulled and all the occupants' details taken. This would have gone smooth if it hadn't been for the third person in the back of the van. Knowing that he was being illegally carried and the Garda were at every one of the van doors, he decided he was going to backchat them with his half-whining American drool.

They picked on him, poked fun at his piercings, searched all his bags and grilled him for 20 minutes. And quiet frankly he deserved it. Only being in his presence for a few minutes and I already knew that man was a liability.

The following morning, it was the turn of Garda surveillance officer Burke, Mary Poppins as he was commonly known to the locals. Every time it rained, which were most days, Burke would protect his camera underneath a black umbrella.

Burke checked my press card and quizzed me, where was I from, who I was working for, all the time documenting our first meeting on his tiny mini-DV camera.

Later that morning, to see what response it would conjure from the Garda, I tested the water by leaving the main group and to walk on my own.

It didn't take long. One officer walked across the road towards me.

"You're Oscar, right?" he asked.

I nodded. He tried to break the ice with pointless conversation, but when it wasn't working he went straight to what was on his mind.

"I want you to take those banners down," he ordered.

Twenty minutes earlier a local had taped two Shell to Sea cardboard posters to a road sign. I looked at the placards, then back to the officer, who in days to come would be named Wolfman, because his thick, dark eyebrows met in the middle and he seemed to be growing fangs.

"I'm a journalist, I can't do that," I said, explaining if I took the posters down that would not be objective.

"No you're not, you're a protestor," said Wolfman. "You're living on the camp."

"Look," I said, "if you want the banners taken down, talk to the person that did it. Or do it yourself."

Wolfman leaned in towards me. He stood nearly four inches higher: "Are you disobeying my order?"

"I just came back from Mexico," I replied. "Out there they kill you outright. No messing. They chop you up into little pieces with machetes. So, if you want to intimidate me you're going to have to try harder than that."



As a one-week trip turned into two, then a month, the actions of the Garda surveillance turned more bizarre. Burke was issued with a new digital stills camera and proceeded to waltz about the place, brandishing it like a semi-automatic pistol he had got intimate with on a personal level.

He lined his colleagues up to pose, waving police hats in the air, all laughing and smiling. It was like some kind of policeman's holiday. Happy snaps from the days at Bellanaboy to look back on and say, yeah, I was there. Pushing, punching, kicking and abusing.

In the first week of March, as the police rotation transferred weary cops with fresh meat, I was surrounded by three Garda. Again, I was questioned and I had to explain the police procedure to check press card validity. One officer, with a new digital camera, then tried to photograph my press card.

"You'll have to move further away," I said, "your zoom lens is too big."

Paddy-wagons and squad cars followed me on morning trips to film the water coming from the construction site, water that was shockingly discoloured with a metallic sheen.

The metal was aluminium. It was coming from heavy aluminium content 'doib' soil exposed after Shell removed surface peat in order to lay the refinery foundations. The aluminium made contact with the surface water and

contaminated the surrounding streams and rivers, all of which lead to Carrowmore Lake, the drinking water supply for over 10,000 people.

Aluminium in drinking water has been linked to dementia and Alzheimer-related illnesses, and bone disorders. In 1993 the World Health Organisation (WHO) set a limit of 200ug/l (micrograms-per-litre) on drinking water.

Limits set on Shell by Mayo County Council (MCC) were an 'action' level of 135ug/l and a maximum level of 200ug/l.

Despite Shell installing an Axonics Water Treatment Plant the aluminium content kept exceeding the maximum limit.

Locals demanded action from the council. MCC took action. They stopped testing the drinking water, reduced the tests on Carrowmore Lake and Shell took control of monitoring the water leaving site, constituting a conflict of interest.

Over the months the aluminium content escalated. According to MCC management documents obtained by this journalist, on 23rd January 2007 the drinking water registered 1714ug/l, nearly nine times the WHO limit. Figures recorded coming off-site a month earlier registered 3271ug/l.

Nor only were the figures higher than any recorded previously, the MCC and

Shell on-site tests showed huge discrepancies. On the same day and at the same testing source, when MCC recorded 3271, Shell recorded 666. On 19th December Shell recorded 180. MCC recorded 1928.

Shell refuses to admit the rising aluminium levels are coming from their construction site. Instead, they blamed eroding river banks.

On 12th March a new contingent of Garda were transferred to the police operation. The violence started almost immediately, dragging protestors across the road and pushing elderly men, women and journalists.

In two days officer U235 from Dublin drop-kicked one visiting German protestor, leg-swept an old man and threw an elderly woman to the ground.

At that point, officer CK132 - pushing was not working - slammed two fists into my chest and followed through with a kick to my right knee.

I left Mayo limping and bruised, but with enough video evidence on the policing and pollution to set up my own human rights court.

But knowing Shell plan to remove the rest of the 50,000 tons of peat in the next few weeks, which will expose more dobe soil and only increase the water pollution, I know that I will be back there very soon, much to the dismay of many top-ranking Garda officers.

Commentary

FREEDOM

Volume 68 Number 07

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

Our neighbours, the Whitechapel Art Gallery have installed a forest of bamboo in enormous pots near the entrance to the bookshop, some green and yellow lighting in the alleyway and have generally spruced up the surroundings of the Press almost beyond recognition, which is always nice. Next, the inside!

There have been some staffing changes at the Press but, hopefully, we have made major progress on the recent mail-out problems and bookshop volunteer shortages although (as always) more help will be gratefully appreciated.

Although the paper has found some new writers we still (predictably) need to increase the number of people contributing in order to produce a newspaper that is not only a positive reflection on anarchism but a useful political tool. There is, maybe, still some way to go and, of course, any comments, reflections, and criticism that readers have are good to receive. Contact us at The Editors, Freedom Press, 84b Whitechapel High Street, London E1 7QX, or by email to copy@freedompress.org.uk

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Next issue

The next issue will be dated 21st April 2007 and the last day to get copy to us for that issue will be Thursday 12th April. 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.

Hitler was not a veggie

'Hitler was a vegetarian! And he opposed vivisection! It was well documented!'

These chestnuts are thrown at us, and frequently, by the left to silence us vegetarians and anti-vivisectionists. For presumably if the twentieth century's greatest bogeyman was a vegetarian and an anti-vivisectionist, then that is evidently supposed to settle our hash once and for all and finish the argument in our opponents favour.

Firstly, let it be known that if Hitler was a vegetarian and anti-vivisectionist, it makes not the slightest difference to our ethical position, but is totally irrelevant.

Secondly, these supposed 'facts' are false. It is not possible for the head of a capitalist state and its military machine to be an anti-vivisectionist, and the myth of Hitler's vegetarianism was deliberately propagated by Goebbels (anxious to portray his master as an ascetic), whose propaganda has been swallowed wholesale by the gullible and ignorant lefties and others who hate vegetarians and anti-vivisectionists! This is well documented. See *Eternal Treblinka – our treatment of animals and the holocaust* by C. Patterson and *The heretic's feast – a history of vegetarianism* by Colin Spencer.

AKW

The '60s

In 1968 (Sir) Mick Jagger of the Rolling Stones said he was an anarchist. Extracts from Percy B. Shelley's poems were read out at the funeral of Brian Jones.

But nobody should really think the '60s produced real anarchism. Jones drowned in his swimming pool – so much for the notion that the Stones were so poor they couldn't afford soap. Pretending you have poor origins when you don't is reactionary and encourages cynicism towards the real poor.

The Rolling Stones were also guilty of glamourising drug addiction, i.e. Keith Richards, seeking to commercially exploit the misery of young people.

Even today, there are those who reckon drug control laws against LSD, speed, cannabis and ecstasy are

political. In the '60s alcohol and barbiturates were legal because they 'dope down' the masses (actually make people aggressive), so why was the 'opium of the people' the first controlled drug? And why did the CIA use LSD and ecstasy, etc., to torture people. LSD is a chemical weapon.

Ex-Beatle John Lennon invested billions of dollars in New York real estate. Squat on his property and he'd have armed police evict you.

Fuck the '60s!

Graham Whitehead

The common enemy

Terrorism can be divided into two main types. Type A uses plastic explosives while Type B uses petro-chemical explosives. A third type of terrorism is hijacking, kidnapping (and others) which is a previously underestimated third option. Type A plastic explosives are generally regarded as being associated with security services of states who sometimes act against their own people. Type B petro-chemical home-mades are associated with individuals and groups and sometimes called copycat because, once a security service has struck its own people, dissatisfied individuals and groups then make copycat attacks of their own. Type A attacks operate under bogus names or use scapegoats to blame.

CA

Zimbabwe

page 1

partner and has backed Mugabe and ZANU PF consistently at regional and international level. Regional governments have done little to defend the rights of Zimbabweans and protected a tyranny every bit as oppressive as Rhodesia or apartheid South Africa. They are now working behind the scenes to attempt to engineer a reformed ZANU PF Government rather than a genuine democratic solution.

Zimbabwe's economic, social and political situation is desperate and worsening for the greater masses of the people. Life expectancy in Zimbabwe has declined from 60 to 37 since 1990. The harsh effects of the economic crisis on the country's poor are likely

to continue with the government turn towards neo-liberal policies. Complete cost recovery and free market charges and fees for state parastatal and local authority services have been imposed. The past weeks have witnessed massive increases in water bills, electricity, council rates, school fees and drug costs including HIV/AIDS ARVs.

The cost of every basic commodity has risen, and inflation is heading towards 1,750%, while the dollar continues to slide on the parallel market reaching US\$1 to ZWD12,000 and the government continues to print money. Workers are earning wages of around US\$16 per month – not even enough for transport to work.

However, the later '90s fighting spirit seems to be reverberating again in the people's minds. There is a growing wave of resistance from social movements, workers, students, HIV and AIDS activists, those in the informal cross-border trading, constitutional reform activists and the rank and file militants in the political parties. As a result of this growing resistance Mugabe has imposed a de facto state of emergency in Harare. There is a heavy police presence on the streets of Harare and all political gatherings have been banned.

Doctors in government hospitals who won salary increments after a two-month strike from January ignited the fighting mood. Teachers again followed suit and won better salaries, ever since, every week we have seen students from most tertiary learning institutions arrested for organising college riots against meagre payouts. Currently all state universities are close as lecturers went on strike three weeks ago for better salaries. A national strike has been called for the 3rd and 4th April.

Ipswich

page 1

in these proposals.

"They offer no budget or resources to address the poverty, debt, rape and domestic violence, lack of housing, cuts in benefits, and low wages in other occupations which force women into prostitution."

Following the statement, an opinion piece in the *Evening Star* accused the ECP of trying to "make their own political points" from the plans.

Ungdomshuset

page 1

new building for them to use, as well as attempting to defend the "Free City of Christiania" – a groups of old army barracks appropriated in the '70s now used as both housing and for cultural events, but recently targeted for capitalist redevelopment. Spring time is coming to Denmark, and it might be a hot one.

Johan Lund

UK news in brief

page 2

criminal justice.

The Home Office will retain responsibility for counter-terrorism, policing, anti-social behaviour and immigration. The split will take effect on 9th May.

Mr Reid said it was likely that the secretary of state for justice would eventually be a minister in the Commons. Lord Falconer, the lord

chancellor, is expected to leave government when Tony Blair steps down.

Mr Reid said the reorganisation was the culmination of a programme of reform to a department he described as "dysfunctional" when he took over from Mr Clarke last year. A succession of mistakes and mishaps have cast doubt on the Home Office's competence.

The idea that a single department guaranteed co-ordination of law and order was "belied by the experience of Charles Clarke". Mr Reid said, referring to the scandal over foreign nationals convicted of crimes.

Mr Clarke was not the only former minister to express his concern. John Denham, Labour chairman of the home affairs select committee, suggested that responsibility for criminal justice would be transferred to a department instinctively sympathetic to lawyers.

Alun Michael, a former Home Office minister, said the reorganisation "appeared to downgrade" the emphasis on local policing and tackling low-level crime.

The Conservatives said the reorganisation was rushed and would "leave public security undermined".

"Breaking it up will solve none of the Home Office's problems," said David Davis, shadow home secretary. "It will just create a whole new raft of problems."

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Quiz answers

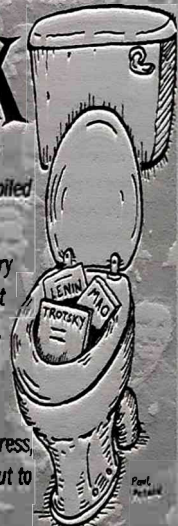
1. An Italian anarchist living in the US. He planted a bomb in his horse-drawn wagon at the corner of Wall Street in New York four months after the arrest of Sacco and Vanzetti. Forty people died. Author Mike Davis credits this as the first car bomb in his book *Buda's Wagon*.
2. It means struggle in Xhosa and Zulu.
3. Collectively, they were the Shrewsbury Two, trade unionist militants jailed after a mass picket at the Brookside site near Shrewsbury. Des Warren died in 2004 after suffering the chemical cough in prison. Ricky Tomlinson was blacklisted from the building trade and went on to find fame as an actor, ironically in the soap *Brookside*.
4. The Corpus Christi procession in Barcelona was bombed in 1895 and the authorities used this as an excuse to arrest and torture hundreds of anarchists, with five eventually being executed. It was widely believed to be the work of a provocateur. An Italian anarchist, Michele Angiolillo, assassinated the Spanish prime minister in reprisal two years later.

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!

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REVIEW

The specifically anarchist strand of punk is often ignored, but Richard Cross finds some long-overdue recognition

Since the anarchist punk band Crass brought to an end the group's cultural-political assault on the Thatcherite state in the summer of 1984, the complex history of the first-wave of British anarcho-punk has languished in a state of almost uninterrupted neglect. For seven intensive years before that cut-off date the rebellious flames of anarcho-punk burned bright, lighting-up a sub-culture that took the revolutionary protestations of punk rock and the idea of 'doing-it-yourself' (DIY) profoundly seriously.

In recent years, cash-savvy publishers have pumped out innumerable coffee-table books rehashing the history of commercial Pistols-authored punk (of alarmingly variable degrees of quality). Very few amongst them have made any effort to accurately represent the history of anarcho-punk: the one manifestation of the sub-culture genuinely convinced that punk should (and could) give life to the movement's irresistibly subversive logic. The burying of the specifically anarchist strand of punk within the historiography of punk rock is not simply the outcome of a nefarious conspiracy amongst retired rock journalists – although that conspiracy does exist, as much fuelled by ignorance and arrogance as by malice. Mainstream eulogisers of punk always face great difficulty in trying to incorporate anarcho-punk's searing critique of punk orthodoxy into their own reassuringly-familiar Bromley Contingent narratives.

But the ease with which such historical sleight of hand can be carried out is also a reflection of the fiercely independent (some would say separatist) sensibilities of the anarcho-punk movement itself, which viewed its continually disappointing commercial counterpart with bitter disdain. Anarcho-punk opted instead for an autonomous existence and a life apart – making it easier for both malevolent and for myopic historians to try to write it out of the record. Works such as Crass drummer Penny Rimbaud's evocative (if esoteric) autobiography *Shibboleth* (published in 1998) have pushed hard to challenge the

movement's exclusion, but the balance of new publishing has continually reinforced its omission.

The fact that anarcho-punk is at last beginning to receive some long overdue recognition and re-examination is not the reflection of a change of heart amongst the writers of traditional punk history, but principally because the movement's own alumni have begun to take up the challenge themselves. As different elements of this parallel account reach the shelves, the result is an increasingly rich anarchist-infused alter-history of punk.

This new wave of anarcho-punk publishing is part of a mini cultural retrospective on the movement's work and worth. While there is absolutely no possibility of Crass following suit, a number of long-disbanded anarcho bands have recently reformed to play reunion gigs. Overground Records have released a four-part compilation CD collection, beginning with the spirited 23-track *Anti-War* collection in 2006. Further books are in the pipeline from AK Press; more releases from the audio archives are imminent; and the first of a number of new anarcho-punk documentaries have recently secured festival cinema screenings or direct-to-DVD release.

Two new books that revisit the experience of anarcho-punk together provide fascinating insights into the evolution and development of the movement. There is much to recommend in the insights of both works, even if neither can be expected to escape the constraint of having to satisfy the interests of the publishers of the pop music histories who contracted their authors.

George Berger's *The Story of Crass* adopts the same straightforward chronological approach of his earlier biography of folk-punksters The Levellers, to document the history of anarcho-punk's most conspicuous catalyst. Berger begins with a focus on the pre-punk creative activities of the founding members of the band and of Dial House, revealing some interesting and little known stories of the counter-cultural experiments that preceded the engagement with punk. Although Berger does not make the point



explicitly, what this shows is how far outside the confines of the official anarchist movement Crass came from – something that is hugely significant in understanding anarcho-punk's often fraught relationship with its more traditional anarchist allies in the years which followed. Berger writes entertainingly enough, although many readers are likely to find his frequent nod-and-wink asides to the reader quickly become irritating rather than endearing.

Securing interviews with all members of the Crass collective (save the reluctant guitarist Andy Palmer), Berger's work is at its most successful in making space for the oral testimony of the group. Although not all voices get equal space, Berger allows former band members to describe in detail recollections many of which have never been articulated in the public domain before. Through these words, the sometimes strikingly different individual perspectives which existed behind the uniform, collective persona of Crass to find expression. These voices illuminate the key moments in the evolution, peak and subsequent fragmentation and decline of the original anarcho-punk explosion, as seen from the band's unique perspective.

For context, Berger relies rather too heavily on the published Crass canon – the 1982 collection of essays *A Series of Shock Slogans and Mindless Token Tantrums* and the 1984 farewell statement *In Which Crass Voluntarily Blown Their Own*. Berger does try to identify some of the more important political controversies with which anarcho-punk became identified. Such debates included: the validity of an anarchist politics based on individual self-will; the utility of militant pacifism; and the means by which the alienated politics and practice of the Leninist far-left could best be challenged. The author deserves credit for getting such political questions aired in a music biography, even if the complex issues that these raise are left largely hanging

as Berger's attention turns instead to the next release in the Crass catalogue.

In *Dancing The Storm*, Berger's love for the music of The Levellers comes clearly across on almost every page. In *The Story of Crass* it is less consistently clear that Berger likes what he hears. In fact, there's more of a sense that he considers the noise the band made is the stuff that you had to put up with to get access to the more valuable elements of the subculture itself. He dismisses the uncompromising late-period *Yes Sir I Will* LP and *You're Already Dead* single pretty much out of hand and wishes that the earlier (and ultimately less 'difficult') *Christ The Album* had been the band's final release.

As this suggests, Berger is not a deferential author and this is in no sense a Crass hagiography. He does have several axes to grind – and is particularly keen to rubbish what he sees as Crass's 'self-defeating' hostility to the music press. For him, the decision to refuse to co-operate with the likes of *Sounds* and the *NME* in favour of an 'over-romanticised' fanzine network was sheer folly. In this, he suggests, Crass mistook self-imposed isolation for autonomy, and in the process made an ideology out of the DIY impulse. At moments like this, the conceptual and political gap between the author and his subject appears at its widest.

At the core of Berger's narrative lies an unarticulated assumption that the ambitions of the anarcho-punk were so unattainable (and the punk vehicle for their realisation so completely inadequate), that Crass should have been willing to negotiate compromises the better to secure goals that were within the movement's grasp. If, in the end, anarcho-punk has to be accepted as little more than an interesting musical distemper, such a view would appear as less than heretical. Those who rate anarcho-punk's revolutionary merits higher than this will be disappointed that this first biography of Crass is so

keen to suggest that, in refusing to compromise its autonomy, anarcho-punk was its own worst enemy. Despite these and other tendentious conclusions, Berger's book remains an essential read for anyone interested in the headline history of anarchist punk.

An invaluable companion to the biography of Crass is Ian Gasper's *The Day the Country Died*, the second in a trilogy of works documenting the history of British punk rock post-1979. Like its predecessor, *Burning Britain*, this volume offers a fanzine-inspired collection of interviews with the members of dozens of (in this case anarcho-) punk bands, grouped by regional scene. The inexplicable absence of Poison Girls notwithstanding, the oral testimony assembled here provides an often-lucid participant's view of the work of the wider anarcho-punk milieu, which demonstrates just as tellingly the diversity as well as the commonality by which it was defined.

Although light on context and analysis, what the collection hints at throughout is the extent to which – within a militant anti-war, anti-work, 'anti-system' framework – the perception and priorities of the movement's activists differed: something the movement's critics (who were always keen to deride the uniformity of the 'Crass punks') rarely understood. Above all, even though Gasper's attention is fixed firmly on the subculture's musical output, *The Day the Country Died* cumulatively illustrates how simplistic the myth is which insists that Crass simply 'led' an anarcho-punk movement that dutifully 'followed' its directives. Incomplete as both these books might be, they serve as clear evidence that – not before time – a recuperative counter-history of punk is at last beginning to be written.

The Story of Crass by George Berger, published by Omnibus Press, £14.95.

The Day the Country Died: A History of Anarcho-Punk 1980-1984 by Ian Gasper, published by Cherry Red, £14.99.



A Sideways Look

As I get older, I sometimes wonder why I continue to hold anarchist beliefs. Recently, a television programme called *The Trap: What Happened to Our Dream of Freedom* reminded me why I am an anarchist and a revolutionary.

The programme concentrated on the limited version of freedom offered by the liberal democratic model espoused by neo-con and social democrat alike. It showed how much of the dominant ideology of individualism draws from the flawed models of human behaviour used in game theory. I think the myth that people are rotally selfish can be disproved just by looking around you, so I don't intend to dwell on that. However, what was interesting was how little 'liberal democracy' lives up to its name. It is only liberal for markets and corporations, increasingly individual freedoms are curtailed by surveillance and the creep of the information state. And it is only democratic if your choices match the neo-liberal approach on offer.

It's worth remembering that while there are very few reformists about these days, most think they are the pragmatic ones and those of us who advocate revolutionary change are the head-in-the-sky idealists. But there are very few places where reformism is even an option, Venezuela perhaps. Look at recent history. Here, Labour and Tories both pledge 'stability' and that they will stick to each others' plans should Tweedledum take over from Tweedledee. Clinton was elected promising healthcare for all Americans. Hardly a radical step, but a useful reform, that was stopped in its tracks by the people with the real power in the US.

The state's role is to make sure that capitalism can flourish and it operates in the interests of the ruling class. It cannot be used to bring about any form of socialism, because that's not its job. It then follows that if you think change is necessary, and you want that change to be permanent, you cannot reform the state and capitalism.

The International Monetary Fund imposes Structural Adjustment Plans on countries whose economies don't follow the neo-liberal orthodoxy. However, since such conditions were imposed in 1977, the British government have been happy to follow such structural adjustment voluntarily, telling us that 'there is no alternative'.

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What they really mean is that there is no alternative under capitalism, which, of course, is that capitalism relies on – we cannot imagine a better or different system, and revolution is associated with the failures of the past, particularly those in Russia. There are too many risks, better to stick with what we know.

If we break out of this mindset, there is an alternative – an anarchist revolution. It isn't us demanding the impossible, it's those who imagine capitalism can be reformed.

Svartfrosk

Bookworm notes

"From each according to his ability, to each according to his need" is a slogan which captures for many the essence of what communism will look like. That we don't live in a society like that now is obvious. What is less obvious is what our needs are.

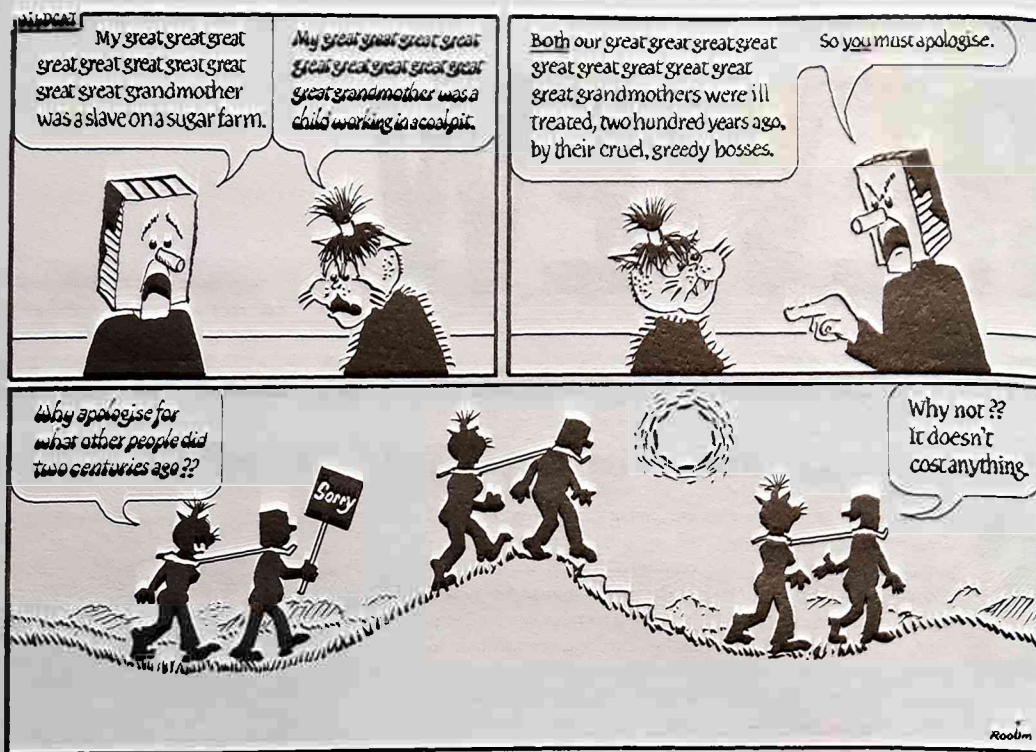
One writer who has consistently addressed human needs, and what happens when these needs are not met, is Richard Sennett. His latest book, *Respect: the formation of character in an age of inequality* (Penguin, £9.99) describes a society where only the few are singled out for recognition, and respect is a rare precious substance. Since, unlike food, respect costs nothing, Sennett asks, why should it be in such short supply? Building on the analysis developed in his *The Hidden Injuries of Class*, Sennett writes sophisticated theory in a conversational style. He is not afraid to draw on his own experiences – whether of growing up in the 'projects' in Chicago, or of his early career as a musician.

By no stretch of the imagination is Richard Sennett an anarchist. It's all too easy to see how the language of respect can be hijacked – not only by George Galloway and his trotskyst chums, but also by New Labour, where 'respect' is pushed up the political agenda precisely because it costs nothing, and diverts attention away from other forms of inequality. For all that, Sennett is worth reading. First, as a reminder that it's possible to write political theory in a way that can be understood by humans. Second, because 'to each according to his need' is something more and something other than proclaiming, 'More stuff for all!'

Imagine if...

Education chief Alan Johnson looked at the latest truancy figures with a startled eye. The former CWU boss, ex-minister of Trade and Industry and member of the Blair 'ultras' was finding it difficult to understand why children were deserting school, with 8.4% of all half-days being registered absent for 2005-6.

"Surely," he asked his aides "they



understand the value of a decent Blairducation?"

His aides looked at each other shifty. Alan, who had always erred on the side of Blairism, had been slipping into smurf-speak for a while now, so obsessed was he with the new labour leader. One of them took courage and explained the situation.

"Well not really sir, our policies haven't been pulling them in like they used to." He didn't quite have the courage to point out that their disastrous academies – where much of the recent rise had appeared – political manoeuvring to try and privatise or PFI the school system, rising levels of authoritarianism, excessive, constantly changing demands and above all, rising levels of poverty and debt in the lower stratas of society combined with the lowest levels of social mobility seen in half a century were not the best way to instil enthusiasm, or even acquiescence, in children.

"Well, what can we Blair about this? My arse is on the Blair here and Tony hates cockups."

A busily reflective silence followed. An enterprising aide, translating fast, ventured, "Can we blame it on Asbo kids? It usually works wonders."

Alan stared, and then broke into a wide grin. "That, my lad, is a Blair idea."

The quiz

1. Who was Mario Buda and what is he credited with inventing?
2. The Zabalaza Anarchist Communist Federation is an anarchist group in South Africa and Swaziland. What does 'zabalaza' mean?
3. How were Dennis Warren and Eric Tomlinson better known?
4. What was the Montjuich trial and how was it avenged?

Answers on page 6

Listings

10th April Blockade Aldermaston, with planning/training on Monday 9th April followed by blockade and vigil on 10th, see tridentploughshares.org to find out more

11th April Brixton riot film night at 7.30pm, 192 Warham Street (off Camberwell Road), London SE5, to celebrate 26th anniversary of the first great Brixton riot, to find out more see 56a.org.uk/warhamfilm.html

12th April Grand National demo at Aintree to protest against the cruelty of the Grand National and horse racing in general, meet 12 noon opposite the main entrance to the Aintree Racecourse on the A59, for more information see veggies.org.uk/event.php?ref=995

28th April to 1st May i07 conference in Paris, details at cnt-f.org.
 11th to 13th May SchNEWS Alternative Media Conference, a coming together of independent media with discussions, screenings, stalls, practical workshops, plus the obligatory messy party on the Saturday night, at the Cowley Club,

12 London Road, Brighton, see schnews.org

12th May Southampton Cruelty Free Festival, with an emphasis on fair trade, organic and sweatshop-free items, from 11am to 6pm at Southampton Guildhall, for details email info@sarconline.co.uk or see crueltyfreefestival.com

18th May Save Titnore Woods benefit to raise funds for the protest camp and campaign near Worthing to stop a shopping and housing development on woodland, from 7pm to 11pm at The Rooms, Western Road, St Leonards, one minute from Warrior Square station, email squirtybottles@yahoo.co.uk or see protectourwoodland.co.uk for info

18th to 20th May Projectile, a festival of anarchist film, culture and ideas at Star and Shadow Cinema, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, see projectile.org.uk for details
 6th to 8th June G8 Summit at Heiligendamm on the north coast of Germany near Rostock, for more see wombles.org.uk/article200609109.php

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