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INDYMEDIA UNPLUGGED

Earlier this month Indymedia's servers were taken, and then returned, without a word of explanation. Now the media group are afraid what might be in there, finds Rob Ray.

Internet news wire group Indymedia UK have been forced to leave their two main servers closed down amid fears of tampering. Much of Indymedia's online network went down last week when a world-wide FBI operation seized servers across three continents without explanation. Two UK servers were returned on the 14th of October after a legal challenge.

Given the sensitive nature of the servers' contents, including details of hundreds of writers and volunteers, as well as legal documentation, Indymedia are loath to bring them back online until the system has been checked for hidden spy ware and virus hacks. Clara, from Indymedia UK, said: "When a server has been compromised it's standard procedure, so it will take some time until all sites are up and running.

"We have most sites up but some have different software and we still don't have the archives. Getting it all working and retrieving the archives are our priorities at the moment."

Up to one million articles are thought to be offline, including 1,000 hours of audio footage and two years' worth of archived written work.

The FBI won't say why they took the servers, save that it was done under a Mutual Legal Assistance Treaty (MLAT) on behalf of the Italian and Swiss governments.

Indymedia lawyers are trying to explore the specific legalities of the case,

but haven't found the legal framework to back their work, according to Clara: "We need to follow up on how far the UK authorities were involved. Someone gave a warrant so they definitely were involved and if the Home Office agreed there are a lot of questions. We need to get the court order issued in the US, and Italy was involved so we need to get the order from Italy.

Although the court order originally came from the Italian city of Bologna, Indymedia have started a campaign to collect support for an enquiry from local MPs.

"Questions have been asked in Parliament, there are MEPs who want to know about it. For us it's a highly political issue and needs to be discussed at a political level."

So far fifteen MPs have signed a petition to force the Home Office to give an explanation of what has happened. So far the only comment has been from Home Office minister Carol Clint, who said the UK government was not involved and therefore has no need to comment.

Although no specific information has been given on the cause of the seizure, both governments are rumoured to have their reasons. Swiss authorities recently complained about Indymedia running photos of two undercover agents. The pair, who had themselves been photographing protesters in France when they were caught on camera, originally went up on Nantes Indymedia last month. The Italian government have repeatedly tried to link Italy's Indymedia to Anarchist group FAI, as part of a general crackdown on 'violent direct action anarchists'.



Both the International Federation of Journalists and the UK's own National Union of Journalists have condemned the move as an incredible attack on press freedom.

The implication of these events – that 'national' governments can now seize property at will regardless of borders, is being regarded as a new and ominous

threat to publishing freedom as it opens the door for completely unaccountable seizures of material.

Conceivably, a member of any branch of UK government or intelligence could have a quiet word with their opposite number in Italy about a server, archive, etc. they need to get hold of.

The Italian government could issue

an MLAT request for it through the US, who could then send in the FBI, unbound by any law of sovereignty, to seize the item. Back in the UK, there is no need for the government to comment, as it is not a UK issue and did not involve UK personnel. Neither the US nor Italian governments have any cause or reason to comment as we are not their problem.

ENDLESS SHIT FLINGING

After the events surrounding the ESF we felt we needed to comment somehow on what had happened, but SchNEWS have already published this brilliant article so we've decided to re-print it in full...

Thousands of people from more than seventy countries came to a very wet London last weekend to take part in the European Social Forum (ESF) and the various autonomous events across the capital. They came to see if 'another world is possible', yet as expected, last weekend was hijacked by people whose vision seems seriously at odds with many people involved in grassroots politics.

An article about the way the Socialist Workers Party operates is hardly news. With its paid officials, the biggest leftist grouping in the UK often try to take control of new movements to feed their

recruitment drives, continually wearing different hats and setting up front groups to try and catch the protest mood of the moment. Obsessed with the tradition of marching from A to B ending with us all having to listen to boring speeches from MPs, they are antipathy of the direct action anti-capitalist movement.

With the rise of this movement they invented Globalise Resistance, and quickly dominated the Stop the War Coalition which was big on marches but crap on civil disobedience. One of their leaders Lindsay German has actually described direct action as 'elitist'.

So, it's no surprise that they quickly took control of the organising of the ESF, presenting people with a stark choice – either go along with what 'the unions' want, or they withdraw their funding and the ESF will not happen. A coalition

of the major UK trade justice and environmental NGOs complained in a letter that they had been keen to get involved in the organising of the ESF "but have found it difficult to do so because of the lack of transparency and openness." Autonomous, non-hierarchical, groups were also amongst those excluded. This hijacking also meant that the goodwill that these events need to thrive began to evaporate.

GLArse

This disenchantment with the way the ESF had been hijacked, eventually boiled over with the storming of the podium on Saturday evening which prevented the Mayor of London, Ken Livingstone from speaking. Livingstone is a prominent member of the Labour Party – the party that took us to war

against Iraq and who recently announced that people should cross a tube workers' picket line. But his Greater London Authority sponsored the event so of course he got to speak. A leading SWP hack Alex Callinicos complained about the "thuggish behaviour" of the "black bloc" and "small and unrepresentative groups that had been consistently hostile both to the ESF itself and to the coalition that brought it to London."

Meanwhile Lee Jasper from the National Assembly Against Racism and a Livingstone sidekick, tried to play the race card against those who stormed the stage.

The reality was that the action seemed to have the support of the majority of the thousand-strong audience after the occupiers explained why they were doing it.

Wombling Free?

Outside of the ESF, those involved in the autonomous zones were facing constant police harassment. Squatters complained that the ESF had increased police pressure and surveillance on them. One SchNEWS bod who joined a demo said "Around thirty cyclists and fifty samba drummers visited climate change criminals on Friday as part of a Rising Tide organised demo ...

accompanied by around 150 police, six vans and the usual photographers. Nice to know we present such a threat to civilisation. If there is ever a terrorist plot in the UK we'll be okay as long as they parade through London dressed in pink!"

Then of course there's the Met Police's unhealthy obsession with the

Home and away

FREEDOM

Volume 65 Number 21

Anarchism

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

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

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

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

Angel Alley

Our apologies to anyone who received their last issue of Freedom late or had to pay excess postage. This was due to a mix-up with the paper, but we've had a word with our printers and it won't happen again.

We desperately need people to help with our mailout. It's pretty boring, stuffing and stamping envelopes, but it does have to be done and Jayne often has to do it alone so if you can help out please email copy@freedompress.org.uk or write to the address below.

Also we could do with a hand on our stall at the Anarchist Bookfair on the 27th November, and with boxing up books to take beforehand, so please get in touch if you'd like to help out. We'll also be holding a meeting there so look forward to seeing you.

Any news about grassroots struggles in your area or workplace, or anything else of interest to anarchists? Please write a story about it and send to our copy address!

Happy Hallowe'en ...

Donations

PA, \$10; RG, £10; DJB, £5.

Please keep those donations coming ...

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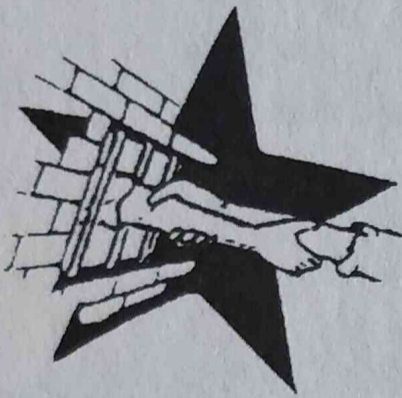
Next issue

Contributions are wanted for future Freedoms. The next issue will be dated 13th November 2004 and the last day to get your copy to us will be Thursday 4th November (see contact details above for where to send your letters/articles). If you are interested in writing regularly for Freedom we want to hear from you!

News from the inside

Freedom for prisoners

As many of you may know, Freedom provides free subscriptions to anyone in prison. If you have friends or family in prison, or regularly write to a prisoner, if they are interested we will be happy to send them a free sample issue or sub.



If you are a prisoner yourself we can provide subs to any of your fellow inmates if they wish. Please also feel free to write to us with any news about your imprisonment, developments in your case, requests for penpals or anything else!

New anti-repression magazine

325 is a new anti-repression, anti-prison, anti-psychiatry, and pro-insurrectionary magazine. The first issue contains articles on squatting in Portugal, the Campaign Against Prison Slavery, prisoner support, the Clairvaux prison mutiny, and much, much more. Contact 325collective@hush.com

Dispatch from Jeff 'free' Luers

I have struggled with writing this for the last several weeks. In fact, I'm staring

at several of the previous attempts in front of me as I try to find the words I need to say. Forgive my lapses in these dispatches. I've been doing them for a year now. I have strived to inspire people with my words. At times, I have tried to inspire action. However, the majority of the time I have tried to inspire you to look within your self and see your true strength and power-to find the courage to be free.

Too often, we accept the roles forced upon us whether they be stereotypes or the obligations of a content citizen. Sometimes, we create our own role to hide behind, afraid to face our true selves or our fears. The walls can be built so thick we can almost forget we have become guided by pain or fear.

In my life, I have been guilty of both and on more than one occasion. In fact,

I am guilty right now. I feel an obligation to every person out there who looks up to me or admires me. I feel an obligation to a movement that expects its political prisoners to stand strong in the face of all adversity.

Many of the decisions I have made in the last four years I have made because of these obligations.

A friend of mine recently said to me, "What people don't get is there is the image of 'Free' the world sees and then there is the guy I'm walking the track with."

I have dedicated my entire adult life to the struggles I believe in. My sense of honour demands no less and despite all of my failures, personal and political, I am proud of myself. It's a personal victory. I found the courage to be me.

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LISTINGS

Bristol

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

London

Until 7th November Grin and Blair It: ten years of political cartoons at the Mall Galleries, SW1. For more info see www.cartoontrust.org.uk

4th November Campaign against Climate Change rally for the planet, two days after the US election, assemble 6pm Lincoln's Inn Fields (Holborn tube) for march to US embassy. If Bush wins we will stage a Global Funeral March, if Kerry wins we will demand he take action on climate now! See www.campaigncc.org or call 020 8855 3327 or 07903 316331

27th November Anarchist Bookfair at ULU, Malet Street, WC1 from 10am to 7pm. See www.anarchistbookfair.org

28th November 'Robert E. Grant, the man who told Darwin the theory of evolution', a lecture by Donald Room at the Ethical Society Library, Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, WC1, at 11am.

Newcastle

10th to 12th December Projectile: a festival of anarchist film and culture,

exploring the past, present, and future of anarchism. Also help needed with organising, at the Side Cinema. See www.projectile.org.uk

Somerset

23rd November Open meeting with talks, video and discussion, 7.30 pm Minster Rooms, Ilminster (behind the Dolphin Pub) £2. For info call 01460 53165 or see www.southsomersetpeace.infoaction.org.uk

International

26th December International Pizza Punk Day, mark this day in your calendar to practise the ancient arts of mutual aid, voluntary association and, of course, vegan pizza making workshops. See www.eroding.org.uk/pizzapunx.htm
6th July 2005 Global Day of Action at the opening day of the G8 Summit www.agp.org or www.dissent.org.uk

Nationwide groups

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

Box 36, 84b Whitechapel High Street, London E1 7QX

www.antifa.org.uk

Class War Federation

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

Dissent

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

Earth First!

Ecological direct action network
www.earthfirst.org.uk

Industrial Workers of the World

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

Solidarity Federation

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

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

Social Centres

Autonomous Centre of Edinburgh (ACE)
17 West Montgomery Place, Edinburgh
www.autonomous.org.uk
The Cowley Club
12 London Road, Brighton BN1 4JA
www.cowleyclub.org.uk

Freedom

84b Whitechapel High Street, London E1 7QX

www.freedompress.org.uk

Kebele

14 Robertson Road, Easton, Bristol BS5 6JY

www.kebele.org

Lancaster Resource Centre (LaRC)

The Basement, 78a Penny Street, Lancaster

www.eco-action.org/lancaster

London Action Resource Centre (LARC)

62 Fieldgate Street, London E1
www.londonlarc.org

Printworks Social Centre

58 Albion Street, Glasgow
www.glasgow-autonomy.org

The Rampart

7a Rampart Street, London E1
SUMAC Centre

245 Gladstone Street, Nottingham NG7 6HX

www.veggies.org.uk/rainbow/

1in12 Club

21-23 Albion Street, Bradford, West Yorkshire, BD1 2LY

www.1in12.com

56a Infoshop

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



Continuing this exclusive series of cartoons for Freedom. You can get Isy's zine from www.activedistribution.org

News

In Brief

One Third the Man

Over the course of the ongoing dispute between Stansted baggage handlers and their contractor employers Servisair it has emerged that one worker is worth three bosses. Around 600 employees walked out in a 48-hour action on the 23rd and 24th September complaining of unreasonable new working practices introduced in February (which reduced break times in between periods of heavy physical labour), in addition to the suspension of a shop steward and the manipulation of disciplinary procedures against him. Although the company claims to be unconcerned by the action; claiming it had caused 'minimum disruption', regional union organisers have a different story, asserting that "it takes three managers to do the work of one baggage handler on strike days". It had been long suspected that shuffling paperwork and typing all day would build a strong breed of super-manager ready to scab in place of real workers at a moments notice, but apparently not. I suspect that Freedom readers will be sympathetic to the plight of these poor suits carrying out this back breaking labour on a cold Stansted runway – happy weekend boys.

Contractors Mess with Cleaners

Cleaners and porters at Birmingham's Heartlands Hospital have voted to stage a strike next month in response to an inadequate pay offer by contractors Initial Hospital Services. With cleaners offered an eight pence hourly increase which has been described as 'insulting' and porters getting no increase at all, this deal will see the gap between agency cleaners and those employed directly by the NHS trust grow to over 16%. Typically IHS have worked tirelessly to lie their way round the problem, first by claiming that this offer will give workers 'pay parity' with NHS colleagues (which obviously it doesn't) and issuing a heart-string-tugging plea for staff to accept the deal because "Any industrial action would be disruptive for the hospital and would cause unnecessary anxiety for patients." It is unknown where IHS's concern for the sick of Birmingham was when they were busy dreaming up their derisory contract.

One Law for us, no Law for Them

Is Jack Straw for or against a corporate manslaughter law? After reports emerged of an alliance between the treasury and the foreign office against the legislation, both departments were quick to claim that they weren't in full support of murderer-bosses. Apparently Straw simply has concerns that the law could potentially be used against government ministers, implying that the criticism levelled at the Foreign Office after telling holidaymakers that Bali was safe could have seen him in the dock under the new law. The way round such accountability seems to be in the semantics. One option being discussed is to distinguish between policy advice and factual advice, with only the latter facing potential litigation. With the new law already targeting companies not directors (so the fat controller won't go to jail if his train hits a school bus) and already pretty low on the government's priority list, Freedom can see further nails being

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Civil servants strike

As civil servants prepare to strike we should be ready to stand alongside them, says Richard Griffin

Over 265,000 civil servants, members of Public and Commercial Services union are expected to strike in defence of jobs and services on 5th November following a 2 to 1 vote in favour of action. The dispute, as previously reported in Freedom, follows Gordon Brown's announcement earlier this year to axe 104,000 civil servant jobs in the name of 'efficiency'. Ironically most of these jobs have been created by New Labour itself since it came into power. Brown's real agenda is to pull the rug from under the Tories who also see the cutting of public service jobs as an easy way to save money and reduce taxes. Neither New Labour nor the Tories care about the people who the cuts will hit – the poor, the old, the disabled and vulnerable. Cuts damage services but they buy votes.

PCS general secretary Mark Serwotka described the government's tactics as 'slash and burn'. He said: "the people going on strike aren't faceless bureaucrats but people providing essential services that are consistently taken for granted". The lie put forward to all the main parties is cutting civil servant jobs mean fewer Sir Humphreys in Whitehall. In fact few central government jobs are going. It is frontline services that will be hit.

The strike – the biggest civil service dispute in a generation is expected to disrupt a large number of government services including the issuing of driving licences and passports, the collection of taxes and payment of benefits.

Like the fire fighters before them, the

government is preparing, in the words of The Financial Times "to face down" the strike. The union's decision not to organise an all out stoppage plays straight into the states' hands. A one day action amounts to little more than a token protest. While services will be disrupted the impact on the government will be minimal. Union members though will lose a days' pay and feel they have achieved little. Militants in the PCS are calling for prolonged action and solidarity from other workers.

This timid and half hearted approach is also seen in the public service unions' approach to government attempts in education, health, local government and the civil service to cut worker's pension rights. In response to plans to cut pension benefits and raise the retirement age of workers, rather than coordinating industrial action across the public sector unions instead are organising a lobby of Parliament! This is pathetic. Queuing up to spend ten minutes talking to your MP (average earnings: £140,000) is worse than useless.

There is real anger about the attack on workers' pensions. Unions should be building on this, particularly as we move towards an election next spring. The last thing Labour wants to see is teachers, nurses, care workers, fire fighters and refuse collectors on the picket line united to protect their pensions. Instead all the TUC has managed is one march in London last summer and a lobby of Parliament. No wonder the government feels confident that it can ride the issue out. Part of the



problem of course is the unions' close ties with Labour. At the end of the day many union bosses would prefer to compromise their members' interests than rock the boat and risk Labour losing votes from Daily Mail readers.

The anarchist movement with a few notable exceptions seems to be increasingly distancing itself from the labour movement. This is a mistake. While official trade unions are never going to overthrow capitalism, anarchists must

engage more with workers, particularly those in disputes. As Freedom has reported on numerous occasions, workers – from radiographers in the NHS saying no to pay cuts, to baggage handlers at Gatwick airport, to soap workers in Glasgow, to FE lecturers in Blackburn – are increasingly standing up to their bosses including the state. They deserve our support and solidarity. Make sure you spend bonfire day on a picket line!

Endless Shit Flinging

▶ page 1

Wombles who eventually decided to hire a venue after the cops promised to evict any squatted social space they tried to take. This harassment led to some arrests on their way to the anti war demo at Trafalgar Square. Worse was to come for Javier Ruiz from the London Indymedia collective, who spoke at both autonomous and official ESF events. Javier went to the stage at the end of the anti war march to try and announce that there would be a demo in support of those nicked. The

stewards refused, a scuffle broke out, and the police were eventually called for by the stewards and he was beaten and nicked.

Does any of this matter? Or does this have all the Monty Pythonesque hallmarks of the 'Judean People's Front', something SchNEWS has been trying to avoid for the past ten years. Well, the autonomous spaces newspaper reckons it matters "Many people believe that the process of organising the ESF is just as important as the event itself ... the social forum passes by in a whirlwind

of packed schedules crammed into just a few days, yet the organising process takes almost a full year. It's in this process that the real opportunity to build networks and solidarity lies. And yet it is this process which has been so flawed, and which has contributed directly to the creation of the Autonomous Spaces."

Another unhappy lot were Babels, the international volunteer translators. "Many opportunities of experimentation and innovation have been missed out on during the organisation of this forum resulting in the exclusion of many. This is in total contradiction to the Porto Allegre (where the first World Social Forum took place) charter. Instead, the London ESF has employed classical neoliberal organisation, management and service delivery, with the result that the form has been totally dependent on the state. This has had disastrous consequence for the development of our movement."

SchNEWS isn't in the business of squabbling, and our strapline has always been 'don't listen to us, but go out there and see things for yourself. We've been trying to build bridges, not by imposing what we think is right but by offering

skills and solidarity to anyone who's fighting for a better world. But the actions of the SWP ruling elite push this tolerance to a limit.

Of course not everything is black and white. Anarchists can forget about the real world and become obsessed with lifestyle politics and hairstyles. Not everyone in the SWP is bad, just like many people in trade unions aren't bad. On the Friday we had a SchNEWS stall at the official ESF Alexandra Palace and chatted to some brilliant people and there were some amazing speakers and discussions. But as so often, the very people that help build new movements of struggle, are bypassed, vilified and their ideas corrupted and turned into ineffective protest in order to build yet another dead-end party (Let's call this new one Respect). If Another World is Possible, SchNEWS hopes we aren't just gonna replace it with one bunch of political cronies for another.

For more on how the ESF was hijacked
www.enrager.net/features/esf/

Taken from SchNEWS 470. For more info see
www.schnews.org.uk



News

The Iraqi killing fields

Blair's use of Iraqi mass graves to defend war exposes his hypocrisy, argues Iain McKay

US investigators uncovered the bodies of hundreds of Kurdish men, women and children in the first forensic exhumation of a mass grave in Iraq. This was part of a \$75m (about £42m)

programme to draw up detailed forensic, photographic and written evidence of the regime's atrocities. "It is my personal opinion that this is a killing field," said Greg Kehoe, a former US federal prosecutor who spent five years working on the war crimes tribunal in the Balkans and who is leading the excavation team.

Needless to say, Blair seized on this discovery to defend his war. Yet while this shows the brutality of Saddam's regime it also exposes the hypocrisy of the US and UK. The victims of these killing fields have been identified as Kurds who were killed in late 1987 or early 1988. At this time both Britain and the US had close relations with Saddam's regime, supporting and arming it while it was conducting its crimes against humanity.

So why should we believe that the UK and US suddenly care deeply for the Iraqi people they helped enslave and kill in the '80s? Given that the occupying forces have been busy dictating to and killing (not to mention torturing) Iraqis since the invasion last year, it seems unlikely that either state has changed its mind. The invasion of Iraq has nothing to do with Saddam's evil. That is only a cover for the kind of imperialist self-interest which resulted in support for Saddam when he was filling the killing fields now used to justify the US occupation. And which results in the US habitually bombing towns and cities across Iraq in an attempt to impose its will today.

If morality is the key to the occupation of Iraq, how can we explain Britain's ambassador to Uzbekistan being withdrawn? His increasingly outspoken attacks on the country's human rights record has resulted in the Foreign Office recalling him hours after Uzbek officials made clear they wanted rid of him. Uzbekistan's autocratic head of state has authorised the construction of one of the region's largest US military bases, meaning that (like Saddam in the 1980s) his human rights record is of no concern. His regime ruthlessly oppresses political opponents and Islamic groups, using torture as a standard technique to extract information. British intelligence agents have routinely accepted such information from Uzbek security forces, knowing that it had been obtained by torture.

So much for the moral case for the war. It has gone the same way as the legal case, and the second UN resolution that Blair promised the British people he would have before going to war.

While Blair reiterates that he is not sorry about regime change in Iraq, the

problem for him is that regime change is illegal. That is why Downing Street explicitly denied that was the rationale for the invasion. If Saddam complied with the UN resolution to disarm then he could remain in power, asserted Blair. Yet, of course, Blair had told Bush he supported regime change long before this piece of theatre, and subsequently selected and manipulated the presentation of 'intelligence' to bolster that commitment. So Blair lied about the desire for regime change just as surely as he lied by sexing-up the intelligence to appear solid when he knew it was not.

Yet, in spite of all the evidence, Blair argues that acted in good faith and apologies for the 'wrong' information he used to sell his war. Is Blair really saying that the British public would have supported his war if he had published the intelligence in its un-sexed up form? Ignoring the sexing-up of this 'wrong' information, the question arises of why he has not acted against those who provided the misleading information. Instead all the key players in preparing the dodgy dossiers are to be rewarded in a special honours list. John Scarlett received a promotion. Obviously this is what taking 'responsibility' means these days.

Blair is adamant that if he knew then what he knows now, he would still have gone to war. He berated Charles Kennedy, saying that if the leader of the Liberal Democrats "had had his way" Saddam "would still be running Iraq. And that was why I took the stand that I did." In other words, if there had been clear proof that Saddam had disarmed, Blair would have invaded anyway. As well as being utterly illegal in international law, it shows that the UN resolutions were nothing more than a public relations exercise, and that the UN was considered either a rubber stamp or an irrelevance.

Ironically, Saddam had complied with the UN resolutions. He had disarmed. And by March 2003 we had additional information on the WMD question thanks to the UN inspectors. This demonstrated definitively that there was something wrong with the intelligence Bush and Blair said they had. The inspectors were not finding any weapons and they were not being denied access to any sites. Hans Blix's team had completed over four hundred inspections of over three hundred sites in Iraq, and found no WMD. So by the time of the war it was apparent that the UK/US intelligence about Iraqi WMD was rubbish and, moreover, that Saddam was taking active steps to comply with the UN resolution. Bush and Blair denied what was obvious to the rest of the planet and invaded anyway.

Bush and Blair rushed to war because they were quickly running out of pretences. After the first UN resolution



the general expectation was that Saddam Hussein would not co-operate, and consequently there would be war. He co-operated. Then the UN inspectors found nothing. So Bush warned the inspectors to get out and invaded a desert nation in the spring. The media was soon reporting on the heat's deleterious effect on the troops. Eight months later a desert invasion would

have occurred at an obviously more advantageous time, as winter approached. But by then, we would have known what we know now: There was no reason to invade. Saddam had no weapons.

So what is it to be? Was the war conducted over WMD? If so, why is Blair so adamant he would repeat his actions with the knowledge he has

now? If it was regime change, then Blair should at least acknowledge that he lied to the people he claims to represent, resign, and get himself ready to be tried for war crimes. But Blair's contradictions simply show that his absurd predicament is of his own making: trying to present imperialism with a legal or moral face is doomed to failure.

A rocket from Iraq

On the Channel 4 News at 7pm on Tuesday 5th October 2004, footage is shown from a cockpit video filmed from a US Air Force Falcon over the streets of Fallujah, Iraq in April. We see everything the dialogue refers to.

The pilot reports sighting a 'target' – a crowd of 'individuals' running around a corner and down a street (there were perhaps twenty people). He asks: "Should I take 'em out?"

With no hesitation, and no attempt to identify who these 'individuals' might be, his controller says within one second, "Take 'em out".

The rocket electronics are locked on to the target, and within thirty seconds we see the explosion 'taking 'em out' (accompanied by the pilot's exclamation of exhilaration).

The news item concludes firstly with confirmation (including part of an interview with an English-speaking

Iraqi doctor from the hospital the bodies were taken to) of their status as civilians – including women and children – running away from a building where they had been pinned down by US Army sniper fire. Finally a Pentagon spokesman confirms that this was indeed from a genuine USAF cockpit video from Fallujah, shot in April 2004.

It took the US government well over 24 hours to cobble together an 'explanation' for the Falcon video revelations. Apparently the pilot's ground commander saw the motley bunch of civilians coming round the corner and running down the middle of the street a couple of hundred yards away from his position. He assumed these must be 'insurgents' who had reportedly left a building way out of his sightlines – hence his unequivocal command.

The Pentagon gofer relayed this lame

story in an embarrassed tone, and it's no wonder. Perhaps the insurgents inexplicably forgot the basic tenets of urban warfare in failing to stick to cover. Or maybe they naïvely believed that surrounding themselves with women and children would suffice to protect them – given their previous experience of the level of US respect for civilian status.

Not convinced? Me neither – but a question that remains is the source of the video leak in the first place. Just a low-level whistleblower? It's possible. But the instantaneous confirmation of the video's authenticity, coupled with the pathetic – not to mention belated and half-hearted – excuse, suggests a more general climate of disaffection in the armed forces towards what's being asked of them in Iraq. Don't hold your breath for a soldiers mutiny, though ...

Tom Jennings

Feature

The miners' strike

The strike of 1984/85 was a high point of British class struggle, but how did anarchists contribute and how did it affect them?

Ben Franks is a lecturer in Social and Political Philosophy at the Crichton Campus of the University of Glasgow in Dumfries. He is currently researching the impact of the miners' strike on British anarchism. He is the author of the forthcoming book *Rebel Alliances: The means and ends of contemporary anarchism* (Dark Star and AK Press). His work sheds light of the state of the anarchist movement and raises interesting questions about its future direction. Freedom interviewed Ben over the summer.

You argue that while anarchists did not have any impact on the direction of the miners' strike itself, their reaction to it did have a major impact on the movement itself. Can you explain how and why?

It's not that anarchists had 'no impact', but that their involvement was relatively minor, certainly in comparison to other political movements. In terms of personnel, resources and influence the left-wing of social democracy (the then strong Labour left), the official trade union movement, like the NUM and even other competing revolutionary traditions to anarchism such as Leninism (the SWP for instance) were far more significant movements in the Miners Strike. Anarchists, however, did have an impact.

So although some who identified with anarchism were enormously creative and enthusiastic in their engagement with the strikers, in terms of the strike as a whole anarchism was not a major force. The strike, nonetheless, did have a major impact on anarchism. Anarchism in Britain at that time was largely influenced by individualism, with a corresponding link into pacifism.

But there is another way of looking at the question of the role of anarchism. This alternative form of analysis considers 'anarchism', not in terms of the actions of those who identify themselves as such (the activists), but as a set of anti-hierarchical, social practices carried out by oppressed subjects in resistance to domination.

As Albert Meltzer points out in his autobiography, there are clear parallels between the types of supportive social structures built by the strikers, their families and their supporters, and the methods extolled by anarchists. This is despite the fact that the horizontal, decentralised structures such as the food kitchens, the picketing rotas, Women Against Pit Closures groups, the local support centres and the direct action hit squads, rarely contained anyone who identified themselves as an 'anarchist'.

How effective and active were anarchists in actually supporting striking miners? In your research on the strike you only found one reference in non-anarchist literature to the involvement of anarchists in the dispute and that was in Ian MacGregor's autobiography! How much did anarchists do?

First anarchists were involved in fundraising for the miners' cause; Clydeside anarchists alone raised £6,000 for strikers' groups. There were also, as Ian Bone reminds me, gigs by the likes of Crass at the Colosseum in Aberdare, at which punks and miners mingled. Mates tell me of the activities of regional groups such as those in Sunderland and Sheffield, which also raised money and morale with their local activities, but as is often the case with such localised actions there are, perhaps wisely, few written records.

Anarcho-syndicalists raised money from fellow members of the International Workers' Association (IWA) for the miners' cause. The British section of the IWA, the Direct Action Movement, also organised a conference along with Burnley Miners' Support Group, at which NUM General Secretary Peter Heathfield appeared. This conference's aim was to 'improve the effectiveness of the strike'.

Further Class War encouraged direct action against the bosses, scabs and state not just in the coalfields, but in non-mining areas, to stretch police resources further. Their encouragement of physical direct action, earned anarchists the enmity of the National Coal Board boss Ian MacGregor.

I doubt I can review anarchist involvement in the Miners' Strike without mentioning those strikers who were also anarchists like Dave Douglass, who, as the recent BBC 2 documentary showed (*The Miners' Strike*, BBC2, Tuesday 27th January, 2004) were at the forefront of the hit squads.

Dave's role is well known both in anarchist and mining areas, certainly if the discussions I had with Durham NUM members were anything to go by. Anarchists who recognised that the use of anti-hierarchical force was (and is) an essential part of certain libertarian tactics, won support within mining areas. This increased the self-confidence of class struggle anarchists., Class War for instance were still referring to the reception they received from miners at the Durham gala in their publications fifteen years later.

In what ways did the miners' strike highlight tensions within the anarchist movement between what you have described as 'individualists' and class war anarchists? Were these resolved at the end of the dispute?



In some ways the conflicts between individualist and class struggle anarchists are ultimately insoluble. Genuine, consistent individualists believe that the ultimate source of knowledge is the abstract ego. As a result their politics is about self-emancipation. As long as they are individually free it does not matter if others remain exploited. Individualism is inherently hierarchical, it places the egoist's 'self' at the top. After all, their perceptions are the ultimate source of knowledge. All other egos – that is to say, the rest of us – have the same value as each other. It is the worst kind of shapeless egalitarianism, one that ignores the inequalities of power which mould us, and against which we define ourselves.

In addition, as individualism is based on the idea that as each individual has identical moral worth, then it holds that no one should have the right to force their will on to another. Individualists consequently tend to accept models based on the contractual relationships of free market capitalism. Coercion of any sort is condemned as 'violence', even/especially if it is the

economically subjugated acting against the agents of oppression – hence individualism's link to pacifism.

What Murray Bookchin tended to classify as 'social' anarchism, but is sometimes referred to as 'class struggle' anarchism, recognises that the 'self' is not fixed, that our identities – for instance, the way we see ourselves – are tied to external factors. These forces which influence our self-perceptions would include, for instance the ways that friends or strangers, lovers or enemies treat us and the judicial, economic and educational forces that discipline us. So liberation for socialists requires liberated social structures.

The Miners' Strike therefore helped to polarise the following four major areas of differences.

- 1) Individualists accept the 'right' of management to maintain its employment contracts, whilst class struggle anarchists saw these contracts as being the product of, and extending, unequal power relations.
- 2) Contracts for individualists are models of consensual behaviour, whilst for class struggle anarchists,

they are coercive as they rely on the threat of redundancy and poverty, as well as heteronomous (external) forces for their enforcement.

- 3) Individualists condemned the actions of the pickets in resisting managerial and state control as 'violence'. Class struggle anarchists accept that such violence by the oppressed is justified when it interferes with the dominant groups' disproportionate power – and as a result such acts of resistance are celebrated rather than condemned.
- 4) Class struggle anarchists regard liberatory social actions to be specific to certain agents in given situations. That is to say liberation is as the act of the oppressed themselves resisting their oppression. Individualists, such as Freedom's own cartoonist Donald Room, make no such discrimination, and are consequently dismissive of categories such as 'class', despite such categories indicating shared oppressions and possible routes of solidarity.

This interview will be continued in the next issue of Freedom.

Editorial

The two traditions I am talking about are both central parts of the current anarchist scene, and can be summarised as 'protest anarchism' and 'class struggle anarchism'. This editorial is not designed to begin or win an argument between the two, but instead is an attempt to think aloud and clarify some ideas about what anarchism means these days.

Anarchism is not a theory? It only exists where people are actually taking direct action – and so the different struggles we have seen in the last fifty years have left us with two traditions. From the 1950s to the 1980s anarchism existed partly as a current within workplace and community movements (where people tried to take control and better their own lives), and partly within the peace and anti-colonial movements (where people struggled to stop the British state committing atrocities abroad). Since workplace struggle was defeated and diverted during the 1970-80s we are left with just our protest movements. It is thus no surprise that most anarchists in the UK today started off in single-issue protest of one sort or another, and that it is in these campaigns that anarchist methods are the most vibrant? Whether the protests are green, peace or animal liberation, sooner or later the tactics of the liberal campaigners are shown to be inadequate, and a direct action, anarchist-influenced, strand develops.

The protest movements themselves are going through a period of great change. The 'anti-capitalist movement' of the late 1990s and 2000s is mainly about the existing protest movements moving on to the terrain of class struggle – facing up to capitalism and having to develop our politics accordingly. The good news is this has given rise to a more mature movement that yet retains a strong bond with the Earth and with our fellow animals. The bad news is that so far this 'movement' has not gone further than doing actions against aspects of capitalism; the general system of work, control and destruction that surrounds us is not a single issue that can be stopped through the harassment of certain companies or meetings. So for the time being direct action in these islands is a tool mainly for preventing the worst from happening, e.g. by stopping GM technology or protesting a rush to war. The reason this happens is partly because of the sheer volume of dodginess that the British state and companies are involved and also because there are few people with the time or resources to get heavily involved with campaigning. This can leave many of us with the role of professional activist, ready to take direct action to save a community on the other side of the globe, but clueless to use it to save ourselves. The two traditions of anarchism both spring from reality, are entwined together, and need each other. In many cases the two have come together and become very effective (examples include the Reclaim the Streets support for the sacked Liverpool Dockers in 1997, or the Earth First! actions for the Brighton bin strikers in 2001). For pressing reasons, such as the survival of the planet, protest cannot be abandoned, but community and workplace struggles are also on the increase all around us, and with the narrowing of traditional politics, direct action is needed more than ever. Empowerment is a theme common to both traditions of anarchism, and protests like those planned against the G8 Summit in 2005 are only useful if they increase our general ability to take and hold control over our own lives.

Commentary

God squad

Alfred Todd should be aware that here in Torfaen (Gwent, South Wales) I am really trying my best to spread the idea of an 'egalitarian, non-hierarchical society' and indeed to relate to the common humanity of other people as I find them.

Unfortunately, here, a group of right-wing (police funded) Baptist Christian fundamentalists are too busy driving their 'Chariot of Fire' bus around our estates telling teenagers about the evils of having sex, using contraceptives, being gay, having abortions, etc.

I'm not sure of the 'ritual symbolism' involved but it involves spreading a lot of hate and guilt-tripping young people!

As an unengaged anarchist misfit I have tried to acquire sufficient philosophic depth so I can relate to their actions. My suggestions have been met with anger and hostility. They have even taken to attacking me in the local press! (Ha, ha!)

What does Alfred Todd suggest I do next? Perhaps I should ask them which way they would like to be buried?

Terry

ESF

Having spent some time at the 'alternative' ESF over the weekend I'd like to offer congratulations to Schnefs for their 10th birthday, the Wombles on their efforts in setting up free accommodation and all the various speakers for giving up their time to share knowledge. It was all thoroughly enjoyable.

Having said that, it was quite disappointing to see how many people there seemed uninterested in affairs taking place closer than 5,000 miles away. Zapatistas, Chavistas, causes in Burma, Tibet, Palestine ... Fair enough if you want to write letters and send money – that might be useful – but can we get away from the idea that us protesting over here will make the blindest bit of difference over there?

Given Blunkett's relentless march towards a police state, Brown's destruction of our economy and Tessa Jowell's collusion to take jobs away from this country, not to mention Prescott's council house sell off, might not a small readjustment of priorities be in order?

Sail

'Direct' action

Your editorial on the Duelfer Report (16th October) ends with these words: "ultimately, to end imperialism we need to end the system which generates it: capitalism ... Only by direct action and solidarity in our workplaces and communities can we do that."

Surely it isn't only capitalism that generates imperialism? There were empires long before the modern capitalist system emerged after the break up of feudalism. Even if we end capitalism, then there's no guarantee that imperialism will end with it.

Don't you think that both imperialism and capitalism may have the same root cause – the ambition to be top dog? The urge to be or to identify oneself with something great? 'Great Britain' for example?

As long as people are conditioned to regard this ambition as a great virtue how can there be universal solidarity? Surely there can only be the limited solidarity of one class, one nation, or one empire battling against another – for ever, or until the human race destroys itself.

If we continue to ignore the psychological causes of the present disastrous

state of the world I fear that any action, 'direct' or otherwise, can only add to the mess.

Francis Ellingham

Uh oh!

Surely some mistake? The Anarchist Bookfair, 27th November 2004. Buy Nothing Day, 27th November 2004. Or do we get special exemption?

Richard
(a concerned publisher)

Pedant

In response to the comment in last week's editorial that "Working class people ... are not of course lazy or stupid. Quite the opposite ..." well, actually my mum is pretty dim. In fact most of my family are. And my dad was not only stupid but a nasty racist bastard as well. And the shit who last winter fitted my new boiler so badly because he wanted to get off early, was not only lazy but a fucking con man who cost me dearly.

I know that it's written with genuine and sincere intent, but the editorial's stereotyping is patronising, self-deluding and sheds light on nothing. There are plenty of lazy and/or stupid working class people. We know this really, and if Freedom wants to offer relevant, incisive, realistic analysis to its readers, it needs to avoid talking through clichés.

glenn

Frank Chapple

The obituary for Sir Frank Chapple in the Grauniad today missed out the couple of things about him that might be of interest to anarchists.

In the early '50s Chapple was a very hardline Stalinist. He and a mate published a pamphlet-length internal document within the CP effectively alleging that the party leadership (and more particularly the Communist leadership of the Electricians' Union) were selling out and were abandoning the Stalinist conception of Communism. The document was reproduced in the late '60s by die-hard Stalinists.

He later turned up at the Malatesta Club (the then London anarchist club) explaining that they were trying to put together a broad revolutionary front against the Stalinist leadership of their union and so were busy trying to contact anarchist, ILP and Trot electricians.

Six months later, evidently having abandoned their turn to the left, they emerged allied with Woodrow-Wyatt in a right-wing witch-hunt against the union leadership (a union leadership that was undoubtedly authoritarian and corrupt).

Laurens Otter

Fermin Rocker

As soon as I arrived at the Chambers Gallery in Long Street, EC1, there was a very large crowd of people not quite sure of what to do. Around the walls were the marvellous paintings of Fermin Rocker and in the window a self portrait of himself with his father Rudolf Rocker and his mother Milly Witcop. But, for a gathering of such a great size, there was complete hush. It was some time later that I was told that Fermin Rocker, the artist whose retrospective this was, had died the previous day.

This was a very important event for anarchism as such. I don't know of any other occasion where a respected anarchist thinker and activist such as Rudolf Rocker to have been in the window of one of the most commercial streets in London.

What was most interesting was that the people present were by and large the descendants of those anarchists who grouped round the Yiddish anarchist paper Arbeiter Fraind of which Rudolf Rocker was editor.

The drawing on the cover of East End Years is of Dunstan Buildings which was in those days entirely inhabited by anarchists. A granddaughter of one of those anarchists was present clutching a copy of the Freedom Press publication and proudly pointing out to me that that was where her grandfather once lived, together with Rudolf Rocker. I am mentioning this not for any other reason but to show that at a certain stage of the anarchist movement it wasn't just people marching up and down but actually living together.

It was such a shame that Fermin was unable to attend, but a video was shown of the last two weeks of this marvelous painters' life doggedly sitting at the easel and adding the finishing touches with his brush.

Fermin wasn't there, but for a strange reason I felt enthused in the company of such good people that anarchism was still a living possibility.

John Rety

In brief

page 3

banged into its coffin. We wonder, is skimping on safety equipment or training, policy advice or factual advice?

Strike works at SoapWorks

Workers in Glasgow's SoapWorks have declared victory in their dispute with anti-sweatshop activists/multinational corporation Bodyshop. Following an ongoing dispute over an increasingly brutal managerial regime, workers have secured an 11.5% pay rise over three years and increased shift allowances. The new deal was accepted by 78% of the workforce, who thanked the general public for their solidarity and support. No doubt human rights activist and Bodyshop founder Anita Roddick will be delighted to see 'the global poor' at her plant standing up for themselves and winning against their big business management.

Only Fools and Davis

Sainsbury's very own Del-Boy ex-chairman, Sir Peter Davis, will show more bounce than Zebedee later this year.

He is due to report on pensions as head of a government quango, just months after being booted off the Sainsbury's board for (among other things) questions over his stewardship of the company pension scheme.

Davis, who walked away with £500,000 in 'cheerio sir' payoffs, as well as a £1.9 million pension pot, oversaw the transfer of common pension stocks to high risk accounts requiring lower company contributions – and during his four year tenure Sainsbury's managed to underpay even those.

He was appointed head of the government's Employer Task Force on Pensions last March due to his extensive experience, then was dropped by Sainsbury's this June.

His old company have since written off £500 million of his investments because they simply weren't viable, including an outsourcing contract that would have cost the company more to run than to keep things at home (Freedom isn't entirely sure how it's actually possible to do this). They are also due to go into the red for the first time in 135 years.

Mindlessly inefficient management? You plonker ...

Inside news

page 2

But, lately I can't remember if I'm Free or Jeff or the two are even interchangeable. It's not that I've forgotten who I am. I've forgotten who I want to be.

So, now I must find the courage to let go of obligations; self-created or otherwise. I'm not a role model or a leader and I sure as hell ain't the hope for a better future-because that's you. No, I'm just a simple guy with a big heart and a lot of dreams. Actually, I'd like to think the only difference between you and I is that I got caught.

I've entered a stage in my life where I need to re-evaluate what I need to be doing. There have been many changes in how I view my life, the people in it and my goals. This will be my last dispatch until my appeal is decided or I feel the need to say something. I'm not sure which will happen first.

Of course, I will continue to write articles and editorials as inspiration strikes. I will continue to stand strong in the face of all adversity, not because it is expected of me, but because I demand it of myself. We are all warriors, only our battlefields vary. Freedom is your birthright. Take it!

Jeffrey Luers, #1379761, OSP, 2605 State Street, Salem, OR 97310.
See www.freefreedom.org

Prisons without bars – anti-repression squat

On October 21st a new anti-repression infoshop will be opening in Leeds. Workshops and other events will be held focussing on ID cards, ASBO's, Prisons, CCTV, electronic tagging, and more. The group, Maelstrom, organising the project see the squat as "an expression of confrontation, and as an open venue for the exchange of ideas, criticism and experiences with the goal of broadening a radical analysis of the repressive system, but also the whole society that produces it."

More details closer to the time on Leeds Indymedia www.leedsbradford.indymedia.org.uk

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

So visit:
The 56@ Infoshop
56A Crampton St, SE17
Elephant & Castle, London
Open Thurs, Fri and Sat afternoons
www.safetycat.org/56a/

Quiz answers

1. They sent a heavy-handed email demanding it be taken down. It's still online at preparingforemergencies.co.uk.
2. 'He Kills Coppers' by Jake Arnott, loosely based on the case of Harry Roberts, though the cop-killer in this case escapes and goes on the run, with most of the action taking place in the tumultuous years of the early '80s.
3. A group set up to respond to media slurs about anarchism in 1997. In 1998, the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith threatened them over the use of the name. Given that organisation's recent history, they decided to change to the Anarchist Action Network.
4. The town of Hershey, Cuba, was originally built to service the confectioners' cane fields. It was renamed after Camilo Cienfuegos, who died shortly after the Cuban Revolution.

REVIEW

The Beautiful Struggle's conscious heartbeats prompt Tom Jennings to dance out loud ...

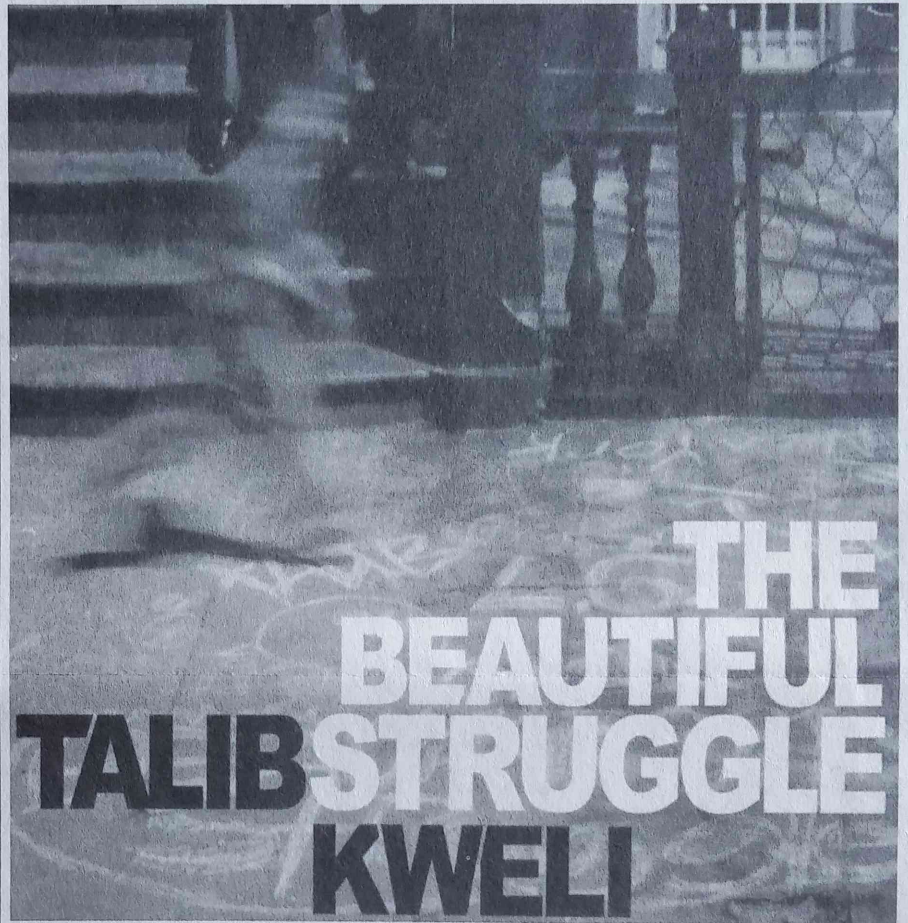
Rapper Talib Kweli's fourth Rawkus Records release, *The Beautiful Struggle*, follows the innovative underground hip-hop classic *Black Star* (with fellow Brooklyn MC Mos Def, 1998), the sublime jazz/blues/soulful *Reflection Eternal* (with producer Hi-Tek, 2000), and the powerful R&B/funk of *Quality* (2002). The new album shifts gears with current urban styles from the most sought-after producers and guest vocalists (Mary J. Blige, Mos Def, Jean Grae, Common Sense, Res, John Legend, Faith Evans, Anthony Hamilton) queuing up to support his vision. An unauthorised internet leak of unmastered versions backfired, since the remixes are even better – Kweli doesn't object to piracy for those who can't pay, just the lack of respect for half-finished art. (A bigger obstacle was the Beatles sample not being cleared for the fantastic 'Lonely People'.) "Tell the truth about the war and suddenly you linked to Saddam / Hate the topic, but the closest people get to patriotic / Is red bull, white vodka, mixed with straight hypnotic / Paper prophets sell the revolution so they make a profit / Trust, they got it fucked up with your taxes, started making rockets / Take it off the top like politicians speaking proper diction / Stuffing dollars in their britches like they do a lotta stripping / Got the top position bitching about the quality of life / All that bullshit get exposed as soon as Kweli sees the mic / They cutting down the tree of life" ('Work It Out').

However you gauge his trajectory, a refusal to kowtow to commercial agendas and the direct thematic and musical address to the grass-roots remain strong. With uncompromising radical politics and fierce lyrical prowess, it's clear why so many hip hop fans (including Jay-Z and 50 Cent – commercial superstars not otherwise noted for their political acumen) name-check Talib Kweli as simply the best. Okay, okay, for anyone nauseated by excess superlatives: his vocal timbre and cadence somewhat lack variety and

depth; the staccato delivery has difficulty capturing conversational idiom; and (try as he might) he doesn't do sexy. But who's quibbling? "Life is a beautiful struggle / People search through the rubble / For a suitable hustle / Some people using their noodle / Some people using their muscle / Some people put it all together / Make it fit like a puzzle" ('I Try').

What's really special is that the social and political implications arising from everyday life, society and history are broached and dissected with effortless aplomb – never self-righteous, patronising, or preaching. His honest, deeply personal perspective probes ambiguity, conflict, and individual and collective failure by acknowledging his own mistakes, confusions and limitations. Measuring your insights and experiences against those of people around you and your/culture and traditions facilitates an avoidance of moral posturing and sophistry, narcissistic self-aggrandisement, and all the other simplistic stupidities and dangerous duplicities that plague political philosophies and practices. "People placed in situations they can't take and what they facing / Is the trials and tribulations to make them say the lord's forsaken them / Their loved ones intervening but they always blaming them / For problems they don't realise what they part is in creating them" ('Work It Out').

Instead you get a pragmatic ethics stitching the individual to the political (without reducing one to the other) with no hint of hierarchy or superiority. Anger, sadness and determination are present and correct along with exuberance, spirituality (irrespective of religion) and all the productive varieties of love, in a mature race-, gender- and class-consciousness. Alternately (or simultaneously) hard-hitting and joyful, encouraging solidarity and direct action, it sounds like a decent blueprint for anarchism. Indeed, Kweli regularly advocates revolution, seeing the beauty in struggle from its prefiguring of the results: creating a new world in the shell of the old. "Yo, I heard it said the revolution won't be televised / But in



the land of milk and honey there's a date you gotta sell it by / Otherwise it just expires and spoils and these folks jump out the pot / When the water too hot cos the fire boils inside / You go to church to find you some religion / And all you hear is conniving and gossiping and contradiction / And you try to vote and participate in the government / And the motherfucking democrats is acting like republicans / Looking for the remedy but you can't see what's hurting

you / The revolution is here, the revolution is personal" ('Beautiful Struggle').

Of course, popular tastes vary. If you prefer bubblegum teenybop, or chemically-assisted jerking and twitching, or crashing, bashing and thrashing, or whingeing guitar karaoke, or retro nostalgia and the 'classics', or student subcultures, or posh art music – well, perhaps *The Beautiful Struggle* isn't for you. But if you fancy seriously

pleasurable, street-level, contemporary music throbbing with passion, intelligence and integrity, Talib Kweli will be a revelation. "The revolution starts today / I say the shit these people ain't got the heart to say / Fuck the harder way, we doin' it the smarter way" ('Goin Hard').

www.tomjennings.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk

Talib Kweli, *The Beautiful Struggle*, Rawkus, 2004

OBITUARY

Fermin Rocker

The artist Fermin Rocker died at the age of 97 on 18th October 2004. A retrospective exhibition of his work opened on that day, and he had been due to give a talk about it on the 19th October. His father was Rudolph Rocker, editor of *Arbeider Frant* (Worker's Friend), a weekly newspaper published in Whitechapel by the Federation of Yiddish-speaking Anarchists, and author of the Freedom Press pamphlet *Anarchism and anarcho-syndicalism*, still a steady seller. His mother was one of the three Witcop sisters, anarchists who lived unmarried with three anarchist gentiles,



Fermin, aged six, tries to prevent the arrest of his father

but were reconciled to their orthodox Jewish parents by producing grandchildren.

Fermin's book *The East End Years: a Stepney Childhood* (Freedom Press, 1998) is about his life in the east end of London between the ages of three and ten, illustrated with his delightful drawings (and some useful photographs) and full of charming, funny anecdotes about the anarchists he knew at the time, not only the many Yiddish speakers who were his neighbours, but also Kropotkin and his father's good friend Malatesta.

Remembering events as childhood experiences brings the anarchist movement of the time to life, in a way

that no 'objective' history could. We remember him as a delightfully humorous old man.

The painting of two demonstrators (a study for a larger painting), which Fermin gave us in 1998, may be seen in the Freedom Bookshop. The retrospective exhibition of his work continues at The Chambers Gallery, 23 Long Street, London EC1, until the 14th of November. His book *The East End Years* is still available, and well worth it, from Freedom Press.

Donald Room

The East End Years: a Stepney Childhood by Fermin Rocker is available from Freedom at £7.95 (post-free)

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The Top Ten

For a topical Top Ten this week we list suggestions for the new name for the BNP's five-a-side team (see Do they wear black shirts? in Sports Shorts below).

1. BNP Not United: 'cos we all hate and sometimes stab each other
2. The Non-Wanderers: since everyone would have to stay in their country of birth
3. The Lilywhites: after the ill-fated team of the NF who had their van and changing rooms trashed by the pre-AFA squads
4. Kristallnacht Palace
5. White-Man United
6. Paedo-borough United
7. Any team with a brown shirt, and knife logo on the back ...
8. Denmark Supporters Club: 'cos at least they're an all-white team like
9. Burn Black Rovers
10. Lazio

Sports Shorts

Inter-ra e Libertad!

Inter Milan has shocked the footballing world by giving thousands of pounds to Mexican indigenous guerrillas the Zapatistas (EZLN).

After the autonomous village of Zinacantan in Chiapas was attacked by government forces, Argentinian team captain Javier Zanetti persuaded the club to donate the funds raised by fining players for late arrival or use of mobile phones in changing rooms to the radical movement.

With the first gifts of a captain shirt, £3,500 and an ambulance, Zanetti included a message stating "We believe in a better world, in an unglobalised world, enriched by the cultural differences and customs of all the people. This is why we want to support you in this struggle to maintain your roots and fight for your ideals."

"We know that we are not alone on the path of this struggle," replied the rebels, who have used the funds to rebuild houses and vital water pipelines.

Subcomandante Marcos of the EZLN showed his appreciation with a communiqué containing a picture of him sporting the donated kit, although according to the Guardian he is more partial to basketball...

Do they wear black shirts?

Following the launch of a Hampshire anti-racist initiative in football, the Daily Echo found a Southampton five-a-side team called BNP United.

Team captain (führer?) Steve King, from Regents Park, admitted that he and some other members of the team belonged to the BNP but denied they were racist and even proved this was the case when he said: "I have got a lot of friends that are black." Sure you have mate.

They have since had to stop wearing their BNP kit, which they whined about having spent £100 on, and are also changing their team name after consultation with the five-a-side league, Vida.

Also it turns out they're shit, not having won a single game in eight - guess it's hard to play well in jackboots. So all in all a highly successful attempt at making themselves look just like your normal, everyday working class blokes and not thuggish bootboys or Oxbridge wannabe politicians. Oh no.

Big Red Fightback

Hundreds of Manchester United fans demonstrated before the match against Arsenal last week under the banner of 'Not For Sale', against the proposed takeover of the club by US business tycoon Malcolm Glazer.

A group calling itself the Manchester Education Committee also demonstrated at Hereford racecourse earlier in the year, and invaded the pitch at a reserve match on 7th October, while club director Maurice Watkins had his car vandalised.

The group announced that "This operation should also serve as a warning to any party interested in taking over Manchester United. They will not be allowed to succeed unless they take into account the wishes of United supporters. For far too long the wishes of Manchester United fans, and football fans in general, have been ignored as clubs sacrifice everything at the altar of commercialism. The Manchester Education Committee would like to stress that in the event of the wishes of Manchester United supporters being ignored in any takeover situation, that we intend to initiate a civil war effectively setting the football club - the supporters - against the company. In such a situation it is our intention to render the club ungovernable and actively disrupt all manner of commercial activity associated with Manchester United. The club's sponsors and commercial partners should note that the Manchester Education Committee will view them as legitimate targets."

For now, the Manchester Education Committee would like to encourage United fans to carry on with the targeting of Brunswick, Glazer's appointed PR company, which has been on-going in recent days.

"In the event of the wishes of United supporters being ignored in any takeover situation, we intend to activate a civil war, effectively setting the football club - the supporters - against the company" - which is something I'm sure anarchists can sympathise with.

£3.1bn

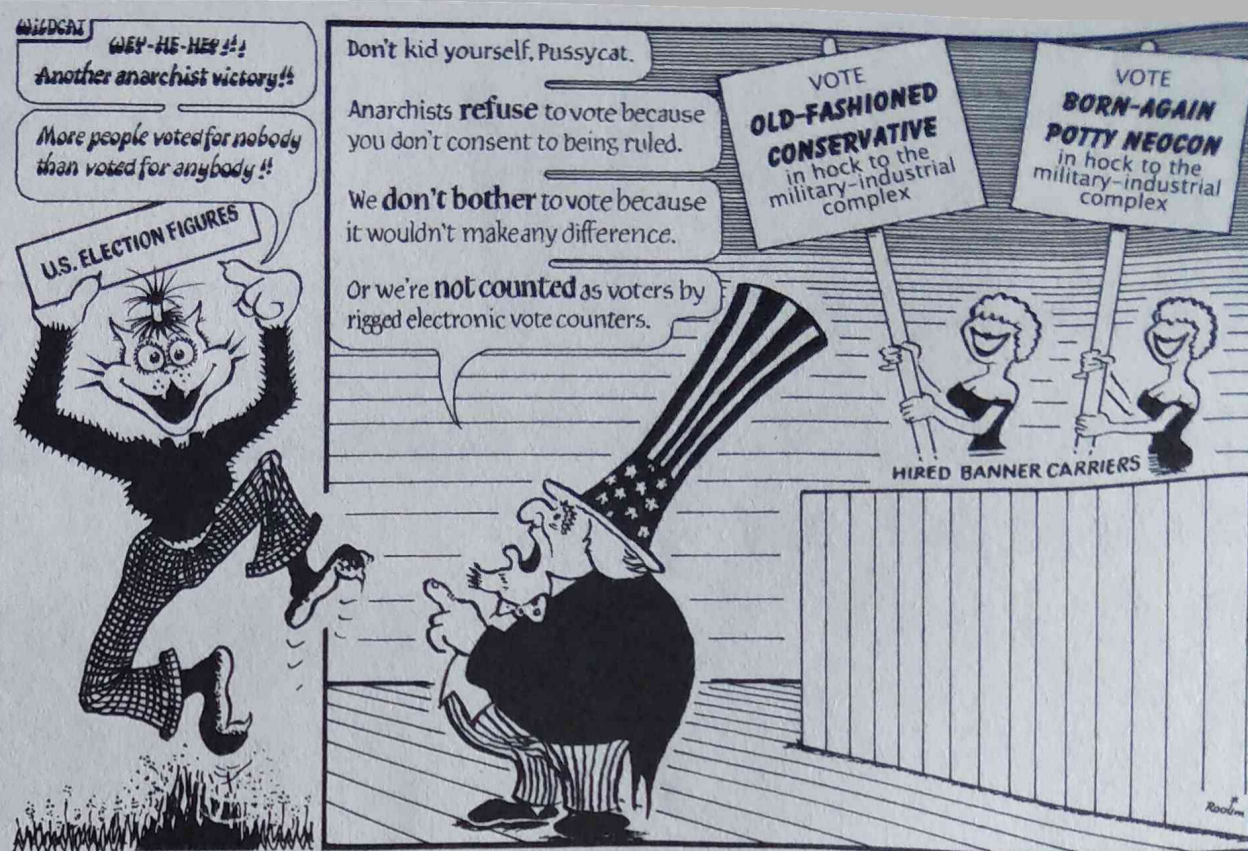
Cost of ID card system, according to the Home Office - excluding the cost of biometric readers and their installation in key locations

£50m

Cost of benefit ID fraud

£200m

Cost of 'health tourism'



A sideways look

For most people who aren't white, racism in this country takes two forms. There's the everyday racism of individual bigots, which can have a fatal impact in some cases, but is usually contained and coped with. And there is the racism of institutions, that denies black children the same opportunities at school, keeps black workers in the lowest paid jobs, sees black and increasingly Asian youth criminalised.

The communities themselves have fought back against racism almost since they arrived, though it was only after the MacPherson Inquiry into the murder of Stephen Lawrence that the concept of institutional racism was even acknowledged by the state. Ever since, these conclusions have been contested by sections of the state and the media.

All this has meant that racists have had to become a lot more subtle, focusing on 'asylum seekers', economic migrants and Muslims. The term asylum seeker, in particular, has become a code word used to avoid the hassle that more direct racism would attract. The press rants about them, and the Labour Party respond by promising ever-tougher legislation, with the Tories and UKIP trying to outflank them on the far right, with the BNP using the mainstream parties' rhetoric as a fig-leaf.

All of which puts the events at the Unite Against Fascism meeting at the European Social Forum into context. A heavily policed, corporate event, bankrolled by Ken Livingstone's Greater London Authority to the sum of £480,000 (or just over four Lee Jaspers), plus free travel. There's a reason why anarchist and anarcho-sindicalist groups generally refuse money from the state, even the newt-loving populist bit of it; namely because it's politically corrupting.

The ESF was stitched up between Socialist Action (via the GLA) and the

SWP. Faced with this organisational straight-jacket, anarchists and others organised autonomously. Ever since the poll tax, we've learned to bypass 'official' structures and just get on with things. One protest planned by the Wombles (who have been the subject of a campaign of harassment from the Metropolitan Police) was when Livingstone was due to speak. They took to the stage and spoke, attacking him for rejoining Labour, the Party of War, and the corporate takeover of the ESF in London. The black Chair of the meeting says he was punched and had his wallet and phone stolen by people who were all white - news to those protesters who weren't!

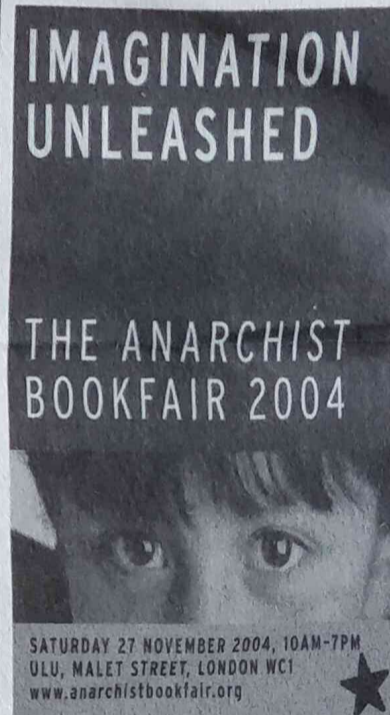
Livingstone's race adviser and Director of Equalities and Policing at the GLA was quick to condemn. In a letter to the Guardian Lee Jasper claimed that the ESF was democratic and that the protest had been to stop black people discussing racism. So, of course, when the session resumed after half an hour, they were discussing what, exactly? His views were contradicted by the translators group and by grassroots black activists around Newham Monitoring Project who somehow manage to do a lot more against racism without Jasper's six-figure salary. The SWP have been quick to throw mud about this being racist, but seem very quiet concerning the role of their stewards in getting an Indymedia reporter arrested and beaten up in Trafalgar Square.

There are criticisms that can be made of the Wombles here. Violence should have been avoided. The protest could have been clearer (though I accept that in this case there's so much to protest about). Jasper and the SWP can complain all they like, I will leave you with words from one participant and a final thought: "compared to Florence and Paris, the London Forum was by far the more policed one. I was sort of shocked by that. I mean, maybe it is a

British cultural tradition, I don't know, but I am not accustomed to have policemen walking around and shooting with photo and video cameras anything that moved, without anybody being bothered by that."

Well, not the organisers, anyway.

Svartfrosk



The quiz

1. How did the government respond earlier this year to a spoof website taking the piss out of its 'Preparing for Emergencies' booklet?
2. Which recent crime novel features Greenham Common, the Peace Convoy and Class War-selling squatters?
3. What was the Anarchist Anti Defamation League?
4. Which town was founded and named for a chocolate manufacturer and was renamed for a libertarian revolutionary?

Answers on page 6

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