

# FREEDOM

80P ANARCHIST NEWS AND VIEWS

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## A TALE OF THREE PDS

In the middle of May in Miami, Florida, the trial of Jose Padilla opened. It's five years since his highly-publicised arrest for allegedly plotting a 'dirty bomb' attack. He was quickly, and without much evidence, accused of being an 'enemy combatant'. The indictment was later reduced to lesser offences and has now been 'downgraded' to 'aiding al-Qaeda'. Even the presiding judge has described the case against Padilla, the outcome of which has become something of a test case for the Bush junta's illegal practice of arbitrarily capturing and detaining perceived 'threats' to the state, as 'light on evidence'.

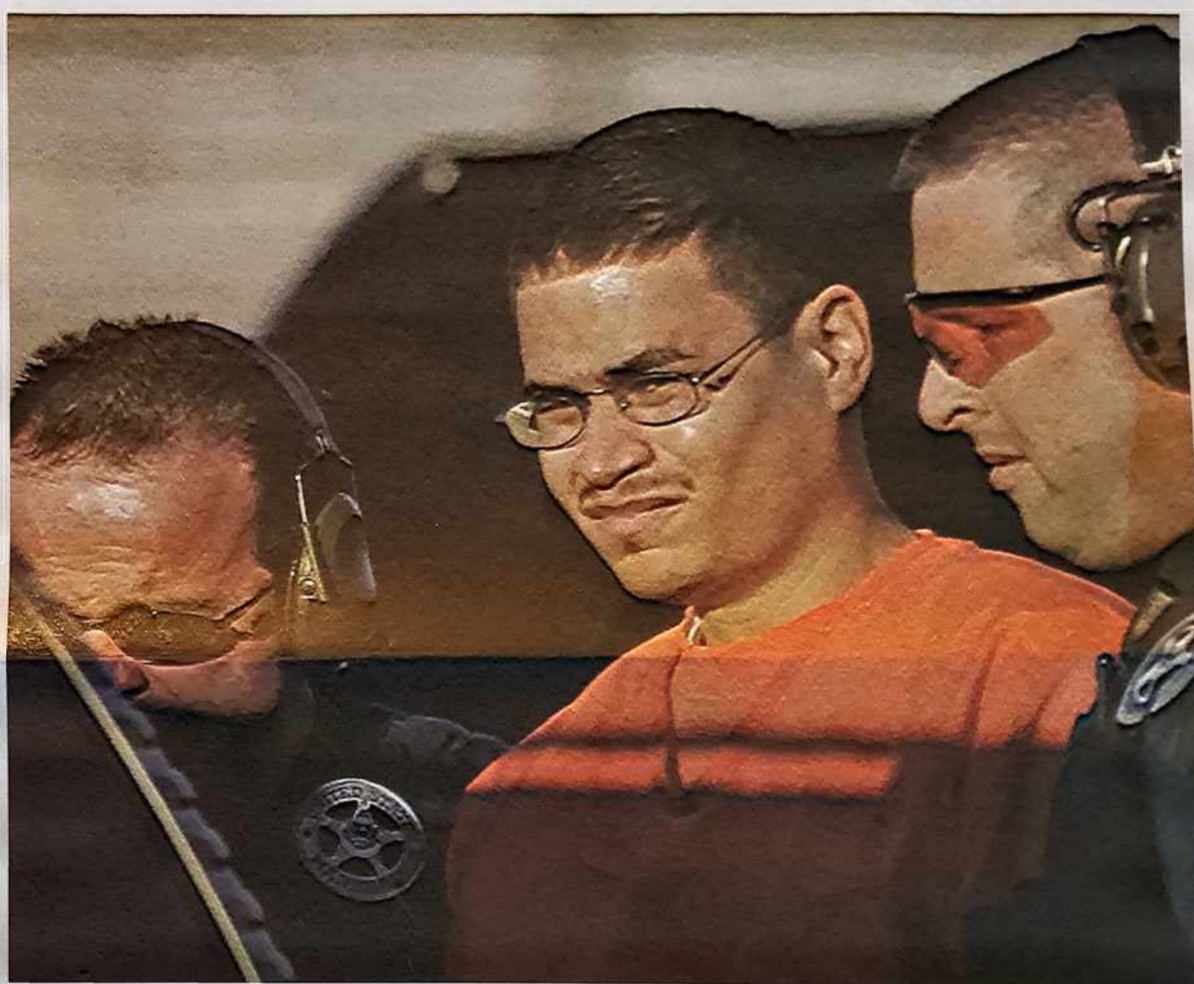
Padilla has been held in complete isolation with no human contact for 1,300 days except with those who have tortured him. Tortured so badly, according to his attorneys (access to whom was denied to him for almost two years), that he is now incapable of assisting in his own defence.

Meanwhile a real terrorist has walked free from his short imprisonment in Texas. Luis Posada Carriles (an ex-CIA operative) is known to have been responsible for a list of violent acts in central America over the past 30 years – including the bombing in 1976 of a Cuban airliner, which killed 73 people. Carriles was initially detained last year in Florida – not on the terrorist charges of which he is so evidently guilty (he has admitted as much), but on immigration violations. Even those a US federal judge threw out; nothing more was heard of

Carriles' murderous activities, his thug associates also on the loose and the current requests by the Venezuelan government that the US justice authorities accept their responsibilities under the extradition treaties they signed. In Cuba, the country Carriles has spent so much of his life trying to attack and destabilise, youth groups staged a two-day mock trial of their own for his 1976 crimes. Margarita Morales Fernandez, daughter of a victim who died in the plane attack, commented, "I don't like talking about death, I don't like to talk about terrorism but I do it precisely because I know that at some point, we will get justice. The North American people can no longer be lied to."

We've reported before on the misdemeanours of the New York Police Department (NYPD) in relation particularly to the protests staged at the time of the Republican National Convention that nominated Bush for his second term in 2004. In addition to being arrested and held illegally at the time, activists were more heavily and intrusively spied on than was previously admitted; and pressure has grown for exposure of the associated police records. Now a federal judge has ordered the NYPD to release about 600 pages of internal documents detailing this spying.

This follows a lawsuit by the New York Civil Liberties Union and the *New York Times*. NYCLU's Donna Lieberman says, "What's shocking is the breadth of the surveillance activity.



They were in lots of different cities across the nation and internationally. We have in here of people doing graffiti in Germany in Croatia. We have reports from Berkeley, from Baltimore, from

Syracuse, from Fresno. The police department was all over the country, all over the globe."

Predictably, the city authorities are resisting pressure to make public

other documents related to the RNC convention.

Indymedia UK:

[indymedia.org.uk/en/2007/05/371125.html](http://indymedia.org.uk/en/2007/05/371125.html)

New York Civil Liberties Union: [nyclu.org/](http://nyclu.org/)

## COVERT ACTION AGAINST IRAN

Details of a covert 'black' operation to destabilise the Iranian government were leaked by current and former intelligence community officials to ABCNews last week.

The sources, who spoke on the condition of anonymity because of the sensitive nature of the subject, say President Bush has signed a "nonlethal presidential finding" that puts into motion a CIA plan that reportedly includes a coordinated campaign of propaganda, disinformation and manipulation of Iran's currency and international financial transactions.

"I can't confirm or deny whether such a programme exists or whether the

president signed it, but it would be consistent with an overall American approach trying to find ways to put pressure on the regime," said Bruce Riedel, a recently retired CIA senior official who dealt with Iran and other countries in the region.

The sources say the CIA developed the covert plan over the last year and received approval from White House officials and other officials in the intelligence community.

"I think everybody in the region knows that there is a proxy war already afoot with the United States supporting anti-Iranian elements in the region as well as opposition groups within Iran," said Vali Nasr, adjunct senior fellow for Mideast studies at the Council on Foreign Relations.

Also briefed on the CIA proposal, according to intelligence sources, were National Security Advisor Steve Hadley and Deputy National Security Advisor Elliott Abrams.

"The entire plan has been blessed by Abrams, in particular," said one intelli-

gence source familiar with the plan. "And Hadley had to put his chop on it."

Abrams' last involvement with attempting to destabilise a foreign government led to criminal charges.

He pleaded guilty in October 1991 to two misdemeanor counts of withholding information from Congress about the Reagan administration's ill-fated efforts to destabilise the Nicaraguan Sandinista government in Central America, known as the Iran-Contra affair. Abrams was later pardoned by President George H.W. Bush in December 1992.

In June 2001, Abrams was named by then National Security Advisor Condoleezza Rice to head the National Security Council's office for democracy, human rights and international operations. On 2nd February 2005, National Security Advisor Hadley appointed Abrams deputy assistant to the president and deputy national security advisor for global democracy strategy, one of the nation's most senior national security positions.

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## B52 TWO NOT-GUILTY

At Bristol Crown Court on Tuesday 22nd May, the trial of two Oxford peace activists, Philip Pritchard and Toby Olditch (known as the 'B52 Two'), concluded with the jury returning a unanimous verdict of not-guilty- in less than three hours.

The two were charged with conspiring to cause criminal damage at RAF Fairford in Gloucestershire on 18th March 2003 when they tried to safely disable US B52 bombers to prevent them from bombing Iraq. The court heard the two men acted to prevent damage to life and property in Iraq, and war crimes by the aggressors. Pritchard and Olditch were facing up to ten years in jail if convicted.

The two men were arrested carrying tools to damage the planes inside the perimeter fences at RAF Fairford in the early morning of 18th March 2003, just two days before the bombing of Iraq started.

The two activists maintain that war

crimes were committed in the bombing as cluster bombs, which spread unexploded bomblets that kill and maim civilians (like mines) were used, as were 'bunker busting' bombs tipped with depleted uranium that fragments, spreading radioactive toxins which are harmful to civilians.

Toby Olditch said "We're overjoyed, and thankful for the good sense of the jurors, for the wonderful support we've received, and for the commitment and expertise of our legal representatives. But hundreds of thousands of Iraqi people have still suffered as a result of the Government's actions. It shouldn't have come to the point that people had to take direct action to try to check the abuse of executive power."

Phil Pritchard "I am delighted that the jury have returned a unanimous not-guilty verdict. Our action in trying to prevent illegal attacks on the people of Iraq in 2003 is vindicated. I hope war of this kind never happens again."

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# Home and away

## Critical Mass under threat

On Monday 24th May, the Court of Appeal gave their judgement in the Critical Mass case (Commissioner of Police for the Metropolis v. Des Kay).

By two-to-one (and against the decision of two previous judges), the Court of Appeal rejected Des Kay's argument that the monthly rides are "commonly or customarily held" which would exempt them from the notification requirements of the Public Order Act 1986.

The result (subject to any consideration by the House of Lords) is that any organiser of Critical Mass is now required to notify the police at least six days before the event providing the with the date, route, and name of organiser.

If an organiser fails to do this, he or she will be liable to prosecution. It would be for the police to prove that a person was an organiser of Critical Mass. The case was brought because, in September 2005, the police handed out leaflets at Critical Mass saying:

"These cycle protests are not lawful because no organiser has provided police with the necessary notification. Your participation in this event could render you liable to prosecution."

Those statements were, and remain, incorrect. The Court of Appeal's judgement does not mean either that the ride is unlawful or that those merely cycling in the ride are acting unlawfully.

## Baby fined for dropping two Quavers

A Sussex woman was fined £80 for littering, after her toddler granddaughter dropped two Quavers.

Barbara Jubb, 57, from Crawley, is refusing the pay the fine.

She was standing by a bus stop with her daughter Selena and 20-month old granddaughter Emily when council wardens pounced. They issued her with an £80 on-the-spot fine for not picking up two Quavers little Emily had dropped.

Barbara said: "I couldn't believe what I was hearing. Emily had a packet of Quavers in her hands and dropped it by mistake, two of the crisps fell out, so I picked up the bag and kicked the crisps into the gutter. They wrote down 'kicking two crisps' as the offence. People were standing around laughing nearby - it is just unbelievable."

A Crawley Borough Council spokeswoman said: "We've cancelled the fine and apologised to the family for being over-zealous."

## Bank again

Mr Wolfowitz's departure was announced as a key ally of Gordon Brown, Tom Scholar, faced similar claims of using his World Bank post to secure promotion for his girlfriend.

Mr Scholar, who was the Chancellor's private secretary, is tipped for a top job in Downing Street when Mr Brown becomes premier.

The *Wall Street Journal* published an email it said was sent to bank bosses last year by an unnamed colleague.

It said: "Please know that UK ED [executive director] Tom Scholar is continuing an affair with [a bank employee]. This woman has been given preferential treatment in [the department] because of her relationship with this powerful ED, this affair is well-known, and is in violation of the bank staff rules and the board's standards of conduct."

The newspaper, which has supported Mr Wolfowitz throughout the

# Around the world

**Bahamas:** Nearly 80% of the staff of the Princess Margaret Hospital's engineering department called in sick yesterday to protest a delay in their long awaited hazardous pay, said union officials.

Around half a dozen supervisors and staff in the Maintenance and Bio Medical building were forced to carry out the duties of a normally 30-plus member crew when more than 20 workers called in sick on Tuesday, said the hospital's administrator Coralee Adderley.

"We have not heard from any representatives [of the staff]," she told the *Nassau Guardian*. "But actually there were no effects from their absence today. Despite the fact we had heavy rain we had no disruptions in services."

The sick-out could continue, said President of the Bahamas Public Service Union (BPSU), John Pinder, who admitted that he also had not heard from any of the workers. He explained that the industrial action was sparked by a delay in the hazardous pay, which was supposed to be included in this month's pay period.

**Brazil:** Indian leaders in Brazil have reacted angrily to comments by Pope Benedict that they had been purified by the Roman Catholic church since Columbus landed in the Americas in 1492.

In a speech to bishops at the end of a

visit to Brazil on Sunday, Benedict said indigenous people of the Americas had welcomed European priests after conquest.

"It's arrogant and disrespectful to consider our cultural heritage secondary to theirs," said Jecinaldo Satero Mawe, chief co-ordinator of Coiab, an Amazon Indian group.

The pope had said the peoples of the Americas had a "silent longing" for Christianity and welcomed European priests' arrival.

"We repudiate the [pope's] comments," said Sandro Tuxa, leader of the movement of northeastern tribes. "To say the cultural decimation of our people represents a purification is offensive, and frankly, frightening."

The Roman Catholic church's own Indian advocacy group in Brazil also criticised Benedict's speech. Paulo Suess, the advocacy group's adviser, said: "The pope doesn't understand the reality of the Indians here, his statement was wrong and indefensible."

**Nigeria:** Nigerian unions have called for a two-day strike to protest against last month's presidential election which saw widespread instance of vote fraud.

John Kolawale, secretary general of the Trade Union Congress, said that the strike would be held on 28-29th May to coincide with the inauguration of Umaru Yar'Adua as president.

Kowale said, however, that the strike

would not affect Nigerian oil production, which the country's main foreign-currency earner. "Everybody is expected to stay at home because the action involves not only the unions but also many civil society organisations," he said, after a meeting of leaders from the TUC and another umbrella labour organisation, the Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC).

Kolawale said representatives from more than 30 civil society groups also took part.

Nigeria's presidential vote in April was intended to showcase the country's transformation from a military-ruled dictatorship to a modern multi-party democracy. Instead, after the vote, opposition parties accused the ruling party, whose candidate won, of rigging the vote, while international observers said that that result was "not credible".

Nigeria's National Labour Congress had already called for mass protests on 1st May and thousands of demonstrators gathered in the main cities, but the rallies were tightly controlled by security forces who arrested and fired tear gas at scores of activists. Since then, popular protests have been muted.

**Valencia:** Antimilitarists managed to enter the main facilities of the NATO base in Betera (Valencia) to demand its closure earlier this month.

In the Fifth Citizens Inspection, on

the 12th May, at 11.30am, a team of seven citizen inspectors entered the main facilities of the NATO Response Force base despite security vigilance measures, demand its closure and conversion into a social and ecologically friendly space, as part of a week of actions against military installations.

From a point 300 metres distant from the main entrance to the base, pacifists entered the perimeter fence and after advancing 20 metres, climbed up onto the roof of a small construction from where they could see the installations. A few minutes later the inspectors found themselves surrounded by military and police agents in large numbers.

The protest march, which had left Betera 40 minutes before, arrived on the scene where they remained throughout. The inspectors unfurled a banner with the slogan 'Peace without Armies'.

**Finance:** Shoeless Paul Wolfowitz will quit the World Bank on 30th June the bank has announced. They apparently agreed to pay him that huge severance package.

According to the Board, 'blah blah acted ethically and in good faith blah blah we'll miss him, etc., etc.'

Wolfowitz is expected to be replaced as World Bank President by either Suze Orman or Shaha Ali Riza, depending on whether President Bush is feeling like an idiotic or a vindictive child.

# Prison news

## Hands off John Bowden!

Friday 25th May marked the first International Day of Solidarity in support of John Bowden and in defence of the ABC. John is a long-term prison resister, who has spent more than a quarter of a century fighting for prisoners' rights, and is now being kept in jail because of his politics rather than because of his original conviction.

Until very recently John was in an open prison at Castle Huntly in Scotland. He had spent two years working unsupervised in the outside community as a volunteer on projects for the mentally ill and socially vulnerable, and had qualified as a literacy tutor for people with learning difficulties. For

almost a year he had also been allowed frequent home leaves, and was not regarded as any form of risk to the public. All this changed however, when Matt Stillman, a right-wing American social worker (who for example, insists on calling Irish people 'Micks'), accused John of having links with a 'paramilitary' and 'terrorist' organisation - namely the Anarchist Black Cross (ABC), which is in reality a legitimate prisoner support organisation that can trace its history back to Tsarist Russia. This easily refuted lie was used as an excuse to move John to a maximum security prison at Glenochil, and damaging allegations (Stillman's lies) hang over him, which we believe are specifically designed to prejudice the parole board and prevent John's release.

Since Stillman launched his smear against the ABC, eagerly taken up by the Scottish Prison Service (SPS), who 'ghosted' John to Glenochil, a campaign has been launched to demand 'Hands off John Bowden!' and to defend the good name of the ABC.

The focus of the International Day of Solidarity on 25th May was the Scottish Parliament in Edinburgh, where more than 25 of John's supporters demonstrated for nearly two hours, demanding a full and swift investigation and an apology for the lies that have been told. Supporters came from various parts of Scotland and England to attend the demonstration, and from as far as the Basque country. Hundreds of leaflets were distributed in support of John, with placards and a large banner demanding an end to the harassment he is enduring

and to the vilification of the ABC.

A statement, specially written by John Bowden for the demonstration reads: "I am currently isolated in a maximum security prison and being denied release because of my association with the Anarchist Black Cross movement. That movement has been labelled as 'terrorist' by an employee of the Scottish Prison Service, which represents an attempt by the state to evoke a mood of outright repression against the ABC and a policy of indefinite imprisonment against me. I am grateful for the support and solidarity shown by people attending this demonstration and am with you there in spirit."

As part of the ongoing support campaign, a large stack of postcards were delivered to the headquarters of the Scottish Prison Service, and these flooded in by post from all over the world, as did faxes, telephone calls, and emails. Glenochil prison had to set up a special system to divert incoming calls in support of John Bowden, and the SPS closed their headquarters early at 4pm.

Around the world, from Japan to the USA, supporters of John picketed British consulates and embassies, organised phone and fax blockades, and held info meetings and mass card signings.

In the coming weeks, until the Scottish Prison Service withdraw the allegations against John Bowden and the ABC, we urge supporters to show their solidarity and continue to put pressure on the SPS liars. Please publicise your actions and events.

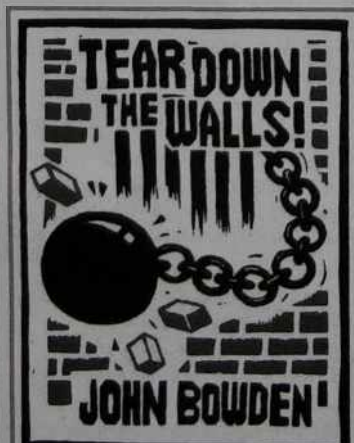
In London there will be a solidarity

demonstration on the 8th June in support of John Bowden's parole application.

Thank you to everyone who has seen through the state's lies to support John Bowden and defend the Anarchist Black Cross.

Some ways you can help:

- Find out more at: [www.myspace.com/friendsofjohnbowden](http://www.myspace.com/friendsofjohnbowden)
- Send a postcard reading 'Hands off John Bowden!' to the Scottish Prison Service HQ, Communications Branch, Room 338, Calton House, 5 Redheughs Rigg, Edinburgh EH12 9HW. You can also e-mail them at [gaolinfo@sps.gov.uk](mailto:gaolinfo@sps.gov.uk) or phone them on 01259 760471 or fax them at 01259 762003.
- Write to Glenochil prison, where John is being held: Audrey Parks, Governor, HMP Glenochil, King O'Muir Road, Tullibody, Clackmannanshire, FK10 3AD. Tel: 01259 760471, fax: 01259 762003.
- Complain to the Care Commission about the lies being told by Matt Stillman, who is employed by Perthshire Social Services: The Care Commission, Headquarters, Compass House, 11 Riverside Drive, Dundee, DD1 4NY. Tel: 01382 207100, fax: 01382 207289.
- Send John a card or letter of support: John Bowden, 6729, HMP Glenochil, King O'Muir Road, Tullibody, Clackmannanshire, FK10 3AD.
- Become involved in the support campaign for John by e-mailing [handsoffjohn@reborn.com](mailto:handsoffjohn@reborn.com)



Tear Down the Walls by John Bowden, with an introduction by Mark Barnsley, is available at £1.50 (plus 50p p&p) from Leeds ABC, PO Box 53, Leeds LS8 4WP, email [LeedsABC@riseup.net](mailto:LeedsABC@riseup.net)



# Your guide to G8

If you are going to G8, be careful – below is a collated guide to help keep you safe

## Checklist on demonstrations:

- Bring your passport/visa, coins, phone card, health insurance card and 10 euro, a first aid kit and any medication you need on a regular basis.
- Masking or protective gear is forbidden.
- Don't take anything you would not need, erase your phone memory and leave all notes and contacts.
- Avoid contact lenses and oily body cream in case of tear gas. Take some lemons.
- Be careful to who you speak during actions and avoid taking people's faces in pictures or video.
- Don't go alone to actions; stay grouped all the time, during, before and after. Watch your friends.
- Make human chains to prevent Snatch Squads. Do the same if they try to arrest you!
- If people are arrested, note their name, birth date, address and nationality and report to the Legal Help Team (EA), telephone number +49 3820 476 811. You should tell them your forename and surname, age, date of birth, home town and nationality.

## Crossing the Dutch border

If you meet any control or check at the border, or any other incidents, please warn fellow activists via telephone number (+31) 06-4970 2887. The information will then be updated at [linksehulp.nl/g8](http://linksehulp.nl/g8).

There are support points at some border crossings. In Nijmegen the address is: Van Broeckhuysenstr 46. Other addresses will be available via

telephone request. In case you get into juridical problems during or after the summit, contact Linkse Hulp for assistance at [info@linksehulp.nl](mailto:info@linksehulp.nl) or telephone this information point: +31 (0)6 4970 2887

## Support networks:

Infopoints are planned for the camps and the convergence centres; moreover, in Rostock, Bad Doberan and Kröpelin a mobile Infopoints will always try to be at a good place during the days of action.

Come to the Infopoints or call us to make reports of the situations to create counter-propaganda coming from the point of view of the participants.

- email: [infopoints@no-log.org](mailto:infopoints@no-log.org).
- Mobile Infopoint: +49 175 892 7868.
- Infopoint Rostock Fischereihafen: +49 1577 230 2168.
- Infopoint Bad Doberan 'on the camp': +49 151 552 65809.
- Kröpelin Infopoint: +49162 886 3594.
- Infopoint Reddelich camp: +49 157 746 30055

## Maps:

Maps of the area of the actions have been prepared. You can get these maps in InfoPoints and Convergence Centres. These maps will include 'zoned' graphics in order to locate the camps. On the maps the numbers of the Infopoints will be also noted, along with the Legal Help Team, and useful web addresses.

Best would be a bike map, a real close up of the region that you will need for your outcamp action trainings and to play the cat and mouse game. Google Earth has a good map of Heiligendamm.



**Public Transportation – Rostock**  
Rostock's public transport company seems to be somewhat friendly towards the protests. They are announcing a ticket for the whole region from 2nd to 9th June for 15 Euro (£10).

Also additional trains are running. The regional train passing by the camp in Reddelich will be running also at

night every hour, trains from Rostock centre to Warnemuende, passing by Evershagen school with media center and convergence center, will be going: from 10:00 to 20:00 every 10 minutes from 20:00 to 24:00 every 15 minutes See <https://dissentnetzwerk.org/node/2047> for up-to-the-minute info on transport (in english).

Finally, the legal team is still asking for funds. Send donations to: Schwarz-Rote-Hilfe Münster e.V. Account-Nr.: 282 052 468 BLZ: 440 100 46 Postbank Dortmund Reason for payment: Gipfel-EA 2007 IBAN: DE02 4401 0046 0282 0524 68 BIC: PBNKDEFF

## Schnews media malarkey

On 11–13th May around eighty media activists gathered in Brighton for the M for Media Malarkey weekend, organised and hosted by SchNEWS. Participants travelled to the Cowley Club social centre from Birmingham, Dublin, Glasgow, Merseyside, Nottingham, Oxford, South Wales, the West Country and throughout cyberspace. Above all it was an opportunity to bring about the face-to-face contact so necessary to create cohesive networks for change.

The event was also a celebration of the achievements and diversity of alternative media and a time to take a hard look at its current limitations and marginality. As the SchNEWS programme for the event concedes: "It's clear that despite the best efforts of the alternative/independent media – and in fact it's probably as good as it's ever been in Britain – the propaganda war is still being soundly lost."

Representatives of Corporate Watch, Porkbolter and Animal Investigations Europe gave stimulating presentations on the power of primary investigative

research, generating hard evidence. There are risks and obstacles but ultimately rewards in sharing original information about topics that the mainstream media are reluctant to touch. Speakers shared tips for volunteers operating in the context of limited time and negligible budgets, confronting states and corporations with vast resources and ready voice-pieces in the mainstream media.

A consistent theme was the need for alternative media to empower itself by offering authentic news over propaganda, underpinned by accurate sourcing wherever possible to ensure reliability. Last month the *Morning Star* generously suggested that the spirited but modest march from Clerkenwell constituted "tens of thousands marching through the streets of London on May Day".

Such inflation of figures can lead to deflation of credibility. Cardinal rules for effective communication such as getting the pitch right for your anticipated readership or audience are as important for alternative media as any source. Indeed, we may suffer

from the disadvantage that we often face greater scepticism than that applied to a 'trustworthy' local rag.

A roundtable discussion on Indymedia took place on the Saturday, looking at the achievements of the project since its origins in reporting the anti-capitalist resistance at Seattle in 1999. This was preceded by a demonstration of a stripped-down micro-version of Indymedia, an innovation designed to enable reading and uploading via a mobile phone. An exchange followed on the future of Indymedia, allowing for a frank assessment and exchange of ideas about its future development. Indymedia enables activists to disseminate immediate and unmediated accounts of events, with control of their own stories and international coverage and reach. However, so-called Web 2.0 developments such as YouTube, MySpace and Wikipedia have now adopted the once revolutionary model of open source publishing, enabling users to upload material direct for more mainstream purposes.

Steve (Bristle magazine)

## Common Ground

The Common Ground Community Garden was opened to the public in Reading last week after four months of preparation. People from around the local area and beyond enjoyed a barbecue, live music, friendship and relaxation in the sun. However, this came in spite, not because of, the efforts of the council. Two days before the opening, they served the garden with an injunction, demanding that it be closed down and occupants of the adjacent squat be evicted.

On Friday 25th May the injunction case will be brought to court. The council's aim is to "secure the site pending imminent demolition of existing derelict property and disposal of the land."

The Council say that their "principle concern is with the health and safety of members of the public". This is despite that fact that the land which became Common Ground had been left abandoned for years, during which it became a home for drug addicts on numerous occasions. Dozens of used needles, discarded condoms and

broken glass littered the site, which was ignored by the council and open for anyone to accidentally wander into and be injured.

The injunction appears inconsistent with the Council's claims to be promoting conservation and "'green' campaigns of all sorts", including community gardens, in Katesgrove, and throughout the borough.

Freedom spoke to some of those involved with the project:

We argue that 'council property', can also be known as 'public property' – they are simply looking after it for us. And, considering the job they are doing, we say they have had their chance and now we, along with every member our community, should democratically decide it's future.

Lots of people came down for the opening, not just activists but local people, and even the security guards ignored the injunction...

We want to drum up support for a neighbourhood council to decide the future of the land and campaign to get



# News

## Somewhere over the rainbow

In tornado-ravaged Greensburg, Kansas Mutual Aid relief workers were forced out of the city by police, reports Dave Strano

On Saturday 19th May, five members and volunteers affiliated with Kansas Mutual Aid (KMA), a Lawrence-based class struggle anarchist collective, made the trek back to Greensburg, Kansas, to again help in relief efforts in the tornado-ravaged city. A week earlier, four KMA members had travelled to Greensburg on a fact-finding mission to assess the situation there. What KMA members found was a militarised, entirely destroyed city where relief efforts were moving tragically slowly.

On Friday 4th May Greensburg was almost completely destroyed by a F5 tornado. Around 97% of the buildings in the town of 1,500 were destroyed or damaged beyond repair. Nearly every single resident was left homeless, jobless and devastated. At least eleven people died in the storm, and hundreds of animals and livestock were also killed.

Shortly after the tornado, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) took control of the recovery efforts in Greensburg. The United Way became the coordinating organisation for relief volunteers but, after orders came from FEMA, halted the flow of volunteers into Greensburg. FEMA demanded that Greensburg needed to be 'secured' before the area could be opened to real recovery efforts.

So, as hundreds of recovery volunteers were told to not come to Greensburg by the United Way, hundreds of police from dozens of Kansas Jurisdictions were mobilised to enter the city and

establish 'control'.

A week after the tornado destroyed Greensburg, the Americorps organisation was finally given permission to establish and coordinate volunteer recovery efforts.

As we travelled further into the ravaged town, it became clear that the photographs I had seen had not done justice to what truly had happened here. There wasn't a single building in this area of the town that had been left standing. The devastation was near complete. Every single house we came across in the first moments we entered the town had completely collapsed. Every single tree was mangled and branchless.

This was a post-apocalyptic world. The city was eerily empty for the most part. National Guard troops patrolled in Hummers and trucks. Occasionally, a Red Cross or Salvation Army truck would drive by. Very few residents were there working on their homes.

After a short while, we met with several people evacuating belongings from their home. They told us that FEMA had been there for a week, and that all FEMA could offer them was an information pack. The pack, however, had to be mailed to the recipients, and they had no mailing address! Their entire house had been destroyed. Their mailbox was probably in the next county. All they were left to do was evacuate what few belongings could be saved from their house, and then pull the non-salvageable belongings and scraps of



Police checkpoint and scenes of devastation from Greensburg, Kansas, in the aftermath of the tornado.

their house to the curb for the National Guard trash crews to haul away.

No agency in the city besides Americorps was offering to help with the removal of this debris, or the recovery of people's homes. FEMA's mission was to safeguard the property of businesses in the area and offer 'low interest' loans to property owners affected. The National Guard was on hand along with the local police, to act as the enforcement mechanism for FEMA, while occasionally hauling debris and garbage out of the city.

The only building in the city that

FEMA and others were working in or around was the County Courthouse. When we approached this area, we quickly took notice of the giant air-conditioned FEMA tour buses, along with dozens of trailers that were now housing the City Hall, police dispatch centres and emergency crews.

On our return visit to Greensburg, we were detained by police before being escorted to the city limits. I asked repeatedly what we had done and why we were being ordered to leave the city. "You're part of a dangerous anarchist group that will only drain our security

resources," he responded. "We've been monitoring your website and e-mails, we know what kind of agenda you have."

It should be obvious to most by now, that the federal, state, and local governments that deal with disasters of this magnitude are not interested in helping the poor or working people that are really impacted. Only through class solidarity from other working people and working together with neighbours and community members will the people of Greensburg be able to survive and rebuild.

## A nationalist cyber war

In what is thought to be the first example of a state using online warfare, Russia has been accused of striking down websites across Estonia in a dispute over a historical monument.

Computer hackers have disabled the websites of government ministries, political parties, newspapers and banks, forcing the government to shut down all online access from outside the country.

The attack saw well-known techniques which have in the past been employed by activists to crash far-right websites, through launching thousands of requests for information in a matter of minutes to try and overload servers running the websites.

Media sources have claimed the move is a direct response to the moving of a 'Bronze Soldier' statue from the centre of the city to a military cemetery, and follows rioting in the streets of the capital Tallinn.

The statue represents the soldiers of the Russian army who swept through Estonia and liberated it from the Nazis. For many Estonians however, it also

represents the long years of brutality under Soviet rule.

Commentators in Estonia have pointed to the conflict being a further example of Russian nationalists both in and out of the country attempting to reassert Russian dominance in the region.

The conflict has also seen fierce opposition to plans for a minimum language requirement for the country's Russian speakers, who represent 20% of the population.

In a letter which has been widely distributed in Russia, a Russian-speaking anarchist in the country explained that the conflict, which also saw rioting which left dozens injured and one dead, has been more a clash between nationalist groups in Tallinn than between state governments. He said: "Most of the people who come there, do not talk in Estonian at all and are very nationalist. Many people, mostly youth, hate Estonian speakers. They are assuring that Russians liberated Estonia, and they do not care that then Estonia was occupied just as

it was occupied by fascists, plenty of people were deported to Siberia. etc.

"They are very proud to be Russians. This is why I already for a long time do not like people who are visiting statue. But I also do not like those, who are against the statue, they are first of all Nazi boneheads (who are plenty there), and elderly Estonians, who lived during time of occupation.

"I am against both sides, who participated to this fights for or against removal of the statue, as all of them are Nazis. But we should not leave without attention the fact, that many Russian speakers were negative about rioters, but are still judging Estonian speakers."

NATO have suggested EU member states should integrate and bulk up their online defences against further attack.



## New trial for Abu-Jamal

The case of Mumia Abu-Jamal, the black journalist and former Black Panther member currently serving a life sentence in a Philadelphia jail since 1982 for a crime he did not commit, has been emblematic for progressives in the United States for the racism, bias and unreliability of the 'justice' system. He was originally convicted by a predominantly white jury of killing a police officer in a trial that was immediately controversial. The original judge, Albert Sabo, was heard by a court stenographer as referring to Abu-Jamal during that trial with the words, "I'm going to help them fry the nigger".

Since then, on death row for a quarter of a century in a cell smaller than most bathrooms, Abu-Jamal has continued his political activism, remained a vocal critic of the US state and, notably, been able recently to broadcast trenchant criticism of Bush via Prison Radio. A focus for anti-death penalty activists as well as a whole gamut of legal groups, Abu-Jamal has been a long-standing focus of defiance in the face of evident miscarriages of justice.

Indeed, as a result of the pressure exerted by supporters of Abu-Jamal, in 2001 a judge overturned the death sentence, but upheld his conviction. On 17th May this year, a three-judge panel was presented with oral arguments in a hearing which should decide whether Mumia now gets a new trial, life in prison without parole, or is executed. The focus of the lawyers was constitutional: they concentrated on crimes committed by the prosecution in its attempts to kill Abu-Jamal - particularly with relation to the selection of the original jury: the prosecutor in 1982 used over two-thirds of his objections to remove blacks, African Americans; but fewer than a quarter to object to white jurors.

As expected, hundreds of people rallied to support Abu-Jamal in the courtroom last week, while an even larger crowd was present outside. Supporters travelled from as far away as France and the West Coast. Of course the mainstream propaganda in the United States is virtually ignoring



# Feature

# A mandate for class war

Iain Mackay looks at the conditions which have seen France's Thatcher bounced into the top job

**C**onservative politician Nicolas Sarkozy has won the French Presidential election. He managed to convince 53% of the population that he represents change and this message has dutifully been repeated in the media over here.

Failing to note that he had been a politician for 20 years, he played the right-wing populist card of portraying himself as an outsider and attacking politicians (and trade unions, immigrants and other usual suspects) for stealing the wealth of hard working French people.

What was significant in the reporting was how a 3% majority was turned into a strong mandate for his agenda rather than what it was, a relatively small majority which showed that a sizeable section of the French people reject it. It is doubtful that a Royal victory of 3% would have been reported in quite the same way.

So what to make of this demand for 'change'? MEDEF, the French bosses association, was solidly behind Sarkozy. This is unsurprising, as he promised to 'reform' the tax on large fortunes and give tax breaks to big business and the rich while making more cuts in the state-run national health system.

'Reform' used to be associated with making things better. These days it is usually an 'economically correct' code word for imposing a neo-liberal agenda (i.e., 'freeing' the labour market, weakening union power and state regulation of business, and reducing taxes).

The assumption is that worsening the situation for the bulk of a population by making workers cheaper will lead to greater competitiveness, higher profits and, therefore, more jobs.

The sad thing is that this programme is based on economics which are at deeply flawed and which have little or no bearing to reality. At best, it is impartial and incomplete, at worst it has been debunked for decades and reflects a fantasy world of

whatever unreal assumptions are required to make the theory come to the conclusion the economist seeks.

So the only group that needs Sarkozy's 'reform' of the French economy is its very rich. Do the French people really want to become like the UK and USA? Countries where the bosses are in the saddle and workers do what they are told? Sure, the French bosses would love such a regime but they do not make up 53% of the population. Part of the problem is that many people accept the image of France as one inflicted with economic stagnation, a new 'sick man' of Europe.

The source of the 'decline' of France is usually linked to lower GDP growth over the past few years compared to countries like Britain and the USA (both of which are constantly touted as models for France to follow). Yet this perspective fails to take into account internal income distribution. Both the USA and UK are marked by large (and increasing) inequality. This means that GDP growth is not equally distributed. In America, for example, most of GDP growth has been captured by the top 5% of the population while median wages have been flat for decades. Ignoring the elite would mean that GDP growth would be roughly similar in both countries, at least for the bulk of the population. This means that while France may grow more slowly, it benefits more than just the ruling class. Then there are such factors as poverty and social mobility. Child poverty is around 7% in France, but at 16% in Britain (double the rate for 1979) and at 20% in the USA. While poverty has risen, social mobility has fallen in the US and UK since the 1980s neo-liberal revolutions.

Moreover, comparing France's income or GDP per person to the US fails to take into account the fact that French people work far less than Americans. So while France may lag America (\$30,693 to \$43,144), it cannot be said that working class people are automatically worse off. Less hours at work and longer holidays may impact on GDP but only an idiot would say that this means the economy is worse. Economists cannot say that one person is worse off than another if she has less income simply due to working fewer hours. Like other Europeans, the French have decided to work less and enjoy it more.

A far better indicator of economic welfare is, in fact, productivity. It is understandable that this is not used as a measure as it is as high, or higher, in France as it is in the US (and much higher than in the UK). And it should be remembered that rising productivity in the US has not been reflecting in



Photomontage: RR

THATCHOZY! Will Sarko be the man to carry on Thatcher's legacy in France?

rising wages over the last three decades. The gains of productivity, like those in growth, have been accumulated by the boss class and not by the hard working American people (whose working week has steadily increased during that period). France also has created more private sector jobs (+10% between 1996 and 2002, according to the OECD) than the UK (+6%) or the US (+5%). Ironically, the UK economy has barely created any net employment in the private sector in the past five years but unemployment has dropped due to increased public sector spending.

What about the notoriously high unemployment? This is based on measuring techniques more than anything else. The standard measure of unemployment divides the unemployed by the unemployed plus employed. By this measure, French males age 15-24 have an unemployment rate of 20.8%, as compared to 11.8% in America. Yet this difference is mainly because, in France, there are many more young males not in the labour force (more are in school and fewer work part time while studying). As those who are not in the labour market are not counted in the standard measure, this gives an inflated value for youth unemployment. A far better comparison would be to compare the number of unemployed divided by the population of those in the same age group. This results in the USA having a rate of 8.3% and France 8.6%.

So the whole 'France/Europe is in a state of decline' narrative is better understood as a corporate media's clever ploy to push it into the hands of

the self-destructing neo-liberalism that is slowly taking its toll on Britain and America rather than a serious analysis of the real situation there. Perhaps the French economy comes in for such consistent bashing precisely because it shows that overall good standards of living are possible without the rich getting richer and the workers being turned into serfs.

Can Sarkozy force the French people down the road to (private) serfdom? He wants to be France's Thatcher and 'reform' the economy. As such, it would be useful to remember Thatcher's actual economic performance rather than the 'economically correct' narrative we have inherited from the media and economic 'experts'. When Thatcher came to office she did so promising to end the mass unemployment experienced under Labour. Unemployment then tripled in her first term rising to over three million in 1982 (for the first time since the 1930s, representing one in eight people), in large part due to the application of Monetarist dogma making the recession far worse than it had to be.

Faced with unemployment rising to well over 10%, Thatcher's regime simply changed how unemployment was recorded. Yet even knocking hundreds of thousands off the official unemployment records did not stop the steady rise in people looking for work. It remained above the 1979 Labour numbers until the Conservatives left office in 1997.

Needless to say, a very deep recession, double-figure unemployment for most of the decade, defeats for key

strikes and unions plus continued high unemployment for nearly two decades had its impact. It made people willing to put up with anything in order to remain in work. Hence Thatcher's 'economic miracle' – the working class finally knew its place in the social hierarchy.

Sarkozy does have some disadvantages compared to Thatcher. It is unlikely that France will discover substantial deposits of oil and so he will not have the boost of North Sea oil which mitigated some of the destruction inflicted by Thatcher onto the economy. Nor does France have a financial centre as powerful as the City of London whose influence ensured it profited from the flawed policies it helped inflict on the country.

Monetarism is utterly discredited and so he lacks the security of economic ideology which Milton Friedman provided the Thatcher politicians. France is also in the Euro and so lacks significant means of changing central bank policy as Thatcher had.

Can Sarkozy really 'do a Thatcher' and triple unemployment in under three years? Can he provoke the deepest recession in French history since the 1930s? Is he willing to oversee the destruction of French manufacturing sector? Will he be willing to use the powers of the state to break the mass protests and strikes his policies will, inevitably, provoke? That depends on the willingness of the French people to stand up and impose, from the streets, the reforms really needed for the French people – reforms politicians will not or cannot achieve.

  
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# Commentary

## FREEDOM

Volume 68 Number 11

### 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

First of all, many apologies for the lateness of this issue. A rich and varied cocktail of problems resulted in a long delay in getting the paper off to the printers.

One of our writers vanished without trace, leaving a gaping hole which had to be filled with copy, one of our editors was attending to the funeral of a dear friend and poor organisation in general have all contributed to an extremely difficult issue.

The solution to the problem is that we need more writers and editors...

If you'd like to lend a hand, then please get in touch with us either at [copy@freedompress.org.uk](mailto:copy@freedompress.org.uk) or write to The Editors, Freedom Press, 84b Whitechapel High Street, London E1 7QX.

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### Next issue

The next issue will be dated 16th June 2007 and the last day to get copy to us for that issue will be Thursday 7th June. Send articles to us by email to [copy@freedompress.org.uk](mailto:copy@freedompress.org.uk) or by post addressed to The Editors, Freedom, 84b Whitechapel High Street, London E1 7QX.

### Correction

Apologies for an error in our Social Centres Directory on page 8 of the 5th May issue. The London Action Resource Centre (LARC) is actually [www.londonarc.org/](http://www.londonarc.org/)

Editors

### NATO follow-up

Didn't mention in my previous letter detailing the tendency of anarchists to support NATO in its early stages (Freedom, 21st April) that among the pro-NATO anarchists, the fact that the fondness of the CGT (FO) the pro-NATO unions in France were former syndicalists.

In reference to "The former editors of the Torch" I meant of course the Rosetti girls, not the members of Commonweal/Socialist League, who took the press back later.

Meltzer had not been connected to Black Flag at the time of his pro-NATO period (1954-63).

Note: There was no 'R' in David Pude's name.

Laurens Otter

### Tide of protest

Friends, it's that time of year again – no, not spring, it's the G8 summit, coming this year to the plush resorts of Germany. As we all know, while the G8 nations continue to line the pockets of the richest, island states disappear and thousands die as a result of the freak weather conditions caused by an irrational and uncontrollable obsession with never-ending economic growth.

We're writing to let you know about the International Day of Action against Climate Change and the G8 on the 8th June. This is a call for autonomous, decentralised actions appropriate for your town, city or local area. Use the day of action to support local struggles against oil refineries, gas pipelines, strip mines, coal-fired fuel plants, airport expansion or new roads. Run workshops to spread sustainable post-petroleum living skills, organise a Critical Mass bike ride – the possibilities for taking action against the root causes of climate change are endless.

We already know of actions planned across the UK, North America, Germany, Spain, Canada and Australia, and that's just the start! By 8th June actions will be planned across the world. The full call-out (in five languages) and a collection of outreach materials (including leaflets, posters and ready-to-use Critical Mass flyer) can be downloaded from [risingtide.org.uk/g8](http://risingtide.org.uk/g8). If you would like us to send you more flyers to help you advertise your event for the day, drop us a line – email

[info@risingtide.org.uk](mailto:info@risingtide.org.uk).

We all know we only have a ten-year window to act. As the G8 leaders meet in Germany, intent on forcing us further towards catastrophic and irreversible climate chaos, we must unite, let's shout 'no more'. Help network the day of action to all environmental justice, climate action, sustainability and related movements in all the G8 countries and the Golbal South, but most of all, plan your 8th June now!

Just us in meeting their recipe for catastrophe with our worldwide resistance!

Rising Tide

### Rubbish decade

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

But nobody should think that the '60s produced real anarchism. Jones drowned in his swimming pool – so much for the notion that the Stones were so poor they could not 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 poor 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 'doped 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 to torture people – LSD as a chemical weapon.

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

Fuck the '60s!

Graham Whitehead

### Great art needs company

It would be nice to think that the relationship between art and corporate sponsorship is a straightforward and benevolent one – business gives money to large institution in return for promotion. However, in today's world of blurred boundaries and increasing corporate hegemony, no such benign relation is plausible.

The Victoria and Albert Museum is currently running a large scale exhibition called *Surreal Things*. At the same time, Selfridges department

store have opened up an exhibition entitled *Surrealism and the Shop* in their basement. The aim of both of these attractions is, apparently, to "explore the influence of Surrealism on contemporary art and design". Both events are accompanied by a series of vaguely quirky innovations and sideshows – performances and installations by the 'eclectic' duo DadaDandy at Selfridges; 'Make Your Own Surreal Hat' at the V&A. Of course, this is no coincidence – one look at any of the promotional material for *Surreal Things* reveals Selfridges & co. in pride of place amongst the sponsors. This is simply the latest in a line of shows sponsored by the department store, going all the way back to (fittingly) 'The Warhol Look' of 1998.

In this context, the role of the curator, and of the art institution, is no longer a free one, but subsidiary to, and greatly dependent upon, the wills of patrons and marketing departments in the shaping of the big shows. In direct proportion, and according to the doctrines of Nicholas Serota, the role of curator has shifted from 'Interpreter' to 'Collaborator' – in other words, someone who provides the visitor with an experience, instead of any real deep knowledge or insight.

Overall, the consensus impression of these shows is one of very little thought, gravity or integrity. But it's not about that any more, is it? It's about 'inclusivity', 'progress', 'wonder' and 'childlike states' and all of the other buzz words. Above all, it's about numbers, and shows which are simply designed to herd a constant stream of visitors through their doors as quickly as possible.

New Labour sees art very much as a part of the economy of modern Britain – perhaps as an off-shoot of the service industry – and expects it to function thus. In other words, the government expects art institutions, major galleries and museums to take on the character of independent businesses. On top of this, in the face of the imminent funding cuts that the Arts face across the board in order to pay for the Olympics, the relationship between the institutions and their corporate sponsors is likely to become even more one sided than it already is. From this perspective, we may now turn to the institutions themselves, the better to examine the great proliferation of blockbuster shows and visitor attractions that has gone on in recent years. Hype and clever packaging? Undoubtedly. But really, what's there to complain about?

After all, it's not exactly disagreeable to sit down and drink a coffee in one of these places. All the art and artefacts add a certain air of gravitas and theatricality to the experience of the café. Lets go on a little tour of inspection, starting at the National Gallery. Here, the Portrait Café has recently undergone a lovely redecoration to make itself look like a cross between the interior of Paul and the kitchen from *The Cook, the Thief, His wife and her Lover* – minus 'Cook' and 'Wife', of course.

Now back over to the V&A, who have also had a lovely Benugo café installed fairly recently (the 'Dining Room' to the National's 'Kitchen'), which opens out onto the central courtyard, enjoying pride of place right in the middle of William Morris' old Refreshment Rooms. This is just to take a couple of examples, but

everybody's doing it – accessorisation is the watchword of the day. Yes, they may all be a little on the expensive side – but you've got a ready-made subject of conversation in all the artwork you supposedly went there to see in the first place.

Then there are the gift shops. The ones at Tate Modern and Britain offer everything the budding young artist could ever wish for – an example being a set of colouring pencils priced very reasonably at £37 and stamped with an official 'Tate' seal of approval. But not just the institutions' own branded merchandise – all of the most contemporary of contemporary artists have no apparent problem doing it to themselves either. Observe the Alexander Calder Elephant Puzzle – a bargain at just £340. Signs that the art economy is now all but subsumed by Neoliberalism? No, it's just radical democracy in action. It's the artists' (no doubt ironic) way of showing that they're just like everybody else in post-industrial Britain – for sale.

So why complain at the demise of the autonomy of major art institutions? It's not surprising. Keeping art pure? Don't be ridiculous. These are just the necessary ways by which said institutions subsidise their income and swell their visitor numbers in this day and age – and after all, according to the DCMS, these are the things that matter. Don't be surprised that this rule of maximum gain now applies to art too. After all that posturing about populism rising up to defeat starchy old elitism in the late '50s and early '60s, don't any of you dare to turn around now. Because this is actually what the people want – art as a backdrop to, and justification for, consumption.

But please, don't get me wrong. I have absolutely no pity for the artistic community whatsoever. My views are simple: You brought it on yourselves, you fools. Whatever the future holds, you abandoned the old guard – you capitulated. You it was who jumped through New Labour's hoops and turned yourselves into commodities. So no one wants to sponsor you, now that the competition is getting even tougher? I guess you'll just have to go out and get real jobs.

A good slimming down is exactly what the art world needs, at all levels. Hardship. Suffering. Wild pain. Wild and screaming pain. Anything but another God damn David Shrigley t-Shirt.

Charles Fulford

### Quiz answers

- Burton. They bought a fashionable t-shirt with Russian writing, from trendy Giraun. They thought its slogan was 'harmless patriotism'. What it actually said was 'We will cleanse Russia of non-Russians'.
- She persuaded the residents and traders of Modbury, in Devon, to declare the town a plastic bag free zone after filming wildlife damaged by plastic bags.
- They want to purge the dictionary of the word 'McJob', which they argue is demeaning to their hard-working employees. The OED defines a McJob as "an unstimulating, low-paid job, with few prospects, esp. one created by the expansion of the service sector".
- In restaurants, where the hourly rate is topped up by tips. One group was quoted as paying as little as £3.75 an hour.

## 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 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

## David Douglass found the the recent Eurovision song contest a toe-curling experience

**T**he most revolting and toe-curling part of Saturday night's Eurovision Song Contest was Terry Wogan's xenophobic commentary. This was an international competition, but Terry couldn't seem to get it through his head why all those foreigners were in there.

It was quite clear to him only English speaking countries and entries had any real talent. The other countries' performers, especially those from the former 'socialist' countries, were talentless and had rigged the contest.

He argued quite simply that the votes were being cast on an ethnic and political basis and not on the merits or otherwise of the song and performance. His knowledge of politics and national hostilities between these states clearly deserves less points than Scooch, with a number of those eastern block states at each others' throats over energy, history and politics to name but three.

His 'anti-British' bias conclusion was based exclusively on the fact that almost nobody voted for the English (or was it British?) entry. Scooch, 'our' entry was one of those totally manufactured groups, unassociated bright young things stuck together for the sake of one performance mainly for their looks, trying so hard to be bouncy and vacuous.

Worse one actually only needed to look at the entry to see the reason it got next to no votes – it was entirely inappropriate. *Flying The Flag*, is an exclusively British expression based on an entirely imperialist history. It refers basically to rubbing the foreigners nose in the dust and showing them that 'we' or rather the British ruling class was the most powerful in the world.

Just to ensure they didn't forget this fact mighty battleships were dispatched around the globe, their huge guns pointing at the capitals of the world while they 'flew the flag' in foreign ports.

Terry doesn't seem to know that it is for this reason many of us from here hate that bloody flag and run a mile from anyone flying it. So to actually enter it into an international competition where either it made no sense to those listening to the words, or else exactly recalled Britain's imperial arrogance to those who did, why did anyone expect it would attract votes?

Then there was the costumes and the dance. Without doubt almost any amateur dance school anywhere in the country would have been ashamed of a performance like that, and could have come up with a routine and costume miles better. It was like some impromptu church hall show put on by folk who had never sang or danced before.

When all comes to all, Scooch did very well to get the points they did, from Ireland and Malta, though even these were probably sympathy votes. As to the contest as a whole, worse than previous years and by God that is saying something. Wogan's criticisms were not however aimed at the poverty of the songs and performance, but very clearly at the nationality and ethnic make up of the performers and this was the most disgusting part of the whole show.

Only the Ukrainian entry Verica Serdyvchka, which came second, showed any star quality – Scooch just didn't rate beside them. The winner, it must be said, demonstrates that you don't need a sparkly costume and swish dance routines to actually win.

The Serbs clearly struck a cord with the content of their political ballad, and since it was in Serbian and not English and we had no translation it isn't surprising it was lost on us. Those countries which did understand the song and voted for it, probably on its content rather than a glamorous presentation, were not however voting 'as a block' or along ethnic lines as has been widely reported here on press and television.

Still even the most chauvinist of reporters haven't been able to say 'we



SCAB: Terry Wogan, one of the BBC's highest paid presenters scabbed on the strike of BBC workers against cuts in 2005. The Guardian reported that he said he supported the strike but felt he was not in a position to join the 24-hour walkout. "Of course I have sympathy for them [the strikers] but I have a job to do. I am on a contract," he said. Wogan had earlier refused to take a leaflet on the strike action from a representative from broadcasting union Bectu.

woz robbed'. Wouldn't the whole thing be better if we just staged an international folk or rock concert

which artists and performers from across the world and drop the whole competition and voting element? We

might discover something resembling talent which was worth watching and participating in if we did.

## BOOKS

**Worlds Apart**  
by David Gribble  
Libertarian Education, £8.95

Education seems to be in a state of perpetual crisis and change. One fundamental cause of this situation is the unacknowledged clash of two totally different world views on the purpose of education and how schools should be structured to provide that education.

In traditional schools the emphasis is on a formal curriculum, uniforms and discipline. Under New Labour this traditional approach has been given fresh momentum with the state's promotion of faith schools as a solution to social exclusion. But there



is a second perspective, which is characterised by informality, independence, and self-direction.

This second approach is unrepresented within the country's political forums and is misrepresented in the mass media, that characterises this democratic approach to education as producing wild, idle and ignorant children.

In *Worlds Apart* former teacher David Gribble has set out the differences in approach by the careful juxtaposition of extracts from prospectuses and 'official' school documents as a way of contrasting the different educational philosophies that underpin conventional and democratic schools.

Gribble goes much further than this, as the bulk of the book is comprised of contributions written by pupils from both types of school. Like the extracts from official publications these are set out on opposite pages and are allowed to stand in their own right without editorial interpretation. This approach results in some surprising similarities and differences in attitudes to things like lessons, teachers, authority and the opposite sex! Sometimes it is the traditional approach to education that creates the natural rebels.

A well-produced paperback *Worlds Apart* features fourteen pages of photographs illustrating the differences in approach at the different types of

school, and represents a refreshing change from academic textbooks about educational theories.

Readers will certainly be motivated to explore ideas about contemporary libertarian education in more depth, so it is a pity that the book lacks a guide to further reading or a list of alternative schools. The big question, however, is how to get the ideas raised in this book discussed, debated and acted upon in mainstream education.

Martyn Everett.

Available from the Libertarian Education website at [libed.org.uk/worldsapart.html](http://libed.org.uk/worldsapart.html) or from Freedom Press at £8.95 (add 90p towards postage and packing in the UK, £1.40 overseas), 84b Whitechapel High Street, London E1 7QX.



# A Sideways Look

I was brought up in a council house in a place not dissimilar to Barking and Dagenham, whose wealthy Labour MP has caused a storm by claiming immigrants should not take priority over established (meaning white) families, for council housing. This is not the first time that Margaret Hodge MP, has been embroiled in a row connected to race and class. Before the last election she claimed that the vast majority of white electors in her working class constituency had considered voting BNP. This was undoubtedly a scare tactic to get Labour loyalists out to vote.

On one level, she does have a point. When I wanted to leave home there was no chance of getting a council flat locally, not even in one of the sink estates. Other parts of London had plenty of empty flats and houses, but weren't very good at letting them to new tenants. Like most white working class people trying to find a home I could afford, I understood little about how housing was allocated and it was easy to feel resentful towards people who got tenancies without a local connection.

That was twenty years ago and quite a bit has changed, though the resentment is still there. The biggest change is that there is so little council housing around. Most of the nicer properties were sold under the Right to Buy, often at a tiny fraction of their value. This has had several knock on effects, aside from the obvious one of scarcity. Where there is only a small amount of council housing, it tends to be reserved for those with greatest need, which means a disproportionate number of tenants with health problems or large families who get overcrowded. Once estates get a reputation as somewhere that is bad to live in, only the really desperate will go there, which tends to be those with the most problems or the least ability to deal with them. A downward spiral follows as anyone with the ability to do anything about the conditions gets out.

It's not just the amount of housing that causes problems. While councils have effectively been barred from making any direct investment in homes, housing associations, the semi-private quangos that pay their management stratospheric salaries, have used the opportunity to speculate and accumulate. While there are exceptions, most of the new housing they have built is of a banal standard. Crucially, it's more expensive, less secure and there is less of it. Rather than bring housing association rents down, the last few years have seen the government force council rents up to match them.

The reason there is resentment against immigrants getting council homes, even though it rarely happens and is the stuff of urban myth, is that there aren't enough. While this state of affairs was started by Thatcher,

Labour have done virtually nothing to stop it. As a Labour government minister, Margaret Hodge is more responsible for her constituents' lack of housing than any poor immigrants. Labour have sold it off, they've not invested, they've encouraged buy-to-let creating a market in rented ex-council properties, they've put the rent up every year by more than inflation, they've used rents to subsidise council tax.

We don't need to bicker over who gets the crumbs, we need to fight for a bigger cake.

Svartfrosk

## Imagine if...

Larry Page and Sergey Brin, founders of Google, sat at their computers with their eyes glued to the screens.

Brin's eyes were red and puffy. The database and information extraction guru had been working around the clock to get their new systems up and running.

Google's new database was designed to be the ultimate source of information on everyone who ever searched the internet using their systems.

Brin glanced up. "I think I've got it Larry, I've been tracking your movements for the last week and can reasonably say what it is you're going to do in the next 24 hours."

Larry grinned "That's excellent Brin, now we can really help the world to become a more open place."

Brin nodded. "Yes, after all we are pledged to 'be good'. Even though we are using our positions to pick out the movements of millions and create a database of their every move, we are a responsible company. This information must not get into the wrong hands."

The phone rang. Larry picked it up, nodded and put the phone down again. "Brin, that was China. The state wants all our information or they'll deny us any further contracts."

Brin considered this. "Well, we already allow them to decide what our readers can see, clearly we consider them the right hands. Better hand it over I guess."

The phone rang again. This time it was the CIA. Brin pondered their own request. "Well, the CIA can't be any worse than the Chinese state..."

Hmm, complicated this 'being good' business, isn't it.

## The quiz

1. Which retailer mistakenly sold a neo-nazi t-shirt?
2. What achievement in retail did wildlife camerawoman Rebecca Hosking make?
3. What is MacDonalds' beef with the *Oxford English Dictionary*?
4. Where in the UK is it legal to pay less than the minimum wage?

Answers on page 6



Taken from Wildcat: Anarchists Against Bombs by Donald Rookin, Freedom Press, £3 (post free)

## Iran

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The United States has supported and encouraged an Iranian militant group, Jundullah, that has conducted deadly raids inside Iran from bases on the rugged Iran-Pakistan-Afghanistan 'tri-border region', ABC news reported.

US officials deny any 'direct funding' of Jundullah groups but say the leader of Jundullah was in regular contact with US officials.

American intelligence sources say Jundullah has received money and weapons through the Afghanistan and Pakistan military and Pakistan's intelligence service. Pakistan has officially denied any connection.

A report broadcast on Iranian television last Sunday said Iranian authorities had captured ten men crossing the border with \$500,000 in cash along with "maps of sensitive areas" and "modern spy equipment."

A senior Pakistani official told ABCNews.com that the ten men were members of Jundullah.

The leader of the Jundullah group, according to the Pakistani official, has been recruiting and training "hundreds of men" for "unspecified missions" across the border in Iran.

## News in brief

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controversy, had another complaint, possibly from the same person, filed this week.

It claimed that "Mr Scholar has used his privileged position as an executive director to influence bank staff to manipulate Ms —'s job description in a way to suit her limited professional qualification.

"Without Mr Scholar's intervention she would clearly not occupy her present position. Several staff members have

reported these facts ... these complaints have been ignored."

Mr Scholar, 37, is a member of the board that oversees the work of the bank and had been deliberating Mr Wolfowitz's fate. He firmly denied any wrongdoing.

There were suspicions that he may be the victim of a smear campaign by supporters of Mr Wolfowitz, who believed he was forced out unfairly by European governments.

## Common ground

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those decisions enacted. We have had lots of support, we are getting anarchist politics across in a concrete manner, the ideas may not be called anarcho, but people are seeing community control, and that we are not working for profits.

At 10am on Friday, supporters of the garden will be gathering outside Reading Court to show the council that they are willing to defend the few community and green spaces we have left, and

## Mumia Abu-Jamal

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the case in favour of celebrity sensations.

Although a decision on the outcome of this hearing may not be made or made known for months - some expect it in between six weeks to three months - Abu-Jamal himself has commented on the hearing, "You know what I want: people to understand that this is not about me, Mumia Abu-Jamal. This is about everybody on death row around the world. This is about all political prisoners around the world. And I hope that, through what the court does in this case, it will help other people."

Louis Further sources: mumia.org/freedom.now/, freemumia.org/ and www.prisonradio.org/

## Listings

2nd June Strawberry Fair, free festival at Midsummer Common, Cambridge, see strawberry-fair.org.uk

6th to 8th June G8 Summit at Heiligendamm near Rostock, see wombles.org.uk/article200609109.php, dissent.org.uk or vision07.net/drupal

16th June It's broke - let's fix it! finding solutions to poverty, conflict and climate change, an all-day conference aiming to take a positive approach to some of the grave global problems that concern us all, and which underlie many of the issues discussed in the cafe diplo talks, at Imperial College, London, for info see mondediplofriends.org.uk/

30th June World Development Movement annual conference: activism past, present and future with speakers including Ngugi wa Thiong'o and George Monbiot, plus sessions on apartheid, slavery, climate justice, privatisation struggles, music and protest, women's rights, corporate globalisation, from 1pm to 6pm at University of Leeds, for more call 020 7820 4900, email register@wdm.org.uk or visit www.wdm.org.uk

6th to 8th July Antiworld Outdoor Festival Experience at a secret location near London, see antiworld070707.com  
8th July Phillip K Dick day - this is part of a film being made about the science fiction writer, in Hyde Park, London (the director/writer is looking for actors and others interested in working as part of a film crew) all afternoon, email punksketamineanddrones@no-log.org  
13th to 15th July Tolpuddle Martyrs Festival, with Tony Benn, Billy Bragg, Chumbawamba, Mark Thomas, the Badgaddies and many more, at Tolpuddle, Dorset, free (charge for parking and camping) call 0117 947 0521, email southwest@tuc.org.uk or see tuc.org.uk/tolpuddle

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