

# FREEDOM

80P ANARCHIST NEWS AND VIEWS

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INSIDE ►►

Postal strikes: overview page 3

Anarchist journalist attacked page 4

Respect eyes up Scotland page 5

The Svartfrosk column page 8

## PUBLIC SERVICE DISORDER

Across the public sector, the government has put in pay offers which are well below the rate of inflation. Unionists have begun to mobilise against the measures, but despite massive general anger, union chiefs have encouraged a lengthy process of consultation with management which is undermining the prospects for concerted militant action.

Union bosses are talking up a deal which would see nurses in England and Wales receive a staged increase equivalent to a 2% over the year for England and Wales, and 2.5% in Scotland, with small one-off payments offered for training, and a rise of between 3-4% for support staff earning between £11,782 and £15,107.

Inflation under the Retail Price Index is at 4.4% according to the latest figures, meaning that the amounts are effectively a pay cut for workers.

The complex deal is designed to head off balloting for an almost unprecedented strike by members of the Royal College of Nursing - renowned for its anti-strike attitude, and Unison, undermining support for a round of public service strikes which could hit across most sectors of government.

Unison bosses have recommended the deal as 'the best that can be achieved through negotiation', while the RCN's chiefs believed they had taken a 'tough stance' to win the slightly less onerous pay cut.

Similarly, 49 of the 53 colleges nego-

tiating under Unison have accepted an effective 2.5% offer for the year starting August, with four rejecting it as too low, the comment from national officer Christine Lewis being that it wasn't quite "bad enough".

UCU meanwhile after months of activity have secured a 13.1% offer over three years, with 3% coming this year, as part of a deal to help lecturers' earnings catch up with those of teachers.

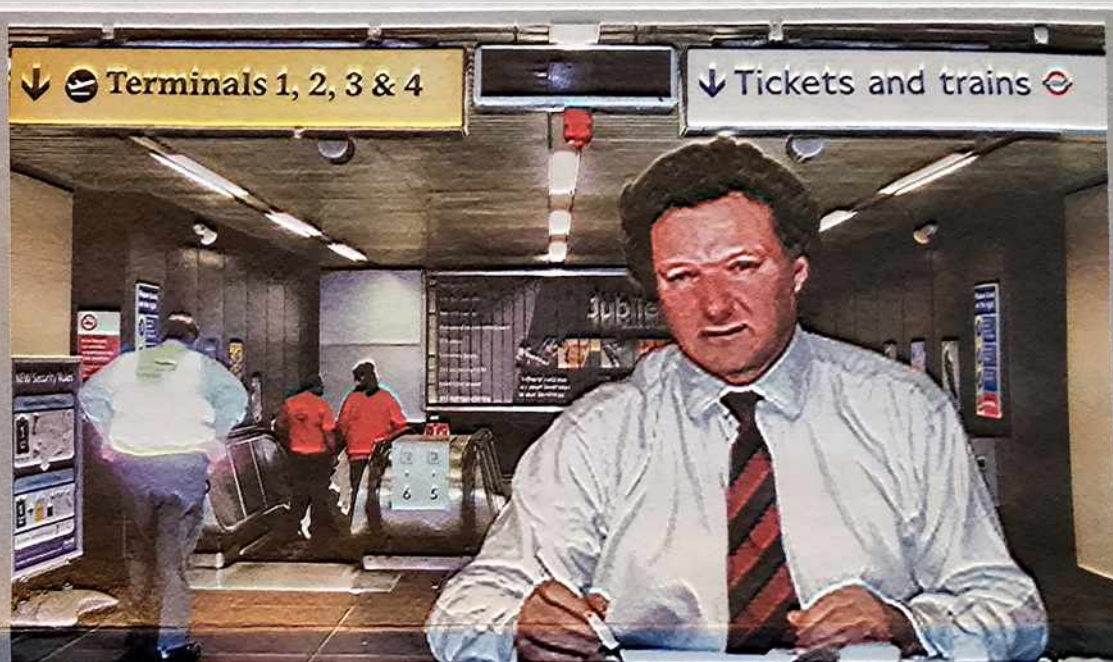
The government are benefiting from giving teachers a low offer while giving lecturers their catch-up pay.

In other public sectors, including teaching, the result of proposed 2-2.5% increases across the board from government has not been agreed. Four million workers are affected by the low offers, including local government workers and civil service workers.

The PCS have launched an industrial action consultation for this month involving 280,000 members employed in the civil service, a move which has angered militants who argue that action should be approved now, while postal workers are already out.

A member of the Anarchist Federation said: "People engaged in industrial action in both the public sphere and members of the CWU have much in common. They represent a struggle to defend their pride in the public service against the ever decreasing quality of work forced upon them by bosses."

A member of anarcho-syndicalist group the Solidarity Federation said:



YOU AIN'T COMING IN: Legal bane of activists everywhere is the lawyer responsible for EDO, Huntingdon Life Sciences and GM injunctions, lawyer Timothy Lawson-Crutenden (bottom right of picture) outdid himself this month with an attempt to bar up to five million people from going to Heathrow as the Climate Camp draws near, which was hastily withdrawn after it turned out the judge would be one of those affected. He has instead tried to pick out three known protesters. As we go to press, Justice Caroline Swift granted an order which bans anyone turning up for the protest to "prevent access to or egress from" Heathrow or "obstruct or interfere" with the operations of the airport. They must also keep their protest confined to the agreed areas. Anyone who breaks the terms of the order faces a prison term.

"Business knows how to deal with individual unions "led" by chiefs looking for a quiet life, this requires a wide front and grassroots unity throughout

the public sector if it's going to be enough of a threat that they blink first."

In a recent statement on their website,

the IWW said: "The CWU should be linking this dispute to those of other public sector workers in Unison and

► page 6, column 5

## GREEN GATHERINGS

The Earth First! gathering took place last month, drawing in hundreds of radical green activists from around the country to discuss, train and workshop in the fields of Suffolk.

Freedom spoke to organisers of the green get-together, to see how it went. They said: "At the high point about 230 people came, but before that it was the smallest gathering we've had in ages. But the fact that it didn't seem like many people were there was partly because the site was huge, it was a brilliant site, three fields separated by a really pretty river.

"There was an obvious climate focus because people involved in a lot of the

climate campaigns were there. There were lots of other workshops as well though - squat electrics, men's sexual health - it changed a lot throughout the event, a lot of spontaneous workshops happened which was good and bad, some of which were really highly technical like a night-time navigation workshop, so that was more direct action focused.

"It's interesting, there's almost no Earth First! groups any more, most of the people involved have merged into other groups now, only Waveney is still working really, so there is a debate as to whether it should keep going, but we think it should, it's a great atmosphere and friendly people who are into anarchist principles - everyone is crew!"

"There's a very small collective organising it for next year, most of the people who are in it have said they can help in a small way but it would be good if more people could offer."

The EF! action update has also been handed over, and that's looking for more people. The first edition of that is going to be handed out at Climate Camp.

• Meanwhile there's the Camp for Climate Action, an eight-day event starting on 14th August and, while it supports direct action, it bills itself as more open to all-comers.

The event, which hit the news after an injunction was taken out by BAA, owners of Heathrow Airport nearby to this year's site, against protest in the area (see picture, above), emphasises its educational focus. Workshops are being held on a variety of green topics, including the science of climate change, the concept of peak oil, biofuels and, of course, air travel, among others. It has also been heavily hinted that a major direct action campaign will take place during the event.

The Camp will be organised in a neighbourhood system. A neighbourhood is an area of the site where people from a geographical area (e.g. Yorkshire) or with a similar interest (e.g. aviation) come together and everyone in that neighbourhood helps organise it.

Earth First!: earthfirst.org.uk  
Climate Camp: climatecamp.org.uk

## BRAVERY IN SOMALIA

Even as people flee fighting in the heart of Somalia between the interim government and Islamic insurgents, demonstrations have been taking place against the actions of troops allied to the interim government.

A demonstration took place at the end of last month, protesting against troops of the interim government, who have been accused of looting, armed robbery, the beating of civilians and raping women as part of a campaign of terror against internal refugees.

Hundreds of thousands have fled towards safe zones after fighting broke out between Islamic insurgents and the US and Ethiopia-backed administration in Mogadishu earlier this year.

On 26th July around a hundred people in Heliwa district protested against the rapes of five women by armed forces loyal to the government. The women were taken at gunpoint from their families, some members of which were viciously beaten.

"The troops, who dressed in government military forces uniform, raided

our camp last night raping five women including a mother with a newly-born baby," Madey Ahmed, one of the protesters, told Afriquenligne by telephone.

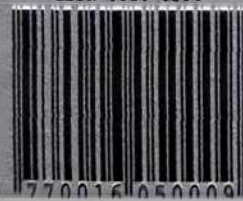
Abdiifitah Nour Sabriye, the deputy of Mogadishu's mayor, denied that there had been any rapes. "First, no group can stage a demonstration in Mogadishu without our knowledge and there are no government forces that raped women," he said.

Prior to the demonstration, allegations had been made that troops were routinely looting across the capital, even as fighting continued. Two days after the demonstration, evidence emerged via the local Sh.M. Network that a 13-year-old student had been beaten and tortured, allegedly by government troops, because he was holding a copy of the Qur'an.

The interim government was installed this year after Ethiopia, backed by the US, wiped out the Islamic Courts Union, a local business-backed force which had imposed Sharia law across much of the country.

Photomontage: Freedom Press

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# Home and away

**CARE WORK:** As *Freedom* goes to press, social care workers in Glasgow are still on indefinite strike to defend their jobs in a dispute over grading.

The action involves nearly 600 Unison members who work with children at risk, vulnerable adults and offenders, and all the city's methadone users.

They had previously voted for action just short of a strike, but were called out after Glasgow City Council threatened to mount a legal challenge.

**ENVIRONMENT:** BAA, owners of the privatised Heathrow airport have called on the services of protest-busting corporate lawyer Timothy Lawson Cruttenden to get an injunction under the Protection from Harassment Act against expected actions during the Climate camp this month.

They want an exclusion zone not just around the airport and its infrastructure but between junctions 3-6 of the M4 and 13-16 of the M25. The exclusion zone being applied for also covers the Piccadilly line and the Heathrow Express.

**IMMIGRATION:** A new immigration detention centre now under construction at Gatwick airport. Scheduled to open in 2008 the facility will house 426 detainees.

The removal of failed asylum seekers reached its highest level in 2006, and asylum applications have fallen by 76% since 2002.

A No Border camp is planned to protest the detention centre from 19th to 24th September. The group said: "This will be another in a long line of barbarous prisons across the world, imprisoning people who migrate. Unless we stop it from being built." For more information go to [noborders.org.uk](http://noborders.org.uk).

**PHARMACEUTICALS:** Drugmaking multinational AstraZeneca plans to shed a further 4,600 jobs as part of a cost-cutting drive ahead of upcoming patent expiries on key drugs from 2010.

In February the company announced 3,000 job losses, bringing the total announced this year to 7,600 - 11% cent of AstraZeneca's 66,000-strong 2006 global workforce.

The latest cuts will include 700 research jobs and thousands more across sales and marketing, regulatory affairs and IT.

**PRIVATE EQUITY:** An enquiry has backed private equity companies against calls from unions to tax their profits at normal levels. At present top executives and investors in private equity firms, which specialise in high risk operations buying out and cutting down businesses, pay almost no tax on their profits.

The panel said that any higher taxes would risk damaging the UK economy.

**TERROR:** New counter-terrorism measures have been proposed by Gordon Brown, including the reinstatement of plans to extend internment without trial, allowing the use of wire-tapping and email hacking as evidence in trials the creation of a new border force to monitor people coming into the country.

A full national security strategy is to be published in the autumn.

"The way forward is electronic screening of all passengers as they check in and out of our country at ports and airports - so that terrorist

# Around the world

**CHINA:** Last month farmers blockaded a brewery to protest against pollution and being left out of negotiations over the sale of the building.

Villagers in the southwest province Sichuan blocked the gate of the brewery and a nearby road close to Shifang city, demanding changes from local officials.

"There's been a lot of trouble," said one villager who gave her family name as Huang told the Reuters news agency. "They weren't listening and so we blocked the road."

Villagers said there were between 1,000 to 2,000 protesters despite heavy rain. They said run-off from the brewery had damaged crops and tainted well water.

They added there was anger among farmers and employees about the recent sale of the brewery, in which they claim a stake. "They didn't share the money with the farmers. It's unfair," said Huang.

**FRANCE:** Transport workers are protesting against a proposed 'minimum service' law. The plan would oblige workers to maintain a minimum service during public transport strikes, which has been taken as an attack on the right to strike by workers and unions.

There have also been strong indications that if the government can establish a minimum service law for the transport sector then it will be introduced for other public and private services. Politician François Fillon has stated that if the law works it should be altered to include "other public services, notably education".

The government has defined transport services as "any company or government organisation entrusted with a mission of public service for the regular transport of passengers who are not tourists". Air transport is currently excluded.

**IRAN:** Mansour Osanloo, President of the Tehran bus workers' union, Sandikaye Kargarane Sherkate Vahed, has for the third time over the past

year and a half found himself in detention. The latest arrest took place after he was abducted while traveling on a Tehran bus on 10th July. He is being held in Evin prison, charged with 'conspiring against national security'.

**ISRAEL:** Israel's biggest trade union has called off a general strike that shut down public services after a deal with the finance ministry.

Histadrut had been demanding a 10% public sector pay increase, with the government initially offering 1%. Negotiators agreed a 5% settlement.

Israel has seen three general strikes in the last eight months. Government offices shut down entirely and state-run utilities operate on skeleton staff, carrying out no repairs or maintenance.

**MEXICO:** Late last month, the second Encounter between the Zapatistas and the People of the World was inaugurated.

Previous to the inauguration there were workshops on health and education, which are now carried out de facto in the autonomous process.

The system of autonomous health is handled nowadays by health promoters, with a clinic, various micro-clinics, several health centres, and an optician's office. Additionally, special attention is given to women's health with this system.

In another workshop, a representative of Oaxacan Voices Building Autonomy and Freedom (VOCAL, in its Spanish initials) explained that, during a repression on 16th July in Oaxaca against members of the social movement who were attempting to boycott the celebration of the official Guelagueta fiesta, three more VOCAL comrades had been kidnapped by the government of Oaxaca, the statement noted: "Our compañeros report having been badly treated, groped, and threatened with rape. We have had news that the State has prepared an operation to repress every youth movement in Oaxaca."

**MIDDLE EAST:** Millions of Iraqis have fled the country's ongoing conflict to

neighbouring Syria and Jordan, where resources are being stretched to breaking point, according to Amnesty International.

"More than two million Iraqis have now fled the sectarian violence raging in their country and almost two million others are internally displaced," said Malcolm Smart, Director of Amnesty International's Middle East and North Africa Programme. "This is threatening to create a humanitarian crisis that could engulf the region unless concerted international action is taken now."

"There is now a desperate need for assistance - financial and otherwise - to ease the situation. The US\$25 million pledged by Iraq's government has still not materialised, while other countries involved in the conflict have offered little support."

**PHILIPPINES:** Despite international condemnation of the Arroyo government's human rights record, on 11th July the US Congress have agreed to send \$30 million in military aid to the Philippines for fighting the 'war on terror'.

The millions look likely to be used to bolster the firepower of the Filipino military and police, both of which have been accused of being involved in more than 860 extra-judicial killings of activists across the country.

Just days after the donation, the Philippines Parliament passed the Human Security Act, a measure similar to the Patriot Act in the US,

which expands the government's ability to curtail dissent in the name of fighting 'terrorism'.

The HSA defines 'terrorism' in such broad language that almost any protest or campaign that 'alarms' the population against a policy advocated by the government could be subject to the law's jurisdiction.

**SOUTH KOREA:** On 1st March 2006, approximately four hundred women who work as train attendants (similar to flight attendants) on the KTX 'bullet train' began a strike to demand the end of discriminatory and unjust outsourcing practices of the Korea Railroad Corporation (KORAIL). KORAIL officials led KTX women workers to believe that although they were initially hired under short-term contracts via an external company, they would be granted permanent status as direct employees of KORAIL after one year. However, the KTX Crew Workers Branch Union's demands for direct and permanent employment have yet to be met.

To date, the KTX Crew Workers' Branch Union's struggle is the longest and most bitterly waged fight by women workers in the history of Korea. For over 500 days, women who work as train attendants on the KTX bullet trains have held public rallies and marches (see picture below), occupied buildings, lectured in classrooms, and conducted outreach.



# Prison news

## Operation Backfire verdicts

The first of the two non-cooperating 'Operation Backfire' Oregon defendants, Joyanna Zacher and Nathan Block were sentenced to seven years and eight months' imprisonment each. They were sentenced for non-violent direct-action which saw property destroyed. They both plead guilty for involvement in two incidents that occurred in Oregon, USA in 2001.

Nathan and Joy stood by their principles and refused to cooperate with the authorities, despite being threatened with life imprisonment without the possibility of parole. Email [solidaritywithsadieandexile@gmail.com](mailto:solidaritywithsadieandexile@gmail.com)

## Lecce anarchists sentenced

On July 12th, 2007, sentences were announced in the first degree of the 'Operation Nighttime' trial against the anarchists of Lecce and the province.

They were acquitted of "subversive association" but four companions were convicted of 'association to commit a crime'.

Salvatore was sentenced to five years in prison because he's considered the leader of the association. Saverio and Cristian, considered to be participants in the association, were condemned to three years. Marina, also considered to be a participant, was sentenced to one year and 10 months.

The same companions were also convicted for specific offenses: damaging Esso gas pumps, squatting the 'Capolinea', unauthorised demonstrations, violence against a public official, instigating detained immigrants to commit a crime, writing on a wall, defamation, telephone threats to the former director of the San Foca immigrant detention centre (Cesare Lodeserto), and threats

towards two medics who had allegedly edited documents to cover up violence by Lodeserto and the carabinieri (paramilitary police) against immigrants who tried to escape. Lodeserto was awarded thousands of Euros for the threats while one of the medics received 50,000 Euros for defamation.

Other companions were sentenced for some offenses. Sandro to one year, Massimo to four months, and Laura received a 100 Euro fine. Another eight anarchists were acquitted entirely. Acquittals were made on the charges of setting fire to the main entrance of the Cathedral of Lecce and for the damages against some automatic bank machines of Banca Intesa that held the funds of the 'Regina Pacis' immigrant detention center in San Foca. The defense will make an appeal.

## Iceland detentions

The Icelandic government and ALCOA are beginning to line up political prisoners with their repression of protests against the heavy industry policy.

A twenty three year old British Saving Iceland activist was arrested last month on an action against Rio Tinto-Alcan, and imprisoned for eight days.

The activist was told by the Icelandic police that she was to pay a 100,000 kronur (£840) fine for her involvement in protests against ALCOA in the east of Iceland in the summer of 2006, or face prison. She chose jail.

The third Saving Iceland protestor to be imprisoned is an Icelandic 21 year old. (The first activist imprisoned was Paul Gill in 2005.) He was sentenced to 18 days in August for protesting against the then still illegal ALCOA smelter in Reydarfjordur.

# News

## Postal strikes: overview

### Rob Ray looks at the Royal Mail dispute, now a month-and-a-half in and still going strong

Attitudes in the battle for the future of Royal Mail have become more and more heated since the conflict began, with stories coming in of alleged illegal use of scab labour, managers lying to staff, suspensions, secret plans to gut a defeated workforce, and even fatalities as managers attempt to drive the mail vans.

Postal workers have responded with absolute solidarity, unionists claim 90% coming out or higher in many workplaces. Suspensions of workers refusing to cross picket lines or sort mail from sectors involved in rolling

strikes have resulted in wildcat strikes across the country.

As *Freedom* goes to press, the CWU is continuing to engage in a series of rolling strikes, with certain sections coming out while others stay in. The tactic is supposed to mean a maximum of workers get paid while disruption continues to be caused.

However, in an attempt both to confuse solidarity and undermine the impact of the strikes, Royal Mail have begun shipping post from striking sectors to be dealt with by non-striking ones.

Wildcat strikes broke out late last month in response to this problem, in solidarity with drivers who had refused to cross a picket line at Edinburgh airport and been suspended. Spreading across Scotland, reports have come in of mass walkouts or sit-ins in depots Aberdeen, Edinburgh and Glasgow, followed by delivery offices, with other unofficial actions taking place in Tyneside, Chester and Liverpool.

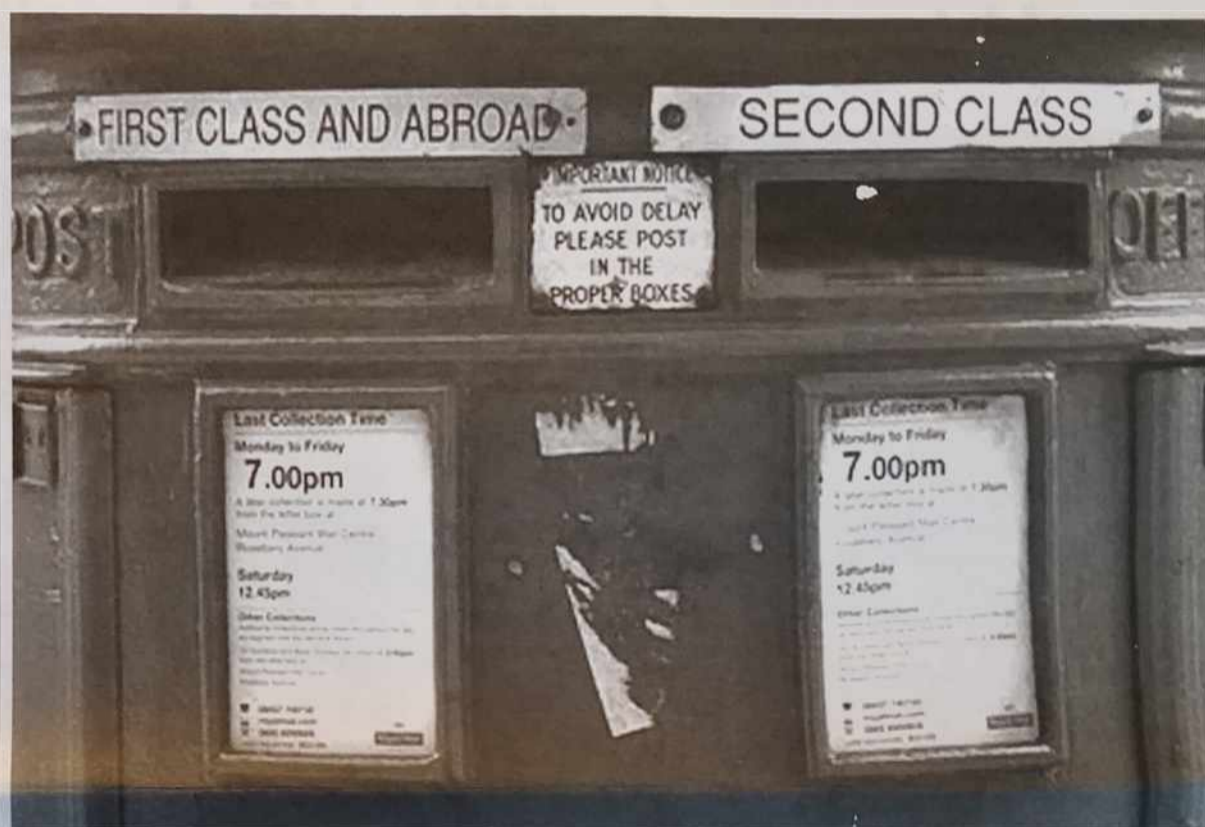
Although the wildcats have died down as *Freedom* goes to press, with Scottish workers voting to head back in on 3rd August, a continued rolling programme for later this month looks likely to force the issue of crossing picket lines again.

For both the official and unofficial strikes, agency workers have been brought in by the company to cover shifts illegally. However, moves by Royal Mail to use Polish workers backfired in Liverpool and Watford. Once the situation had been explained to them, Polish workers actively joined pickets, or simply went down the pub instead.

However postal workers are becoming concerned that a system of streaming

#### Week 4 Schedule:

- Network and International/HWDC – duties, Scheduled Attendance and overtime commencing at or after 19.00 Monday 13th August 2007 and before 19.00 Tuesday 14th August 2007.
- Airports – duties, Scheduled Attendance and overtime commencing at or after 12 noon Tuesday 14th August 2007 and before 12 noon Wednesday 15th August 2007.
- Mail Centres – duties, Scheduled Attendance and overtime commencing at or after 19.00 Wednesday 15th August 2007 and before 19.00 Thursday 16th August 2007.
- MDECs – duties, Scheduled Attendance and overtime commencing at or after 12 noon Thursday 16th August 2007 and before 12 noon Friday 17th August 2007.
- Deliveries and Separate Collection Hubs – duties, Scheduled Attendance and overtime commencing at or after 19.00 Thursday 16th August 2007 and before 19.00 Friday 17th August 2007.



the backlog is cutting down on the effectiveness of short partial turnouts, and that effective co-ordination of the CWU's system is proving difficult.

While the strike proper is going on, investigations into Royal Mail have uncovered both fudging of the annual accounts and a plan to attack pensions.

The company, which usually brings out its accounts in May, is stretching its accounting period to the end of January of next year, thus avoiding posting their profits for the likely duration of the strike.

Its planned attack on pensions, which

would have seen postal workers made to extend their retirements and close the scheme to new staff, ripping an estimated £1.5bn off the bottom rungs for the deficit the company has built up, has now been scrapped. Union bosses had already accepted the pension move when an expose in the *Daily Mirror* brought it down.

The dispute at Royal Mail has seen a stand-off over the future of the company, with postal workers fighting against an estimated 40,000 job losses and working practices which would actively harm the service provided.

The conflict is part of a wider

European struggle for postal workers, with EU commission directives 97/67/EC and 2002/30/EC laying down a route to marketisation and privatisation.

In a stunning move, Royal Mail bosses have suggested making deliveries later on the grounds that "Earlier delivery times and later collection times would create a barrier to entry on quality grounds, as competitors will struggle to match universal early delivery and late collection times" – effectively admitting they are attacking service levels to help rival companies.

## Rail subsidies dumped

A recent White Paper announcing government plans to cut subsidies to private companies running the national rail network by 50% has found travellers gravely concerned. Government subsidies for the privately run UK rail network are currently twice those given to British Rail in the era of nationalisation, but privatised services remain worse, less reliable and more expensive.

The ongoing mismanagement of public transport and the government's willingness to give massive handouts to failing transport companies has been widely reported in *Freedom* and elsewhere. This new programme, due to be fully implemented by 2014, superficially shows a partial and welcome turnaround by the government.

On the other hand, train fares are set to rise dramatically over this period in order for the rail companies to maintain their previous profit margins. Fare hikes of well over inflation are expected to hit travellers' pockets in

the coming years, in exchange for a few minor improvements regarding overcrowding and restructuring, largely on commuter routes.

In its proposals, the government intends to shift the burden of paying for the running of railways much more heavily to passengers, who paid 50% of the cost this year but will pay 75% by 2014. From 2009 the annual subsidy for the railways will fall from £4.5 billion to £3 billion. The total collected in fares will rise from £5 billion a year to £6.7 billion by 2010 and £9 billion by 2014.

The government claims that over half of the increased cost to passengers will be offset by a predicted 22.5% rise in rail use by 2014. Increasing prices, however, will inevitably deter many more from travelling by train.

This shifting onus on railway funding – from government subsidies to passenger fares – stands in stark contrast to the recent job cuts and service reductions seen in the last

couple of years. It places further 'blame' on travellers for falling profitability of rail companies, as well as reducing incentives to travel by train. Furthermore, it has the effect of distancing government from any responsibility for the deteriorating state of the rail network.

Whereas both train operators and unions are blaming the government, it is easy to see that both the state and capital will be satisfied. The government will save money and its accountability for the railways will be diminished. The train operators, now almost fully deregulated, will be able to charge virtually any price. The traveller, on the other hand, will have to bear the full force of this new White Paper in terms of rising cost and few, if any, improvements to rail transport. Gerry Doherty, general secretary of the TSSA white-collar rail union, called the proposals "the economics of the madhouse".

Tony F.

## Guernica commemorated

People gathered on the 21st July to commemorate the 70th anniversary of some of the bloodiest episodes of the Spanish Civil War, and to remember the heroic actions of the thousands of International Brigaders who travelled to Spain to offer their contributions in the struggle against fascism.

This year's summer event marked 70 years since the bombing of Guernica, and the battles of Jarama and the Ebro.

The ceremony, organised by the International Brigades Memorial Trust, started at 1pm and was attended by several hundred people, ranging from national dignitaries to IWW members to veterans and their families. Set in the Jubilee Gardens in the shadow of the Millennium Eye, the event took place before the permanent memorial sculpture to the international brigades by Ian Walters, surrounded for the occasion by banners from the TGWU, ASLEF and Antifa.

Opening with a formal welcome

from Jack Jones, it then moved to a speech by Sam Russell, who reminded us of the exiles of the Basque children to Britain and read the poem "The Volunteer" by Cecil Day Lewis.

The names of comrades who have died in the previous year were read by Dolores Long, and two wreaths were laid: one by the last remaining member of the British nurses who served in Spain, and one by Bernardo Fernandez, representative of the Spanish Embassy.

After a minute's silence, a very moving speech was made by Roman Marquez, one of the last three living veterans of the Catalan militia fighting on the Aragon front in 1936. We heard read the poem "The Telman Battalion" in honour of the German-speaking who left their own states at that time falling under the sway of fascism to fight in Spain.

For more information visit [international-brigades.org.uk](http://international-brigades.org.uk)

Rebecca

# Anarchist journalist attacked

## Helen looks into the implications of the recent beating of an anarchist newspaper editor in Turkey

On 26th July 2007, police in Istanbul attacked Sinan Tekpetek, an anarchist living in Turkey. He is legally responsible for the bi-weekly anarchist newspaper *Özgür Hayat* (Live Free) and the youth movement's magazine *yüzde 52 Öfke* (52% of anger).

Sinan was asked for his ID by police, who checked it against their database and returned it. In this location there was CCTV. However, five minutes later, Sinan was approached by three policemen who forced him into a vehicle, where they hit him and aimed pepper spray at his face.

Here there were no surveillance cameras. They drove off and more police arrived. Around 10 or 11 police attacked Sinan with their fists and batons for a further one and a half hours and threatened to kill him with their guns. They then drove off and proceeded to throw Sinan out of the vehicle as it was travelling at about 40km/ph.

Sinan is now recovering from broken ribs and other injuries whilst awaiting results of medical checks for brain damage and internal bleeding. If he had not fallen on his back, he could have died.

Internal sources say this incident is not an isolated event: it is part of a 'terror atmosphere' being created by the police.

It is feared the media and activist responses to this particular event will lead to further police attacks against

anarchists, along with other groups perceived as 'oppositionist', such as Kurds in the PKK (Kurdistan Workers Party), human rights activists, trade unionists, peace protestors, critical journalists and authors.

On 31st July, The Solidarity Platform of Imprisoned Journalists (TGDP) noted that, since the September 2006 Anti-Terror Act, 20 journalists have been imprisoned and the situation is worsening. Comrades from anarchist newspaper *Özgür Hayat* are aware that their group is now being closely monitored.

There is little external pressure on Turkey, indeed the US government vigorously assists in violence against the PKK.

The police law in Turkey was changed in recent weeks in order to broaden police authority. It is now possible for police to randomly stop and search people, ask for their ID, detain them and enter any residence without providing a reason.

In the 1990s, police authority was officially wider than it is now. Under the pretext of 'preventing terror', police kidnapped, tortured and killed many people. The recent EU process meant the State of Turkey attempted to create a 'democratic' atmosphere in which police authority was seen to be restricted, however the reality is that the pretext of 'danger against the state' is constantly used as an excuse to attack people who are not seen as loyal to the 'Turkish State'.<sup>2</sup>



In recent months, the area in Istanbul from which Sinan was abducted (Taksim-Beyoglu) has seen around 70 similar attacks. For example, on 26th May, when Ferhat Yalcinkaya tried to stop a man from beating a dog, police found he had no ID card with him, so beat him and threw him in a dump.

On 5th June, Esmeray, a transsexual

and feminist activist, was stopped and attacked by police. These incidents must also be seen in the context of the recent re-election of the hardline nationalist AKP (Justice and Development Party).

The anarchist movement in Turkey is defiant and reacting in creative ways against the 'Turkish State'. However, repression is increasing and our

comrades need solidarity now even more than usual to resist the continuing 'lynch culture'.

Notes

1. 'Turkish State' has ethnic connotations, *Özgür Hayat* and *yüzde 52 Öfke* prefer not to use that phrase
2. This phrase highlights that anyone who is not seen to actively support Turkish nationalism is a target for the police.

## Notes from the US

In the middle of last month a US coal firm, Drummond Co. Inc., was indicted for ordering and arranging the deaths of two trade union leaders in its Columbia operations.

The company is accused of using local militias and right-wing paramilitary organisations (in ways similar to those used by the Chiquita banana company, which has admitted as much; and Coca Cola, which so far has not) essentially to keep costs down by eliminating union activists.

The Union in question (Sintramienergetica with over 6,000 local workers) has been vociferous in pointing out Drummond's negligence – there have been a further 13 accidental deaths since 1995 thanks to the company's poor safety record. Now Sintramienergetica has presented affidavits to a court in Alabama evidencing occasions when Augusto Jimenez, Drummond's Colombia CEO, paid large cash sums to 'representatives' of the local paramilitary warlord. The union claims that this was to fund the killing

on 10th March 2001 of local union president Valmore Locarno and his deputy, Victor Orcasita.

When the coal veins ran out in Alabama, it seems as though such tactics became a matter of policy as the family-owned Drummond company moved to Columbia. United Steelworkers lawyer Daniel Kovalik commented, "I think they thought they could get away with anything, literally get away with murder."

This is all the more likely since the legislation to hold multinational companies accountable in countries outside the US, the Alien Tort Claims Act, already too narrowly-focused to apply in many cases, has been weakened in recent years.

To win cases, families of the murdered have to show, for example, that the deaths were effectively war crimes sanctioned, approved or directed by state officials in the country concerned: it's easy for such state agencies to put distance between themselves and external entities.

The irony of going to such lengths to obtain coal (last year Drummond exported more than half a million tons of coal each week from Colombia to the US and Europe) will not be lost on those living in climate change fallout areas.

- Another family standing up against industrial terrorism is that of Rachel Corrie, the peace activist who was run over by the Israeli military driving a 60 ton Caterpillar bulldozer whilst she was trying to prevent them from destroying a Palestinian home in March 2003 in the Gaza Strip.

The Corries are re-instating their federal lawsuit against Caterpillar.

The company argues that it isn't responsible for the use made of its goods.

The Corries point out that it was and is impossible for such suppliers not to know that what they sell will be used in such acts of aggression and destruction.

Louis Further

## War criminal in charge

A human rights group has expressed strong concerns over an apparent rise in paramilitary activity in West Papua alongside threats against West Papua resistance groups from the ruling Indonesian military.

The Institute for Papuan Advocacy and Human Rights (IPAHR) believes the rise of pro-Indonesian militias follows the installation of a new commander in the capital.

Colonel Burhanuddin Siagian, who has publicly threatened 'separatists', has twice been indicted for Crimes Against Humanity in East Timor, where he has never faced prosecution for his role in the Cailaco and Maliana atrocities despite the recommendations of Indonesia's own human rights commission.

Siagian is charged with individual and command responsibility for the torture, murder, persecution and forcible transfer of a civilian population. He is also widely considered to be responsible for the creation of the Bobonaro militia system that became one of the most

repressive in the whole of East Timor.

One of his alleged specialities is the use of paramilitary terror to break resistance groups, and was observed on 6th July in a major meeting of over 500 delegates and individuals from pro-Indonesian militia groups.

Siagian, who commands the 172 Military District based in the capital Jayapura, said in a speech the next day that he promised to crush all enemies of the TNI (Indonesian military), with the words "We are not afraid of human rights".

Following the declaration, it appears that one of West Papua's most feared paramilitary groups, the Red and White militias, has reactivated, signalling a new programme to actively promote paramilitary violence, say the IPAHR.

In Timika, the regional centre servicing the giant Freeport copper and gold mine, the Red and White Militia is reported to be led by a local man, who is a former member of Indonesia's notorious special operations force, Kopassus.

## Feature

# Squabble, slip and slide

## 'Trotwatch' looks into the crumbling of Scottish Socialism as Respect hovers on the sidelines, waiting for its chance

**A**fter recent poll showings that ranged from the dismal to the disastrous, the British far left is showing signs of increasing strain and disarray as its assorted party-building projects continue to unravel.

The most dramatic reversal of fortune came in the May elections to the Scottish Parliament where both the Scottish Socialist Party (SSP) and the breakaway Solidarity party saw their combined electoral caucus (of six MSPs) wiped out.

In 2006, the SSP tore itself in two following a lengthy and bitter faction fight triggered by a series of press allegations against the party's National Convenor Tommy Sheridan (see *Freedom* 2nd December 2006). The bitterness and rancour that followed the split in the SSP continued without respite in the months that followed, intensifying as the May election campaign neared. As both the SSP and Solidarity struggled to find ways to distinguish their essentially interchangeable left-capitalist political programmes, each continued to insist that the looming electoral contest would vindicate their assessment of the 'real' causes of the split and see their former allies crushed.

In the event, leading SSP official Alan McCombes was obliged to concede that the electoral humiliation for both his own and Sheridan's rival outfit had been "a massacre for the left". McCombes' public post-mortem on the calamity was revealing, suggesting that (despite the SSP's insistence during the campaign that triumph awaited them) the party's strategists knew that this was in reality a grim "damage limitation exercise", in which all efforts had to be focused on preventing a haemorrhaging of the party's vote. In the end, the SSP's worst-case scenarios were overwhelmed by events, as around 100,000 former SSP-voters defected or stayed at home across Scotland.

In the days following the poll, both parties insisted that the complexities of the new voting systems being piloted in Scottish elections – which had led to thousands of incorrectly completed ballot papers being discounted – had cost them decisive numbers of votes. There is no evidence, however, that the polling fiasco hit the left disproportionately harder. Much more decisive was the revival in the fortunes of the Scottish National Party as the recipient of the anyone-but-New-Labour protest vote, especially when combined with the voter-repelling Sheridan 'scandal'.

The shared experience of catastrophe did little to repair the rift between former comrades. For the SSP, McCombes insisted that in the election

Solidarity had "exposed itself as an embittered personality cult around Tommy Sheridan", and now stood revealed as a pseudo-party without a future. Solidarity meanwhile hit back at what it claimed were the SSP's dirty tricks, which had led it to "actively collude and collaborate with the establishment" in an effort to wreck the new party.

The SSP had, Solidarity insisted, orchestrated a "a concerted campaign to smear and ultimately destroy" Sheridan. Clear evidence of the failure of the SSP's efforts to discredit the new party was, Solidarity insisted, the simple fact that the elections has confirmed its own status "as Scotland's leading party of the left". In other words, if Solidarity's statisticians number-crunched the dire poll results in just the right way, the party had done slightly less badly than the SSP: a victory every bit as hollow as it sounds.

The simultaneous Scottish local elections delivered further setbacks, with the SSP losing one of its two council seats and Solidarity picking up just one of those it had targeted. Both parties are now neck-and-neck in Scottish local government; in possession of a solitary councillor each – as small a 'bridgehead' as it's possible to have, and an acutely vulnerable one at that. As a result, other political forces on the left began to consider their Scottish options.

In late June, the *Scottish Herald* reported that, following the SSP-Solidarity debacle, maverick Respect MP George Galloway was considering ending his party's voluntary embargo on contesting seats in Scottish elections. The paper suggested that Galloway was looking to broker a new left alliance in Scotland that could re-unite the fractured SSP in a re-engineered coalition with Respect.

The delusion-busting reality check is that Respect won just two of the 45 council seats it contested in England and Wales in the May elections, and is strained by political, factional and disciplinary difficulties of all kinds. There's little reason for other leftists to see Respect as the model they must emulate. Respect's electoral gambit in England is premised on outreach work in Asian and Muslim communities on a narrow anti-Iraq war and opposition to the bogus 'war-on-terror' agenda. Success in Scotland would require an effective appeal to SNP voters to defect to the softer Scottish nationalist politics that the SSP touts. It's hard to see how the two approaches might easily be merged – particularly given Galloway's hostility to state-independence for Scotland.

Respect's own internal malaise is deepening. Two sitting Respect councillors have left the party's largest



George Galloway and Tommy Sheridan, 27th April 2007

council grouping in London's Tower Hamlets in recent weeks. One switched his allegiance back to New Labour claiming he had "always believed in the principles of Labour" of and apologising for his "major error in ... judgement" in joining Respect; the other simply stood down denouncing his "immature and self-serving" colleagues who he claimed had spread "despicable" rumours about him.

Respect claimed itself well rid of them both (without explaining how these individuals had become the party's adopted candidates); but these 'little local difficulties' should be seen as indications of wider problems. For Socialist Workers Party (SWP) leaders, struggling to pull the levers behind the scenes in Respect, what's proving to be a persistent problem is how to balance the desire for overt political control against the desperate need for electoral success. In areas where SWP agents are in effective charge of the local party machine, Respect's candidates routinely lose; in the rare instances where the party wins council seats, the SWP has usually either ceded (or simply lost) local political control to other local alliances better able to mobilise voters.

It seems there was little discussion of Galloway's new scheme at the SWP's 'Marxism 2007' event in July. In any case, reunification prospects look slim. For the SSP, convenor Colin Fox rejected any such approach out-of-hand, firmly warning Respect to back-off south of the border; while a suspicious Sheridan insisted that

Solidarity was the only outfit Galloway should be considering.

In mid-July, Galloway was delighted to be returned to the front pages of the British press to pose as the persecuted 'leader' of the anti-Iraq war movement. The Parliamentary Standards and Privileges Committee urged his suspension from the Commons – citing evidence of a lack of transparency over his channelling of funds into the coffers of his Iraqi charity project, the Mariam Appeal.

Galloway always revels in the opportunity to rail against the power of 'the establishment' whilst trying to conflate his own personal fate with the fortunes of any protest movement which currently interests him.

Galloway adopts a more quietly deferential demeanour when he is the guest of various 'anti-imperialist' despots around the world as he accepts their hospitality as dutiful representative of the British proletariat. He proudly declared that, as he accepted money transfers for his appeal from the billionaire King of Saudi Arabia or the Emir of the United Arab Emirates, he respectfully "never asked ... from where they earned the wealth". The SWP know that there is no electoral mileage for Respect in such headlines, but opts to grin and bear it, just as it had earlier to endure the mortifying spectacle of Galloway's appearance on *Big Brother*.

Prior to polling day in Scotland, Tommy Sheridan's celebrity index was also again briefly revived following

new revelations in the press that 'persons unknown' had allegedly placed secret recording devices in his Honda Civic. While the list of potential buggers (as it were) would have to include the 'agents' of the SSP and the *News of the World*, as well as those of the British state, Sheridan (who has previously alleged that all his enemies were colluding against him) remained uncharacteristically coy about who he thought the prime suspects were. Instead, his office handed over the bugs to the Lothian and Borders Police, while Sheridan agreed to co-operate with any inquiry to find the culprits.

Having lost his seat in the Scottish Parliament, and with no wider electoral mandate on which to base his credibility, Sheridan now has little else to call on other than his 'reputation'. His own immediate political future now rests entirely on the upcoming court case, in which the *News of the World's* solicitors will try to overturn his earlier legal victory; prove that their published allegations about his personal life were true; and reveal Sheridan and his witnesses as perjurers.

However the theatre of the courtroom plays out, none of the possible outcomes will aid the real struggle against Tartan capital. A 'vindicated' Sheridan would, of course, be insufferable. Sadly, there is no shortage of equally repulsive proto-Lenins waiting to occupy the 'celebrity leftist' space vacated by him should he crumble and fall.

# Commentary

## FREEDOM

Volume 68 Number 16

### 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 an apology, both for the lateness of last issue, and the likely lateness of this one. In the first case, we were just unlucky and didn't get it all printed and sorted on time.

In the latter case however, it's hard to feel too sorry about it as it's likely to be because the posties are showing the rest of the country how a good walkout can work.

Next issue won't happen at all, but don't despair (I can see the tears welling up already, bless you) because we're just on our usual break over the latter part of August and will restart in September on the second part of this year's run, most likely with a feature on detention and borders that should not be missed.

Another quick apology should go in for the mysterious 'Judge Jack' picture which went in two issues ago without any kind of explanation – it was supposed to be a teaser for page three referencing the appointment of Jack Straw to the spookily named Ministry of Justice, but the caption sadly got arrested in transit – letters of support and suggested replacement captions to the address below.

RR

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### Next issue

The next issue will be dated 8th September 2007 and the last day to get copy to us for that issue will be Thursday 30th August. Send articles to us by email to copy@freedompress.org.uk or by post addressed to The Editors, Freedom, 84b Whitechapel High Street, London E1 7QX.

### SA strike

Your article about the general strike in South Africa (*Freedom*, 30th June) commented that strikers had to overcome police and government repression – and that that the head of the police doubles as the Chair of the SA Communist Party.

This reminded me of an incident in 1977, when I took part in an anarchist protest picket of the Bulgarian Tourist Office in Central London in solidarity with Bulgarian libertarian dissidents facing repression from the Communist government there.

A batch of Westminster police kept pushing us further and further away from the building. I demanded to know which law prevented us leafletting outside the office and the senior cop replied "my law". I then grabbed him and said "in that case you're under arrest for behaviour likely to cause a breach of the peace" and turned to a nearby cop saying "arrest this man". The junior cop went deathly pale and there was a stunned silence for what seemed like a lifetime (but was more like five seconds) whereupon I was then nicked. It turned out I had tried to perform a citizen's arrest on the Chief of Westminster Police.

So it was into the cells for me, followed by an appearance in the local magistrates court. Whilst awaiting the hearing I chatted, as you do, with two of my fellow miscreants on the bench. "What are you in for?" I asked the nearest of them, a black geezer. "Shoplifting, mate."

There then followed a lively discussion about the unfairness and hypocrisy of supermarkets and how they steal resources from all around the world etc., etc. The second bloke, a white guy, nodded in agreement and told us he was in the Communist Party. So I asked him: "and what are you in here for then?"

He replied: "I'm the store detective for this guy."

There then followed another, more acrimonious discussion, culminating in the communist cop uttering the immortal line: "There'll still be a need for store detectives after the revolution."

Anyway, in case you're wondering, I pleaded 'not guilty', explaining I'd made a citizen's arrest to prevent a crime being committed by the cops. Tragically the judge was unsympathetic

and I got done for obstruction – £30 fine. The Chief of Westminster Police got off scot free and as far as I know is still on the loose ... as is the store detective.

At least that is more than you can say for the late, unlamented Bulgarian Communist government.

Dave Morris

### John Bowden

In response to the letter from 'John' in a recent issue of *Freedom* (16th June) regarding the background to the situation of prison militant John Bowden and the claim that we (Leeds Anarchist Black Cross) provided "misleading information about it", we would like to clarify a few points.

Firstly, we are deeply troubled that the editors of *Freedom* did not feel it important to contact either Leeds ABC or John Bowden himself to allow an opportunity to respond to these reactionary slurs.

At best that is thoughtless, but the lack of right-of-reply (at least until the next issue) for John Bowden is potentially considerable and only serves to strengthen the odious smear campaign that has risen from the stagnant mire that passes for 'discussion' behind the cyber safety net of Internet forums.

It is significant, we feel, that 'John' has never been in direct contact with either ourselves nor John Bowden and these spineless attacks on a long-term prison resister reek of 'key-board revolutionary'.

That the basis of the letter writer's accusations has been lifted heavily from a sensationalist tabloid piece in *The Dundee Courier* speaks volumes and shows little consideration for the facts. As 'John' quite rightly points out information regarding John Bowden's sentence is in the public domain and easily accessible.

Sadly, 'John' and his forum colleagues seem unable to see beyond the lurid, and frankly disgusting, spectacle they have created and recognise that John Bowden is currently being punished for his political views.

The simple fact is, that John Bowden's original crime is of no relevance whatsoever to his current situation. John is suffering persecution at the hands of the Scottish Prison Service simply for refusing to condemn the Anarchist

Black Cross as a 'terrorist' organisation.

He has served his original 25-year tariff, and until his contact with the ABC was made into an issue in a report by a right-wing social worker, he was in open conditions with regular home visits. John's original co-defendants were released long ago – they chose not to take the courageous stand that John has taken against the abuses the prison system inflicts on its victims.

The letter from 'John' is sadly typical of the type of 'solidarity' shown by many left-wing liberals when faced with prisoners not convicted on accepted 'political' charges or an obvious 'mis-carriage of justice' case.

That is 'solidarity' with an opt-out clause if the case challenges the safe middle-class armchair-radicalism that blights today's anarchist movement. We neither want nor need such tourists.

At no point has Leeds ABC sought to excuse the murder John Bowden committed as a young man, but we contend that he has been a ceaseless fighter against the prison system, experiencing hardships that the likes of 'John' could never imagine.

He has sacrificed his own liberty rather than condemn the ABC – would your correspondent 'John' be prepared to do that? We doubt it. Leeds ABC continues to support John Bowden because of the tireless prison resister he is now not the man he was 20-plus years ago.

To damn a man for a crime that was committed well over a quarter of a century ago is to deny the potential for an individual to grow and change.

The logical conclusion of this is that no one can – or should be given the opportunity to – change, and we are hard pushed to see how this is compatible with a revolutionary anarchist ideology. In fact, we feel that 'John' may have more in common in the 'throw away the key' mentality of the *Daily Mail* than the genuine solidarity we feel with our imprisoned comrades.

That John Bowden continues to fight against the prison system and that his integrity remains intact despite the continual harassment of the authorities is something we as anarchists should celebrate and fully support.

Yours in struggle  
Leeds ABC

*Editor's note: An apology was made to a member of Leeds ABC for the lack of direct contact, but it should be noted we were unaware that they weren't reading the paper, so had assumed they would reply in due course should they wish to add anything to what we had already written as a cover note. Freedom will continue to campaign for solidarity with Bowden and publish his, and the ABC's material should they wish – we hope that in the end our clear support will help ease the concerns of Leeds ABC.*

### Public Services

➔ page 1

the teachers unions."

In local government, Unison have begun an industrial ballot following the continued rejection of a 2% pay offer which the government is refusing to negotiate over.

National and local government have repeatedly promised to 'rethink' about what else could be put towards the pay offer, but have brought nothing new to negotiations, say union chiefs.

Peter Allenson of Unite noted: "The employers continue to say that to meet the claim is unaffordable. However, we know the majority of authorities have budgeted for much more than 2%".

### News in Brief

➔ page 2

suspects can be identified and stopped before they board planes, trains and boats to the United Kingdom," Brown said.

Within nine months biometric visas will be extended to all passport applicants as part of the new measures.

**WORK FATALITIES:** New statistics from the Health and Safety Executive suggest that the provisional figure for the number of workers fatally injured in 2006-07 is 241, and corresponds to a rate of fatal injury of 0.80 per 100,000 workers. In 2005-06, the finalised figures were 217 and 0.72 respectively; these were the lowest annual figures on record. This indicates an overall increase of 11% since the last year.

HSE has come under sustained criticism from campaigning union magazine *Hazards* for cutting inspections over the last year following a series of budget cutbacks.

### Quiz answers

1. The SBE concluded that he had "brought his office into disrepute" but decided to take no further action.
2. Lancaster councillor Gina Dowding was banned for three months by the standards board in 2002 for leaking the fact that British Energy had been given a rent deferral for their Heysham nuclear reactor.
3. Lenin. He went on, "These days, one can't pat anyone on the head nowadays, they might bite your hand off. Hence, those little heads must be beaten, beaten mercilessly, although ideally we are against doing any violence to people."
4. The International Centre for Research into Anarchism (CIRA), based in Lausanne. They are currently appealing for funds to secure their premises.

# 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.

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# REVIEW

## Iain McKay rejoices as at last, a fully-researched biography of Bakunin has become available in Britain

**A**t last! A biography of Bakunin by someone who knows what they are writing about. I have long despaired at the utter ignorance and lack of common-sense when academics and others have approached anarchism and anarchists, particularly Bakunin.

Whether the product of ignorance or maliciousness, they seem intent on misrepresenting Bakunin's ideas and life. Leier refutes such accounts and sets the record straight. He does this with flair and knowledge, making his book highly recommended.

Informal, yet informed, Leier presents an excellent introduction to the life and ideas of Bakunin. Even the biggest Bakunin fan (and I admit to being one!) will find something new or of interest in Leier's work. His account of Bakunin's life and ideas is rich in detail and in understanding of both anarchism and the social and political times and circles Bakunin lived in.

Leier presents a picture of Bakunin's early years based on the latest research and which shows his intellectual development within Russian radical circles, explaining his important role in these as well as his early commitment to women's equality. He outlines Bakunin's activities in the 1848 revolution, plus his period of imprisonment by numerous monarchies across Europe because the Tsar got his hands on him and placed him in solitary confinement. Bakunin's escape from exile and subsequent return to revolutionary politics takes the reader to the First International and the conflict with Marx.

Along the way, Leier presents excellent overviews and discussion of Bakunin's ideas and how they developed into revolutionary anarchism. He also summarises Bakunin's critiques of the state, capitalism, authority, religion and Marxism basing himself, in the main, of the recent French language CD-ROM of Bakunin's collected works (it really is time for us, as a movement, to get this translated and published into English – preferably starting when Bakunin became an anarchist in the 1860s!).

All show a good understanding of the subject matter as well the historical and social context in which they were developed and articulated. Moreover, he draws out their relevance for today, so showing that there is more to

studying Bakunin than mere historical curiosity. His ideas, as Leier stresses, are as relevant today as ever.

I do have a few qualms. The use of the pop-culture references may make the book accessible to general readers but, unfortunately, will tend to date it. Bakunin's critique of the Paris Commune is not developed, nor is subsequent additions to it by other anarchists included. Given that the event was a significant influence on how anarchism developed after 1871 it is unfortunate that Leier does not discuss it more.

Bakunin's obvious anarcho-syndicalism is highlighted, but for some reason he does not explicitly draw the links with his ideas and the subsequent movement. He does say that the IWW was America's most famous and biggest expression of anarchism, which is stretching somewhat as the IWW was more influenced by anarchism than Marxism but it was never explicitly anarchist.

Bakunin's critique of Marxism is, in general, very well presented. However, I would suggest he does not stress enough that Bakunin's critique of the proletariat as a "ruling class" is premised on the fact that the proletariat, at the time, was a minority within the working class. At the time, as Marx himself acknowledged occasionally, wage workers were outnumbered considerably by peasants and artisans everywhere bar Britain. As such, to advocate a "dictatorship of the proletariat" meant rule by a minority.

Leier does discuss this social fact in his useful overview on Bakunin's views on which classes can be revolutionary agents but it would have been nice to reiterate the point when contrasting Marx and Bakunin ideas. Equally, it would have been nice to stress that Bakunin's opposition to the Marxist state was firmly based on an awareness that a revolution would need to be defended and that the ruling class would not just disappear.

Leier also fails to give Engels' *On Authority* the theoretical drubbing it so richly deserves. The notion that organisation is inherently authoritarian and that stopping others ruling you is "authoritarian" or "coercive" really should be exposed for the nonsense it is. Leier does, rightly, stress that Bakunin's critique of Marxism was confirmed by both the degeneration of Social Democracy and its radical offspring, Bolshevism.



As such, I doubt, contra Leier's hope, that Marxists will be any more keen to honestly discuss anarchism than they have been in the past – it really does make sense for them to smear and rubbish us as it is the only way they can maintain the fiction that their ideology is the only revolutionary one around. Perhaps Leier will be proved right rather than my cynical position, but 20 odd years in the movement have convinced me that most Marxists (particularly Leninists) have little interest in learning anything from anarchism (beyond what they rip off and use in their rhetoric, usually labelling it 'Marxism', of course!).

Leier does not discuss the suggestion I have heard a few times that Bakunin was, in fact, gay and his involvement with Sergey Nechayev is partly explained by lust and infatuation (passions which turn even the best minds into idiots).

Leier does, however, have fun exploding the politico-psychological critiques of Bakunin's politics and activities popular with some. He also, rightly, points out how Bakunin's anti-Semitism was in contradiction with his own beliefs and were, fundamentally, a minor aspect of his ideas which can be, and should be, ignored as an unfortunate aberration.

He stresses that racism was a common feature of Marx and Engels which, rightly, does not stop their contributions to socialist thought being discussed by those Marxists and Liberals who are so keen to find any excuse to put Bakunin (and by implication, anarchism) into the dustbin of history (something explained, undoubtedly, by the awkward fact that Bakunin was proven right in his critiques of both!).

But these are really very minor

points. Leier has produced an excellent introduction to Bakunin, his ideas and his legacy. Finally, we get an academic who understands anarchism and Bakunin, knows his subject and is more than willing to refute nonsense when he needs to. For anyone who wants find out about Bakunin and his anarchism, I can recommend no better book.

As Leier stresses in his conclusion, Bakunin and anarchism has a lot to offer current radicals and his vision of a free, decentralised socialism is one which can successfully provide an alternative to capitalism, an alternative which current anarchists can build upon. We have to thank him for producing such an excellent work on one of the key anarchist thinkers.

*Bakunin: The Creative Passion* by Mark Leier (Thomas Dunne Books)

## RECENT PUBLICATIONS

### Kate Sharpley Library Bulletin

#50-51, July 2007  
12 pages, £1

A double issue of the bulletin, features articles on Sacco and Vanzetti, H. Zolotarov and the Jewish Workers Movement in America, Peter the Painter and the Latvian connection, a review of a new novel about the Haymarket tragedy, and a selection of biographies extracted from a new book (in Polish)

about the Polish Anarchist Movement. Plus the usual short items.

### Anti-Fascist Action: an Anarchist perspective

by an ex-Liverpool AFA member  
KSL, 22 pages, £2

A revised version of this text (previously published in *Black Flag*). A sober account of the history and politics of Anti-Fascist Action, with extensive notes and references.

### Forty Years in the Struggle: the Memoirs of a Jewish Anarchist

by Chaim Leib Weinberg (translated by Naomi Cohen, edited by Robert P. Helms)  
Wooden Shoe Books and Robert P. Helms

A substantial piece of autobiography from the heyday of Jewish working class activity and organisation in Philadelphia, USA. The main text is an

edited and translated version of the original "as told to" Marcus Graham (then editor of *Man!*) in 1930 and subsequently published in Yiddish in 1952.

This is a fascinating piece of writing complete with the successes and failures of both trade union organisation and co-operative ventures in the early decades of the twentieth century USA.

The modern day editor, Robert P.

Helms, has provided plentiful footnotes to the text which help readers unfamiliar with the context of the story.

Weinberg's memoirs are supplemented by several accounts of others mainly written in memory of him after his death in 1939. Well worth downloading and reading. Fascinating stuff.

Download *Forty Years in the Struggle* for free from: [deadanarchists.org/weinberg.htm](http://deadanarchists.org/weinberg.htm)

# A Sideways Look

The expensive directly-elected Mayor where I live, Sir Steve Bullock, is a man who knows how to represent his constituents. You or I might think that those constituents would be the hapless residents of the London Borough of Lewisham, who pay him over £70,000 a year. But we'd be wrong.

In the last couple of months, Sir Steve and his chums in council have agreed loads of transfers of council housing to new landlords. To be fair, these were with a ballot, although the choice was effectively "take it or else..." - a Hobson's choice option that only one group of tenants has so far refused.

Three large estates in the south of the borough will go to a new housing association, to be set up by the council. The chief executive and finance director for this have already been advertised in the *Guardian* for £110,000 and £95,000 respectively. Some blocks on the Orchard estate and an old people's block in Blackheath will go to Broomleigh Housing Association. Hyde HA get Foreshore, the last riverside properties in the borough (after a private developer was gifted the nearby Aragon Tower as featured on TV\*) and New Cross Gate. The Grove Park area is to go to London & Quadrant HA, who have already got one estate.

A quick glance at these Housing Association's boards show that they are composed of the 'great and the good', with the odd resident thrown in. For many of them, running peoples' homes for them is just one of the things they do. London & Quadrant even boast about their origins as a charitable impulse by young professionals to 'do something' about the wretched state of housing for the poor in the sixties. Not something that the working classes could manage for themselves, obviously.

Broomleigh originated as Bromley council's stock transfer, so their governance is actually not composed solely of actual or would be members of the ruling class. Hyde's board includes the director of the buyout team of 3i, a private equity firm; a chartered accountant who is also chair of an NHS Primary Care Trust; a director of Lloyds TSB; the retired Chief Executive of Broadmoor; a property developer and a PFI specialist.

Now council control of housing was always problematic, but at least there was someone you could put some pressure on. Councillors always used to complain how much of their postbag was about housing - now they've done a Pontius Pilate on it, perhaps it will be homelessness that fills the postbag in future!

On a more serious note, are these really the sort of people you want running your estate? What sort of priorities will they set - and will they

really listen to you more than the council did? It's what they all claim - but watch your rents rocket while they pay lip service.

If any reader doubts that the ruling class exists, have a look on these housing associations' websites. Or indeed on the website of whoever is taking over council housing in your area (it could be the same ones - like states they are all expansionist at heart). You can find some of their names. And it really is win-win for them - rents go up, to pay for improvements, which mean profits for their friends in property development and consultancy, and the whole shebang is further than ever from local control.

Svartfrosk

\* Eight-part documentary series *The Tower* on BBC1.

## The quiz

1. What was the response of the Standards Board for England to Bradford BNP councillor Paul Cromie, who sent a fiver in a Christmas card to 210 voters in a sheltered housing complex in his ward?
2. What was the response of the Standards Board for England to a Lancaster Green councillor after revealing a secret state subsidy to the nuclear industry?
3. Who said "I can't listen to music very often, it affects my nerves. I want to say sweet, silly things and pat the little heads of people"?
4. Which anarchist archive will be 50 years old this year?

Answers on page 6

## Imagine if...

Menzies Campbell raised his patrician head as another paper was thrown down on the table. 'Ming who?' the *Liberal Today* headline blared.

He grimaced. It was true that he had failed to make much of a public impact since he had taken over as liberal-in-chief, and not entirely surprising.

The Liberals were the party of the free market. Always had been. Jesus sandals notwithstanding, it was a party which firmly believed in a *laissez faire* approach. But now Labour and



the Tories were both in the same frame of mind, where could he go?

It had turned out the chubby Scot was just as bad as Blair. He'd appointed business tycoons to his cabinet, hoisted border controls while pushing free trade, backed Bush...

"What am I supposed to do?" He cried in anguish.

David Cameron, who had thrown down the papers, ruffled his hair into a slightly more pleasing shape and checked his tan in the mirror. "I know old man, it's a dreadful bore, we're tearing our hair out at Tory HQ as well. It's just getting a bit embarrassing."

Menzies took a sip from his whisky, feeling sorry for himself. "Maybe we should just merge."

Cameron laughed uproariously. "Merge? Preposterous! Never the twain shall meet my good man. We're in a deadly struggle to determine whose vision of capitalism shall triumph, the elites ruling exactly how they please or the elites ruling exactly how they please without Home Information Packs."

Menzies took another sip and nodded, glumly. David was right, it was an unbridgeable chasm.

## Listings

10th to 13th August AR2007 International Animal Rights Gathering 2007 will be held at Appelscha in the northern Netherlands, near to a forest with camping, on the day before (9th), there will be an Animal Rights march through Amsterdam, focusing on fur and vivisection targets, see ar2007.info  
11th August Worthing Anarchists Summer Gathering from 11am to 5pm, Camp Titnore, Durrington, followed by social.

14th to 21st August Camp for Climate Action - after the success of last year's at the Drax Power Station, this summer the camp will take place at a location near Heathrow Airport to highlight airport expansion and the role of the aviation industry in carbon emissions and climate change, for more info see climatecamp.org.uk

19th August 10th London Vegan Festival from 10am to 8pm, Kensington Town Hall, Hornton Street, W8, see vegancampaigns.org.uk/festival  
19th to 24th August No Borders Camp in the Gatwick area, a space to share information, skills, knowledge and experiences, and to plan actions together against border controls, for more email g-anbc2007@riseup.net or visit http://noborders.org.uk

27th August Environmental Fair (theme: stop climate change) from 10.30am to 8pm at Carshalton Park, Ruskin Road, Carshalton, Surrey, see ecological.org.uk/efair  
27th to 30th August Smash EDO Summer Action Camp, direct action against the war machine, with workshops on effective campaigning, actions against EDO MBM and lots of fun together, call 07875708873 or see smashedo.org.uk  
11th September Disarm Desi, a day of actions against the Defence Systems and Equipment International (DSEI),

the arms sales expo held every other year at East London's ExCel Centre, see dsei.org for more.

15th September Trees for Cities Tree-Athlon at Battersea Park, London, see tree-athlon.org

19th to 24th September Gatwick area No Borders Camp, a space to share information, skills, knowledge and experiences, and to plan actions together against the system of border controls, see http://noborders.org.uk

23rd September Car Free Day in Amsterdam, see iamsterdam.com

7th October South Place Ethical Society talk on Shelley and Freethought by James Herrick at 11am, Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, Holborn, London WC1, see ethicalsoc.org.uk, or contact 020 7242 8034 or spesupdate@yahoo.co.uk for full programme

27th October Anarchist Bookfair 2007 at Queen Mary & Westfield College, Mile End Road, London E1, from 10am to 7pm, with books, speakers, workshops, meetings, films, creche, exhibitions, food, and so much more, see anarchistbookfair.org  
3rd November 'Bash the Rich!' march on David Cameron's house in Notting Hill, London, see londonclasswar.org for details.

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