

EDL VIOLENCE

English Defence League kicks off over 'terrorist' murder

Despite continually insisting that they are not racist – but rather “an inclusive movement dedicated to peacefully protesting against Islamic extremism” – the EDL responded to the death of soldier Lee Rigby with a deluge of rioting, vandalism and shouting of offensive slogans.

Rigby was run over and then hacked to death by two men of Nigerian heritage as he returned to his barracks in Woolwich in south east London on 22nd May. One of the men who killed him were recorded on a passer-by's mobile phone saying that it was a revenge attack for the British army's actions in Iraq and Afghanistan. Various witnesses allege that the men shouted 'Allah Akbar' throughout the attack.

The EDL swiftly leapt into action after the news broke, organising get-togethers across the country. In Woolwich, over a hundred demonstrators clashed with police, before heading off to the pub via a local mosque – which they treated to a brick through the window. In Newcastle, EDL leader Tommy Robinson introduced a key organiser on-stage, where he proceeded to announce that Britain should “send the black cunts home”.

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LENS CAP USA



May Day march for immigrant rights in Seattle. The march itself was peaceful but the police and protesters clashed in the evening, with police using pepper spray and 'flash bang' grenades on the crowds.

LET THEM EAT CAKE

Degrading, Dickensian and definitely not the way to solve the UK's current poverty crisis. Welcome to the wonderful world of food banks.

The number of people using these services is increasing at an alarming rate thanks to changes to the benefit system and soaring food prices. The biggest food bank provider in the UK, the charity Trussell Trust, says that 346,992 people received at least three days' worth of food from them in 2012/13, compared to 128,697 in 2011/12. Although there is no exhaustive list of data on every food bank in the UK, Oxfam's recent Walking The Breadline report estimated that a total of 500,000 people currently rely on them. Unsurprisingly, food banks are increasingly being forced to turn people away as they run out of supplies.

As charities bear the brunt of this enormous demand, local councils' attempts at helping out not exactly been impressive. Hounslow council came under fire at the end of April for announcing that those who lead 'chaotic lifestyles' or have 'money management issues' and those who are currently under benefit sanctions are not allowed to use the services of its new council-run food bank. With benefit sanctions being handed out for the flimsiest of reasons as Job Centre staff race to reach unofficial targets and stop as many benefits being claimed as possible, this potentially excludes a large number of people from receiving help at the very bottom rung of the ladder.

The food bank, crows the Conservative Home website, “is the epitome of the Big Society”. Indeed.

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NEWS

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LENS CAP MOSCOW



Russian riot police attacked a peaceful, authorised demonstration in Moscow on 6th May 2012, beating Alexei Gaskarov with batons and boots. He filed a complaint against the officers who beat him up, but no one was charged. Now, a year later, as Gaskarov was preparing to lead a left-wing and anti-fascist column at the 2013 May Day demonstrations, he has had a set of absurd charges brought against him and been arrested. See <http://gaskarov.info/> for further details.

EDL violence

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Numerous other mosques were also vandalised in areas with high concentrations of EDL support, including Gillingham in Kent and Braintree in Essex. Since the day of the attack, a further spate of mosques have been vandalised, some daubed with graffiti saying 'EDL'.

Following an arson attack on a mosque, the EDL's Wallsall/Bloxwich division page published a status saying "London mosques are burning down, burning down... Let's go out and burn some more!" Posting a link to a news item about the attack, the Yorkshire division's page garnered a deluge of 'likes' and comments along the lines of "Crying shame if only it had been full", "next time do1 on a Friday afternoon@3pm", "love it" and "bonus" (sic). Indeed, since the murder, the EDL's social media sites alone have show a sharp rise in its popularity. In just a few days, Facebook 'likes' on the organisation's page leapt to 80,000 from an original

20,000 before the murder. The EDL Twitter feed has gone from a few updates a day to an almost constant stream of tweets, garnering a huge number of new followers at the same time.

So what does the leader of this 'peaceful' organisation have to say in its defence? Tommy Robinson tends towards various extremely bizarre excuses when faced with evidence that his party is largely filled with racist scum. These include claiming that photos of party members making Nazi salutes have been digitally manipulated and insisting that the suggestion that EDL graffiti has been done by EDL members is 'ridiculous'. As well as a talent for flimsy excuses, Robinson also has a habit of making slips and essentially admitting to his party's warped ethos. In a recent Radio 4 interview, he admitted that the EDL had "completely questionable tactics". Understatement of the year.



EDL supporters marched in Woolwich, south east London, after the death of Lee Rigby.

998... Police!



Figures released by the Met police after a Freedom of Information (FOI) request have revealed that the boys in blue garner an average of 17 compensation claims a week after smashing their way into the wrong houses. The FOI request was submitted by website londonlovesbusiness.com.

The cops' inability to read door numbers costs the Met police force around £400,000 a year on average. The total number of non-criminal households broken into per year (both those who submit compensation claims and those who do not) is around a thousand. In the past three years, £954,000 has also been paid out for personal injury or further damage to properties. Ouch.

In defence of this stupidity, Met vice chair Gill Barratt said: "The vast majority of these entries result in a positive outcome – however, occasionally officers get it wrong, and in these incidents it is right that compensation

is paid. It is notable that the number of incidents of wrongful forced entry is falling year-on-year."

The exact compensation figures released are as follows:

- For 2010/2011, the number of claims: 324, and compensation paid out: £331,094.19
- For 2011/2012, the number of claims: 269, and compensation paid out: £245,243.07
- For 2012/2013, the number of claims: 358, and compensation paid out: £366,280.90

Some particularly memorable cases of mistaken identity and resultant door-breaking stick in the mind. In 2008, Aaron West returned to his home in Oldham, Manchester to find that the police had broken into his home, realised their error and then left an explanatory note on his

fridge in magnetic letters: 'OLDHAM TASK FORCE CALLED'. Professional. Mmm. In February last year, Robert Kerr was told that he was ineligible for compensation for £500 worth of damage done by police breaking into his home. Their defence? The Find My iPhone app had wrongly located a stolen phone as being inside his empty Nottingham property.

Of course, our trigger-happy pals in the States effect even worse damage with their stupidity. In April this year, 61-year-old Tennessee resident John Adams paid for it with his life when he shot at the invading police officers in a panic and they responded in kind. In Texas last year, Michael Paxton had the pleasure of being tased and then seeing confused cops gun down his gentle dog. Poor old 76-year-old New Yorker Fred Skinner – who sleeps with an oxygen tank, has hearing, memory and mobility issues and was, at the time, just recovering from a stroke – will be haunted for the rest of his life by the day gun-totin' officers from three different agencies burst in on him while he was eating some toast and accused him of being a drugs baron. They apparently didn't bother to apologise, either.

Absolute. Bastards.

Charlotte Dingle



THE BIG PICTURE



Protesters in San Francisco dress as Guantanamo Bay prisoners to join a march and demonstration on the 101st day of the Guantanamo Bay prison hunger strike. Forty four of the 166 inmates of the prison are currently being force fed.

Different drums

Racism, radicalisation and the death of Lee Rigby

On 22nd May 2013, Drummer Lee Rigby was deliberately run over and then hacked to death shortly before returning to Woolwich barracks. His killer and his killer's accomplice, it later transpired, were Muslim converts of Nigerian heritage. After committing the murder, the killer persuaded members of the public to film him while he made a political speech justifying his actions. This footage was handed over to ITN, who released it to the rest of the media. Politicians queued up to make statements and claims about the incident in advance of the facts about it, the victim or the suspects emerging.

Suddenly, Woolwich was the centre of everyone's attention. Yes, the same town that bore the brunt of the riots in August 2011 with next to no publicity (indeed, Sky News used footage they garnered from YouTube of the confrontation/conflagration at Wetherspoons and claimed it happened in Bristol). That same town where Marcus Innocent was shot dead round the back of a bakery at 6.30pm one afternoon, again with barely any media attention.

Did he do what he did because he believed in the *Koran*? He certainly tried to argue that, but it clearly isn't how most people interpret it and what he did certainly isn't what most Muslims are capable of doing. Did he do it because the West is occupying parts of 'Muslim Territory'? Again, he tried to argue that, but I doubt that political

beliefs were his primary motive. Again, very many people recognise that the West's adventurism in Iraq/Afghanistan/Somalia, etc., is wrong, misguided and probably counterproductive. It is a perverse twist of logic – or morality – to suggest that these things justify killing people, innocent or not. That is a personal choice that not many people (including soldiers) are capable of without careful brainwashing.

There are personal reasons why he did what he did. It could be, as has been suggested, that he was tortured and threatened with being raped when he was arrested in Kenya, and this has made him angry and thirsty for personal revenge. It could be that the brainwashing he received at the hands of Jihadists programmed this behaviour into him. It could be that he genuinely believed in what he was doing.

The real truth, I suspect, goes something like this: he got into an argument with members of the public the day before having set his stall up in the town centre and the police removed him from the vicinity. So convinced was he of the righteousness of his cause that he was no longer able to contain his anger. Deprived of a comparatively harmless outlet for his frustrations, he set out to show the world he meant business and contrived to carry out a plan he'd been hatching in his mind for some time as a denouement to his personal Jihad. He knew who Lee Rigby was, he sought him out and he killed him.

He was clearly counting on the police to kill him too. He probably believed that they would because that's how it usually goes

down, and because it was Allah's will that he died and went to heaven. Being sure of the outcome of our actions because we have persuaded ourselves of their moral correctness is a common human failing. The truth is that you can't control what other people do. The police, for once, did their job properly, took the suspects down without killing them or rendering them incapable of testifying (so we now know that they are capable of doing that instead of going berserk and emptying guns into people) and made sure that they can actually explain their actions and tell people exactly why they did it, not from a contrived political platform but under examination in a court of law. We may finally get the opportunity to gain some useful insight into the process of radicalisation instead of relying on idle speculation from idle politicians with their own malign agenda.

The question of MI5's role in the incident. How much did they know prior to the incident? It is clear they were aware of Adebolajo and Adebowale, their links with Jihadism, the fact that they had been radicalised and their whereabouts and movements. The claim that they were only of 'peripheral interest' is thrown into doubt in a number of respects. Not least of which is the fact that M15 appear to have been harassing them into spying for them. The politicians seemed to know an awful lot about things immediately after the incident happened. Guesswork? Rather lucky guesses!

What does it all mean?

According to various right wing pundits, it's a symptom of us being "soft on Islam" or "soft on immigration" (Adebolajo was born in Lambeth). According to Adebolajo himself, his actions were justified on political grounds, grounds that rest on a belief that land belongs not only to people, or even to people of a certain ethnicity, but to people of a certain ideology. Yet some supposedly left wing people appear to agree with those assumptions when dealing with people they have co-opted into their model of 'anti-imperialism' just because they are against America and/or Israel. The people who believe there is such a thing as the 'Muslim World' are very much part of the problem.

The incident leaves many questions to be pondered, and all of us need to examine ourselves and our attitudes, not least of all those on the left who pander – selectively – to ethnocentrism whilst rightly condemning overt racism and Israeli apartheid. We need better answers than the politicians or the security experts are able to offer. We need a critique of people's shallow and intellectually dishonest assumptions and we certainly need to address the underlying issues of social justice.



ANALYSIS

Networks of collusion: the road to 9/11



PART TWO

Ignorance of history and geography helped to conceal the provocations of the 9/11 bombers and their reasoning. No conspiracy theory is suggested here, only hints at the ad hoc links between various agencies for different aims. We can suspect networks of collusion, reciprocities of interests. It is possible that those who manipulated those provocations did not intend mass slaughter. Intelligence failures underestimated the bombers' skills and organisation. But the manipulators were in a strong position. If the bombers and their networks of supporters made an armed response, American military action would secure certain interests, helped by appearances of public support. Alternatively, if the provocations were ignored, it would be globalised 'business as usual'. Before offering details of the manipulations, here is a glance at some historical background.

It was widely believed that the Crusades were divinely inspired holy quests. 'Crusade' became a tag for a good cause. Recent scholarship has brought them some criticism. Conquest and plunder were often a main inspiration. Far from freeing the Holy Land, one English Crusade began at home, robbing and murdering Jews. Centuries later, far from its Western connotations, Arab peoples use that word as a term of hate and derision. Tiny minorities of such people now call the killing of innocent civilians Jihad (holy war).

The Crusades gave Europe its most significant cultural gifts since Roman times: architecture, building, astronomy, maths and medicine to name some. But that traffic was mainly one-way, from the Middle East to

Europe. In spite of this, the racism of many far-flung colonialists failed to acknowledge such history and geography. Nineteenth century entrepreneurs and Christian missionaries then came along with their technology and Bibles. Post-1918, the 600-year old Ottoman Empire collapsed. Its Turkish power base was on the losing side, permitting French and British control of the Middle-East. Increasingly, oil interests influenced outcomes in that area. The Kingdom of Iraq was partly established for its extraction.

While social and technological progress continued in the West, much of the Middle East remained unchanged. Instead, those in power there placed emphasis on refining scholarly interpretations of Islamic texts. Even before the end of the Second World War, the Cold War had begun. Europe had Displaced Persons camps for stateless people, many of them Jews. They had a 'stick and carrot' approach: remain in such camps or go to a new country. In 1948 Israel emerged as a Western bastion against Soviet influences. That tiny country has been a scapegoat for some of the oil dynasties, helping to deflect attention of some Arab peoples from their local exploiters. Conversely, Israel has used that process to have a siege mentality, excusing its own colonialist expansion. Generally, in different ways this shows an example of how states operate.

A more detailed article than this would show how and when various factors combined to produce the present day Jihadists, listing relevant events. But awareness of how Western capitalism and its values were threatening the Arab/Islamic world with

change was a prime factor. Again we see an example of how those in power use scapegoats to keep their positions.

A network of collusion helped preparations to invade Iraq. Two agencies arose for information management outside the normal, supposedly accountable working methods. America had The Office of Special Plans operating independently from the CIA, Britain had Operation Rockingham working outside of MI6's boundaries.¹ The final straw may have been the placing of US air force bases in Saudi Arabia. Another 'foreign policy' insult. Most of those attackers seem to have come from that area. Alternatively a final provocation could have resulted from a publicised document called Full Spectrum Dominance. It showed intentions for American military dominance world wide aided by the so called 'Missile Defence System' in outer space.² The Saudi royal family's relationship with President Bush was another factor – they visited the White House just before 9/11.

It has been argued that in any war innocent people are killed and their homes destroyed. Collateral damage is a price for the war on terror. Survivors may hate the perpetrators who can act as recruiting agents of the Taliban/al-Qaida. But it is claimed there is no alternative for the West but to pursue such wars. Such toxic thinking ignores history before 9/11 mentioned above. Ignorance of geography is also used in that excuse for perpetual war.

Post World War Two saw much anti-German feeling in Europe, especially in ruined areas. In contrast to the Middle East, the general educational level in Europe was and remains much in advance. Long struggled for, some social progress and democracy had been won, again in contrast with the Middle East. So in 1945, in spite of widespread 'collateral damage' in Germany, outside its borders there was little reaction to that destruction. No religious fundamentalism developed internationally, wanting the conversion or death of opponents. There are connections between events and their perpetrators mentioned above, suggesting networks of collusion. Anarchists accuse capitalism, the state and the relationships they create. Much has been written about the road to 9/11.³ It is possible that, like the Kennedy assassination, the full truth will remain hidden. As long as we permit the state and its elements to exist, such networks of collusion will continue to exist.

Martin Gilbert

References

- 1 Nigel Wilson, 'Operation Rockingham and The Office of Special Plans', *Socialist News*, September 2010
- 2 fullspectrumdominance.com
- 3 Google lists nine titles.

Part one of Networks of collusion appeared in our January/February issue.

ANARCHISM SUNNY SIDE UP!

Two things always seem to happen when we have an Anarchist Bookfair in Bristol.

Firstly the sun shines – as it did again on 20th April for the first time in ages. This fortunately justified our brave decision to change venues, with this year's fair taking place at the Trinity Centre. The large outdoor garden was ideal for meetings focusing on land, food, the commons and permaculture... and a bit of fun too (including a bouncy castle).

Secondly, the fair took place once again against a period of heightened political tension – last year riots on Stokes Croft, this year the death of Thatcher (and a mini riot at the end of the Easton Death Party!).

Those factors, along with extensive online publicity, posters and stickers, plus 65 stalls and 38 wide-ranging meetings (including the Radical History Zone down the road at Hydra Bookshop), ensured an excellent turnout of around a thousand people to the fifth Annual Bristol Bookfair.

Whilst the large numbers generated a little too much background news during meetings, the fair weather helped facilitate some serious networking and chatting. Even Bristol's independent Mayor, the liberal green capitalist George Ferguson, came along as a punter. Unsurprisingly, he wasn't greeted very warmly at all, but rather with a volley of abuse... and a bath in cold coffee.

Kebele's vegan cafe was overrun, our donations buckets overflowed as we more than covered our costs, and we've already booked in next year for Saturday 17th May. We'll be seeing you then!

Tim Bristle

Bristol Anarchist Bookfair collective



One of the stalls at the Bookfair

Crass war

Mike Murphy on Thatcher, punk rock and the insipid state of the modern music charts

The death of Margaret Thatcher saw many commentators turning to the raucous and combative punk rock of the 1980s that provided a backdrop to her evil reign. The question that this resurrecting and revisiting of past punk raises is: where the hell is the fighting music of today, expressing the resentment and rebellion that clearly exists? Why is it that the inheritors of Thatcher's extremist legacy can exercise their deepening assault on people with such strutting arrogance and our creative response shows little of the febrile rage and political voice that was part and parcel of 1980s music? Where are the sounds of new ideas to be heard amongst the surrendered conformity of modern music?

I recently read the excellent *Clampdown: Pop-Cultural Wars on Class and Gender*, in which Rhian E. Jones looks at how the culture of dissent that existed in the past has been erased and replaced by a blank acceptance of the prevailing right-wing rationale. Instead of providing a ready space for agitators intent on using its wide boundaries as a focus of political dissent, popular music has instead been standardised and depoliticised, and suitably appropriated by the voices of the privileged, who now make up the majority

of professional popular musicians. The conclusions of this book provide a clear contrast to Thatcher-era punk bands such as Crass, whose DIY production methods allowed their insightful and carefully-crafted lyrics to spread the message of anarchist ideology. This anarcho-punk genre became an active focus for political ideas that arose outside the passive and servile formulas spoon-fed by the political establishment. For me the emergence of groups such as Crass, Poison Girls and Chumbawumba had an illuminating effect on my steadily maturing mind. Firstly, they reclaimed the philosophy of anarchism from the closed confines of academic politics and the morose mumblings of political historians. Secondly, they used the insights and honesty of artists, powered by the mechanics of rock music, to slice a gap through the cloak of conformed consent that was firmly wrapped around Britain under the guise of contemporary culture. Thirdly, through the rip in the cultural and political status quo that these punk pioneers fashioned, a strong sustainable space was created for kindred spirits to explore and develop their own ideas through art and music.

Penny Rimbaud, the former lyricist and drummer of Crass, is currently performing under the umbrella of experimental group Penny Rimbaud's Last Amendment. The collective has a residency at The Vortex Jazz Club in north London, and their next gig is scheduled for 25th June. Spread the word. Let's hope a good few up-and-coming young musicians find themselves in the audience...



Crass at the Cleatormoor Civic Hall, UK, on 3rd May 1984, left to right: Pete Wright (bass), Steve Ignorant (vocals), N.A.Palmer (guitar).

INTERNATIONAL

NEWS IN BRIEF

AUSTRIA: Activists from 'Solidarity Agriculture' occupied a section of farmland in a district of Vienna. The land, owned by the government, has been leased on a long-term basis to an individual who has done nothing with it. As the tenant started legal proceedings, the occupiers built a camp and started to cultivate the land. An attempted eviction is expected in the coming weeks.

GREECE: The Greek government has a civil 'mobilisation order' to force 80,000 striking school teachers back to work. If the teachers – protesting about working conditions – do not return to work, then they can be arrested. Teachers are unhappy at being forced to work an extra 8 hours a month, whilst receiving a massive pay cut.

ITALY: A student rally in the centre of Naples has been brutally attacked by members of the neo-Nazi group, Forza Nuova. Police officers, monitoring the initial peaceful protest, joined with the fascists in attacking the students – several of whom required hospital treatment for head injuries following a baton charge. This was one of three student protests across Italy that had been attacked that day. In all cases, the media reported that students had instigated the violence.

PAKISTAN: Nine prisoners at Haripur Central Prison have stitched their mouths shut in protest at being held in solitary confinement. A further 42 prisoners have gone on hunger strike. The prison governor is starting legal proceedings against the protesters, as sewing your lips closed and refusing food are against prison rules.

SOUTH AFRICA: Janitors recently dismissed by Sannicare defied a court order banning any demonstrations, and blockaded roads in and out of Cape Town – building barricades of burning tyres, and dumping tonnes of human faeces. Sannicare had prevented workers from challenging or protesting their dismissals, so they decided to take matters into their own hands.

TURKEY: Several hundred protesters in Ankara have held a 'kissing protest' at one of the cities underground stations. The protest was in response to a public announcement instructing passengers to behave 'morally' and refrain from public displays of affection. Scores of police officers quickly arrived on the scene to prevent anyone kissing from entering the station. A variety of religious and conservative protesters were on hand to shout abuse and assist the police.

US: Thousands of protesters gathered in Nevada as part of a global action against seed giants, Monsanto, and the genetically modified foodstuffs they produce. Protesters marched for several miles though Las Vegas. Monsanto claims to respect the protesters rights to protest, but claim that their seeds improve agriculture and food.

LENS CAP TURKEY



Protesters and police clash in Istanbul on May Day after they were refused entry to the city's main square. The police used teargas and water cannons to try and disperse protesters, who responded by throwing rocks. Confrontation between workers and police are a common occurrence in Turkey on May Day. International workers' day had been banned until 2010, when they were reinstated following trade union pressure

Clash with police in Bolivia

Throughout May, Bolivian teachers, nurses, and miners have gone on strike – demanding huge improvements in workers' pensions. Strikers have marched on government offices in the Bolivian capital of Sucre, established countless roadblocks across southern Bolivia and launched a failed attempt to take control of the Jorge Heinrich airport.

The strike has been organised by the Bolivian Workers Confederation (COB) in an attempt to win a pension scheme that is the equivalent of 100% of salaries (currently 71%). The President, Evo Morales, has offered a maximum of 81% and is accusing the strikers of "Trying to provoke the police to mutiny and overthrow the government".

Scores of injuries and hundreds of arrests have been reported throughout the country

as strikers clash with security forces. Riot police have used tear gas and rubber bullets to subdue workers. Striking miners have responded by throwing sticks of dynamite.

The government has declared the strike as 'illegal' and has vowed to strip workers of portions of their final pension fund for each day they remain on strike.

After nearly four weeks on strike the government has reluctantly agreed to get back around the negotiating table following the union's agreement to suspend all strike action.

Union leaders have warned President, Evo Morales, that a new wave of strikes will take place if their demands are not met.

Solidarity with the workers in Bolivia.

Matt Black

Notes from the US

Racism

Just as Obama was announcing, in response to the bombings at the Boston Marathon on 15th April, that "... any time bombs are used to target innocent civilians, it is an act of terror", Pakistani government officials were confirming that at least five more people had been killed in a US drone strike in the South Waziristan tribal region.

In the week following the bombs in Boston several propaganda outlets (CNN, Fox and

The New York Post) lost no time in 'analysing' the event as the work of Al Qaeda – without a shred of evidence. Night after night Fox had 'experts' on its 'news' programmes drawing links between the methods used in the attack and those known to be favoured by 'Islamic extremists'.

At the same time, a surprising report confirmed that it is 'indisputable' that the United States tortured people after the 9/11

Refugees on hunger strike

Solidarity with hunger strikers in detention centres in the Netherlands

About 60 asylum seekers in detention centre in Rotterdam, the Netherlands, have been on hunger strike for four days now. Eighteen of them also stopped drinking from Wednesday 6th May. They are protesting against the asylum policy that criminalises refugees: they get thrown out on the streets without money or shelter and they get detained in prisons for up to 18 months. The refugees on hunger strike demand not to be treated as criminals anymore. They clearly stated they want freedom and protection.

On Wednesday 1st May, twenty refugees in detention centre Schiphol went on hunger strike. While the guards brutally broke down the strike in Schiphol, by putting the hunger strikers in isolation cells, about 80 refugees in detention centre Rotterdam started a hunger strike on Monday 6th May. One day later, 50 women in detention centre Bruges (Belgium) also went on hunger strike.

The Dutch government has shown an unbelievable arrogance in this matter. At first, they did not respond to the demands of the refugees at all. One parliament member of the ruling party People's Party of the Freedom and Democracy (VVD) even went as far as to say the refugees "were taking the government hostage" by going on hunger strike. Then, as late as Thursday 9th May, they "provided" a worthless "offer". In return for the end of the hunger strike, the government "offered" to shorten the usual 17 hours a day detainees are locked inside their cell with a few hours. The hunger and thirst strikers of course rejected this ridiculous proposal and they will continue with their protest.



But things are getting very serious right now. As of Friday 8th May, the third day without water begins for the refugees who have no other means of getting their voice out than to go on a hunger or thirst strike. Refugees searching for a better life get thrown into a Kafkaesque bureaucracy of having to provide proof that doesn't exist in order to get their permit to stay. Once rejected, undocumented refugees get thrown out on the streets and get denied basic human rights, such as food, shelter, work and health care. Racist police hunt them

down and jail them. In detention, refugees are stripped from their dignity. We are strongly calling for solidarity from our friends throughout Europe. Solidarity with the hunger and thirst strikers in special; and with refugees in general. The state is aimed at excluding everyone who is not directly exploitable by capital. Make it known how this insane migration policy of repression destroys the lives of hundreds of thousands of refugees. Show your solidarity by spreading this message.

No Borders

Notes from the US

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attacks; it says that the highest officials in the George W. Bush administration are responsible. Surprising because 'The Constitution Project' was led by two former congress members: Asa Hutchinson (a former Bush appointee and supporter) and James R. Jones.

A study by the Urban Institute published at the end of April shows that the wealth gap by race is widening. The average white family in 2010 was six times wealthier than the average African-American or Latino family; this is an increase from 1980, when the ratio was five times.

Protest

Towards the end of April, over three hundred pupils at a couple of dozen state schools in

Chicago boycotted the second day of a state-wide standardised exam. After the walk-out, organisers rallied outside a school District (LEA) meeting to demand a halt to the planned closure of 54 schools in the city.

Statistics released recently show that inequality has widened significantly in the two years since the height of the recent recession: according to the Pew Research Center, income leapt by over a quarter for the top 7% of US households. That of the remaining 93% declined.

And some good news: The states of Rhode Island and Delaware have legalised same-sex marriage, Minnesota introduced a bill for the same purpose, and Maryland

repealed the death penalty and legalised medical marijuana.

Environment

As scientists announce that the amount of CO2 in the atmosphere has officially topped 400ppm (when it's widely accepted that the safe maximum is 350), the Environmental Protection Agency recently confirmed plans to delay the first ever limits on greenhouse gas emissions from new power plants. What would itself have been a totally inadequate small step would have obliged such polluters to hold emissions under 1,000 pounds of carbon dioxide for every megawatt hour of electricity. Now even that requirement is to be waived.

Louis Further

ANALYSIS

Going spare

Nic Lane of the Harringey Solidarity Group and Brent Housing Action on the farcical bedroom tax

On 20th May 2013, Liam Byrne, the Shadow Work and Pensions Secretary, made a strangely under-reported attack on the current incumbent Iain Duncan Smith: “Let me tell the Secretary of State the point of the question: across the country discretionary housing payment fund money is about to run out. In my home city of Birmingham applications are up five times on last year. That policy means that in places such as the north-east three-bedroom houses are now standing empty because people cannot afford to move in. There are now 53,000 households in our country being put up in temporary accommodation, which is costing the taxpayer billions of pounds. When will he admit the truth: the hated bedroom tax now costs more than it saved? It is time to scrap it, and scrap it for good?”¹

That Byrne was calling for the outright abolition of the “hated bedroom tax” was curious for those campaigning against this policy as three days earlier he had been claiming he saw the urgency for repeal but could not “rush into” making uncosted policy announcements.² Only a cynic would regard three days as a speedy bit of financial reconciliation on the part of the floundering Labour apparatchiks. It wasn’t even necessary to know that the Labour Housing Group’s *Towards Labour’s One Nation Manifesto – 50 Housing Policies for Labour* had already been published, and contained the proposal

that: “The ‘bedroom tax’ should be ended in favour of a new national plan to tackle under-occupation based on incentives and a stronger ground for possession with a right to suitable alternative accommodation”.³

What actually made Byrne’s comments so fascinating is that it inadvertently let slip what most anti-welfare reform campaigners had long since recognised: the bedroom tax has nothing to do with under-occupancy or financial clawbacks, but is a deliberate attack on those in receipt of benefits. It is another stage in the ideology of ‘conditionality’ – the notion that claimants must be forcibly taught to accept their personal responsibilities (or recognise their personal inadequacies) by the imposition of increasingly aggressive and widespread bullying tactics to encourage their return to productive employment. After the enforced ‘work experience’ of workfare, the cuts in benefits imposed by the beefed up sanctions system and the horrifically incompetent ‘medical evaluations’ to determine fitness for work run by ATOS, claimants will now be threatened with the choice of homelessness or removal to a local authority approved ‘poverty ghetto’. Remarkably, no-one has suggested a re-evaluation of the labour camps for the feckless unemployed proposed by Sydney and Beatrice Webb during the Great Depression.

The Harringey Solidarity Group and Brent Housing Action both have evidence of long-term temporary accommodation tenants being focused on by advisory ‘navigators’. These are teams brought in to liaise between housing providers and the DWP – sending out threatening letters to these already vulnerable tenants in attempts to persuade them to move on from what was in effect ‘last option’ housing (without having to go through the expense of the proper legal

eviction process). In April a Newham-based Somali woman arrived at an anti-Benefits Cap demonstration in Stratford after being told that her family of five were being relocated to Birmingham – prior to the borough initiating the bedroom tax! At a recent meeting of the Anti-Bedroom Tax and Benefits Justice Federation a disabled activist described how she was due to appear in court to face eviction proceedings... not through non-payment of the bedroom tax but due to failure to pay the new Council Tax increments. The National Housing Federation demonstrated in March 2013 that even if the much vaunted £30 million of discretionary housing payments were ring-fenced for disabled claimants many would still stand to lose approximately £14 per week.⁴ The website www.insidehousing.co.uk has published a report with data from ten social landlords indicating how between March and June 2013 the numbers of tenants with arrears had increased from around 35% up to 53% or more – in three cases the percentage of arrears due rose to 70%.⁵

Of course some social landlords are unwilling to evict and have “redesignated” rooms in their properties to avoid the tax – notably Leeds Council and Knowsley Housing Trust⁶ – but as this article is limited to the bedroom tax it does not have space to consider the heightened effect on social housing providers when the full mechanism of Welfare Reform rolls out as the Benefits Cap and Universal Credit are introduced. Social Housing providers may well choose to work with their tenants when their arrears mount up slowly, but next month Brent phases in the Benefits Cap and it has already been recognised that 800-odd families will lose more than £100 per week from their income which makes the possibility of eviction so much greater... These invidious policies need to be halted now before they take effect. And only we tenants are truly capable of doing that – time to get in touch with your local anti-bedroom tax or anti-welfare reform group *now!*

Footnotes

- 1 <http://www.theyworkforyou.com/debate/?id=2013-05-20b.898.4>
- 2 <http://www.journallive.co.uk/north-east-news/todays-news/2013/05/17/labour-cannot-make-bedroom-tax-promises-says-minister-on-newcastle-visit-61634-33342604/>
- 3 <http://www.labourhousing.co.uk/towards-labour-s-one-nation-manifesto---50-housing-policies-for-labour>
- 4 <http://www.insidehousing.co.uk/6525984.article>
- 5 <http://www.insidehousing.co.uk/tenancies/bedroom-tax-debt-mounts/6527380.article>
- 6 <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/politics/10087896/Leeds-council-uses-loophole-to-avoid-bedroom-tax.html> and <http://www.insidehousing.co.uk/tenancies/tenants-avoid-bedroom-tax-after-knowsley-reclassifies-homes/6525752.article>



A recent bedroom tax protest outside the Guildhall in Bath.

The road to Almería

John MacDonald looks at the horrific fascist attacks on refugees fleeing Málaga after the Spanish Civil War

To say Málaga was a doomed city is easy with hindsight. Due to Franco's failure to take Madrid by storm in late 1936, the battle-lines to the east of the city had become deadlocked. The new strategy was to isolate Madrid by cutting the road to Valencia. In February 1937 the Nationalists launched an offensive to force a crossing over the River Jarama.

In Málaga the situation was desperate. Of the 12,000 Republican defenders fewer than 4,000 had rifles, with very little usable ammunition. The Republican Prime Minister, Largo Caballero, had said "Not a round more for Málaga". The defence of Madrid was the Government's priority but the growing anger over Andalucía's virtual autonomy may have affected this decision. Elements of the anarchist militia, the CNT and armed communists defended Málaga. The former completely caught up with their social revolution and the organisation of the new farming communes; the latter enjoying their new found prominence brought about by the increased influence of the Soviet Union in Spanish affairs. There were no trenches dug or roadblocks erected. The only act against the Nationalists was to shoot hostages as a retaliation against air-raids. Málaga was under constant bombardment, from the air and sea. While the Nationalist fleet including the German heavy cruiser Admiral Graf Spee shelled the City, Republican warships at Cartagena remained at anchor.

Colonel Villalba, the Republican commander in Málaga, was of variable ability. His inability to organise its defence was either dereliction of duty or a deliberate act of sabotage. There is strong evidence for the latter. Facing these fragile defences of the 'White City' were four Nationalist columns under the overall command of the Duke of Seville. This was the first action for the CTV (Corpo Truppe Volontarie), the Italian expeditionary force in Spain. On the 8th February the City fell.

Arguably the reprisals taken by the Nationalists were the most appalling acts of terror during the whole war. Some 20,000 were executed. The bewildered and demoralised defenders that fell into the enemies hands were simply shot out of hand. The killings continued until 1944. Carlos Arias Navarro, the prosecutor responsible for the horror was Franco's last Prime Minister holding office in 1975 and subsequently under King Juan Carlos.



The nationalist column attacking from Granada purposely left the coast road out of Málaga open. Not from any concern for the civilian population but to allow escape and so reduce resistance within the City. It was on this road that the refugees began their tortuous 200 kilometre march to Almería. From Sunday 7th February some 150,000 refugees left Málaga. Estimates put the number arriving in Almería at only around 40,000.

Members of a British aid team carrying supplies originally destined for Málaga encountered the refugees on the road. As they drove on the whole horror of the situation became clear. Thousands of unaccompanied children bedraggled, exhausted, cold, bewildered and frightened, their feet swollen and bleeding from the ordeal. The old lagged further and further behind, falling by the wayside waiting for the inevitable. The pitiful procession not only suffered the elements but the indiscriminate bombing and strafing from the fascist air force. Remains of the dead were still being found in the 1960s and many remain undiscovered.

Driving on towards Málaga, the aid team's progress became increasingly more difficult. The sheer number of refugees halted their progress some 90 kilometres from Almería. They started ferrying children to safety in their small van, which could only hold 30-40 a trip. To choose which children to take, which to leave behind, must have been harrowing for the aid team.

The population of Almería doubled with the influx of almost 40,000 refugees. Shelter was scarce with most sleeping in the streets. A large queue formed outside the Provincial Committees for the Evacuation of Refugees store for preserved milk and dry bread. It

was the evening of the 12th February. The final cynical act was about to be played out as the air-raid sirens started to sound. Fascist aircraft bombed the centre of Almería. The queue waiting for food took a direct hit as ten large bombs devastated the small town. No attempt was made to hit a Republican warship in the harbour or the military barracks. Over one hundred civilians, mainly refugees, were killed or injured.

Many photographs exist of these events, from photographers such as Robert Capa and Gerda Taro. Looking at these faded nitrate prints we see the long pitiful procession of displaced people – tragic scenes which during the next eight years became familiar all over Europe.

If Málaga was sacrificed by the Republic, it was due to military expediency and therefore understandable – unlike the policy of non-intervention of western democracies which led to the sacrifice of Spain. It was these democracies that reaped the whirlwind of Nazi aggression, honed and practised in Spain. It was the war in Spain that assured Hitler that the democracies would not fight. It was that assurance that influenced his decision to invade Poland.

Would intervention by Britain, France and the United States have saved Spain from Franco? Possibly, but there was no will to get involved. Society gossip filled the front pages of British and French newspapers, with the war almost an afterthought. The last despatch by Delaprée, Spanish correspondent for the *Paris Soir*, stated, "the massacre of a hundred Spanish children is less interesting than a sigh from Mrs. Simpson". With that sort of indifference the policy of non-intervention was inevitable.

FEATURE

IRON BARS

How Thatcher screwed our prisons

By now all the Thatcher hagiographies should finally have disappeared from the media, as should the endless debates about her so-called ‘legacies’. Certainly her continuing effect on prisons and the legal system is clear; characterised by an unprecedented series of prison uprisings and rebellions, a rapidly growing prison population and the ever-increasing spiral of new punitive legislation and regressive forms of sentencing.

However, it would be wrong to lay all the blame for this epoch of ‘social authoritarianism’, one that continues in only a slightly modified form to this day, at Thatcher’s feet. After all, she was only implementing the policies that she and her political guru Keith Joseph had forged together in the 1970s in their newly founded centre-right policy think tank, the Centre for Policy Studies. At the time Joseph, who had been appointed Shadow Home Secretary following the Labour victory in the second general election of 1974, was seen as the Tory right-wing rebels’ party leader in waiting. But, unfortunately for him, he blew his chances with a blatantly pro-eugenics speech that highlighted the threat to “the balance of our population, our human stock” coming from the working class single mothers who in his eyes were breeding like rabbits.

Step forward the junior partner in the relationship, Margaret Thatcher, who, in the absence of Joseph, appointed Ian Gilmour as her Shadow Home Secretary. He in turn was swiftly replaced by “my Willie”, the aptly named William Whitelaw, who filled the post for the three years leading up to the 1979 election and who drew up Thatcherism’s new

hard-line approach to ‘law and order’. He would also go on to implement it in the first Thatcher government, as Home Secretary and Deputy PM, giving the Prison Service a greater independence from the Home Office in order to create “a better corporate identity”, introducing ‘short, sharp shock’ detention centres for young offenders and a massive prison building program “in order to reverse the cumulative neglect of decades”.

It should also be stated here that the previous Labour government of Jim Callaghan was no more liberal in creating the brutal new Control Units to house the most recalcitrant prisoners and the notorious MUFTI (Minimum Use of Force Tactical Intervention) riot squads as well as introducing segregation and ‘ghosting’.

Whitelaw’s downfall in 1983 came when he tried to reign back on official hard-line Thatcherite policies. His plan to introduce automatic parole, thereby cutting the prison population by 7,000 and easing mass overcrowding, was defeated at a Tory Party conference taking place against the backdrop of inner city riots. The inevitable result of which was a sharp increase in self-inflicted deaths in prison and Whitelaw being replaced by the Thatcher ‘creation’ Leon Brittan. Thus began the real Thatcherite ‘hard reign’, as Joe Sim describes this period in his *Punishment and Prisons: Power and the Carceral State* (2009).

In Brittan’s first speech to conference he announced what amounted to the biggest prison-building plan of the twentieth century, with 14 new nicks plus a massive refurbishment programme in existing prisons and 5,500 new prison officers. Also in were minimum sentences of 20 years for the murder of police and prison officers and use of firearms, as well as cutting parole for serious criminals including violent offenders and drug traffickers. He also flagged up the



need for “an overall strategy for dealing with crime”, something that New Labour were to all too willingly adopt in future years. All this went hand-in-hand with an extension in police powers, their increased militarisation *c.f.* the 1984 miners’ strike and a massive relative increase in the ‘law and order’ budget.

Thatcher replaced Brittan with Douglas Hurd, previously Northern Ireland Secretary, in order to reassure the police over ongoing changes in their working conditions. He continued Brittan’s work without ever dealing with any of the issues that would have had a real positive impact on prisoners’ lives. Despite Hurd paying lip service to the need for more rehabilitation of offenders and for alternative sentencing, nothing really changed on his watch except for a significant increase in the percentage of women and ethnic minority prisoners. And of course, the 1989 ‘Grisly Risley’ rebellion, which prompted him to upgrade the MUFTI teams, replacing them with a greater number of better-trained and equipped Control and Restraint (C&R) teams. More significantly, Hurd drastically altered the working conditions of prison





officers via the 1987 Fresh Start agreement and became a belated convert of the idea of prison privatisation.

In the October 1989 cabinet reshuffle Hurd was promoted to Foreign Secretary and was surprisingly replaced with David Waddington, an ex-barrister who led the defence in the notorious Stefan Kizsko miscarriage of justice case. This stopgap Home Secretary, who presided over the Strangeways prison insurrection, was given the elbow following Thatcher's resignation in November 1990. In his place came Kenneth Baker, promoted from Chairman of the Conservative Party where Thatcher had previously tasked him with securing her a fourth term.

Post-Strangeways, there was little let up in the prison riots and the day after Baker received Lord Justice Woolf's moderately reformist report into the Strangeways insurrection (published on 25th February 1991), his response was to announce that more screws should be trained in C&R, their equipment upgraded and security reviewed in addition to building 12 new prisons. Baker also oversaw the opening of

Britain's first private prison, the Group 4 Services-run HMP Wolds, and went on to be the first serving minister to be found guilty of contempt when he ignored a court order and deported a man back to Zaire while proceedings were still pending.

It was of little surprise when he was replaced as Home Secretary following the unexpected 1992 Tory election victory, with Ken Clarke taking his place. However, Clarke had hardly gotten his feet under the Home Secretary's desk when he was promoted to Chancellor in the aftermath of 'Black Wednesday' in 1993 – much to the relief of the Tory right and the tabloid press who painted him as some sort of 'liberal'. And in the light of his successor's rhetoric almost anyone would resemble a liberal.

That successor was of course St. Michael Howard. His bastard sons, Tony Blair and Jack Straw, both shadowed him and absorbed by osmosis his ideological stance when standing across the dispatch box from him, changing their tired old party into New Labour – forged in the cauldron of Joseph-inspired Thatcherism. Just as Howard brought in the Criminal Justice and Public

Order Act 94 and abolished the right to silence, his immediate successor Jack Straw brought in RIPA (Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act) 2000, mandatory minimums and ASBOs.

New Labour's 2001 re-election saw David Blunkett set about his avowed ambition to make Jack Straw look like a woolly liberal, confronting the judiciary and the police with the introduction of PCSOs, and attacking 'airy fairy' civil liberties at every turn. Blunkett even wanted to regain control of HMP Lincoln during the 2002 riot by any means possible – including machine-gunning the rioters if necessary.

Such is the power of the 'social authoritarian' orthodoxy that has now become the default setting across all parliamentary parties in Britain as the centre-ground has shifted ever rightwards. Yet no one seems to question its all-pervasive presence, especially not the Lib Dems as they continue to enjoy their fleeting taste of being in government.

And we all know in the end who are the losers in this prolonged battle for the right to the name themselves 'the party of law and order'. It is us – the poor, the marginalised, women, ethnic minorities, Muslims, etc. It is we who have been the cannon fodder for the doubling of the prison population that has taken place since 1979 (42,220 vs. 86,000), against a meagre 2.6% increase in the wider population. The female prison population has trebled, now constituting 5% of all prisoners (up 25% in the same period). Black and Asian prisoners amounted to 15% of the total in 1991, against less than 5% of the general population – now those figures are 21% vs. 8%, representing a greater disproportionality than exists in the United States.

In addition to the greater numbers of people being sent to prison, ever longer sentences are also being handed down and a greater proportion of those sentences are having to be served, with life and indeterminate sentences accounting for two-thirds (26,600) of the prison population increase since 1979. Over the 20 years (1979–99) of Conservative government the 'law and order' budget increased by 4.1%, whilst New Labour's average increase for the following 20 years was 4.8%. So, even when you do get out of prison your chances of staying out are pretty poor, either because of the stark fact that, whilst all these new laws and accompanying 'law and order' budget increases, the recidivism rate has remained essentially unchanged, or because your chances of being recalled to prison for a licence breach have increased a massive 5,400% over the same period.

So, despite having been out of power for the last 23 years and now finally having been consigned to the flames, Thatcher's legacy sadly lingers on in every area of the criminal justice arena.

INTERVIEW

The SALT intentional community

In January of this year I began working with a couple in western Pennsylvania on materialising ideas for an intentional community. With the splintering of the Occupy movement, I became interested in the different ways people around the country were taking the responsibility of improving their lives into their own hands and subverting the structures of power. During my previous internship I spent a night at a bed and breakfast where I met Don and Lynnell Brian [pictured below], a passionate and loving couple who just happened to be looking for a young, naïve and anarchistic brain to help jumpstart their intentional living project known as SALT. Without hesitation I hopped aboard and have been with them since. The project itself sparked a surprising amount of interest from factions of the Occupy movement, local community members, other community-based projects such as Pueblo House, and activist Noam Chomsky. Inspired by the communes that have lasted from the 1960s, the Brians want to create a model for global change, locally, to help combat the problems we face in this century, improve our quality of living, and change the way we organise our enjoyment. I'll let Don Brian explain.

Aleksander Houk: What is SALT?

Don Brian: SALT is an acronym for Senior Activists Living Together.

AH: Where is it?

DB: SALT presently has four locations: 20506 Maple Road, Linesville, PA 16424; 468 Chestnut Street, Meadville, PA 16335; 466 Chestnut Street, Meadville, PA 16335; and 463 Arch Street, Meadville, PA.

AH: Who is it for?

DB: SALT is for any single senior (widow, widower, divorced, separated, never married, etc.) fifty and older interested in living peacefully in an intentional community. The community focuses on the goal of extending and enriching the longevity of one another in respect to both physical and mental viability. SALT is for those who want to remain active and relevant, financially independent, interested in sharing their talents and customs, and



enhancing culture, freedom, sustainability, and truth through art, crafts, theatre, talent exhibits, research, writing, publishing, and direct action.

AH: Where did your idea for SALT come from?

DB: The idea for SALT comes from the realisation that the 'salt of the earth' has long been an expression referring to that which sustains mankind and is essential to life. SALT is designed to be an intentional community focusing on the essentials of an honest and worthy life in the service of the best of humanity overall without any kind of discrimination or bias.

AH: What are you hoping to do with SALT?

DB: With SALT we are hoping to provide a paradigm for reducing the cost of nursing home care by 75% by extending the productive shared lives of people everywhere and delaying or eliminating the placement of individuals in nursing homes. We are also hoping to provide a model for others to emulate so that the prevention of disabilities and compensation for disabilities in terms of productive alternatives becomes commonplace. In addition, we are hoping to provide the interactive means for individuals to escape destitution and be able to designate where and when they want their financial accruals to be allocated in accordance with their desires, values, and choices. In addition, we hope to provide a mutually respected, caring, and loving milieu that is exceptionally desirable and affordable throughout one's entire lifetime.

AH: What do you feel is the importance of SALT and the building of intentional community in general?

DB: SALT is immediately implementable and serves as a cost solution to the reign of government, as well as to respective families, while preventing alienation, isolation, and loneliness in an environment that is supportive, mutually protective, and

exceptionally active on all fronts (mental, physical, educational, and social).

AH: In communities of this sort, the collective of members design ways to make decisions. What form(s) of decision-making do you see happening here?

DB: We see decision-making evolving to a combination of consensus, interests, focus groups, and multi-scope representation. We also want to involve various boards that develop as group interests and dedications evolve, reflecting an ever-changing world and flexible ideas.

AH: In light of the global financial, political, and environmental crises, how will SALT posit itself as a viable alternative?

DB: SALT will position itself as a viable alternative in view of the flexible nature of this intentional community. SALT wraps itself around the changing needs and engagement of members seeking a viable voice and pursuit on this planet. SALT is designed to remain relative to financial, political, and environmental mandates that are never static or wholly predictable as the cycles of life and the world fluctuate and reintroduce themselves generation after generation.

AH: Anything else you would like to say about the commune?

DB: SALT is essentially a pilot programme seeking members and funding to establish itself as a truly meritorious economy, activity, longevity, and function alternative, that makes sense as the best that life has to offer while displacing obsolete costly traditions that degrade the purpose of life. SALT also beckons input, engagement, and interaction from those of all ages interested in designing programs for the present and future that enable rather than disenable people.

Aleksander Houk

To find out more and get involved, please do not hesitate to contact us at cisteo@gmail.com.

● Whilst countries around the world are complaining about dangerous levels of overcrowding in their prison systems *and* the fact that they are costing them far too much to remain sustainable, the Netherlands has a slightly different set of problems. Yes, they need to save money – £340m all told, which they are doing by closing down a large number prisons, detention centres and psychiatric units and cutting 3,700 prison jobs. However, that will still leave a significant number of ‘spare’ prison places and the latest thinking appears to be ‘insourcing’ – bringing in prisoners from neighbouring Germany in order to fill all these ‘empty’ beds and help secure a new revenue stream into the bargain. Needless to say, Dutch critics of the Ministry of Justice’s proposals view the whole reforms package as just another underhand route towards wholesale privatisation of the country’s prison system.

● Since 1983, California’s prisoner work programme has become the largest in the US, with 5,000 prisoners in 57 state-run prisons (California has no privately-run prisons) earning between 23p to 63p an hour doing everything from making dentures and office furniture to roasting coffee, recycling toner cartridges and cutting meat.

However, this particular commodity is beginning to get thin on the ground because of a 2011 decree from the US Supreme Court that California’s prisons had caused “needless suffering and death”. California had to cut its prison population (then running at 75% over capacity) by more than 30,000 in two years, in order to to repair a health care system that lower courts had previously found to be defying constitutional standards and endangering guards and inmates alike. This was the latest in a long line of cases brought to court by Californian prisoners themselves.

The response was initially to ship prisoners into county (i.e. local non-state) jails or out-of-state privately-run prisons. This may have begun to alleviate the overcrowding problem to an extent but it had one major unforeseen effect on CALPIA (California Prison Industry Authority). This was the lack of short-term prisoners (just the sort chosen to ship out of state-run prisons) to carry out things like stitching trainers or manufacturing spectacles. Hence the closure of two spectacles factories and a 45% drop in orders for trainers, and the wider 18% drop in revenue over the past five years.

The end result is that the prison industry programme last year ended up \$8.8m (£5.8m) in the red and, for an organisation that must by law be self-sufficient and that can only sell its products to other government bodies, things do not look too rosy for CALPIA.

Prisoners’ ‘privileges’?

There has been a lot in the press recently about prisoners so-called ‘privileges’ as the Coalition’s new prisons attack dog, Chris Grayling, continues to bare his teeth. Most of it has, of course, been ill-informed rubbish, not least from Grayling himself who clearly has either been badly briefed, is getting all his information from the pages of the tabloid press or is, heaven forefend, being deliberately mendacious. So, to correct some of the obvious inaccuracies and omissions, here is a short Incentives and Earned Privileges Scheme (IEPS) guide as we have covered the subject in a number of previous columns (e.g. December 2011).

In the aftermath of the 1990 Strangeways prison uprising, which had spent 21 day in the full glare of the world’s media as the prisoners systematically dismantled the prison, causing £60m damage (roughly £112m at today’s prices) and left the prison uninhabitable for the next three years, the government needed to be seen to be responding in a robust but constructive fashion. Accordingly, whilst they tried to fit up many of the prisoners involved on trumped-up murder charges in addition to trials for riot and various forms of conspiracy (riot, grievous bodily harm, violent disorder, criminal damage, etc.), the government set up the Woolf Inquiry.

And against a continuing background of the prison riots and rebellions that had been a feature of the British prison system for the previous two decades, the 1991 Woolf Report put forward a series of recommendations, all aimed at making a more humane and less overcrowded prison system. All well and good, but the government had more important priorities than stopping inmates, for example, from having to shit in a bucket. They wanted to win back control of their jails and to do so they would have to go about it in a slightly different fashion as there was no going back to the bad old days

of the routine brutalisation of prisoners by screws and the all-pervasive use of the ‘liquid cosh’ (forcible injections of the major sedative Largactil).

Which is why they seized upon Woolf’s suggestion of introducing a ‘compact’ or ‘contract’ between the prison and each prisoner setting out expectations and responsibilities on either side. The Home Office’s twist on this would be that, in return for a slight improvement in their basic conditions (an extra visit a month and the introduction of payphones into prisons – conditions that even then would barely meet the most basic level of human rights), prisoners would agree to an addition set of ‘carrots and sticks’ – the earned ‘privileges’ of IEPS (extra visits, more money, the ability to wear one’s own clothes) in return for improved behaviour and, more crucially, increased productivity from those with prison jobs including the new prison workshops.

This last factor is key to the whole system and functions on that good old capitalist principle: supply and demand – there are only enough jobs for about 30% of the prison population, therefore only the better behaved prisoners get a job and the pay that comes with it. And only the better-paid one go to those most favoured prisoners – tea-makers, brown-noses and snitches. Another consequence of all this cut-throat competition for such a scarce basic resource (along with the introduction of heroin into prisons) has been the loss of the ‘old lags code’ and the working class solidarity that once prevailed amongst prisoners.

Now Grayling wants to turn the clock back to the 1980s by forcing more prisoners, including all new prisoners who currently enter on Standard level (and who will also wear prison uniforms instead of their own clothes), to survive on Basic level IEPS – more or less the same level of ‘privileges’ as the Strangeways rebels rejected.



COMMENT

ABOUT FREEDOM

ANGEL ALLEY

Early May saw the completion of the floor repairs downstairs in the bookshop, so reassembling the shop layout is progressing. Our thanks to those responsible and to everyone else who has helped with the massive amount of stuff that needed doing after the fire. The lighting is now functional and most of the windows are now fixed.

Freedom now has a new editor, Charlotte Dingle. Charlotte has been a keen activist since enthusiastically waving a 'No More Chernobyls' flag from her pushchair. She has previously edited a glossy lifestyle magazine for lesbian and bisexual women, managed communications for a housing association and spent a shameful stint as Internal Communications Coordinator for the Green Party (oh the shame) which convinced her beyond all doubt that anarchism was the way forward. Unsurprisingly, she feels much more at home editing *Freedom* than she did in any of these roles. Charlotte is currently a mature art student as well as being a writer and editor and is (she hopes) at last starting to shape out a future free from the tyranny of offices.

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A sideways look

by SVARTFROSK

Since the murder of Lee Rigby in Woolwich, big efforts have been made by the far right to exploit the killing, particularly as the killers spoke about their motivation being Islamic. The night it happened the English Defence League (EDL) called a demo in Woolwich and fought with the police.

The immediate response of anti-fascists to the threats was to offer both physical and political solidarity. The British National Party (BNP) tried to hold a provocative march-cum-motorcade from Woolwich to Lewisham Islamic Centre (which for readers who don't know the area is too far for most of the master race to walk, hence the motorcade). The Islamic Centre has had some fairly unsavoury preachers at various points in recent years, which was what the BNP were trying to exploit, but built on links made with the left on anti-war work and a lot of people were ready to run out to stop the BNP and their agenda.

In the aftermath of the Woolwich murder, there have been a lot of attacks on Muslims and Mosques, to the point that Lee Rigby's family actually came out and publicly stated they did not want to see his death used like this. They really shouldn't have had to.

In the end the police banned the BNP from marching in Woolwich and they managed a national mobilisation of a hundred or so in Whitehall, where they were prevented from marching despite the best efforts of the police. Surely this is the end for the BNP? They can't even have a march with thousands of police trying to make it happen.

More problematic from an anarchist point of view is the rebirth of the EDL, which was splitting and arguing amongst itself before the killing. As the EDL's stated aims have always revolved around how Islam is taking over England, if they were going to profit

from any event this was it. What they also have in Stephen Yaxley-Lennon is a leader who can speak to working class people and stand his own against middle class interviewers. I've made the point before, he was a football hooligan and used to facing people far more intimidating than Paxman or the posh one off the *Today* programme. He also articulates some working class concerns in a way that does not come across as racist. A comrade talked to me of listening to him on the BBC Asian Network and he repeatedly challenged people to show how he was racist, which of course they couldn't, because he's smart enough not to fall into the trap of saying anything that detracts from his anti-Islamic mantra.

Much of the anti-fascist and anarchist opposition to the EDL has dismissed them as fascists or near as dammit. This misses the point. Of course, street-level racism and attacks on vulnerable communities should be opposed. But the EDL are articulating a new sort of right wing populism, its scapegoat may be mainly of Asian origin but it is not primarily about race even if many of its followers think it is. And, as right wing populists in Europe have already found, there's plenty of mileage in an agenda that distrusts radical Islam and seeks to scare people by conflating Muslims with Islamists. One clear effect of any general attacks on whole communities from outside, is to encourage people to adopt a siege mentality, an 'us against them' way of seeing the world. It then becomes so much harder for those within that community who want to move in a more secular or socialist direction as the Islamists are strengthened by the perceived threat from outside. You could almost say both the EDL and the Islamists need each other.



Stephen Yaxley-Lennon, also known by the pseudonym Tommy Robinson.

FEEDBACK

The mouths of babes

I too was endlessly criticised for revelling in the death of Mrs Thatcher (*Freedom*, April 2013). At 17, I never knew life under her tyranny. But as a well-informed 17-year-old, I know full well that her legacy is a strong and enduring one in this country. As a teenager, I am used to being patronised whenever I try to express an opinion. I am used to my youth being used to invalidate everything I say. That is standard. This situation was not.

To be confronted by this strange argument that myself – and anyone else under the age of about 40 – is too young to say anything about a PM who left power in 1990 really baffles me. It is not an argument I have heard being used about any other public figure. There was clearly something strange going on in the media.

The worst moment was when even a teacher at college told me I was too young to comment on Thatcher's death. More than ever before, I really felt like telling her that I should be teaching her, not the other way round.

Thomas Brown

Fascism or racism?

Congratulations on the April *Freedom*, late but splendid.

A small point of disagreement. The article entitled 'Sunderland's big mistake' calls the claim that Paulo Di Canio is a fascist but not a racist "a ridiculous position". I do not know about Di Canio, but in general, it is not impossible for an Italian to be fascist but not racist.

The fascio symbol, a bundle of sticks, is a classical Roman symbol of unity (sticks may be broken individually, but not if they are bound together) not of exclusivity. The

Roman ruling class included people of many ethnic origins.

Fascists, elected to the Italian chamber of deputies in 1919, included nine Jews. When Mussolini seized power in 1921, he appointed one of the Jewish deputies, Aldo Finzi, to be national police chief. Italy harboured thousands of Jewish refugees from Germany until 1938, when Mussolini, in need of Hitler's support, issued an anti-semitic proclamation. (Finzi resigned from the Fascist party in 1938, and was killed by a German SS officer in 1944.)

Donald Room

Let's be Frank

I've always really enjoyed the Wildcat cartoons in *Freedom*, so I was very pleased to see another good strip appearing in the April issue of the paper. Marc Roberts's 'Frank' character is so very much like me. In fact it's a lot like some of my friends too... In the April strip we see Frank's nemesis, Ern, asking Frank why he spends so much time on his computer when he used to be "out 'til all hours, causing criminal damage, blockading power stations, resisting arrest..." Frank just looks at Ern sheepishly when he asks "This is permanent, right?"

Anyway, I have cut the strip out and placed it above my computer table to remind me not to spend my time messing about on Facebook and get something useful done instead! I used to be a really active activist as a youngster but now I'm Frank's age (or thereabouts!) I've grown idle. I have substituted so much with online shenanigans. Sigh.

It's too easy to forget in this super-digital age that clicking 'like' doesn't actually equate to the same thing as getting outside and getting involved in some direct action. That's not to say the internet hasn't been a massive

blessing for us, of course. But we should be using it to organise, not just letting it distract us. It's all too easy to get stuck leaning in, shaking our fists and shouting at the screen.

Cheers for that.

Ariadne M.

Flogging a dead horse

I also believe that "capitalism is to blame" for the horsemeat scandal (*Freedom*, March 2013). However, I think the consideration that horses ending up in processing plants were "likely to be work animals that have died through natural causes" is a touch naive. I do not doubt that in countries around Eastern Europe where work horses are more prevalent this might sometimes be the case, though when an animal loses its potential to work I would say it is more likely they are intentionally killed for economic reasons. In terms of the scandal itself, the presence of phenylbutazone in some of the tests suggests involvement from the racing industry and western European horse breeders. The idea of killing and consuming an animal for its flesh, compared with eating a spent carcass is, to me, completely different.

Kevin Watkinson

Equal writes!

Every time I read *Freedom* I am struck by the number of articles written by men. It would be really good to see more female writers and try to achieve a bit of a balance. It seems totally wrong that a publication of this kind should be dominated by male voices. I am quite sure that Charlotte Wilson would be turning in her grave.

Eleanor Tansy

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GETTING ACTIVE

WHAT'S ON

MAY

■ **11th London Radical Bookfair** presented by the Alliance of Radical Booksellers, from 10am until 6pm at Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London WC1R 4RL, see <http://londonradicalbookfair.wordpress.com/> or <https://www.facebook.com/pages/London-Radical-Bookfair/497414930304046> or on Twitter @ARBRadBookfair.

■ **11th and 12th Sheffield Anarchist Bookfair** from 10am until 6pm at Showroom Workstation, 15 Paternoster Row, Sheffield, South Yorkshire S1 2BX, for details see <http://www.sheffieldbookfair.org> or <http://www.facebook.com/pages/Sheffield-Anarchist-Book-Fair/160916777367840>.

■ **28th Radical Anthropology talks, Greenham Common: a modern matriarchy** with June Clevely at St Martin's Community Centre, 43 Carol Street, London NW1 0HT from 6.15 to 9pm, for further details see www.radicalanthropologygroup.org

JUNE

■ **4th and 18th Practical Squatting Evening** at LARC, 62 Fieldgate Street, London E1 1ES from 7pm to 8pm, for more see <http://www.squatter.org.uk/>

■ **6th, 13th, 20th and 27th London group of The Anarchist Federation** meets weekly on Thursday evenings at Freedom Bookshop 84b Whitechapel High Street, London E1 7QX. If you would like to attend please email london@afed.org.uk beforehand.

■ **8th News from Nowhere Club** presents *Tony Hancock 1924-1968: The Man, The Comedy, The Legacy* with speaker Dan Peat at The Epicentre, West Street, Leytonstone E11 4LJ, buffet 7.30pm, talk starts 8pm, see <http://www.newsfromnowhereclub.org/> or call 0208 555 5248 for details.

■ **11th Radical Anthropology talks, Frogs, moon and sun at the Avebury monuments** with Lionel Sims at St Martin's Community Centre, 43 Carol Street, London NW1 0HT from 6.15 to 9pm, for further details see www.radicalanthropologygroup.org

■ **11th and 25th Practical Squatting Evening** at 56a Infoshop, 56a Crampton Street, London SE17 3AE from 7pm to 8pm, see <http://www.56a.org.uk/> for details.

■ **18th Radical Anthropology talks, The origin of the family, private property and the state** with Chris Knight at St Martin's Community Centre, 43 Carol Street, London NW1 0HT from 6.15 to 9pm, for details see www.radicalanthropologygroup.org

■ **21st The Red & Black Club** at LARC, 62 Fieldgate Street, London E1 1ES from 8pm, Dissident Island Radio will be broadcasting live as the local anarchists host a traditional east end knees-up.

■ **25th Radical Anthropology talks, Red stars and snowy mountains: linking folklore and archaeology** with Fabio Silva at St Martin's Community Centre, 43 Carol Street, London NW1 0HT from 6.15 to 9pm, for further details see www.radicalanthropologygroup.org



● This year's **Peace News Summer Camp** will be held near Diss, Norfolk, from 25th to 29th July, and the theme for 2013 is 'Taking a lead from the Global South'.

The Peace News Summer Camp is an annual family-friendly event that attempts to embody many of the characteristics of the future society towards which we're working: inclusive, democratic, participatory, renewably-powered and environmentally sustainable. It's an opportunity for a broad spectrum of people – activists, community organisers and other people working for and exploring radical social change – to come together and develop intentions, priorities, knowledge, strategy, skills and networks in support of our different movements, be they anti-racist, environmental, global solidarity, anti-war, feminist, localisation, anti-cuts, counter-militarist, disability, LGBTQI, food sovereignty, radical health and other movements for transformation.

There will be workshops and discussions, practical skills sessions, delicious vegan food, music, film, and participatory entertainment, a bar, a campfire and activities and facilities for kids and families.

For further details on the Summer Camp see <http://peaceneWSCamp.info/>

● The 2013 **Earth First! Summer Gathering** will be from Wednesday 7th until Sunday 11th August in south-east England. The gathering is an activist camp with workshops throughout each, so go to what you want/think will help you develop

The camp is run on the principle of consensus decision making and we are *all* crew and participants so you will be expected to help run the camp, with jobs needing to be done announced in a camp-wide morning meeting. This will also make you feel like a core part of this camp... because you are and it literally couldn't run without you!

Everyone is really friendly, you don't need to come with friends as you'll make them, and it's also a chance to link up with like-minded individuals for planning any future actions.

So whether you're just starting out in the world of direct action or you're an old (glued and paint-stained) hand at it, you're welcome here.

Note that no direct actions are planned by the camp as this is about you getting the skills/knowledge you need to become more effective in whatever direct action you involve yourself in.

For the full programme, how to get there and much more, see <http://efgathering.weebly.com/index.html>



Football for the rich

The Brazilian government have expressed phoney concern that ordinary football fans are going to be priced-out of football, both at next summers World Cup and beyond.

As part of a huge modernisation project, all of Brazil's large football stadiums have been renovated at huge expense to ordinary Brazilians. Whilst many fans welcome, in principle, the upgrading of their local stadium to include seats, toilets and food outlets, they do not welcome the inflated ticket prices that come hand in hand with such changes.

Football in Brazil – and across South America – remains a predominantly 'working class' sport. Whilst the stadiums are not of a European standard, the atmosphere and passions generated within them is certainly a sight to behold. The concern is that these fans will now be frozen out of their newly

gentrified local stadium – making way for what former Manchester United footballer, Roy Keane labelled as the "prawn sandwich brigade".

The Brazilian deputy sports minister, Luis Fernandes, stated that: "To have socially exclusive stadiums as a result of World Cup investments is not the legacy we want. The government is very concerned with this issue and it has to be addressed very seriously. I think we could have a gentrification of the stadiums".

It must have passed Fernandes by that the government has engaged in a policy of systematic and brutal gentrification of the areas in and around football stadiums since Brazil was awarded the World Cup. Hundreds of thousands of Brazilians have been violently displaced to make way for huge infrastructure projects to support the

World Cup and the Olympics.

Some club owners have gone on the record to say that following the World Cup they will be looking to attract a 'different clientele' to matches.

Historically food and merchandise has not been available at football matches. Fans take their own food, and buy counterfeit merchandise from unlicensed street vendors. This is about to change, as stadiums welcome in the likes of McDonald's and Burger King, and the police are planning a crackdown on street vendors to make way for new 'official' merchandise stores.

Everything is now being made 'official' and corporate. If a fan wants to enjoy the same match experience, they will now expect to pay 300% more for the ticket, food and t-shirt.

Matthew Black

To boycott or not to boycott

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discrimination against Palestinians and glosses over the fact of Israel's illegal occupation of Palestinian land."

However, the case for and against is much more complex. A brief comparison with the international boycott of South African sport shows the situation is far from the same. Israeli athletes are not currently prohibited from participating in any sport, in any tournament, or in any county. So why or how could a 'one off' ban on hosting a tournament be justified, and what benefit would it serve – other than giving the 'boycott Israel' movement a quick win. Any sporting boycott, if it is to be effective, must encompass every level of every sport, otherwise it is meaningless and ineffective.

Over fifty international footballers signed a petition that was handed to UEFA demanding

that Israel be prevented from hosting the tournament. They claim that if UEFA is serious about stamping out racism in football then it should start by not allowing Israel to host tournaments. Expecting to get the hosts of an international football championship changed with weeks to go is naïve to say the least – although not quite as naïve as believing that UEFA are serious about stamping racism out of football.

The question of Israel's suitability to host sporting events gives rise to a much wider debate. Against a backdrop of international drone attacks – should the US be allowed to host events? What about China, Russia, Iran? The 'boycott Israel' movement make no mention of Brazil and South Africa brutalising hundreds of thousands of people and forcing them from their homes and

gentrifying town after town in order to make way for shiny new stadiums for the Olympics and football world cup.

If, as is being claimed, UEFA are complicit in Israel's human rights abuses by making them hosts, then are they complicit in the negative actions of every other country on earth?

Should all countries that abuse human rights be prevented from participating and (or) hosting international sporting events? Should there be a sliding scale of human rights abuses, in which some countries are penalised more than others? Do we then boycott countries that refuse to join the original boycott? Do we then have every single international sporting event held in Luxembourg?

Matthew Black



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REVIEWS

FICTION

Discomfort

It had been three days since they'd all got together and marched up to the boss. He'd been spooked and had a couple of mysterious meetings off-site the following day when they'd returned to see what he had to say. The day after, he had come in very early then was very evasive when Dom and Sarah came in. He sat in the glass-fronted office everyone called the Goldfish Bowl all afternoon. Whenever there were more than two workers in the main office he would stare intently at his laptop.

"He's not doing very much," said Dom loudly to Sarah and Ged.

"You're not checking?" asked Sarah.

"I can see the network traffic from in there," said Dom, quieter this time, nodding at the Goldfish Bowl. "And aside from it all being to LobCo Central, there's not very much."

"He obviously doesn't want to talk to us," said Sarah.

"Yeah," said Ged. "I've been watching, he only comes out if there's less than three of us."

"We could have two of us leave and then suddenly come back in the minute he comes out," said Dom.

"Or..." said Sarah, "we could make sure there's always three people here, so he can never leave even if he's desperate." Dom raised an eyebrow.

"I like it," said Ged. "I'll call some of the others – we can do a rota."

By the time their boss Dougal MacKenzie finally left the Goldfish Bowl, it had been four and half hours he had shut himself away.

"Ah, Dougal," said Dom as he came out.

"Not now," grunted MacKenzie. He rushed out towards the toilets. There were sniggers. They quickly called everyone and several others made their way over to the office for his return.

MacKenzie came back in. Everyone stood up.

"So, Dougal, we need to catch up on our little chat from two days ago," said Dom.

"Yes, I've nothing I can tell you at the moment," he replied.

"Do you not have the authority?" asked Ged. MacKenzie glared at him.

"It's funny how things move quickly when head office want them to, but we're reduced to a glacial pace when it's something we want to know," said Sarah.

"I'm trying to find answers," said MacKenzie. "But at this point I've nothing more to add, so you should all get back to work."

The moment had passed, for now and they all walked slowly back to their desks.

Martin H.

TELEVISION

One Mile Away

directed by Penny Woolcock, Channel 4, 11th April

Penny Woolcock's impressive hip-hop movie *1 Day* (2009) adroitly showcased Birmingham's Black street culture, deploying beats and freestyles from indigenous musicians and amateur cast to indict the ruination wrought by drugs trade lifestyles. Despite this, West Midlands police persuaded local cinemas to refuse screenings. Still, general youth approval of its authenticity and respect encouraged Aston ex-gangster Shabba to approach Woolcock to help broker a truce initiative in the Handsworth postcode war. This gang rivalry infamously caught two lasses in cross-fire on the borderline in New Year 2003 but had a further decade's murderous provenance. This fascinating documentary follows those parts of the proceedings captured on film, after *1 Day* star Dylan Duffus promptly lent charismatic support. Unfortunately snail's pace progress followed due to entrenched suspicion and the exceedingly vicious circularity of the vendetta as well as general depressive inertia.

Until, that is, the de facto suspension of hostilities during August 2011 – far more concretely helpful than homilies from the producer's VIP buddy Jonathan Powell (former North of Ireland peace process aide). Now common cause is more readily recognised against divisive deprivations of economic hardship and social policy, police strategy and media demonisation. Here it weaves extensive experience of poverty and hopelessness, relentless harassment and brutality with the philosophical, political and historical savvy of various veterans – both of 'the life' and previous organisations, cultural movements and riotous insurrections – who had themselves virtually given up on their descendants. Sharing stories of footprints of repression forges link between, for example, Brum's

industrial-colonial heritage and current devastation. It also highlights official malevolence like the show-trial miscarriage of justice in the aforementioned innocent bystanders case and police attempts to prevent Woolcock filming and then to seize all her material (both rebuffed).

Truce and Consequences

Subsequent accelerating recruitment to the cause yields the salving of recent and long-standing local wounds and a sharp, sustained decline in neighbourhood crime ensues. The *One Mile Away* community enterprise and schools programme sees the confidence and inspiration, not to mention concrete footage, facilitated by Woolcock's intervention continue to echo and sustain.* Yet the underlying economic and institutional causes of the problem remain intact. Understandably, given public exposure, no reference has been made to the role of the drugs game in fuelling gang rivalry – transforming a nebulous identification among teenagers with their 'turf' into more intransigent barbarism, insidiously colonised by adjacent realms of capitalist governance. So, we can hope that those conspicuous collective dimensions of grassroots solidarity remain prominent and autonomous enough to allow political development and agitational expression. We can hope too that they may counter the predictable conformist individualism of bootstrap entrepreneurialism and moral education by role-model exhortation.

Tom Jennings

<http://libcom.org/blog/tom-jennings>

* Stemming not least from integrity, skill and commitment in recording and representing accounts of working-class life during years of documentary and hybrid fiction filmmaking (see, for example, a review of *Mischief Night* in *Freedom*, 13th January 2007) – also helping explain *1 Day*'s effortless trumping of the hyperbolic overkill of the new British urban cinema.



QUIZ ANSWERS

1. His father Woody Guthrie after he was commemorated on a US postage stamp.
2. Civil aviation aircrew, who had a dose of 3.0mSv. By contrast, workers in nuclear power plants received 1.4mSv.
3. They finally admitted they'd got it wrong after a string of leaders confessed they retained feelings for men. The group went onto apologise for the hurt and pain they had caused.
4. The *Mirror* published a series of cartoons

attacking war profiteering, one of which showed a merchant seaman holding onto a piece of driftwood with the caption "the price of petrol has been increased by one penny – official". The government thought it suggested petrol companies were profiteering on servicemen's lives. Outraged, they investigated the cartoonist Philip Zec and discussed closing the paper down, though in the end settled on a severe reprimand.

Access all areas

Justina Jase looks at trespassing and our freedom to roam

Britain is famous for its vast and verdant countryside, but it doesn't always occur to everyone that a large majority of it is now situated in private ownership. John Bainbridge, author of *The Compleat Trespasser*, traces this phenomenon back to the Normans who through their love of hunting placed extensive restrictions on land across the country. "Prior to the Norman Conquest in 1066, it seems that people could more or less wander where they liked, without let of hindrance," says Bainbridge, "The Anglo Saxons who ruled before, had a much more live and let live philosophy." These restrictions remain in place today and, according to Bainbridge, exemplify "everything that is immoral about the British attitude to land ownership and access". Bainbridge, an inveterate trespasser himself, goes on to explain how the Normans rendered a quarter of England as hunting ground, wiping out whole towns and villages to make way for the venerated pastime. "Hundreds of thousands of people were cleared away," he says, "as though they were of no consequence at all. Unaccountable thousands were massacred or driven to starvation... It was against the background of this holocaust that the outlaw ballads of Robin Hood began." It was this folktale that inspired in Bainbridge an interest in this particular strand of history, and subsequently

instilled in the writer complete contempt for the "absolute rules of property".

As an avid perambulator Bainbridge writes – with some ebullience – about the subject, deeming it a "basic human right". Trespassing, after all, was a hobby, says the writer, enjoyed by a great many famous historical figures, including William Wordsworth, Winston Churchill and composer Sir Michael Tippett. Yet the act of wandering freely across the countryside remains against the law. "On many rural walks you will encounter every permutation of Keep Out and No Trespassing signs," Bainbridge explains, "warning of dire consequences if you stray from the lane or path and attempt to enter these green havens. It was not always so... The very principle of enclosure and restrictions of access to land, especially woodland set aside for game preservation, has been challenged from its very beginning." This was mainly fuelled by the need of the poor to actually survive, and by a select few fighting to preserve the right to be able to enjoy the country's terrains freely. Bainbridge proffers some factual and literary documentation chronicling the history and dangers of trespassing, drawing on nineteenth century social commentators, writers and historians' first-hand accounts of man-traps and spring guns. "The most likely victims of these 'terrible engines' was not the skilled local poacher, who would be weary and knowledgeable when entering the preserved park and its wooded coverts," says Bainbridge, "but the naturalist on the lookout for specimens, the literary gentleman seeking inspiration, the early Rambler and,



most likely of all, the local labourer and his family desperate for firewood, nuts and mushrooms."

The Compleat Trespasser offers considerable insight into this important but largely unexplored piece of social history and its implications for us today. Bainbridge cites various instances in which previously public pathways and parklands have been closed off, including Glen Tilt in Scotland and the old route from Hexworthy to Hensroost Mine in Dartmoor National Park. Both of these places are now once again accessible to the public after some considerable legal wrangling, but immense areas of land elsewhere remain barred. This is not the case with Scotland, however, whose people have some of the best free walking in Europe due to The Scottish Land Reform Act of 2003, which allows for an almost unlimited right to roam the Scottish countryside. This, Bainbridge says, is something that should be legally extended to the people of Britain and Wales. Many in favour of land restrictions maintain that the countryside is being preserved and looked after as a result, but Bainbridge says this is a fatuous argument. "Most of British landscape has been improved in one way or another," he explains, "Is that an excuse to keep the British public out? The same British public which, through taxation, puts loads of money into the pockets of these same-self landowners?" Bainbridge makes a good point, which stems from his aversion to the inherently elitist notion of ownership.

Open spaces are vital and should be accessible, the writer argues, to people who work long hours during the week. There was a shift in the social stratosphere, especially after the Great War, when the working classes began to look beyond their working week, seeking to escape industrial cities for leisure. Rambling was no longer a pursuit of the middle class and the literary, but a pastime to be enjoyed by the general public. This saw a proliferation of Rambling Clubs

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THE ARTS

FROM STONEHENGE

I grew up in Leeds in the late 1970s. I lived with a punk band called The Flamboyant Zips and we used to organise punk gigs with Reggae Dub outfits. A good match. We tired of SWP people trying to hijack us and our energy so we became Red Youth. One of the first events we helped organised was a march and festival called Rock against Racism which we held in Chapeltown, Leeds, around the time of the famous riots. Later on in 1981 we joined another 250,000 CND demonstrators in London's Hyde Park.

Me and Kirstin moved to Rusholme in Manchester's Moss Side for her college and then on to Hulme. Back in Leeds we had done a brilliant seven-day march across the Pennines; the CND Easter parade. So the first thing I did in Manchester was to go on another march and find some new friends. I think this was a march to the Conservative Party Conference? We stayed one night at Salford University and I remember Billy Brag singing for us. Ooo-er?

We got back to Hulme with a new set of friends. We formed the Hulme Anarchist Group – HAG. We made a banner. We considered ourselves activists.

We heard about a peace camp near Burtonwood, Warrington. It was outside a



photograph © Angella-Dee

US military weapons store. So we picked up our flag and marched through the streets of Warrington to the bit of common land, next to the military base. It was a well organised camp, built with tarps that a Trade Union

had donated. We swelled the size of the camp considerably. (all eight of us?). We tried to build our own homes from ideas we had dreamed up, like a shower, a meeting room, etc.

That summer we went to Stonehenge Free Festival to see what happens there.

People came from all over the world to trade. I felt I was home. I could feel free and be me, total freakin' paradise on earth.

I soon became addicted to this lifestyle, so within a couple of weeks of leaving Stonehenge I was back on the road and went to the infamous Greenham Common Counter Cruise Carnival. It was here that I felt the full force of the police for the first time. The fence to the nuclear military base was right next to us. So some people got sledgehammers and razed that fence to the ground. This was seen as an act of aggression so the police moved in big style and started on us. I was at the main gate when they marched past in rank and file, goose-stepping past us, casting us aside like insects, they rubbed their leather-gloved hands, breathing testosterone and amphetamine and went off hunting for a kill.

photograph © Angella-Dee



Book review

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one of which was founded by G.H.B Ward in 1900, who believed in "the exploration of the outdoors as a way of restoring human sensitivity to workers who were effectively just cogs in an unfeeling industrial machine". It was due to him, says Bainbridge, that many of the ancient walks and paths have been preserved for future generations. *The Compleat Trespasser* is an interesting outline of the issues surrounding trespassing, and why some of the most beautiful stretches of

moorland and downland, forests, woodlands and national parks are private and thereby closed to the general public. Bainbridge writes with great proficiency about the legal, political and social aspects of land ownership, noting the more colourful incidents and examples of trespassing throughout history. He is also keen to point out that while trespassing is deemed illegal more often than not landowners, particularly farmers, don't mind people walking on their land. "As long

as you are well-behaved, shut the gates and don't cause damage, disturb livestock or drop litter, they don't mind" says Bainbridge. But the fact remains that they do have a right in law to remove you from their land, at least until the day Britain adopts the same land laws as Scotland.

The Compleat Trespasser – Journeys into the heart of hidden Britain by John Bainbridge, published by Fellside Books.

GE TO SOUTHBANK



photograph @ Angella-Dee

Apart from that brief moment of chaos, life was on the whole totally fulfilling and overwhelmingly beautiful. I soon moved to Cornwall and there started preparing for next year's festivities.

It was at Stonehenge 1983 that I first saw someone spinning a staff and sort of dancing with it, so I went up to this lovely guy and asked him what this was all about? His name was Rico (we became friends for life) and he had the patience to show me the basic hand movements and what length to cut my own staff. I was soon in motion. A 5ft 6in staff, sun shining hot, gifted a tab of Samurai acid and I was off spinning. I learned quick and I took my staff out with me everywhere I walked. Back in Cornwall

that winter I carried on learning stick dancing skills between all the caravans I would visit on our common. It became an extension of my personality and a skill that would not go wasted!

After a good trashing at the Battle of the Beanfield, June 1985, I decided to stay in Cornwall a while and go to drama school. It was about this time that I met fire juggler Danny. He came to stay with us in our winter farmhouse let and soon we were out busking together. We became partners and hit that road. Danny could juggle fire clubs and I could do fire stick dancing, and I played the clarinet. We could juggle dangerous objects one-handed each and also upon my shoulders with an axe, knife and



photograph @ Angella-Dee

lump hammer. That kind of dangerous stuff. We were called 'Crazy Cat' and 'Wreck-less Rat' and we were a seriously funny comedy act. We started at Strawberry Fair and, whilst there, we were booked for a tree fair and once there we were booked all summer.

Move on nearly 30 years and life happened. I find myself living in London and looking to study. I didn't want to do any more pen-pushing exams so I chose to do a photography Diploma at the University of the Arts, London (LCC). I had learned to use a camera back in the festival days but I was reluctant to shoot amongst that crowd because of security paranoia.

One day browsing Facebook I saw a group called 'The London Fire Spinners'. They meet up every full moon to dance, spin and party with fire down on The Dirty Beach – that's on the south bank of the Thames, down near the OXO building – on Friday



photograph @ Angella-Dee

evenings nearest the full moon. So I takes me camera down there and, yeah, it feels like a free festival on the beach. I have permission to photograph as long as I share my creations. This event is arranged as a memorial to a fire dancer who suddenly died too young, Alex Lee.

I started with no flash gun and realised my handicap. Soon I was enhancing all my photos with three flash guns with different coloured gels. I learned so much down here on the beach.

These photos are about the best I have ever published and I am so proud to have learned all of this, even if it has taken 30 years. For more stuff search me out. It's not hard being a spy these days!

Angella-Dee

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SPORT

To boycott or not to boycott



Israel is set to host its biggest ever sporting event – the European under 21’s football championships.

Understandably many observers are drawing comparisons with South African apartheid regime that was effectively frozen out of international sporting events throughout the 1970s and 1980s. The question being

asked is – why should Israel be able to host a major sporting event whilst having such a horrendous record on human rights? For many people their immediate response would be, no, they should not.

Naomi Wimborne-Idrissi, a spokesman for Red Card Israeli Racism – a London-based group set up to oppose Israel hosting the

games – said, “There is a strong body of opinion that believes allowing Israel to participate in international events of this kind legitimises and normalises entrenched

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THE QUIZ

1. About who and what did Singer Arlo Guthrie say “For a man who fought all his life against being respectable, this comes as a stunning defeat”?
2. After uranium mining and milling, workers in which industry faced the highest average annual radiation dose?
3. Why did Christian group Exodus International, famous for claiming they could “cure homosexuality”, close down this year?
4. Why did the Wartime coalition government think about closing the *Daily Mirror* in 1942?

Answers on page 20

The Anarchist Quiz Book by Martin Howard, with illustrations by Paul Petard, is available for £5 post free from www.freedompress.org.uk or from our bookshop at 84b Whitechapel High Street, London E1 7QX.

