GATE GOURMET EXPLAINED

Matt Kane, a worker at Gourmet, had been fighting for over six years, telling the story of the workers’ struggle against management. Have conditions changed over the past few years? When Gourmet was under British Airways management, we used to provide the food for 45-55 flights. In recent months, we have provided food for over 80 flights, and this is on the same rate of pay and working hours, but we have been subject to a series of cuts. The management, however, has been successful in cutting costs, and this has led to an improvement in working conditions.

Gourmet was that there seemed to be too many levels of management. On the one hand, we were being told that the company was losing money and on the other hand, our management team was being introduced, and in 2002 many of them had their wages increased, from £175 to £235.

How did the dispute start? On the 9th August we went on strike, and the seasonal temp workers were being brought in, so there was a lot of stress. It was a difficult time, but we were supported by our colleagues.

What has the personal impact been on you? Well obviously the income has substantially decreased but it is the mental strain that is worse. The job is very demanding, and it is important to have a good work-life balance.

Gate Gourmet dismissed what I have heard from friends and colleagues as being unnecessary. The workers were not allowed to get water, and this has led to a number of accidents, including one where a worker had to be put in hospital.

NHS FACES CUTS ACROSS THE UK

The NHS is facing a crisis with new, unreasonably high prices leading to the loss of up to 8,000 HES jobs over the next few years, according to a new report. Across the 23 strategic Health Authorities (SHAs), six are overly discounting massive cases, while others are closing beds and dropping services to meet their enforced targets. Figures compiled by Health Emergency, an NHS watchdog sponsored by Unison, reveal widespread weaknesses in the national budget. In their newsletter they said: “We have been told that up to 50% of all HES trusts are facing deficit and are totalling almost £8.6 billion.”

Trusts are being asked to deliver £3.6bn in efficiency savings in order to achieve full funding for the year. If they don’t make the cuts they risk opening up a wide gap between expected care and ability to pay, said the study. Some hospitals and mental health trusts are facing cuts of more than £1bn, each to stay in the black, with 22 others requiring £1bn at least.

The group have cited a huge series of cuts appearing in newspapers and government information across the country, particularly in Berkshire, Lincolnshire, London, Southwark, Worcestershire and York.

The situation is being exacerbated by an apparent move to privatise NHS management at the expense of NHS funding. Local PCTs have been told by central government to begin greater allocation of funding to private hospital sources, taking funding away from the NHS. By the end of the year, 10% of all PCT funding will go to private sources, with a long-term goal of 15%, although according to health secretary Patricia Hewitt, this figure is not being regarded as an upper limit.

“Failing hospitals which do not make a profit will be closed down, as a particular concern as according to the national audit office, one quarter of all NHS trusts could break even last year, with worse figures predicted for this year.”

One third of trusts are in perilous financial circumstances, they said. The policy shift has raised fears that the ultimate motive for Labour may be privatization of the NHS.

Dr John Lister, Information Director, Institute of Health Economics, commented on Labour’s threat to privatize the NHS.

“Dr John Lister, Information Director for pressure group London Health Emergency said: ‘It’s hard to tell which trusts are the most worrying: the huge sums are being saved through identified spending cuts, or the fact that tens of millions of ‘savings’ assumed by the SHAs have yet to be identified. Paying Harry to Mr M says that the NHS is not ready to buy in more services from host private hospitals despite the capacity of the NHS to deliver better value. It is not yet clear whether the NHS is cutbacks on a scale is scaring off the worst order.’

But Health Emergency point to the practical impact on a huge number of PCTs: where millions of pounds are having to be recouped through reductions in service. Local reductions such as in Westminster (£1m), Gloucestershire and Wiltshire (£1.5m), Northampton and Tonbridge (£1.5m) are already well underway, and there is a growing concern that these reductions will affect the services and jobs of many more people across the country. These are the trusts who are considering their future to curb back more cuts.

POSADA STAYS FOR NOW

Posada’s involvement in the arms trafficcking to the Contra insurgency and a close relationship to infamous Maritime Corps were issues of concern. However, the US decision to revoke his status in accordance with the 1978 immigration law is a step forward for the Contra regime. Posada has also applied for an extradition, which Posada’s legal team has declined to fight, indicating that such a claim would involve revealing the identity of anti-Castro activists that were to be embarrassing to his former employers – the US government.

Posada was involved in terrorist activity against the Cuban government after fleeing the island in the wake of the 1959 revolution, participating in the CIA sponsored Bay of Pigs invasion in 1962. His lawyer claims that he has been a CIA agent up until the 1990s and that the US should grant him citizenship or

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Home and away

Around the world

DENMARK: The Danish police raised the alert level of terrorism in Copenhagen. About 200 police set their forces on the streets. (The meadow of peace) which is a part of the site, where people live in trailers. In one of the biggest mass arrests in Denmark ever, the police made over a hundred arrests. There are various reports of injured people. Most people have been charged with rioting the public orders, although some with charges relating to violence against the police.

Joosepho Piastu, the Italian Interior Minister, said that measures in the decree were "exceptional" but an "inevitability of a situation which is more serious and more inescapable in the fight against terrorism.

Statewatch said: "Although the clampdown aimed at reducing any echo of the measures that were to be adopted, a clear reading of the law suggests that it foresees the adoption of "exceptional" measures on a permanent basis.

MEDICO: Over the 7th, 8th and 9th of September, Mayans groups of the Yucatan, Mexico, will hold the Faj, the search for the heart, that represents the capacity of the Mayans to organise themselves around a common objective.

The Faj will be a mobilisation to lift the word and the memories of the Mayan people from where the government has a forgotten. The three-day march will depart from Cittar, the place where the indigenous rebellion led by Sarmiento began against the Spanish colonisation, and will arrive in Merida, the capital city of the Yucatan, where they will present a document to the local congress. The document is the manifestation of a group of Mayans who oppose the conviction of a local law of indigenous rights, as much as it is the manifestation of the Mexican commitment in a way that would respect the Sat Andas Accords, which were signed in 1996 by the EZLN (Zapatistas), the representatives of various indigenous peoples and representatives of the Mexican government.

MIDDLE EAST: The accounts of two Yemeni detainees said to have recently been transferred from the US detention facility at Guantanamo Bay in Cuba have described another US detention regime (just as sinister, yet more recent, than Guantanamo. The man appears to have been transferred to the US in custody and held for a period of time in an undisclosed location in Afghanistan, some of them having been detained without trial indefinitely incommunicado for more than a year.

Thousands of detainees remain held in US custody in Iraq and Afghanistan, in some cases where they have been detained without trial indefinitely incommunicado for more than a year.

Several thousand other detainees are believed to be held in the custody of other governments at the behest of the US.

In addition, however, the USA is holding an unknown number of detainees in secret, incommunicado custody in unknown locations and under unknown conditions.

Amnesty International has received reports that in the context of the "war on terror" the USA has established secret detention facilities in a number of countries. This could include Jordan, Pakistan, Egypt, Thailand and Afghanistan.

UK police have impounded its entire 40,000 prison-run of the BNP on the grounds that it is inciting racial hatred. The September issue of the paper was impounded at Dover on Sunday while those on sale in Slovakia (its previous printer was a Slovak firm) to a distribution facility Leeds, and will hopefully be pulsed. A spokesman said officials were working with the Crown Prosecution Service.

USA: Colin Powell, the former US secretary of state, has attacked the US administration for its actions in Iraq and Afghanistan, saying that the country has been chaotic and could lead to civil war.

The general expressed deep regret at the failure to push the war in the UN, and has admitted that he had neither tactfully correct enough to justify the invasion.

He also welcomed there was evidence linking the events of 11 September 2001 to Saddam Hussein.

Prison news

Yorks Wood

Two women have been taken to Bedford Hospital as fears grow for the health of the Ukrainian hunger strikers in the fifth week of their protest. Four women hunger strikers remain in Yorks Wood protesting against their deportation and the conditions in detention. One very ill and weak woman was taken on a 12-hour journey to Dunaguill Detention Centre in Scotland, where she remains on hunger strike.

Other women, including spokeswomen Harriet Aranyoglo and Rekha Vignesh, have been released having agreed to legal representations and the opportunity to get their case reconsidered as a result of their protest. But at least two women have been deported, one of whom was stopped by corrupt immigration officials in Uganda demanding they give all her money and they would hand her over to the police. She is now in hiding. There has been no contact with the other woman.

The Home Office refuses to take any responsibility for monitoring the safety of those it returns.

Some of the women affected are Ms Gloria Challinot (HO Ref: G111 735393 Port Ref: SEY042077) who has been in detention since 24th June 2003 and is due to be deported on 22nd September. She suffered years of repeated rape from the age of six, when the Lords Army (IRA) killed her father and killed her father's army. She was a child soldier who fought and was killed in the Irish war.

Ms Irminia, who is an engineer, said the account was lied by her attorney because it was a lie.

Ms Embah, who is a refugee, was detained for six months in the UK and is due to be deported on 10th September. She was detained in military barracks in Uganda where she suffered rape and other tortures.

The Home Office refused to take any responsibility for monitoring the safety of those it returns.

Most of our time is currently spent sorting out the aftermath of the G8 as part of the G8 Support Group. The G8 Support Group fielded legal observers at all the actions in Scotland throughout the week and investigated their impact. A good idea of how much was discussed by the G8, the account was lied by the G8 because it was a lie.

John Embah, who is a refugee, was detained for six months in the UK and is due to be deported on 10th September. She was detained in military barracks in Uganda where she suffered rape and other tortures. The Home Office refused to take any responsibility for monitoring the safety of those it returns.

Ms Irminia's lawyer failed to keep her informed of what was being done on her case, and she never saw what was submitted to the authorities. No expert report was commissioned by her lawyer for her appeal hearing to document Ms Irminia's account of her experiences and investigate their impact. She alleged she had got from Uganda confirming her account was denied by the G8 because it was a lie.

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An unusually cool summer

Research by the Met Office suggests that climate change will have a major impact on our food supply and weather, reports Rob Ray

Climate change will destroy crops. This is one of the number of people at risk of starvation by the year 2020, according to a report given at the British Association for the Advancement of Science Festival of Science in Dublin on 9th September.

The report, published by the government funded Hadley Centre, paints a deeply concerning picture of the impact of global warming, and warns that without massive changes in greenhouse gas output, the changes will be irreversible.

Other effects predicted using newly developed methods by the Met Office-funded research team to cut down uncertainties in predicting global climate change over the next 50 years have shown in preliminary studies

- A study predicting that the climate will become 2°C warmer by 2050,
- At many locations, extreme temperatures to increase more than the seasonal average. At some locations, seasonal variations are projected to decrease, while the intensity of extreme rainfall will increase.
- Of certain possibilities include:
  - The ocean's thermohaline circulation (movement of the sea along underwater arteries which transfer heat from the equator to the poles) could collapse. The effects of such a collapse could be disastrous, according to the scientists responsible for the study.
  - A de-glaciation of Greenland may be triggered some time in the next few centuries. A new simulation indicates that more than half of the Greenland ice sheet could be lost over the next 1,000 years, with a constitution to sea level rises of up to 4m.
  - Global warming to 2°C by mid-century, though unlikely to switchoff altogether.
  - Significant degradation of the Amazon basin, and massive die-off in the rainforests due to low rainfall/higher temperatures.

The report highlights the importance of maintaining a balance between the effects of climate change and the need to reduce carbon emissions. It states: "A balance must be struck between the need to reduce carbon emissions and the effects of climate change, and we must not lose sight of the bigger picture.

The ability of vegetation and soil to absorb carbon dioxide concentrations in the atmosphere is also a cause for concern, and it is feared "in some parts of the world, where rainfall decreases and higher temperatures increase evaporation, vegetation will die back. Thus, instead of carbon being drawn from the atmosphere, it will actually return to the atmosphere to enhance already increasing concentrations of CO2." Soil is due to become a net producer of CO2 by 2050, speeding the process of global warming still further.

During a festival in Trinity College, Dublin, a separate talk by Steve Long, a crop scientist at the University of Illinois, discussed recent interest in a theory that increasing CO2 levels would stimulate crop growth even to offset any danger posed by rising temperatures. "But dismissed the idea of extensive growing under controlled conditions, he said, showed a significant loss of crops regardless of CO2 levels. "Current projections of global food supply under climatic and atmospheric change are likely to be very optimistic."

Professor Long illustrated his point with the results of experiments with soybeans, the most important

Hatfield execs walk

A campaign for changes to the rules governing manslaughter convictions has found renewed support in the wake of the Hatfield rail crash trial, which last month saw rail executives cleared of responsibility for the deaths of four passengers on 17th October, 2000.

Campaigners want the rules — which currently allow for prosecution only if it can be proved there is a "controlling mind" — to be altered, with support expected coming from the Crime Prevention Service after the trial.

The construction company Balfour Beatty and five railway executives had been taken to court on manslaughter charges, which were thrown out by presiding judge Mr Justice Mackay two months ago.

Mackay said at the time: "I am not permitted to give reasons for the decision. I must ask you to accept my ruling.

The decision angered campaigning groups and disturbed the CPS, Director of public prosecutions, Ken McDonald QC, said on Tuesday 6th September. "I want by the decision to prosecute for manslaughter and breach of health and safety law. We felt there was sufficient evidence in this case and the seriousness of what was alleged meant the public interest demanded a prosecution.

"However, the judge's ruling on manslaughter demonstrates again the very real difficulties the Crown has in securing convictions against corporate businesses or individuals."

Balfour Beatty found guilty by a jury of breaking safety rules before the rail crash, which also injured 102. The ruling will see the company fined for Health and Safety Act violations on 3rd October, at the end of a nine month trial and a five year wait for the families of those affected.

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Bob Crow, general secretary of rail union RMT, said: "There's money to be made there's no shortage of executives ready and willing to pocket fat bonuses, but when there's some responsibility to be taken for something going horribly wrong, there's a distancing chorus of 'not me, guv'..."

Jonathan Goldberg, defending one of the executives, told the jury: "These men worked in an under-funded, under-resourced industry, which had been neglected by governments of all parties for over 40 years and which had recently undergone a brokered and unworkable privatisation..."

During the trial it was pointed out that workers on the line had warned bosses up to two years before the crash that the line was unsafe. They had proposed a 20mph speed limit and urgent repairs over a 36-hour period to the affected area.

In a year of hugely increased profits, this professional recommendation was ignored.

A draft bill designed to impose a "duty of care" on executives will be put to the parliamentary scrutiny process shortly before Christmas.

75 or bust

A study by the Employers' Forum on Age (EPA) has found that the majority of workers want to work beyond 65 and, of those that do, most either cannot afford to stop or are private sector managers.

Around 52% of the 1,600 people questioned said that they regarded their retirement age as just reward or disability their job enough to discount staying. Of the remaining half of the working population, it was estimated that 40% comprised of private sector managers whose attitudes to work and pensions were "irrelevant", with most of the rest of the workforce using their personal financial situation as the primary reason for opting to stop working.

The report, Attitudes on Age, also found that only one in five workers thought they would be fit to continue working into their 70s, though that total may be skewed by age discrimination factors.

Siân Berry, director of the EPA said: "Our research reveals that age is irrelevant when it comes to people's attitudes to working for longer — over half of all workers want to retire as soon as possible. This should worry Government, given the need to extend working life to counter our ageing population and the looming pension crisis.

The report concluded: "The finding of a stark warning to Government in advance of the introduction of age discrimination regulations in October 2006.

"The report suggests a 'one-size-fits-all' approach by the Government and employers to tackle working for longer and retirement will be ineffective."

The Pensions Committee is due to report on its findings on the pensions issue in November. Pensions minister Stephen Timms has said a separate consultation document on the subject will be published next spring.

A major shakeup in age discrimination law will come into effect in October of next year.
Constitutional farce in Iraq

The proposed Iraqi constitution is the product of bribery, American pressure and is almost completely illegal, reports Jack Ray

The founding document of Iraq's new Republic, set to be put before the people by referendum on 15th October, has come under fire from all sides, providing anti-constitution demonstrations across the country. Reports on the process have also emerged from the United Nations, the US, and American Ambassadors to Iraq Zalmay Khalilzad and his team with accusations that members of the drafting committee were offered multi-million dollar bribes to support the document.

Under the Transitional Administrative Laws (TALs) established by Iraq's interim administration under US rule, the process was due to be finalized by 15th August, but difficulties in reaching an agreement meant that an amendment to the law allowing for an extension to the 22nd. In the event that the national assembly was to be dissolved and a further election called, the constitutional process was legally continued until the 29th, where the constitution was submitted without the consent of the drafting committee - a provision of the Sunni delegates' involvement in the process.

Andrew Arroyo, a constitutional expert at the University of Chicago said, "It an absurd idea, and probably a novelty in the history of constitution making that a constitution is needed but not voted at all, who is submitting the text to the population and by what rights?"

The chaotic constitutional process continued after the submission of the final draft, with US ambassador Khalid insisting that changes could still be made to the draft as late as the 7th September. American interference in the constitutional process has been the subject of widespread complaint, even from former US ambassador to Iraq, Richard Holbrooke, who said, "I think US diplomats should be more involved in the drafting process." "Most of the negotiations on the constitution being conducted by American and British diplomats shunting between individual delegates, side-stepping open committee debate. Saudi Arabia, the US and the UK have been working on a statement that all the shipments have to be signed off by the US and the UK."

Coalition interests were obvious in the final draft. An early draft appeared in June containing the provision "Social justice is the basis of building society," replaced in the later version with Article 28 authorising the formation of a social justice committee with the approval of the prime minister. The prime minister and cabinet was also replaced in the document's second article authorising civil law and protections for women, the family, and social justice and proposing a constitutional amendment to the constitution itself.

The constitution has come from a wide variety of sources. The Sunni muftis on the committee kept working on the first draft until the very end while the Iraqis worked on the second. The opposition to the constitution has continued to be rejected in larger numbers, "the constitutional process is almost completely illegal."

Meanwhile, violence across the country has not abated, with insurgents taking control of Al Qaim, on the Syrian border, reportedly executing civilians with the cooperation of the US military. "Where the killings are taking place, the US military is either not aware or not doing anything to stop them," a local official said.
Dead city

A summary of New Orleans reports from the ground in the aftermath of hurricane Katrina, edited from raw Indymedia text

Hurricane Katrina could have killed tens of thousands of people, aided and abetted by the actions of an American government who, in the words of Kanye West, 'don't care about black people'. Below are edited versions of some of the best reporting on IndyMedia New Orleans.

Self organisation sans the state

Two paramedics stranded in New Orleans gave their account on 2nd September, as the first reports of looting and anarchy started to surface:

"Two days after Hurricane Katrina struck New Orleans, the Walgreens store at the corner of Royal and Bienville streets remained locked. The display case was clearly visible through the window..."- 9x3

"Cops could have broken one small window and distributed the seeds, fruit juice, and bottled water in an organized and systematic manner. But they did not. Instead they spent hours playing cat and mouse, temporarily chasing each other around the city."

"We were finally airlifted out of New Orleans two days ago and arrived home yesterday."- 9x3

"We have yet to see any food, water, or tents in our area. We are willing to give up these videos or front-page pictures of Europeans or affluent white tourists looting the Walgreens in the French Quarter."

"We also suspect the media will have been inundated with 'hero' images of the National Guard, the troops and the police, stealing the Vic's of the victims of Katrina. What you will not see, but what we witnessed are the real heroes and sheroes of the hurricane relief effort: the working class of New Orleans."

"The maintenance workers who used a back lift to carry the sick and disabled. The engineers, who rigged, nurtured and kept the generators running. The electricians, who improvised thick extension cords stretching over blocks to share the little electricity we had in order to keep cars stocked on rooftop parking lots. Nurses who took over for mechanical ventilators and spent many hours on end manually forcing air into the lungs of unconscious patients to keep them alive."

"Those who rescued folks stuck in elevators. Refinery workers who broke into boat yards, 'stealing' boats to rescue their neighbours clinging to their roofs in flood waters. Mechanics who helped hotwire any car that could be found to ferry people out of the city. And the food service workers who secured the commercial kitchen's imported coffee and cordial meals for hundreds of those 'stranded'."

"Most of these workers had lost their homes, and were trying to help members of their families, yet they stayed and provided the only infrastructure for the 20% of New Orleans that was not under water."

Words from the refugee camps

Joden Flanery on 2nd September writes: "I just left New Orleans a couple hours ago... I travelled from the apartment I was staying in by boat to a helicopter to a refugee camp. It appears government officials are turning the attention of the victims of Hurricane Katrina, I advise you to visit one of the refugee camps."

"In the refugee camp I just left, on the I-10 freeway near Caucanoy, there were hundreds of people at (90% black and poor) stowed and squatted in mud and trash behind metal barricades, under an unforgiving sun, with barely armed soldiers standing guard over them."

"The view was overwhelming, it would stop at a random spot, state police would open a gap in one of the barricades, and people would rush for the bus, with no information given about where the bus was going. Once inside (we were told) evacuees would be told where the buses would drop them."

"The media did not do so, and no way to get to the shelter in Arkansas. If you had people willing to come to New Orleans to pick you up, they couldn't come within 17 miles of the camp."

"I travelled throughout the camp and spoke to Red Cross workers, Salvation Army workers, National Guard, and state police, and although they were friendly, no one could give me any details on when buses would arrive, how many, where they would go, or any other information."

"The media did not cover this, and it's clear from the above that there's no need to wait."

"I spoke to the several teams of journalists nearby, and asked if any of them had been able to get any information from any federal, state, or local officials or any of these questions, and all of them, from Australian tv to local Fox affiliates to the New York Times, were continuing to report on their own, non-centralised, non-commercial, news."

"Our cameraman told me 'as someone who's been here in this camp for two weeks, I've seen this before, it's nothing new. You can't get through it next night. You don't want to be here at night.'"

"There was also no visible attention by any of these running the camp to set up any sort of transparent and consistent system, for instance a line to get on buses, a way to register contact information or find family members, special needs services for children and infants, phone services, treatment for possible disease exposure, nor even a single trash can."

"While the rich escaped New Orleans, those with nowhere to go and no way to get there were left behind. Adding salt to the wound, the local and national media have spent the last week demonizing those left behind. As someone who loves New Orleans and the people in the city, this is the part of this tragedy that hurts me the most, and it hurts me deeply."

"No sane person should classify someone who takes food from indefinitely closed stores in a desperate, starving city as a 'loser', but that's just what the media did over and over again. Sheriffs and politicians talked of having troops protect stores instead of perform rescue operations."

"Images of New Orleans' hurricane-ravaged populations were transformed into black, out-of-control, criminals. As if taking a stereo from a store that will clearly be ruined against loss is a greater crime than the governmental neglect and incompetence that did billions of dollars of damage and destroyed a city."

"This media focus is a tactc, just as the eighties focus on 'welfare queen' and 'super-predators' obscured the simultaneous and much larger crimes of the Savings and Loan scams and mass lay-offs, the hyper-exploited people of New Orleans are being used as a scapegoat to cover up much larger crimes."

"City, state and national policies are the real criminals here. Since at least the mid-1980s, its been widely known the danger faced by flooding to New Orleans. The flood of 1927, which, like the week's events, was more about politics and racism than any kind of natural disaster, illustrated exactly the danger faced."

"Yet government officials have consistently refused to spend the money to protect this poor, overwhelmingly black, city. While FEMA and others warned of the urgent impending danger to New Orleans and put forward proposals for funding to reinforce and protect the city, the Bush administration, in every year since 2001, has cut or refused to fund New Orleans' flood control, and ignored scientists warnings of increased hurricanes as a result of global warming."

"And, as the danger rose with the flood, the lack of coordinated response dramatised vividly the utter disregard of our elected leaders."

Don't forget the prisoners

One local wonder, where have all the prisoners gone?

"[j]atched members of Families and Friends of Louisiana's Incarcerated Children (FFLIC) these past few days walking through shelters in Louisiana and Texas trying to help families connect up with their children who had been locked up in detention centers and/or the local ones who had been in OPP."

"All adult prisoners who are still in state custody are currently being held at either Angola or Elau. There is word also that people who were being held at OPP on less than a $1,000 bond either will or could (depending on if you talk) be released if a family can and is able to provide some kind of address. Older family members have been told that records are not available yet, but once the computer system is up, they intend on holding hearings for 'a couple of weeks' to process release.

"We have not been able to find out how many of the 6,000 plus OPP prisoners are accounted for. The New York Times today reports that Sherif Gunman claims the prisoners have all been moved outside the city. As of Monday morning, however, it seems the OPP computer system was still down, as it hard to fathom how the Sheriff could possibly make such a claim."

"We have heard disturbing accounts from the evacuation of OPP. It seems Gems in Jefferson Parish was evacuated as we but we have no information on what happened to them.

"We also know now that at least 600 of the people who were arrested during the general evacuation are still being held at Gracea in Jefferson Parish. The media reports earlier in the week reports arrested people were being held in the Greyhound station. We don't know if that is still the case, and have been able to get a phone number for families to call. FFLIC has not confirmed that all 600 have been accounted for."

"We do not know where people age 16 or under who were arrested during the general evacuation are being held. Families scattered around the state are desperately trying to find out where their kids and other family members are being locked up."

See letters on page 6 for more in New Orleans
FREEDOM
Volume 66 Number 18

Anarchism
Anarchist work towards a society of mutual aid and voluntary co-operation. We reject government, and all forms of exploitation and domination.

No hope, no chance
The aftermath hasn’t begun. There are still thousands trapped in a beleaguered city by water, disease, lack of supplies and by the most galling lack of competence and care. The disaster that has struck New Orleans in the shape of hurricane Katrina has asked some fundamental questions about the current American administration, but just as importantly it asks deep and demanding questions about the nature of American, and therefore Western, government as a whole.

While still many explore the political effects of the disaster some might say that this is not the time to look at the wider issues and currents that have left the people of New Orleans facing the rising waters. However, it is exactly now, as the levels of anger and incredulity of the people of Mississippi is at its highest, that voices must be raised to fathom the reasons why so many should have been treated, apparently, so badly.

In Baton there has been, surprisingly, an examination of the Bush administration’s hubris, if not frozen, response to what has been dubbed one of America’s greatest tragedies in history. Bubbling underneath the cold rhetoric of the media is an alarm, (though thankfully not quite, dumbfuck must need to define the White House’s position as, at best, incompetent, and at worst, caring to give a damn. But why should they? What’s in it for them? Surely by the time the next election comes round (in a fall of 2008), many more events will have intervened for the vast majority of Americans reducing the current crisis of New Orleans only as a dim and distant memory.

Put bluntly the American government has not been there where it has been most needed. Critics have consistently commented on this fact with a native xenophobia of surprise. They are only there when it suits them. Their actions must fulfill the most fundamental criteria that motivates government – what will it do for them in terms of retaining or gaining power.

Tangibly, within Western democracies, people have come to rely, almost exclusively, on their government and their agencies for the answers and solutions to their societies’ problems and crises.

That reliance on a system that purports to care deeply about the people’s concerns when it evidently doesn’t is one of the fundamental flaws of any government from a citizen’s point of view. What’s worse, however, are the scenes we have witnessed over the last few days, looks of shock and horror as gun wielding members of government agencies speed through areas full of desperate people.

When a government orders in its troops away from the important tasks of search and rescue towards the seemingly petty defence of buildings from looters then the basic motivations of those in charge must be placed under the microscope.

There is a deeper concern in relation to the American peoples’ reliance on their clearly unexceptioned Government. So much trust and hope has been placed in the hands of those that don’t deserve that the ability to act largely on an unscrupulous view of those around you, either physically, morally, intellectually or spiritually is massively impaired.

But should we be surprised? The seemingly calous way the population of New Orleans has turned to in need of this crisis only highlights the underlying racism at the centre of any society’s definition. It seems hardly to subject a population to years of authoritarian sponsored devotion to capitalism and then look aghast as they place the desire to strive and get jobs over the desire to help those around them.

Steve Price

Anarchism
There were many signs that the ‘rebuild’ army and marine facilities, there are some signs that familiar in the worst-affected areas appear to have set up self-help groups that are keeping the mystique. The Prometheus Radio Project, for example, has been planning radio pirate systems for those displaced by the hurricane. This writer came back, but there seems little the average displaced civil service can do to cash vehicle and power plant. The fact must be that other disasters will have to happen before action is taken to halt climate change.

Little further

Secret agents
Secret Service insinuates in radical movements is a serious matter. Activists have had their lives thoroughly messed up, some are in prison, and a few, like Hilda Murrell and others are dead because of it. Therefore the subject needs to be taken seriously. It is crucial that you keep up with Larry O’Hara as a ‘spokesperson’ in your e-mail distribution of my long report on the O’Lara versus Greensboro Skyline debate (page 7 of Freedom, 26th August 2005).

Perhaps, more worryingly you erroneously capture a picture of the ‘anti-war’ movement as a whole. Elementary mistakes like this will undermine the credibility of your magazine. Please don’t trivialise the topic in this alphabetical way.

Steve Booth

Search for...
I’m trying to find someone I lost track of in the early 1980s in Lexington. His name was John England who was an anarchist who worked as a porter at Warwick University. He was a converse for Lancaster District Anti Fascist Committee. Can you help me in any way or point me in the right direction?

Doug Law

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Next issue
The next issue will be dated 1st October and the last day to get your copy to us will be Friday 23rd September (see contact details above for where to send your letter/articles).

ZAPATA AND MEXICO

by PETER E. NEWELL

Zapata was the leading figure of the Mexican Revolution of 1910. He fought for the rights of local communities against greedy landowners, fraudulent politicians and foreign-owned companies. Under the slogan ‘Land and Liberty!’ he became the people’s champion of the Mexican Revolution. Zapata’s memory, his ideas, views on Mexico. Now available at £9.50 (post-free inland) from Freedom Press.

Quiz answers
1. Benih and Aztec tomatoes multihued against hard mountain and poor conditions.
2. Becoming an Annie Oakley, they sell each other ‘with a gun bought at the WalMart discount store’. For easier living, selling records to children than guns.
3. The earthworm.
4. The German anarchist-Pogo Fritz, a fairly famous group of punks, with their broadcast fanbase tortured, smoking and alcohol-fed vandals. Their songs ‘Weeds Is it’.
Iain Mackay finds in Workers' Power an extraordinarily insightful
and well researched work of history and theory

Morrice Brinton was the pseudonym under which Christopher Pallas (1922-2003) wrote and translated for the British libertarian socialist group Solidarity from 1960 until the early 1990s. Brinton's translations of libertarian socialist Constantinos Candidorii's work (under the pseudonym 'Paul Candid') contributed immensely to enlivening libertarian politics in the English speaking world. However, Brinton's own work was just as stimulating (and in many ways, wider in scope) than Candidorii's, as can be seen from this collection.

The book has a diverse range of documents as well as articles on numerous subjects, there are reviews, introductions, newer works and his own pamphlets. In latter include his analysis of the Bolshevist and Workers' Control and Le Syndicalisme in Politics, the former a groundbreaking account of the Russian Revolution and the latter a popular introduction to the ideas of revolutionary syndicalism. William Rech who edited the book describes how a variety of people who contributed to the book could help to be 'the least confidence in people's ability to dispense with leaders.

His dismissal of Leninist organisation in the essay Revolutionary Organisation is short but devastating. He notes that while Leninists argue that "the lack of high centralised forces of modern capitalism requires an equally centralised type of party" "this ignores the fact that capitalism is a complex system embedded in the social fabric of society. It is not just a question of how to organise the workers to fight against the employers. It is a question of how to organise the workers to change society itself." He concludes that the book considerably but Bolshevik authoritarian politics were not as important as just underlying economic democracy.

The book also contains a translation of M. I. Kropotkin's book The Russian Anarchists. While he is right to condemn the authoritarian and anti-theoretical tendencies of Russian anarchism, he is also critical of the focus on mutual aid and social reform.

Ultimately, these are minor points. The core ideas of Brinton deserve a wider audience and should be reprinted.
A Sideways Look
In the rich world, people tend to expect something from their governments. This is theorised as the "social contract" - they tax us and in return provide a legal framework, various services and defence. Of course, reality never lives up to the theory, but there can be few better confirmations of this as stark as the hurricane which devastated the southern United States.

Clearly the Bush administration is blundering around in response to the flood defences and allowing development of natural barriers such as marshes. The State and City levels of government failed to include the poor in their evacuation plans. Aliens are busy blaming each other depending on which of the overly influential and/or sympathetic capitalist parties run which authority. The disaster struck an area which has three levels of multi-million dollar government - and they’re all incompetent.

The previous job of the head of the Federal Emergency Management Authority, Michael Brown, was a judge for the International Arabian Horse Association, a horse show organisation. He was asked to leave from there and filled in the time between with a moonlighting head of FEMA by working on Bush's campaign team. Even if Bush fires him from this sinecure, he'll find him another somewhere else. His and the clearly named emergency in emergency planning was as an intern to a local government manager. I know of at least one Unicef branch secretary in London better qualified to be head of emergency planning, but then he’s not American and hasn’t done favours for Bush.

Brown also said that residents who stayed in New Orleans deserved part of the blame for their own death. This is the classic claim one would probably those too poor to own a car or afford the fare, too infirm to move elsewhere or who couldn't judge 's houses should find out not a little more about some of the people who tried to walk out of New Orleans but were prevented by armed police from the Greta Sheriff's department. When they set up camp on the freeway in full visibility, the police smashed their strollers and stole their food and water, before driving them away. They're not the only ones to blame those who camp on about asylum seekers here is that more refugees end up in poor conditions with little or no chance of asylum, for example refugees from Darfur and Congo. In fact, the UNHCR has been forced to deal with about asylum seekers here is that more refugees end up in poor conditions with little or no chance of asylum, for example refugees from Darfur and Congo.

This was a natural disaster, amplified by wrong choices made by government, smeared through the prices of rice and gas and in the American south. It undoubtedly brought out the best in some and the worst in others. In places where there is effectively no equivalent of FEMA, people must make their own arrangements. It is a peculiar society that thinks the welfare of its neighbors isn't in concern, particularly when it wears in Christian credentials so prominently.

Source: an eyewitness account by two American Socialists at www.livjournal.com/users/fusion/831647.html

Blast from the Past
September 15th: Freedom protest on the afternoon of the Park Square massacre.
On 4th June, the People's Liberation army attacked unarmed demonstrators in Tiananmen Square with tanks and armoured personnel carriers. According to different reports, 1,000 to 3,000 demonstrators were killed beneath the tread of tanks or were shot to death. But perhaps these numbers were too low as, according to press reports, the army attempted to disguise the number of its victims by crushing their bodies with tanks, and then dismantling the remains on the spot with flame throwers.

Since then the Chinese regime has underlined itsesympathetic offensive, which would have filled Joseph Goebbels with admiration. The Chinese Communist regime now claims that no massacre took place, and that up to 100 of their heavily armed soldiers were murdered by the unarmed demonstrators.

Waves, thousands of the idealising young people who opposed the corrupt bureaucratic communist regime have already been arrested in the repression which followed the massacre, many of them have been sentenced to death, and several have already been executed. The bloody events will undoubtedly spend many years in history textbooks and 'reeducing' camps. But while events in China are occurring, they should come as no surprise. Bloody outbreaks of a similar nature are not new. The whole concept of human rights has been disregarded for human life goes far beyond concepts for the life and liberty of all people. It is institutionalised in the normal operations of communist states. Incredulous brutality has been employed extralegally in pursuit of the objectives of the totalitarian class who run such systems.

The reasons for these nonentities are, therefore, a mystery. It is inherent in Leninist dogma.

The quiz
1. What happened at atalats in northern France in 1918?

2. What is the Good Thing get sherry? Crow's record banned from Walmart?

3. What did Darwin ascribe to more newtonianism and more importance to the economy of the cow?

4. Whose poetry broadcast jumbled up a gynaecological election, even though it was obscured?

Answers on page 6

Imagine If...
Mike Myers was feeling a little foolish. He'd reacted badly when Karen West had stood up on US national television and spoken for everyone with a conscience, railing against the state's disregard for the lives of black Americans.

"George Bush hates black people," the rep said, having been informed of the situation by his boss.

He'd just stood there ignoring it and continuing to read the autocue, like some kind of wind-manned corporate sellout unwilling to take his nose from between their comfortably padded lecterns.

While he waited, he read the story when his heart of irresistible slapstick humour had been employed in the service of 'world peace and no racism shite'.

Back then, he and his trusty anti-corporate sidekick Pius, along with his coloured docker friend had stood much to the Man by showing that downtown king and stubborn fairy what it was...

But now...

What had become of him? Tens of thousands died in a tragedy, the US state held gaurd to the survivors to stop them 'footing' food and he'd just shifted guilishly while someone else stood up for what was right.

Just as well he had his millions of dollars earned from films they'd gone, otherwise he'd be irreconcilable.

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