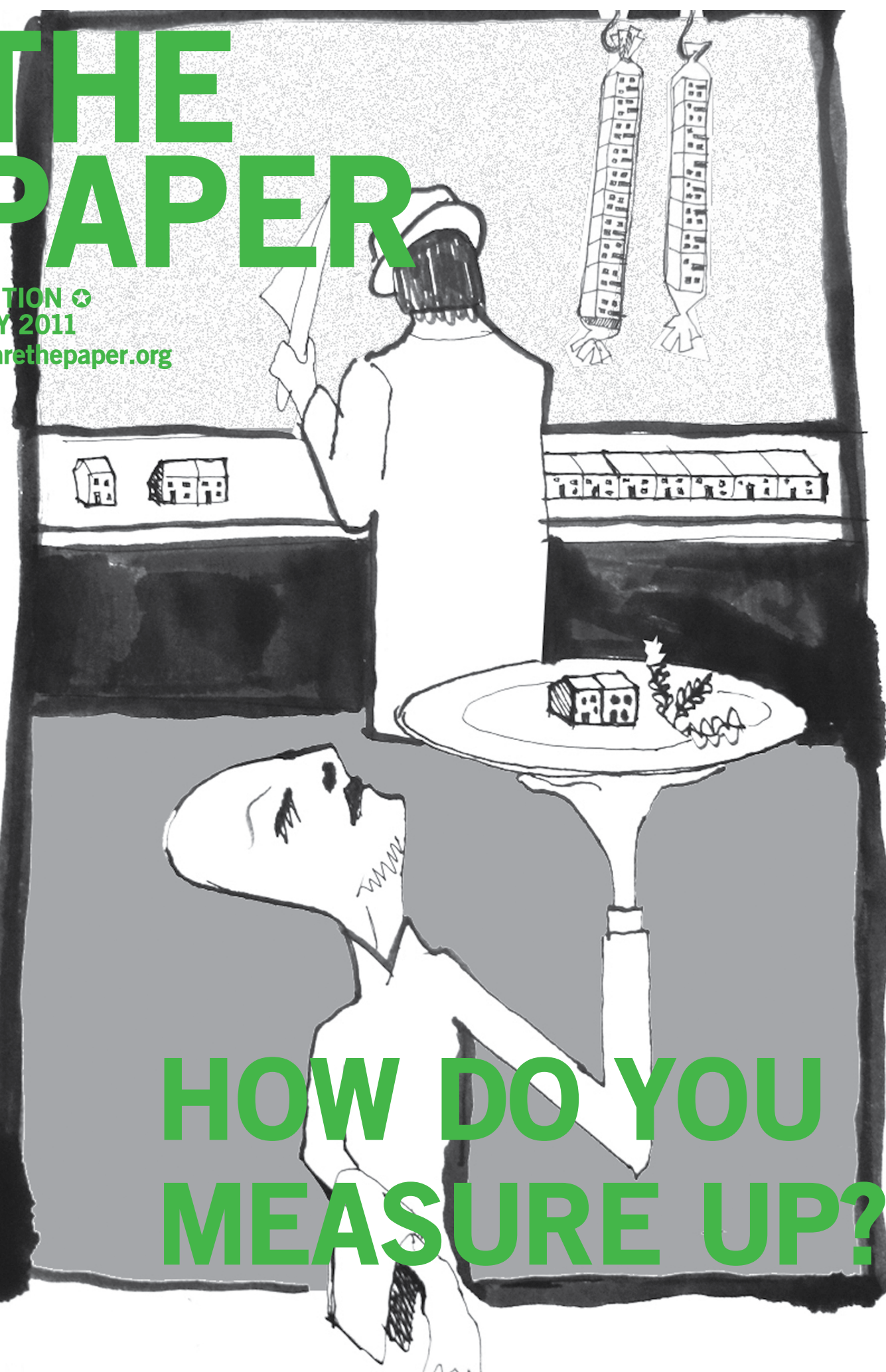


THE PAPER

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HOW DO YOU MEASURE UP?

EDITORIAL

To call to account, account for something, be of account. 'To count' can mean to tally or calculate but also to matter, esteem or to have importance. It is in the interstices of these literal and idiomatic meanings of measure that this issue of The Paper precariously sits.

Measure is all around us. Our phone conversations are billed by the second, while the number of dead of Libya escalates. Our capacity to think is measured in grades, degrees or the metrics of 'research output', at least for those who pass the 'merit-point' based migration schemes. The health, wealth and strength of States and populations are measured by all manner of statistical indicators. But there are also those of us who don't count, or at least don't count in the right way: the unemployed, the undocumented, the lumpen and so on. How and when might we, who are many, count otherwise?

This issue of The Paper carries multiple examples of the brutality of measure - from the racialised policing of State territory, to the discipline and organization of the

classroom, to the official discourse about the magnitude of public protest. Measure is a form and a means of governance. It makes the heterogeneous homogeneous, it turns the richness of our lives, and our singular measures, into the dead abstraction of number. The conservative and dull fiction that our future can be calculated, with measured effects and risks that are known is backwards and destructive. Their numbers will not tell us what needs to be done.

The forces that want to reduce and divide us follow the monetary calculus of costs and benefits. Profits, interest, and capitalization lived as exploitation, debt and appropriation. Capping migration and welfare, uncapping our costs.

We want to break these regimes of instrumentalisation. Paradox: how to take a measured response to the excess of measure? How can we, as immeasurably broad collective, intervene, reflect and interact alongside emergent and uncharted attempts to resist and overturn the logics of measure? How are we, and how do we want to be, situated in the numerous struggles?

Contact us

Email: emailthepaper@gmail.com

Send your letters, drawings, reports, articles or photos for the next edition by 13 April

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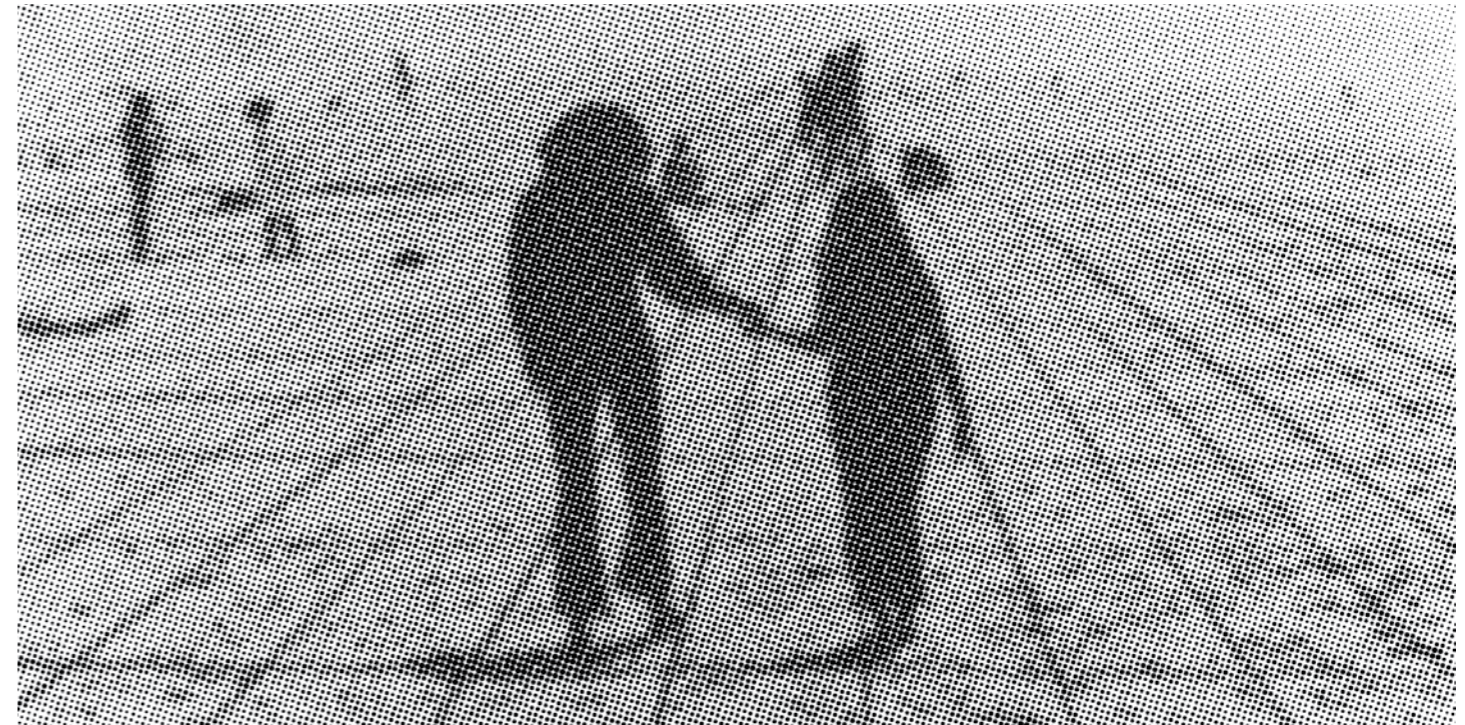
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Correspondence



Smiley Culture and Saxon Posse: Police Officer (1984)

Everytime me drive me car police a stop me superstar
True me drive a fiat and a Mercs, Sell weh me Lancia
So more time when me go a Esat London fe check some cockneys
Them a tell me to produce insurance, license and M.O.T.
but me say.....

Police Officer no give me producer
Police Officer no bother give me producer
Police Officer no give me producer
Police Officer no bother give me producer

To everybody in the dance I and I dedicate this style yah
Whether you a lawbreaker or you a informer
You could be a P.C., C.I.D. or a inspector
Me no charge for murder, Failing to produce is weh me charge for
So.....

Police Officer no give me producer
Police Officer no bother give me producer

Ca' me a Smiley Culture. Used to drive up a Lancia
And me a drive car from me a teenager
Police Officer me is a expert driver
So if you see me no shout and no holler
No stand up in the road with a torch and try pull me over
Ca' if it's a dark night by yourself you will get run over
No come behind me in a rover and start flash your flasher
Or come rev rev rev it beside me 'pon your scooter
Ca' me is a man who would a just faster
And when me feel like it me would a pull up on a corner
Before you ask any question me already have an answer
And any answer you get me wan' you know it would be formula
So.....

Police Officer no give me producer
Police Officer no bother give me producer
Police Officer no give me producer
Policer Officer no bother give me producer

On me way a People's Club me pass through Victoria
And through me a entertainer say no tax 'pon me window
As me go through the lights the whole road take over
And as me drive nearer could see clearer it was a Black Maria
With six or seven plain clothes police officers
Them didn't look the type of police me could give a fiver
First thing that come into me head: Good thing me hide me ganja!

Next thing that happen them a wave, in other words pull me over
All me could a do is sigh and shrug me shoulder
And as them approach me start wind down me window
Me a go tell you how me answer.....
Every question them fire.....

"Well, Wha wha wha what's your name then son?"
My name Smiley Culture
"Yeah, Where do you think you're coming from lad?"
From seeing me mother
"What's the registration number of the car then?"
I can't remember

"What you got in the boot then son?"
A cassette recorder. Would you like to have a look?
"Shut your bloody mouth. We ask. You answer"
Now take the keys out of the car and step out of the motor
Me and my colleagues have got a few questions to ask ya
You'll be on your way as soon as we get an answer

As me come out of the car me a think and me a wonder
What police officers could want with Smiley Culture
Ca' with them a search the interior
But whatever them look for me hiding place superior
But the way them a search me had to ask them what they a look for
But me try handle them coarse. Them just handle me coarser
Then one draw handcuff, Put him hand 'pon me shoulder
And say: "We ain't got time to waste, We don't think you have neither
Just give us what we want - the real sensimania"

Me never had no choice me draw out me ganja
As me do that start rub them hands together
One say: "Shall we put him in the van or in the back of the Rover?"

Me say: You can't do that ca' me name Smiley Culture
"You what? Did you do that record Cockney Translator?"
In the reggae charts number one was it's number
"My kids love it and so does my mother!
Tell you what I'll do . A favour for a favour
Just sign your autograph on this piece of paper"
Me cut him short and just draw out me Parker
'Pon the producer me just sign Smiley Culture
Then never lie. Them never bother.... arrest me or take me ganja!

More lettuce to chew over from our readers. Find The Paper online at www.wearethepaper.org

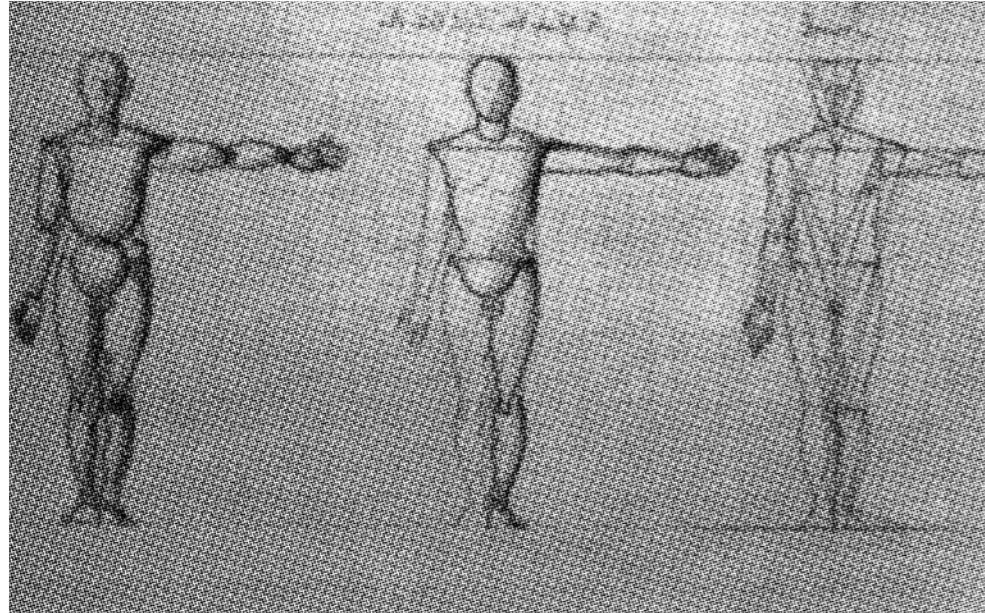
Dangerous Alliances: Class and the Student Movement, Edition Zero is really very interesting and beautifully written. Reminds me of Pasolini's *Valle Giulia* but, just like Pasolini's poem, I think there might be a problem in your argument. Whether you're from Oxbridge or Croydon shouldn't count in a movement, as long as you are thoroughly aware of the embodied ideologies your class belonging involves and as long as you are bearer, in words and actions, of authentically progressive stances. This sounds very politically incorrect, but I cannot see any reason why Oxbridge people (of a certain social class) shouldn't be leading this movement. Unless, of course, their slogans and demands start to reflect elitist interests and culture. I am aware what you describe is a sort of uneven division of labour along class lines within the movement, but the way out of this is to stay focused on the struggle and its objectives, not advocating more space in the media for young working class people. This is a sort of multiculturalist, liberal way of talking about social class, incorporating Blair's Third Way within Cameron's Big Society. What we are fighting should be hard battles against deep, structural economic inequalities and ideologies: we should be focusing on what we want to achieve, not on where we come from and on how to give media visibility to the minorities/poor within us.

Also, your remarks about the conditions and fights of students as being 'limited', reminded me of how Negri and Hardt are often criticized by orthodox Marxists

for focusing on intellectual labour and cognitive proletariat, as they call it. The orthodox argument would be that one shouldn't be focusing on these new forms of exploitation, as they only involve a limited number of people in the West, while the majority of proletarians worldwide are unskilled manual workers. Negri and Hardt's answer to this is that, when Marx wrote *Capital*, industrial exploitation also involved only a limited number of people in the West, namely in England. For them, the point is not to analyse what regards the majority of workers, but to be able to identify what is at the core of the transformations of contemporary global capitalism, and intellectual labour (including your students) definitely contends. Moreover, are we sure that the student condition is today still limited in time, as you write? All evidence seems to suggest it is increasingly expanding throughout our lives, well beyond what it used to be in the traditional 'Fordist' model. Are you sure that 'what are we going to do when we leave university?' is the right question to ask? Maybe the question is: are we going to leave university at all? Have universities become the places where the most advanced form of labour struggle - something that will involve us all, even the young working class who didn't go to university - is taking place?
/ Elisa Pascucci, University of Sussex

Hi, thanks for my paper! Great cover ...no explanation or apology required. Words were never 'ours' or theirs for that matter. In the slip and play of words we find, yes violence and power at work, but also poetry and new meaning. We re-use words, they are not for destruction. You can hijack a word but only the fearful would destroy or abandon words. We hijack words to create new terrain, new space to illustrate our ideas, but if, as the last 40 years has seen, we attempt to hijack words to create a programme we turn opposition into an endless circle time, a show and tell ending in apology and reconciliation. Our theory must, by its radicalism, promote our multiplicity. Our universals are under daily construction and are only able to be threatened when they ossify and become our dogmas. Words remain unavailable to all, perpetually and wonderfully elusive, and events dictate their usefulness or otherwise. What was redundant returns whilst what seemed essential must pass away. Our use of words creates a space between us and power and opens up a new terrain where we create opposition and celebration. Words, like broken windows, function as both entrance and exit and the action that necessitates the choice requires all words to carry the day. Words are stones with which we arm ourselves ...our multiplicity creates a billion of them but when we confront power this billion, this richness, can become our burden. Our radicalism and its theory informs our choice and we must know which words to choose and when... often a well chosen solitary stone becomes the most effective weapon. Good luck with the paper I look forward to future issues.
/Paul

The Arithmetic of Border Control



Joe Rigby weighs in on the debate over the value of different forms of immigration and argues that neo-racism prevents questioning of how immigration came to be constituted as a problem at all.

Numbers, limits and caps, or more precisely, their real, purported and/or threatened transgressions, are key operators in the construction of the so called 'problem of immigration'. On 6 April the Coalition's new cap on non-EU immigration came into force, complimenting the new points-based immigration system: a visa programme designed to more accurately filter-in only those immigrants which are deemed to be of value to the UK economy. Like all border technologies, this arithmetic of control provides a powerful motor of depoliticisation, naturalising the right of some to determine the movement and value of others. But perhaps one of the most insidious features of the numbers debate is the way it gives a twist to conventional racism, making it palatable for the mainstream.

David Cameron promoted the idea of a cap on non-EU immigration long before becoming Prime Minister. Pushing the policy he has not only made use of the usual false arguments about the pressure immigration puts on housing, health and education, but has actually argued that a cap is necessary to combat the spread of anti-immigrant populism. 'Immigration has been too high', Cameron argued during the first of the televised election debates last year, 'and so we must reduce it again to acceptable levels, which will be in the tens of thousands and not the hundreds of

thousands, so it is no longer an issue in our politics, as it wasn't in the past'.

Cameron's position on the immigration cap can be best understood in terms of what Etienne Balibar, in the book *Race Nation Class: Ambiguous Identities*, has called neo-racism. Neo-racism does away with notions of inherent biological superiority, instead emphasising the 'naturalness' of cultural incompatibility. For Cameron anti-immigrant sentiment can be explained as a result of an excess of immigration, to which his cap responds, and the failures of what he calls 'state multiculturalism'. Here racism is portrayed as a latent anthropological condition, a 'natural' socio-psychological response, waiting to be activated by certain sociological conditions. This naturalisation, not of racial belonging, but of racist conduct, is what justifies the prefix neo in neo-racism. The ruse of this discourse is of course that by claiming to explain (and offering the policy solutions to ward off) the root causes of racism: neo-racism presents itself as a form of anti-racism. To ward off anti-immigrant populism, the argument goes, we must organise a reasonable anti-immigration policy.

Cloaked in the apparently neutral language of numbers, these arguments soothe the otherwise traumatic passage of racist policies into the mainstream. The debate over the value of this or that form of immigration – the arithmetic of border control – tends to preclude questioning of

how immigration comes to be constituted as a problem at all, by whom and for what ends, ultimately obscuring what is really at stake. The truth is that controls, which seek to calibrate flows of migration to the needs of the labour-market, are only one place where capitalist metrics of value seek to determine our lives.

Cameron's coalition government is proposing much more than a series of cuts. By introducing more market mechanisms into the health service, social housing, and education they invite a further and deeper subsumption of society under the logic of capital. If they succeed, we can expect a proliferation of borders, modelled on national borders, which control access to the collective wealth of society. Wherever 'the problem of immigration' gains traction it does so at the expense of the movement against these enclosures.

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Asylum in the Economy of Miserable Efficiencies



A woman seeking asylum is expected to tell all, instantly, to strangers. Any delay in revelation is read as duplicity.

The imperative to tell of horror means giving up the horror of horror. A false economy of mourning, a gift that returns only more horror for those most at risk.

DANIEL MOSHENBERG

In the last half-century, the so-called 'strong passport' so-called democracies have turned the application for asylum into a criminal justice procedure.

The myth of asylum is that asylum is a gift that one State gives to a citizen of another. From the perspective of nation-States, it is the gift of amnesia, the gift of forgetting. The gifting State forgets its obligation to respect the sovereignty of the asylum seeker's State. The asylum seeker's State forgets its obligation to protect the national identity of its citizens.

For the asylum seeker, the mytho-politics of the gift of asylum is irrelevant. For the asylum seeker, asylum is the labour of memory, the labour of speaking and writing and re-living the horror in order to obtain asylum. The injunction to provide evidence in the form of words, pictures and traces on the body is nothing more than the insistence that an asylum seeker must work, must provide labour, in order to obtain legitimate, real asylum.

In order for the asylum seeker to obtain asylum, she must abandon the work of mourning and replace it with the labour of asylum. To do otherwise is to become a failed asylum seeker.

In the United Kingdom, this narrative of horrible success and even worse failure relies on the particularities of the Detained Fast Track Asylum System, or DFT, initiated in 2003. DFT is a system meant to shorten the time of asylum proceedings and,

importantly, to cut the number of asylum claims. It is a model of efficiency.

A woman applies for asylum. In two or three days, her claim is decided. In 2008, 96 percent of claims were refused first time out. The woman then has two days to appeal. The appeal has to be heard within 11 days. While 'appealing', the woman stays in detention at Yarl's Wood. In 2008 91 percent of the appeals were refused.

For women, DFT is lethal. Women's cases are often more complex. Many involve sexual violence and many involve family members and partners. In DFT, that doesn't matter. A woman seeking asylum is expected to tell all, instantly, to strangers. Any delay in revelation is read as duplicity.

Women arrive at Yarl's Wood and often the asylum interview happens the next day. The majority of women have consulted with their duty solicitor only briefly and only over the phone. For women fleeing rape or abuse, there is every reason to not share relevant information in a timely manner. Accessing expert evidence, such as medical reports, is extremely difficult. A UKBA officer conducts the asylum interview and makes the decision. Not a specialist, not a magistrate, not someone trained to work with rape survivors. Just a guy.

That is what efficiency looks like.

And here is how efficiency 'works':

The State declared an economic crisis, the time it took to reject asylum seekers. The source of this crisis? Too many asylum

seekers. A surplus population. Surplus and Crisis, two of the Three Horsemen of Accumulation. The third is Misery. The story of the production of a surplus population is the story of the targeted distribution and intensification of misery, for some in the service of the acceleration and again, intensification of accumulation for others. Welcome to Yarl's Wood.

What exactly is the value that is produced in this economy of miserable efficiencies?

The value is that women don't matter. The value is precisely extracted from the absolute devaluation of the work of survival and the work of mourning. The value is in compressing the time it takes to destroy the worth of the women's labour is destroyed. Once destroyed, it is replaced with non-worth, un-worth, and rising debt. That is misery.

The misery of the economies of efficiency is the misery of the precarious. Precarious in the sense of always at risk, at risk of deportation, at risk of incarceration, at risk of losing everything ... again. Precarious in the sense of poorly paid, insecure, unprotected, unable to support a household and eminently disposable. Precarious as well in that the rate of risk, the rate of indebtedness, continues to accelerate and accumulate with stunning velocity. Precarity means being a citizen of the non-nation of the un-worthy, the surplus population.

In this national economy, women asylum seekers embody the precarious citizens. They are manufactured inside the asylum process as unworthy of citizenship because they have been filled with the non-worth and the un-worth of their labour and of their lives.

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Showdown at the Sausage Factory



TOM GILLESPIE, ANDRE PUSEY,
BERTIE RUSSELL & LEON SEALEY-
HUGGINS

'A schoolmaster is a productive labourer when, in addition to belabouring the heads of the scholars, (s)he works like a horse to enrich the school proprietor. That the latter has laid out his capital in a teaching factory, instead of in a sausage factory, does not alter the relation' / Karl Marx, Capital

As Karl Marx suggested in *Capital Volume 1*, the university is akin to a sausage factory in that it is a site of capitalist production - in this case the production of knowledge. Writing from our experience as four doctoral researchers within the higher education system, we want to add to Marx's analysis and argue that, since *Capital* was first published in 1867, academic research & teaching has been increasingly subordinate to, and reorganized in the interests of, capitalist value. Every stage of the knowledge production process - from the choice of topic, to the allocation of funding, to the criteria against which research is assessed - is becoming increasingly guided by values that guarantee the conditions for the reproduction of capitalism. Over the past two decades, this has taken the form of the introduction of metric systems into the university - under the guise of guaranteeing 'quality' and 'competition' - in order to subject teaching and research to quantitative measurement. This move to quantify the value of academic work is a key strategy in facilitating the marketisation of higher education. The financial crisis has proven the excuse for accelerating the extension and introduction of further systems for the measurement of university labour, not least in the form of 'academic profiling'. We contend that resistance to these metric

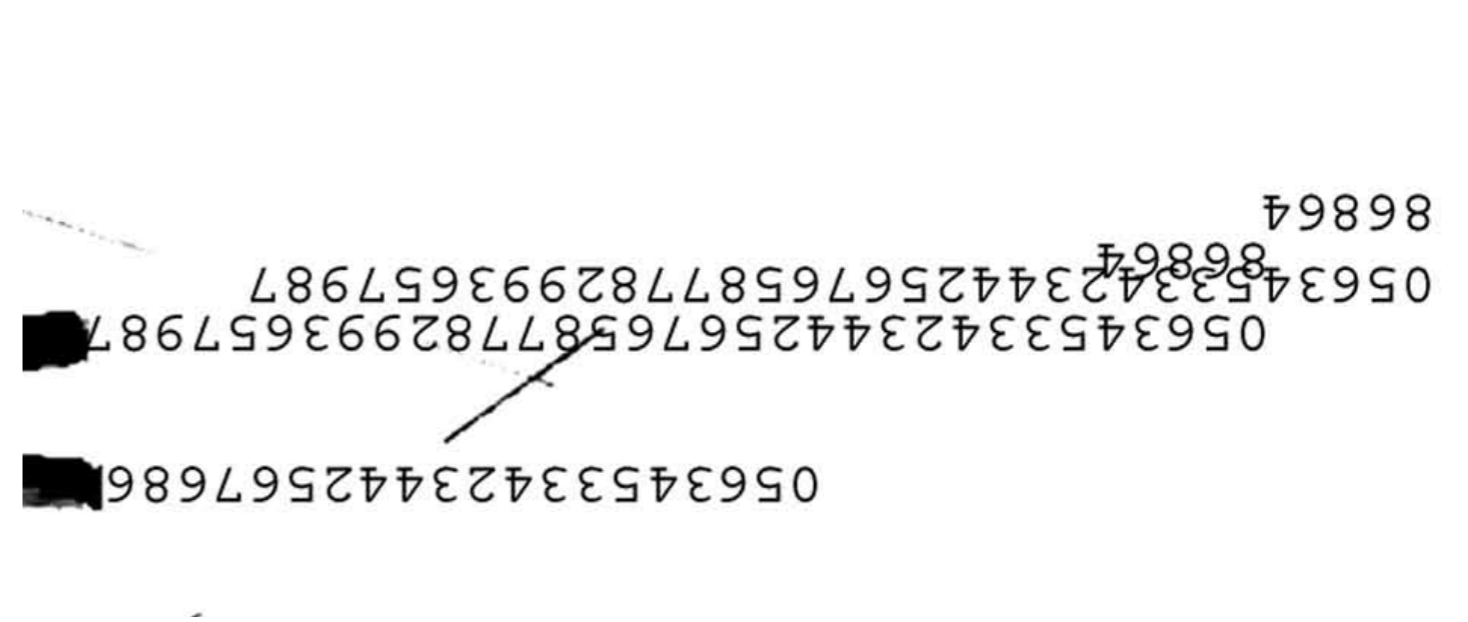
systems must be at the heart of strategies to prevent the marketization of the university.

The incoming 'Research Excellence Framework' (REF) (which is replacing the old Research Assessment Exercise) and the 'National Student Survey' (NSS) are two mechanisms applied to all university research and teaching across the UK. Their purpose is to assess the 'quality' of teaching and research by subjecting it to quantitative measurement, facilitating the direct comparison of qualitatively different research and teaching. Although the exact framework is currently unclear, the REF will almost certainly operate on the basis of grading the research 'quality' of an individual university department according to a sample of four journal articles per academic, with premium grades awarded to articles that are published in the 'top-ranked' journals. The NSS meanwhile assesses universities according to student 'satisfaction' with the university experience. These are two of the primary measurement mechanisms that allow universities to make claims such as being a 'top ten research university', and to stake out management goals of 'becoming a top 50 university worldwide'. As a result of these quantitative assessments, the theory goes, we should be able to compare universities based on the quality of their research and teaching. We believe, however, that this mechanism serves another purpose - it allows teaching and research to be subjected to the disciplinary logic of capitalist value production.

The ability to directly compare the 'performance' of universities is fundamental in creating a competitive market in higher education, as will become ever-more evident with the rising the 'cap' on tuition fees. In terms of teaching, how

could one university justify charging more than another unless it could 'objectively prove' its superiority through a system of direct comparison? In terms of research, all funding is tied to your departments performance in the REF, with only a handful of elite universities set to receive about 80 percent of available funding. The primary reason for your research has therefore become to guarantee access to further funding through performing in the league tables; competition for money has 'necessarily' taken precedence over all other values.

According to the neoliberal ideology of market-fetishism, this competition should lead to an improvement in standards across the board, as academics are forced to work harder and teach 'better' so as to work their way up the league rankings, which yields the rewards of more funding and larger student numbers. In reality, rather than guaranteeing or improving the quality of universities, these quantitative assessments lead to a sort of short-circuiting, as research and teaching becomes geared towards the generation and massaging of 'representations' of quality rather than towards the research or teaching itself. In the context of market discipline, it matters less and less how well you teach or what you research, only that you are able to meet-or-beat your performance indicators. Managers increasingly bully researchers into abandoning any research that isn't guaranteed to provide a short-term influx of REF-able papers; academics are coerced into publishing three or four vacuous papers before the next REF deadline instead of taking their time over one meaningful contribution (leading to a glut of substandard research); and teaching becomes a watered-down exercise in customer service.



Increasingly, as the geographer Noel Castree observed in *Border Geography*, the 'content of (academic) work is (not) valued for itself, but because it can be abstracted into the contentless currency that serves as the measure of academic value in Britain today'. Engagements with research subjects that should be based on social utility and desire become confused with the disciplinary compulsion to secure one's livelihood by meeting externally imposed quantitative targets. Rather than a creative activity over which the producer enjoys intellectual autonomy, academic work comes to resemble all other work under capitalism (including that carried out in a sausage factory), assuming the form of abstract labour. By 'abstract labour' we mean an activity that is performed not primarily for its specific content - in this case the outcomes of teaching or research - but for its ability to be exchanged for a wage. When viewing the world from the perspective of 'abstract labour', one becomes increasingly indifferent to the specific content of the productive act itself, and increasingly concerned with for how much one is able to 'exchange' the results of production. As research and teaching becomes increasingly perceived from the perspective of abstract labour, the compulsion to hit abstract targets takes precedence over the compulsion to produce and share ideas that are potentially world changing. This has the disciplinary effect of closing down the university's potential as a space for radical and transformative thought.

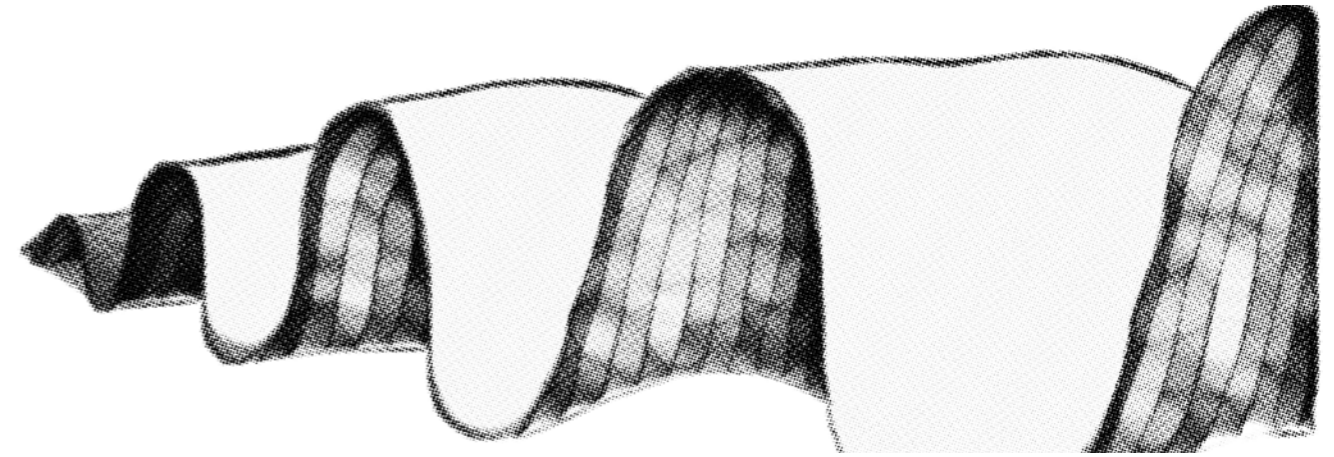
Whilst the REF and NSS are central to the abstraction and qualitative devaluation of research and teaching, a series of other 'metric' systems are being introduced that will have similar effects. Most frighteningly, we are beginning to see the formalization of 'academic profiling', creating a database for

the quantitative comparison of individual staff. This is nothing short of the creation of 'academic Top Trumps', as each university worker can be given a score out of 100 based on their 'teaching capacities', 'admin efficiency', and 'research production speed'. The 'best' universities can afford to buy all the highest scoring cards, whilst it is the responsibility of the underpaid and overworked academic to constantly strive to improve their Top Trump score. We work harder, faster, and longer - with no punch card to tell us when we are clocked in - in an attempt to 'trump' each other's stats, all on the false premise that we will one day be able to teach or research something that actually matters. Meanwhile, there is a complete collapse in any form of solidarity or collaborative research, as everyone feels obliged to prioritise their own statistics over any form of collective pursuit. The only collaborative projects that occur are those in which you wager on your ability to exploit the outcomes of the project more efficiently than your colleagues. Meanwhile, life gets tougher for all of us.

What scope is there for knowledge workers to resist the imposition of these metric systems? Situated, as we are, in the contemporary academy it is depressing that we see all too limited evidence of organised, collective activity to resist the restructuring of education according to the logic of capital. What's more, there is all too much complicity with the implementation of neoliberal technologies of measure such as the REF and the NSS, under some misled belief that it either improves the quality of teaching and research, or that you are in some way getting a 'better deal' as a result. Sadly, the focus of many self-styled 'radical academics' is often far removed from the ongoing struggles and conflicts within their own workplaces.

Any effective struggle over the academy, whether it be over working conditions, pay, the quality of teaching and research, or student fees, must necessarily identify these metric systems as fundamental in the neoliberal transformation of the university. It is untenable for us to fight against cuts when done so within the framework of these supposedly 'objective and fair' metric systems; political aspirations are rendered utopian, and acts of injustice are rendered unfortunate but necessary in the face of the 'objective reality' of our situation. What will be perhaps most rewarding in finally abolishing these metric systems will be our ability to engage with one another as humans again, rather than as cold, calculating and competitive machines. It is time for us to author a different future for the university; to do so means affirming our collective strength and consciousness.

The March that was



In the following section, we asked several contributors to reflect upon a month of movement. March saw actions at universities continue, resistance erupt on the streets and London play host to one of the largest demonstrations in over a decade. What follows are reports of struggles and also excerpts discussing the March 26th demonstration, see The Paper online for the full articles: www.wearethepaper.org.

A Goldsmiths Occupation

ANONYMOUS

21 March - the eve of the first day of stop work by the University College Union (UCU), Goldsmiths students took a step that would demonstrate concrete solidarity and open up the possibility of new avenues of resistance. We occupied the opulent headquarters of Goldsmiths Senior Management Team at Deptford Town Hall (DTH). This move, decided upon by a grassroots meeting of students just minutes before the action, was calculated to erect new and more powerful picket lines in one of the centres of power of the university. We understood perfectly, given the cowardly position that the national student leadership took in the face a government onslaught, the difficulties our lecturers face in trying to combat the degenerate culture that passes for trade union leadership these days. We remained in occupation until the morning of 26 March and collectively left DHT to join the south London feeder march.

Throughout the strike days, it was decided by those occupying the building that no work would take place in DTH. Rather, delegations of students were sent to help staff the official UCU picket lines. Other students stormed scab lectures, highlighting the dangers of disunity when the entire education system is under threat. On non-strike days it was decided that lecturers would be invited to re-locate their classes to the occupied DTH: an offer that was enthusiastically taken up by many lecturers and students alike. Furthermore, this demonstrated a qualitative change in how we were to imagine and confront education in this period of militancy and action.

Lectures were opened up and new lines of enquiry pursued. DTH became a hub where the boundaries between education, democratic engagement and life broke down, where new bonds of solidarity were created. And it is precisely the emergence of these new bonds of solidarity that we need to foster in order to fight and win.

Protest Heralds New Age

(excerpt)

March 26th saw one hundred billion people descend upon London to protest the cuts.

ADAM HUTCHINGS

...The party was over, the protest an overwhelming success. But on the morning of the 27th David Cameron was back on TV. Perplexing some, he congratulated the protest as a "splendid display of democracy". Moreover, so he said, it was a great day for Britain's economy, for even though the clean-up operation would be so large it would increase the deficit by twenty times, private companies are lining up to take on the burden.

With taxes going up to ensure prosperity for these companies, the government are now compelled to sell everything. The Royal Family are being sold to the Norwegian Royal Family, the BBC to Rupert Murdoch's News Corporation, the roads to TopGear (now a part of News Corp.), and all listed buildings to be sold to Tesco who plan to open 374,081 new stores. As for the Government itself, it is to be divided between G4S, Capita and Serco, and renamed GovernmentCorp...

A day in three parts

(excerpt)

A reflection in three acts on March 26th. Act one: the march, act two: the occupation, act three: the black bloc.

NIC BEURET

...The two main co-conspiratorial bodies on the day - UKUncut and black bloc - both failed to make something more - more disobedient, more radical, more disruptive - out of the day. UKUncut because of their organisational and political limits and the black bloc because of their separatism and misjudged theatre of militancy.

...March 26th saw over half a million people take to the streets of London to protest against the latest regime of austerity, cuts and social reorganisation. This multitude of bodies had no one single (or simple) demand. Their dissent flowed through select channels on the day; three well worn acts of an old play, one that looked tired and failed to evoke much feeling from the audience or the actors on the streets. What comes next is the pressing question, but we need to first look at why the play failed to resonate. What happened on the 26th and why did it leave so many with such an empty feeling?

...The terrain of the 26th was marked out by two different forms of protest that both led back to existing political forms of expression, both aimed at reform and both ultimately correlated to a reduced constituency. What we saw was a mass of bodies from a range of networks, organisations, groups and tendencies take part in these two spaces. While the potential existed within this disparate multitude to go beyond the limits of the TUC march and the UKUncut spectacular occupation, on the day this did not manifest itself. Hope lies with some of the actions and forms that emerged before the 26th - such as the university occupations, the local anti-cuts actions and town hall 'riots', the various service actions and campaigns around childcare and the NHS. This hope requires that people quickly recover from the fact that while most organisations were

building for the TUC march or actions on the 26th, few had any plans for what comes next. Despite a vast amount of the radical left proclaiming otherwise, the latest neo-liberal restructuring of our lives is not a rerun of the Poll Tax. It is in fact completely different. Our parallel is not with the Poll Tax but with the Structural Adjustment Programs that have until 2008 taken place in the global South. We need to look to the forms of resistance in South Africa, Mexico, Argentina and elsewhere, and not to the much-reified Poll Tax resistance and riot.

...We haven't really begun to explore what militancy could mean - we don't really know what is possible anymore. We need to move out of our old roles and habits, and find new ways to inspire resistance and revolt and make both endure. The day could have been, and should have been, a space to explore what this could be. But we lack, as a radical left, the places for these conversations and seductions to happen. After the 26th it's become painfully clear that we need forms of organisation to carry this militancy further. If militant organisation has any meaning, it is in this - to inspire revolt and make it endure beyond the moment of insurrection and riot.

Black is... Black ain't

(excerpt)

ANONYMOUS

Blackness is testament to the fact that objects can and do resist / Fred Moten, In the Break: The Aesthetics of the Black Radical Tradition

...After March 26th the term 'Black bloc' became part of the lexicon of the mainstream media. Black bloc was turned into a convenient catch-all term. The fact that Black bloc tactics have generated a great deal of analysis is notable. Whether it is in the form of hysteria from a frame-locked media or an unnerved activist left, Black bloc seem to present a problem. This fixation on the 'problem' of Black bloc is a sign that such tactics are worth pursuing. These tactics need to be pushed further,

if not to undermine the press narrative of legitimate/illegitimate protest, then to force an activist left to address the question of what it is we need to do to win. Or rather, to consider what 'winning' constitutes. What is it we want and how do we go about forming forceful enough counter-narratives to achieve these aims? Black bloc tactics make us address, once again, the forms of protest and resistance. What levels of disruption are needed to further disturb, scramble and oppose the entry of neo-liberal practices into everyday life? Is there a difference between sabotage and opposition? The question of how to proceed is related to the tactics Black bloc are currently using which renders them such a 'problem'.

...Blackness has been part of the everyday in our cities for some time. There are those who live under its conditions and have been pathologised as a result. It is just that we have been deceived into thinking the conditions of political Blackness are no longer relevant: 'That battle has been fought, it's over and done with.' It has taken a while, but for some of us the violence of capital is now moving into our everyday. There is an urgent need to act. Fight back needs to transform more readily from chant to action. To defend ourselves we need to put Blackness to further use as a series of incomprehensible strategies. Black bloc may have set out the conditions of future action.

The UCU Strike

LAURA SCHWARTZ

In March this year university lecturers went on strike against the reform of their pension scheme which included forcing employees to pay more while their employers pay less, and ending the final salary scheme for anyone new to the workforce.

Picket lines went up in every university across Britain totalling five strike days. Pensions are now political. Pension reform is an attempt to create divisions between baby boomers and those of us under 35, erasing the memory and sense of entitlement

to something as basic as the right to retire without fear of poverty. Many students supported the strike, and at Goldsmiths College, University of London they took over management's offices for 4 days - an interesting tactic of using an occupation to enforce a picket line.

What has often been passed over, however, is the sexist nature of these pension cuts. The proposed changes discriminate especially against any employee whose wishes to take a career break or to return to work part-time. These are most likely to be people with childcare responsibilities, who in turn are statistically most likely to be women. The pension reforms represent not only a neoliberal but also a socially conservative agenda: further limiting any choice we might have about how to combine work with family life. They will also serve to reinforce the nuclear family, deterring fathers or non-biological family members from taking an equal part in childcare.

Less than one hundred years ago women were still fighting to study at universities on an equal basis with men. Until the Second World War, female lecturers at many universities were required to resign their posts on marriage. It is ironic (if only it were not so predictable) that, just at the moment in which women have begun to enter a relatively prestigious profession in near-equal numbers to men, that profession becomes devalued and degraded. Academia today is still a comparatively welcoming space for feminists: but right now our feminism needs to extend beyond the words we write in books to struggling in our own workplaces against retrograde practices which divide and exploit in highly gendered ways.

Tower Hamlets' School Workers' Strike Against Cuts to Central Services

RACHEL DRUMMOND

Despite the fact that the cuts are not hitting workers in specific schools yet, enough people came out to partially or entirely close every school in the borough. After picket lines were held, a few hundred people met at Weavers Fields and got ready to march. I'd walked with my schools around the Isle of Dogs, kids were on our megaphone all the way, other kids leaned out of windows to cheer us, cars beeped and we got escorted off the premises of Canary Wharf to one of my kids (seemingly liberated from her fairly severe speech and language difficulties) leading a chant of 'you've got loads of money'. We were en route to support workers at Cyril Jackson School where the Head had been leading a campaign of intimidation against strikers; we missed CJ but we met the workers of Around Poplar Children's Centre holding a formidable picket line. This was one of many highlights as we all cheered in riotous solidarity; a year 3 child standing in front of the balloon covered gates of our school and with arms crossed telling our headteacher she wasn't getting in was another.

As the march went off, our numbers suddenly swelled. Before we knew it, about

2000 people had taken to the streets, many of whom had never struck or demonstrated before. Suddenly the least likely staffroom inhabitants were running off to be stewards, fighting over who was going to carry the union banners, or complaining about the brief pause in otherwise vociferous chanting. The demonstration, full of school bands and workers with their kids marching as service users as well as providers, felt massive, was incredibly loud and lively and got loads of public support. Another of my kids who appeared out of nowhere, clutched my hand and said in an awestruck whisper 'I've never seen anything like it.'

Problematically the closing rally was held at the London Muslim Centre, attached to East London Mosque. Myself and Jean had complained about this to the organising committee, and I realised just how right we were when one of my colleagues who had refused to cross the picket line that morning, said she wasn't able to go any further on the march because it was 'getting too local' - not too local for her to be seen wielding a placard and shouting anti-cuts slogans, but too local to be seen uncovered and in skinny jeans as a Bengali woman near a Islamic building.

Smiley Culture

The death of Smiley Culture when Police raided his home on Tuesday 15th of March is a tragedy to outrage and galvanise the Black community and their friends. Two big events so far and another one planned for May 7 mean this call for justice cannot be swept away with the usual Po-lies Con-plain-ts self-investigation committee.

Miles Franklin of the IPCC spoke at the Smiley Culture event at Lambeth Town Hall on 24th March and said the investigation would be 'sophisticated'. He was greeted with the call of 'Lie Detector' from the floor. As the Youth for Smiley Culture flyer rightly notes, the Lambeth event 'was historic and

assertive in its atmosphere and peoples demands for justice after yet another death in police custody'.

The Rally and March to Scotland Yard on April 16 was attended by thousands, and brought a positive militant message of anger at the police and support for the family of Smiley and others killed by Police. The songs of Smiley resonated in chants - 'Police Officer no give me producer' re-tooled as 'Murderers' - as the rally marched through the city and the narrow streets to surround the hated Yard. The calls for Justice, for the four cops to be brought to book, for there to be a fully independent and public inquiry, not another cover up or half-baked public relations scheme, were strong on the rally.

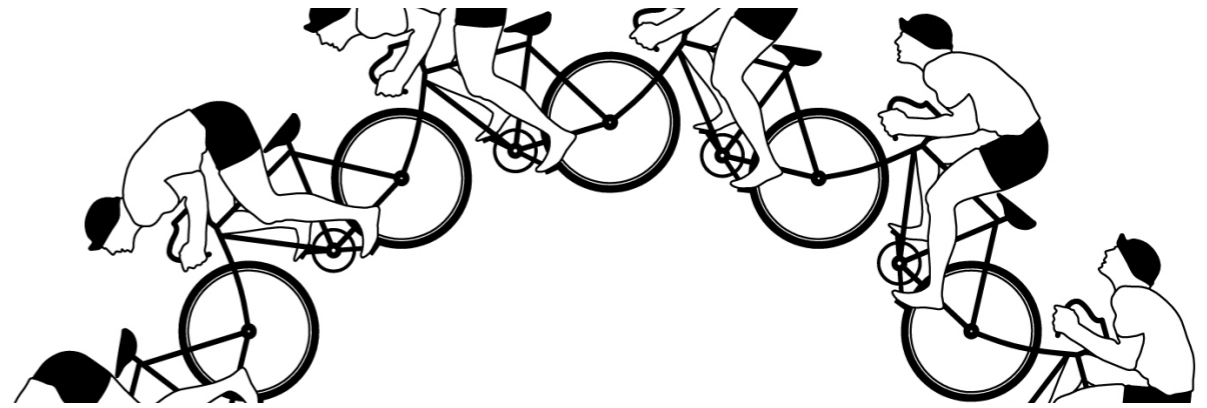
The rally consisted of a top-table speaker panel of men in suits - including Sewotka. There was lots of fighting talk from the bureaucracy and a grovelling thank you to the mosque who were being paid to provide a venue for us. We'd managed to hold on to hundreds of people - standing room only - and the atmosphere was charged; there was lots of chanting demanding a general strike, a big vote in favour of combined public sector union action over pensions and I hope a sense that we need to hold our tub-thumping 'leaders' to account and demand some action.

I think everyone was surprised at how big we were, and how good it felt to be taking action together. Obviously a one day strike is going to win nothing, but this was a necessary experience for us I think. It gave us practise at organising, arguing, mobilising and demonstrating and was a massive confidence boost to lots of us who are feeling our way for the first time with this stuff. Perhaps most importantly it allowed us to have solidarity with workers of different unions, in different schools, with parents and children - in short our community and opportunities to build this solidarity are in themselves vital if we are going to be able to go on to fight a battle with some chance of winning.

The event in May seeks to bring this issue to our youth through film, debate and music. At The Venue ULU, Malet Street London on May 7th, there will be Smiley videos followed by a panel debate with Merlin Emmanuel (nephew of Smiley Culture), Lee Jasper, Dr Lez Henry, Isis Amlak, chaired by Sukant Chandan (Sons of Malcolm). A musical selection from Azala, Duurty Goodz and others will round off the night. The event is geared especially towards students from FE colleges and youth groups from around the capital and is billed as a purely positive event expressing the unity and assertiveness of our demands for justice.

Organised by: Sons of Malcolm and Friends.
<http://sonsofmalcolm.com/>

Time Out for Scheherazade



Reflecting on The Paper as a very serious play at theatre; the political as a theatrical serious playing at paper, and 1001 stories to tell, in pictures.

JOHN HUTNYK

As bombs still rain down on Libya, with cockpit-cam night video peep-show footage of tanks being destroyed to preserve the No-Fly Zone on our 24-hour news (since tanks might fly?), we should probably have a discussion about images. David Cameron has evoked that old 'line in the sand' crusader cliché, and the TUC and NUS have worried about 'hijacks' and hi-jinx stealing their place on the day (N10, M26). But, a hijack means crashing a plane into the Twin Towers, not smashing a window - though both can be media events as well. Hijacking the UN and NATO to invade entire countries on pretence is of a different order of obfuscation - and the comic image of a President in combat gear reading stories to children does not quite register. On our part, we have had debates about images in the movement and in The Paper. Our discussion should and has extended to file images in other papers and media, and the convoluted political uses on several sides (and yes, we have been taking sides). So, what should we say about the image of images, what is the story with pictures worth a thousand words, what do we see when we open the photoshop, diorama, kaleidoscope of viewing to question?

The Millbank boot-window-demonstrator assemblage was reproduced many times. I particularly like the aesthetic, though of course it is a little bit pantomime. I also like to tell the story of watching the live BBC coverage of the December 9 demonstration as 'anarchists' stormed The Treasury. Early in the evening my two-year-old son was also watching when the police roughly handled a protester dressed as Santa Claus and bundled him aside. My son was shouting at the telly: 'time out Santa, time out!', having learnt at nursery that a cool-down period is necessary after a dispute over Lego blocks or whatever. With the kettle in place, the BBC camera then showed a police liaison constable directing photographers away

from the action with the words: 'Have you got the pictures you want? Then move along...' Showing Santa storming The Treasury in a recession was not an ideal front page however, and so instead about a half hour later the sticking of the Prince's ride in Regent Street was staged to grab the headlines.

The pantomime quality of such striking imagery is well known, and of course, in The Paper we have sought images with a punctum, or with irony, poignancy and politics. We have debated whether images of 'protesters in Tahrir' were problematic because the said protesters did not speak (photogenic credibility?), were possibly put in danger (military reprisals?), were wearing headscarves (exotica?), or were there as examples of revolt that we wished we had here (revolutionary tourism?). I think on the whole our discussions have moved us towards a more nuanced appreciation of images, and from the start we have included line drawings, illustrations, cartoons and art. My favourite is itself a claim for credibility, exotic and touristic all at the same time - the image of the boot that appears above the 'Bosom of Fear' article in the pink issue. This boot picks up - fashion editors love this kind of attention to accessories - an echo of the line drawings and photos of slippers in the issue that has images from Tahrir. That works for me.

Less successful were the two facing pages with pictures of Obama/Qaddafi and Mubarak/Qaddafi. These were overly literal and would only have 'worked' if the whole issue had been a relentless compilation of all the images of other Western leaders that had wined and dined with the Lion of Libya. We have discussed imagery that tells a story, but we also want multiple strands of narrative and subtlety in the pictures. The projection of scenes that complicate and deepen analysis, that step away from simple realism, that offer a provocative or contrary take on the expected, images that debate each other, that suggest reverie and

thinking, or even that confuse, if they do so with intent. The Paper need not always adopt the one plus one platitudes of the commercial press. We can take inspiration from homemade placards from the rallies and the innovations of high art photography (Mapplethorpe and Cartier-Bresson as our gods) and tamper with each. Barbara Kruger could design a great issue, with text over picture and a wry cunning. We have had people send in their drawings, we have cultivated our own cartooning skills - and a cartoon certainly speaks in different ways in the press, there is something about the border around a cartoon that both enables anything to be said and disarms it as merely a joke. We have mostly avoided borders (of course, borders are rules).

We will multiply images, and always take sides, even with ambiguity.

The pantomime scene of marauding anarchists shopping at Fortnum&Mason which terrorized the nation (ahem) is just as much a shibboleth as the multiple images of Saddam that were presented in the lead up to the Iraq war (the playing cards) or the mysteries of the taped voice of Osama bin Laden beamed in via smuggled cassette from the caves of Afghanistan. These folds in the ideological compendium are the ones that pantomime must decode for children. Scheherazade is the ur-story here, telling fables of Ali Baba, Sinbad and Aladdin over and over, so as ultimately to disarm the power of the despot Shahryar. Only now such a figure is trapped, detained and deported, she is forced to wear an orange jump suit and tell her tale to interrogators in Guantanamo. Perhaps we can imagine her contributing to The Paper as well. Undoing the imagery of death with joyous picture narrative and creative interpretation. Fearless exposure of truth to power and spectacular adventures for all.

DIY GUIDE No. 4

VISA MARRIAGE GUIDE

Marriage is sacred. Marriage is all about love matches. Oh, and money. Also politics, and property. And reproduction, don't forget reproduction. And ideology. But mostly love. Here is a guide to making sure your lovely papers are in order.

0: Be rich (or start saving)

This revenue-generating exercise will cost well in excess of £3500 and will require multiple days off work while you flagellate yourself with forms and get bludgeoned by bureaucrats.

1: Find Mr/Mrs Right

The state likes neat couplings of birth certificate Ms and Fs. That said, MM and FF couples go through the same official process (but be prepared for unofficial grief). Previous marriages, particularly with visas involved, will also arouse the trolls. Your dream passport-holder will be: single (if not your current partner); trustworthy (as you will need to swap personal financial details); and living in the same vicinity as you for three years. If you ain't no chump, holla: "We wanna pre-nup! We wanna pre-nup!" Even if both parties are broke as fuck, it is important that finances are legally separated. The Home Office needn't know about any of your clauses, such as "I will never ask you to stop hooking/drinking..." It will make you both feel more secure.

2: Ask permission (until 9 May 2011)

EU Human Rights Law has intervened and made a remedial order against this requirement, so after 9 May, you will no longer need to gain permission from the Home Office to get married. The down side of this is of course that the government is trying to devise new schemes to expose 'sham marriages' (not those acceptable shams that exist for the reproduction of labour, but those that enable free movement of people). Keep an eye on updates.

3: Get to the UK on a visa (tourist visa doesn't count)

If you don't already have a visa (education, employment, tier 1, ancestry) then you will have to get an engagement visa. The other option is to get married outside the UK (a Vegas 'Elvis wedding' is a good way to allay suspicious minds and avoid being returned to sender). If you do want to get married under the butcher's apron (Union Jack) and are without a visa, then an engagement visa is your only option. One downside is that you'll have to go back to the place you're trying to leave (your home country). It is important to note that you may not be able to get a visa if you don't have good spoken English. If you're worried about this - and it is blatant jingoism since the English abroad hardly ever learn the local lingo - it may be better to get the ceremonial package part done outside the UK.

4: Planning

Before the ceremony it's important to consider the following:

1. Who is in the know and who is not? Not all people will be understanding of your decision to marry for a visa: some people believe that marriage is a sacred institution, and you having a good reason for your wedding may throw into crisis their patriarchal pantomime. On the other hand, the whole process takes three long years, and being open from the start can avoid messiness later.
2. Pictures, and other proof of relationship. Inventing your relationship is the fun part. Start taking 'cool shots' and writing kinky letters.
3. Financial ties. Set up shared household bills and a joint bank account. Pay for everything to do with the visa process from the joint account, as well as general purchases, such as your new BDSM equipment (see April's DIY Guide).

5: The Ceremony

It's probably best to keep it out of any religious institution. Aside from the creepy imagery, churches often require meetings and formalities before the wedding. Dress for the occasion, and have your story straight:

How did she/he propose? Why don't you have nice rings to exchange? When and where is your honeymoon?

Check if you can bring your own music, so as to avoid the instrumental version of Robbie Williams' 'Angels'.

6: Apply for a marriage visa (lasts for 62 years)

A few things to include, which aren't clear on the UKBA website:

1. Pictures of your relationship: not just of the two of you, but with friends or, even better, family.
2. A letter from a friend or family member gushing about your happy relationship.
3. Proof of any employment you might have. It looks good to say that you have things lined up.
4. Any joint statements, bank accounts, etc. that you may have created.
5. Have a native speaker proof read the application: the mostly monosyllabic, often mono-lingual, UKBA requires that you speak English in order to move here.

7: Life in the UK

You will have to buy a book called 'Life in the United Kingdom: A journey to Citizenship', and memorise a whole lot of pointless shit that no one from Britain knows anyway, such as 'In what year did Nick Griffin eat his way out of the sewer?' After that you can go on to apply for your 'Indefinite leave to remain', and then...

With the power vested in all of us, we now pronounce you, Migrant and Citizenship!

