

# THE PAPER

EDITION MINUS 1  
February 2010



## THE RIOT ACT HAS BEEN READ

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## EDITORIAL

We've felt it in the streets, in occupations, in walkouts, teach-ins and at Top Shop. In the assemblies, conferences and meetings - every time we get together we discover that it's broader than we thought. We are in the midst of the most exciting student movement in Britain for decades. In the past months there's been a joyous explosion of organising and creativity against the ConDem's plans for austerity. And not just against the cuts to education, but increasingly for envisioning and building better ways of teaching, learning and creating knowledge. Undergraduates, education workers, school and college students - people from many different areas - have mobilised and been energised and now we need to establish better channels of communication and start learning from each other.

Producing a newspaper is a strategic move in developing this kind of solidarity. With The Paper we want to build a space to reflect on, critique and learn from the frantic and inspiring actions we are all involved in; to host a meeting place in print for radical, considered analysis and commentary on tactics and strategy. We need to develop a sense of ourselves as a movement: a collective imaginary. Thus we need to know who we are, where we are, what we're fighting for, what holds us together and what keeps us apart.

Underlying the spirit of The Paper is also a commitment to provoke debate and self-reflection. To broaden the movement's vision and enable a re-imagining of the role

and practice of education in our society. This we can only do by positioning ourselves not simply in the student movement, but also in the wider struggles that are emerging daily against the government's brutality.

The Paper as an object is strategic: not only will it provide an important archive and record for struggle, but through its distribution, it can strengthen networks. Instead of living in the often anonymous, brief and fragmented discussions that dominate the web, The Paper aims to foster an accountable forum for debate, and to engage a wider range of participants. In providing a space for more sustained and in-depth analysis, The Paper recognises that a great deal is at stake in this struggle - that we need to develop analyses and collective strategies that go beyond the immediate fight against cuts. By voicing, analysing and imagining pasts, presents and futures different to those that are told or sold to us, The Paper can provoke and inspire us to act in the now, transforming our present.

So here is edition minus 1 of The Paper. Minus 1 because it is framed by questions for you: What would a paper for and by the movement look like? Is it possible to create a paper that school students and university lecturers, ESOL learners and library workers all feel belongs to them? Can we create a forum for genuine engagement across networks, occupations, and autonomous projects? This edition was produced by an ad-hoc editorial board of activists, students, troublemakers and artists from a broad radical political base. Take it as a message in a bottle to existing networks

## Letters

*Various letters The Paper received and discussions that people started in response to the call for a first editorial meeting.*

The Paper is an interesting idea, but not without problems in my view. What is the basis for this paper, for example? Has it come out of a defined group or movement, like being agreed upon at a London Student Assembly (or produced by a political group with a certain aim)? There are a lot of papers around produced by various groups, some think these papers are vital, others are an anachronistic blast from the past.

From your email I take it that this will be an intellectual paper for the movement rather than one aimed at the public/students generally. Is that right? I think that we should have a serious discussion about the need for an in-movement paper, what people want to do web wise, how will it be paid for, how distributed etc. There are a lot of people with blogs, and there is a kind of free-for-all out there of ideas, and responses to them already. I also feel that more academic debate is very important, but it must be relevant and immediate to our struggle (as a lot I have read online has not been, and in fact would bamboozle and

put people off activism). Perhaps a paper acting as a monthly journal would be a good idea, otherwise I think a more regular paper should also include news articles, not just news comment.

I think it will take a lot of effort to produce a paper regularly (is it to be free?). I am not saying it is impossible. I do think more writings about the movement and how to work better is a good thing, however these are disseminated.

*Sean Rillo Raczka  
Birbeck SU chair, Open Birkbeck*

I share some of Sean's concerns and these should be clarified in more detail and revisited at Monday's meeting. I know that at LSE many in the occupation were interested in a proper forum for larger debates and discussion. I don't think that there is an independent blog/paper/etc that is not tied to specific group/parties to which people feel they can contribute. It is encouraging that The Paper will be free, and I don't know what the Centre for Ethics and Politics is exactly, but if the funding is truly without strings, this makes the possibilities of this project really exciting.

*Ashok Kumar  
LSE sabbatical, LSE occupation, EAN NEC*

and projects, co-ordinating committees and aroused political consciences: a call out for your contributions. The Paper is yours to seize, use and fertilise.

## Contact us

**Email:** emailthepaper@gmail.com

Send your letters to the editorial collective, event listings, drawings, reports, articles, photos and other bits and pieces for the next edition: **by February 15th**. We have a free subscribers postal service, so to receive the next edition email your contact details. We have regular editorial collective meetings and are always looking for writers, designers, proofreaders, editors, artists and energetic folk to get involved.

## Contributors

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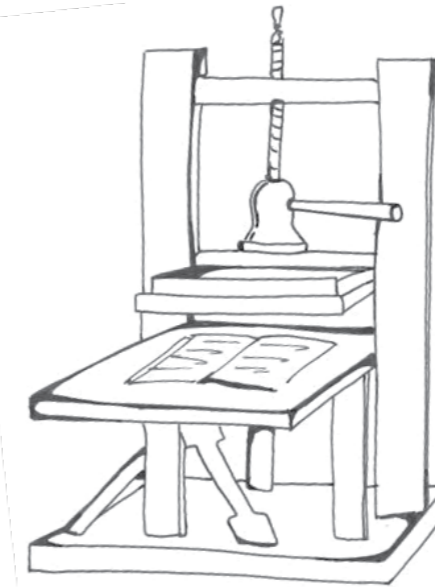
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We welcome The Paper- a good initiative in these difficult yet exciting times. Over a period of thirty or forty years, the university student has been reduced in circumstances and privilege so as to now be quite a bit closer to the proletarianized worker, themselves increasingly digitized as precarious labour, data input, call centre workers or shopping till operators. This trajectory of concurrence is occurring while at the upper echelons an opposite pattern ensures the non-convergence of previously highly-privileged professionals with the wealthy and rich in business. Indeed, the Professors look set to become little more than petty bourgeois shopkeepers, and their departments more like merchandise stores, while University heads, and no doubt in other service sectors the upper managements as well, become robber barons paid six figure sums with benefits. We are not talking social class here, since the quality of the wine is still a marker, but we are talking class formation nonetheless. A glass has been raised to your success. Lal Salaam.

*Theolonius Wiesengrund  
University for Strategic Optimism*

## How To Make A Collective Newspaper The Pedagogy\* of Working Otherwise



In this edition of The Paper we ask ourselves: what are the lessons and what is to be learned from making a collective newspaper?

As many of us have experienced in these last months, the classroom is only one of many sites of learning. Education does not only happen in places zoned for it but in the very ways we organise ourselves for change.

There are many issues facing the education movement today. In the urgency of the moment sometimes we forget to talk about what is at the very heart of our struggle, that is, **what kind of education are we fighting for?** This paper allows us to explore what we want: what pedagogies, what processes of learning and teaching we would like to transform; what relations between students and educators we desire; upon what histories of radical education can we draw, and what world our education efforts support.

### Instructions

The Paper, a collection of 12-16 pages of compositions of various voices of participants in the struggles against austerity in education and beyond, printed on A3 sheets with a Risograph, folded in half, usually appears monthly.

#### 1. Writing from experience

While much of what we do in school and university starts from the knowledge and analysis formed by others, the making of a paper allows us to draw from the questions, problems and joys that we produce in common struggle. Our experiences, stories and confusions are points of departure from which we look to others: other texts, times and parts of the world for inspiration.

#### 2. Producing an analysis for change

Where the analysis of the classroom is similarly focused on the production of abstract assignments for grades, just as the research of teachers is oriented towards scores on government assessments and the production of university brands, The Paper can be a place for analysis. Issues might be not only the recording of collective discussion and reflection, but also the basis for moving it forward. Dialogue in its production will be important and time will need to be taken for this. In undertaking such a process, The Paper becomes a planning tool for future action, intricately connected to its actors, rather than the space for professions of strategies disengaged from doing. The reason to read and write here is not simply to receive a qualification or to progress one's career but to reflect upon a common struggle, generously and critically.

#### 3. Thinking and doing together

While demonstrating at Trafalgar Square during one of our many recent mobilisations, a passer by shouted at us: "Get a job". They were making a false though common division between those who study and those who work. In spite of the fact that most students work and that many workers continue to study, many of the regressive education reforms echo this polarised perspective: that education should be practical, useful and oriented towards producing good workers (even in the face of mass unemployment). This false separation between work and thought enforces an active process of forgetting

the many theories and practices of radical education that have connected intellectual and manual activity. It also produces divisions between people along class lines. This division is replicated within structures of education itself: poorer students are trained to do manual labour (called work), middle and upper class students to have careers (sold to them as thinking or creativity and not labour). Vocational training is pitted against thought. Can a newspaper be a way of marking our refusal of this division, of replicating and recording the way the education struggle brings people from different classes, ages and backgrounds together?

#### 4. Making together: paying attention to the kinds of relationships we make in a collective production

It would be easy to make a place for a few people to control the analysis of the movement, for people to make or elevate academic careers, to become authors or leaders. What has been incredible so far in this struggle has been the many people, voices and organisational forms that have taken place. Thinking about the structures of collaborative production: rotating editorial teams, diffused and collective authorship, fake names and having fun, are all forms of learning how to be otherwise. The pedagogy of The Paper is in its production. Also, the dissemination process has to have as its goal the alteration of traditional hierarchies of privilege of those working both within and outside of the education frame. Could those networks that produce, but also that pass the paper around, develop their own processes for collective discussion around its contents?

#### 5. Connecting the production of language to the production of an object in the world

While we have many blogs and some amazing online platforms for connecting our work, making and seeing something that we can hold, keep and put on our walls helps to construct a collective imaginary of our movement. Not imaginary in the sense of non-existent, but in the sense of something that helps us to understand and map the processes we are in. The deadlines and discussions attached to collective production create a sense of urgency and necessity that is different in impact to sending out an email or posting to a blog - often solitary activities experienced by the body in a chair.

\* *pedagogy* | *peda gäje*; - *goje* | *noun (pl. -gies)*  
- *the method and practice of learning and educating*



## Inside and Outside the Kettle

SASKIA FISCHER

There are many ways to read and feel the kettle. The thing is to climb out of it. Slippery as its walls may be, find a grip, crack a hole, let the rage pour out and the rest of you with it. Make that rage a thing you can examine, learn from. Lest it swallow you, your feelings half chewed. Then take a look around outside, talk with your friends and remember the energy and ideas that carried you into its belly, courtesy of the beast. Get back to talking, planning and organising a movement.

What does the rage do? Well, hopefully it radicalises, brings into sharp focus the lines.

Because it does make clear, yes, even without bullets, that there is risk. If not the violence, loud and open, of baton cracking skull, then intimidation, retribution. After dark a group of us were divided from the rest and marched onto Westminster Bridge. There we were held in a dense, tense mass till they felt we'd got their meaning. In that cage a we is born, reinforced. And a them.

But it can also divide, this rage.

There is the rage of the self-righteous: "we just came here to protest, we've done nothing wrong and it makes no sense, it's not reasonable to keep us here like this". And within the zone, some were also raging as much against the fire crackering, window smashing youth as at the police. They will never come back. Or not?

The state is not reasonable, it doesn't give a shit, it will blithely use force where it sees fit.

The language of the kettle is force. Inside it, drops of boiling rage fly through windows, telephone boxes, eventually the Treasury. For most of those swimming in it, it sucks and spits out our energy over long cold hours, making sure we never have the cheek again. It's boring, frustrating, maddening. And for those outside watching, it is a spectacular, government-run sport. It hands the police control over what is supposed to be a manifestation of popular, not police, will. Big media comply. Vultures, they hover at the edge of the action, their flashes

light every small destruction. They choose to ignore the thousand or two late night prisoners on the bridge. In the managed demonstration, we are all guilty, the crime being association.

Only media have passes to move in and out through these borders. Inside, police are invisible, though busy smashing and filming and note-taking. It is a zone controlled, apparently by us. And no matter the caption, the voiceover, the images are clear: here, at the walls of the palace bursts energy, power, and no fear. We are spectacle, the repressed rising. We embody the collective fantasy of smashing all the lies preached in double speak by the Big Society, or for that matter, representative democracy. Of refusing the lonely path of individualised containment, with its exhortations to practise despair, quietism and abstinence - except of course, from consumption. It is a negative, destructive energy, from inside a cage. It is also, at least partly, a collective energy. This is no solitary figure at the gates of the Treasury. It is a group with cheering crowds around



them. We are a captive audience it is true. As well as caged performers.

In the kettle feelings are made tangible that most in the world, and many in this country, have long experienced. Now these start to circulate more widely in the university. We may live in a representative system, but it's not us it's representing. The "rule of law" may apply to some abstract elite, but not here. For us: chaos, unpredictability, doubt. No right to gather, nor to be heard through the media filter. In our pilgrimages around the perimeter, in pleading, shouting, shoving for an exit, we are confronted with the helmets, boots and batons of an authority that is totally unaccountable, distant. Appeals to rights, to the law or justice have no meaning here. They are part of the liberal arsenal.

Here, in this temporary zone, rules the same logic that operates in the benefits office, or the courts, or the immigration detention centre.

Arbitrary, punitive and opaque. It is the instrument of the neoliberal doctrine

that's already shaken part of the welfare out of the state. In this moment, with the "crises" as shields, what's left is being either sold off cheap or simply abandoned. The state is being re-shaped. No more will it compensate for unemployment, poverty wages and astronomical rents. As more and more people lose their jobs, as wages drop and prices rise, as benefits are cut and more wealth transferred up, a growing number of us will feel the grip of this logic shaping our daily lives. Neoliberalism severs and fragments, both at the ideological level - we are singular, self-seeking actors - and in its policies which destroy communities, infrastructures, the ability to act together. The kettle is designed to boil and divide us. And to keep the streets clear for shopping and working, not thinking and acting and feeling together. As we did on November 30th, with simultaneous actions in many locations, we'll find other ways to politicise and be in public space. And as we do this, we need to build our own media, to speak with each other, on our own terms.

And if we look, we'll also see in the school, the call centre, the college and

*We are spectacle, the repressed rising. We embody the collective fantasy of smashing all the lies preached in double speak by the Big Society, or for that matter, representative democracy.*

## "They're not on our side. We shouldn't be on theirs"

As the cuts begin to bite, what role can and do the police play in the movement?

SOFIE BUCKLAND

On 11 January Paul McKeever, chair of the Police Federation, publicly hinted that police forces may demonstrate over job cuts. Due to the same budget cuts the Coalition government is pushing across public services, as many as 20,000 police force jobs are under threat. This has prompted an extensive internet debate between various anti-cuts activists around the question: should we march with the police?

Some argue any job loss is a personal tragedy. Perhaps, even though these are the very people trying to prevent our anti-cuts demonstrations from being effective (kettling and beating us in the process), we could claim the moral high ground

by showing them some solidarity. We might win the cops round to an anti-cuts position that would benefit us on further demonstrations.

This argument, though well-meaning, is naïve. An individual police officer might sympathise with the aims of the protest they are policing. But it is still their job to keep public order - and that means following orders when it comes to repressing protest.

We might want to win some of them over anyway, of course, but it's important to think about what that means in the situation we're in. Being a copper is in direct conflict with radical political activism. The police form part of the armed wing of the state. Their reason for existence is to keep public order. We're going to need to seriously

disrupt public order to even begin to challenge the cuts, let alone the wider capitalist system and the state. For us, winning over individual police can only be a case of persuading them not to be police any more.

Marching alongside the cops in their attempt to stop job cuts is hardly going to achieve this. Joining in such a demo explicitly suggests you don't want a cut in police numbers - that the police are just fine as they are. It's hard to imagine many useful conversations on such a demo; after all, those marching are against the cuts in their jobs whilst being perfectly happy to physically, often violently, quash dissent against cuts to anyone else's. Their role makes this a different question to organising solidarity with other public sector workers, which can only strengthen any anti-cuts movement. By supporting the police, we're excluding a huge chunk of analysis from our own anti-cuts agenda: that of how

the state operates, and how to effectively challenge it.

Some have argued, however, that it's wrong to see the police as our enemies outside of protest days. After all, their day-to-day job is more concerned with solving crime. Working class communities are hit hardest by crime, and report the highest levels of fear of crime. Being robbed is pretty shit, even more so when you have very little yourself. Living in fear of going outdoors, or having someone break in to your house, is debilitating. The police force plays a limited protective role in these cases - were it to be abolished tomorrow, life would be more difficult for many people.

The key word, however, is 'limited'. Anyone using this argument to back up support for the police - and for, essentially, maintaining or increasing police numbers - should dig a little further into crime, and where it comes from. The Howard

League for Penal Reform reports that 78% of all people sentenced to custody were convicted of non-violent crime. It's a pretty much undisputed fact that the vast majority of crime is acquisitive - stealing stuff to make money (often in order to fund a drug addiction), or, in the case of many women, shoplifting to support families: 54% of women in prison in 2000 cited their lack of money as a reason, 38% the need to support children and 33% having no job.

Simply regarding the police as defenders of working-class communities occludes all this, and the structural reasons behind the majority of crime. Poverty, lack of opportunity, drugs, shit low-paid work - all these factors contribute to crime, and none of them are anywhere near solved by the actions of police. Arresting, charging and imprisoning someone might stop them breaking into your house or car for a few years, but it does nothing to resolve the underlying problems; it often fuels a cycle

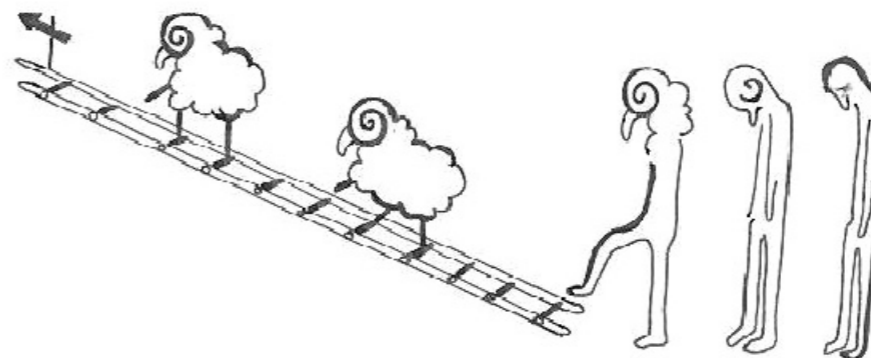
of unemployment, crime, mental health problems and addiction that condemns thousands to misery.

In this context, 'protecting working-class communities' looks rather like the opposite. The police defend the state against protestors challenging the very structure that produces crime. A better-funded, more extensive welfare state, an end to the poverty pay of the minimum wage, the abolition of the elite academy and free schools that sap money from state schools in working-class areas, free education at all levels and more - these are measures that would cut crime. And when we march for them, or to defend the limited welfare state we have left, the police are on the other side of the barrier, defending privilege. They're not on our side. We shouldn't be on theirs.



## Hope Against Hope: A necessary betrayal

*Hope, the dominant form of hope, is to do better than your parents.*



What has been taken from them to make them so angry? Hope, that's what. Hope, and the fragile bubble of social aspiration that sustained us through decades of mounting inequality; hope and the belief that if we worked hard and did as we were told and bought the right things, some of us at least would get the good jobs and safe places to live that we'd been promised. - Laurie Penny, *New Statesman*

NIC BEURET

A single image from a day of movement marks out competing visions of hope. A boot through a Millbank window fed the dreams of resistance that many in the Left have been craving since talk of austerity started. The same boot posed a question that plays out in the university occupations that preceded it and have since blossomed in its wake: what is it exactly that we are hoping for?

The question of how students have inspired people to act, engage and organize to combat the Government's austerity plans is an important one. It is one that also potentially contrasts with some of the views of students themselves. For let's be clear - it is not necessarily (or even principally) the University or its defence that mobilizes people's desires and dreams outside the student movement. Defending the 'right to education' may be what sparked student revolts, but those of us who are not students have been drawn in because we want, more than anything, to resist and fight. And to resist and fight you need to know that resistance is possible, that you will not be alone, and that you can win. For the most part the resistance so far to the regime of austerity has been rote and uninspiring - a betrayed strike here, a sacked workforce there.

Minor victories and thousands of words spoken of an inevitable uprising, of an insurgency against the restructuring. The boot through the window took us beyond the rhetoric and yearnings. It showed rage and the will to fight. It showed cops overwhelmed and underprepared, Tory offices ransacked and the beautiful excess of an insurrectionary moment. It inspired because it was truly magical, and people saw for themselves that battles could be

waged, people would fight, and winning was possible.

But beyond this, what support is there for the 'right to education'? For this was the starting point for the riot and the thread that binds the demonstrations, the walkouts and the occupations. Cutting the Education Maintenance Allowance, shedding whole university departments and countless staff, and raising fees. The restructuring is an attack on 'education' as it exists in the University; a wholesale revision of who can access what. It is perhaps taken for granted that 'we' all support the right to education, and that we are all united in our defence of the University. But what if we are not?

What if it is our rage and not our hopes that are united? What if we are together only for the fight, but not the victory?

### Hope becomes scarce

Laurie Penny nails the motivation behind the riot - hope. Or rather, the restructuring of hope and its coming scarcity. A restructuring and scarcity because hope is not something eternal or ephemeral. Hope is a material thing, produced and distributed through social channels and institutions. Institutions like the University.

What do we mean by a socially produced hope? Different societies produce different kinds of hopes. In fact, every single society produces different kinds of hopes. Hope is a mobilizing and organizing force that structures the direction and possibilities of our lives. As memory shapes our understanding of the past and how we understand what we are now, hope shapes our understanding of the future - what there will be, what there could be, who and how we will become something more than we are today. Both hope and memory give

form and purpose to our actions; they give our lives meaning.

There are competing versions of hope in a given society, but there is also a hegemonic form to hope. For us, living in a becoming-neoliberal world, that hegemonic form is aspiration. Not aspiration in the sense to aspire to greatness in some heroic Greek sense, or something romantic and colourful. No, for us aspiration has a particular hue and tint - it means social mobility. It means a better job, more money, more things and a higher rung on the career ladder. Hope is individual in our world, never collective - the hope of entrepreneurs dreaming of making it big. Not just climbing the ladder but also winning out over all others. We hope for social mobility. Which is exactly how Penny frames it, as do most of the placards on the streets. Hope, the dominant form of hope, is to do better than your parents.

Hope is not evenly distributed - what hopes there are and who has access to them depend on where you are located (be you poor or black, disabled, a woman, young, living in the regions, etc). Neoliberal hope - aspiration - is increasingly restricted to an ever-smaller circle of people: those people doing well through the current crisis; those people above the buffer of the 'squeezed middle'. For the rest, there's the lottery. (To be clear, there have been 'no hoppers' for quite some time - an underclass living a kind of social death of meaningless, pointless lives, hidden away behind ASBOS on estates [1]. But this is to become the norm for many, many more people).

This in turn leads to a scarcity of hope and an increasing number of people subject to a social death - a life defined as without future and therefore without meaning. A life trapped with nowhere to go. This generates a crisis of hope that can manifest in a number of ways. The most obvious is resentment against those who seem to still have hope. It is also visible in the desperate attempts to salvage some hope - through the memories of privileges of nationality, race and gender (such as mobilized by the BNP).

The current crisis marks a turn from a mixed economy of hope - where neoliberal policies and subjectivities press up against

older forms of entitlement and ideals of fairness and social mobility. We are living through the birth pangs of a truly neoliberal age where meaning, hope and the future itself are scarce and out of reach for most of us. It is here, at the juncture of a new social order and the collapse of the remaining entitlements of the welfare state, that the restructuring of hope comes to be generally seen as a crisis of hope. We are entering an age of scarcity of the future.

It's clear that the students are revolting against the loss of this hope and future. Social mobility (as such actually exists) is under attack. The 'squeezed middle' and their children will become, like the existing underclass, a footnote to the bigger and brighter stories of the well-to-do professionals. The student revolt speaks to us all as the first open revolt against the expansion of social death and the collapse of the more general circulation of aspiration. So the loss of entitlement is real, and the revolt is too. But we should stop here and ask if that is the end of the tale told by the boot. Did that kid kicking in the window really just want to be better off than his parents? Did he really want to keep the University as it stands?

### Aspiration and the right not to be working class

Let's go back to the idea behind neoliberal aspiration - social mobility. Social mobility means getting ahead, doing better than your parents and your peers: it means that while you move other people have to stand still. Social mobility requires both winners and losers. Hope - or aspiration - confirms the unequal world in which we live. And education - that formal process of differentiation, where some end up with degrees and contacts and others with jobs without a future - is essential to the creation and maintenance of that inequity. It reinforces the role of the University in unequally distributing meaning, possibilities, wages and other forms of social wealth. Put this way, the right to education means the freedom to be unequal. The right to education works to underpin the myth of meritocracy - the myth that it's through hard work and ability and not connections, class and privilege, that people get to where

they are. The right to an education means that if you perform well in standardized tests (helped by being well off, going to the right school and having a stable family life) then you deserve to go to University and cement your place up near the top of the social hierarchy (as long as you make it into a relatively decent university, though how many 'bad' ones will remain after the cuts is an open question). The betrayal of the right to education - by either there not being enough jobs for graduates (as is the case for a third of existing graduates), or by the rising costs of 'earning' a degree, putting it out of reach for all but the very wealthy - is the betrayal of the right to not being working class. Looking at it this way, through the broken glass, we can see that the riot went beyond mere aspiration. Just as the university occupations have gone beyond the simple question of the 'right to education'. The joy to be found in revolt overflows the boundaries of a pedestrian desire to get ahead.

But here both we (both we who are students and we who are not) find ourselves in a double bind. We need to defend mobility in the world as it stands - its defence is the defence of actual existing lives and the real possibility to have a meaningful social existence. And we need to defend the funding of education as it stands. To resist paying more for education is to defend the social gains made by previous generations and to defend the social wage. And defending it is exactly what many students (and many of their supporters) are doing. But in merely defending it we are in fact defending the most sacred of neoliberal freedoms - the freedom to be unequal. Defending this freedom means defending the University as a filtering device set up to segregate us into educated and not; those with access to a 'professional career' and those who do not. Those with meaningful lives and those without.

### Hopes against hope

So we must go beyond mere defence. The riot is as much about dreams that have yet to become possible as they are over the loss of existing entitlements. There are hopes that lie dormant or hidden that speak of different ways of being; of different kinds of dreams and futures. The crisis of hope and

the coming scarcity of the future for many people is a betrayal that makes possible a different kind of hope - a hope against hope, violently against aspiration and cold conformity.

The student revolts then are the fracture in the facade. Students sense that not only are their lives changing, but that the myth of mobility that has underpinned the University in recent years is coming undone. These protests are the first protests in Britain to contest the changing meaning of hope, and the austerity of dreams that is the coming neoliberal future.

But to be honest and faithful to the riot and the promise of a different kind of hope, an act of betrayal is needed. A betrayal of the University and education as it stands. For here we come full circle.

For if the protests and occupations speak only of the importance of education, and the necessity to defend the University, people will quickly fall away. People can see clearly what the University is now.

The window is broken. We can see clearly that the University is a machine that creates social death. Eventually the inspiration of the initial fight and victory will fade, and the content of the revolt will have to stand on its own. If the content of that struggle is only to restore that machine, to defend the freedom to be unequal, failure is all we can hope for.

But if the struggle calls into question the very existence of such a machine, and reopens the question of learning as opposed to education - to self-development, the exploration of interest and inclination, and to allow for the navigation of curiosity and desire; in short, learning as a way of creating new possibilities and meaning, new practices and forms of relating and organising - then the window may stay broken for a long time to come.

[1] I am talking of the hegemonic form of hope here. Those devoid of hope in the conventional normative sense often resist through the production of alternative visionings and dreams; other kinds of hopes and socialities, often rejecting outright the binds to convention and the ethics-of-aspiration.



## We're not going to be famous

Who will be 'the voice of the movement?', 'the voice of a generation?' - a chorus of activists could shout 'none of us' - 'all of us' - 'anyone'. What about the few that say, 'Me'?

ANYONE

The recent struggles for free education have empowered 'ordinary' people to feel as if their actions might count for something. But they have also seen the emergence of a new host of celebrity activists basking in new found media attention.

Mainstream UK campaigns and currents could take a leaf out of the playbooks of radical libertarian movements. Clandestinity, no-names, a rotation of public representatives and a culture that respects and honours expansion, inclusion, delegation and skills-sharing as opposed to a marketisation of political personalities and leaders, single issues and compartmentalised goals, differentiate some of the political currents in the UK at present. But the reproduction of capitalist dynamics within our very own scenes - where we think we are being anti-capitalist at every turn and phrase - are evident.

The anti-war and Palestine Solidarity scene, for example, relied upon a rotation of high-profile NGO and established peace campaign organisation directors, MPs and journalists cyclically put out on platforms to become recognisable draws for audiences to consume. My focus here is on the format and focus of these political encounters as the problematic issue, not the achievements or commitment of those concerned. In creating celebrity activists that gain currency on the market of struggle - that is alienation-maintained social peace within the UK - and creating an interface which is personality driven, the agency of those engaged is limited to a form of campaigning which markets political candidates and advertises mass mobilisations.

There is a fine line between writers who use their skills to promote movements and struggles, by name or anonymously or within collectives, and those who seek recognition, status and primacy through their engagement with struggles. I'm not arguing for a moralistic negation of ego, nor condemning the understandable need for recognition. I do not wish to censor individual agency, but am interested rather in how to create communication and movement and trust building. What is the use of writing - a commodity or a rumour? Guided by the market and editorial agendas or freestyle, uncompromising and undoctored? A dominating voice or a voice that gives voice to the voiceless?

Class, privilege, group affiliation and position in an organisational hierarchy can fund the social capital of activist

or activist group participation within a movement. Through fame, this acquires further currency and can pay for political mergers (coalitions and joint campaigns), acquisitions (taking over campaigns and other groups) and an increased market share (TV appearances and multi-platform appearances) within a given movement based on the marketability of an individual or campaign as a brand.

It is true that not everyone views spokespersonship as the sale of the self, but in the context of social peace, these market dynamics don't prepare us well for generalising struggle or for a time when the ante may be upped and social peace implodes. Compared to many majority world movements and also armed political struggles, such as in Lebanon or Palestine, many 'leaders' are marked for death, go underground, cells remain clandestine, while above ground activism is so generalised as to become a many-headed hydra that drone-plane assassinations cannot decapitate, or ego-oligarchs cannot co-opt, where there is no need to market or promote. The generalised struggle is intimate, intergenerational, felt on the body and close to death; conditions we do not have here, but which nevertheless have meaning for how struggle can be organised. There are millions that make up movements; unnamed cooks, medics, lawyers, families, funders, trainers, builders, gardeners, farmers, drivers. Struggles when fronted by the same individuals lose their authenticity, their plurality, actually reproduce alienation and mystify the collectivity of change-making.

In abdication of the 'I' in the cause of furthering the 'we', collectives co-producing theory and action as an alternative to the single voice. The freedom that can come with anonymity, the space for radical movement that can be created in the shade beyond the limelight, actions speaking louder than words, abrupt and open platforms that create space before disappearing and reappearing elsewhere, allow for a political agility that can adapt to moves from authoritarian powers above. The creativity that inspires creativity in others, without copyright, un-privatises creativity. Generalising struggle depends on generalising representation, democratising 'voice', and encouraging groups and movements where the many yeses are heard for their substance and direction, rather than status and individualised profit. Look into the mirror. Say it. Look into the blogosphere and say it. Look into the crowds hurling paint and bricks at cops; put on a mask and say it: We're not going to be famous.

*Look into the mirror. Say it. Look into the blogosphere and say it.*



## From Ivory Tower to Debt Factory

An analysis of the long-term funding situation of the British university system and how costs have continually been transferred to students, who are forced to become workers and debtors

BUE RÜBNER HANSEN

Almost three months after Millbank it seems clear that something significant happened on the 10 November 2010. For all involved it seems there is a before and after Millbank, it marks a break that sparked off something that we are still living. The university that has for a decade practically been a site of non-struggle has been turned into a focal point of discontent.

So why this sudden resurgence of activism amongst the supposedly 'apathetic' students? The immediate reason is of course the Con-Dem coalition government's decision to make the greatest cuts in public spending since the 1930s. What we are paying to avoid, they say, is the bankruptcy of the British economy, while carefully avoiding mentioning the costs of the bank bailouts and of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Within the perverse horizon of capitalist realism and its imperative of reducing the deficit by cutting universities ('if we don't cut universities we will have to cut health - people will die!') higher fees have been seen as a panacea. Higher education (HE) can expect a cut of 40% in funding (excluding research funding), down from £7.1 to £4.2bn, while further education (FE) is to be cut by 25%, 1.1bn down from 4.3bn by 2014-15. More concretely, this will mean the disappearance of between 75% and 95% of all teaching funding. In practice this will mean the total or near total withdrawal of state funding from the social sciences, the humanities and arts. The University and College Union (UCU) has warned that a third of all English universities could close.

Looking back, the present cuts to British universities are like a sudden acceleration (of the kind that will give you a whiplash) of a process that has been going on since Thatcher. The process however, can be seen as carried by university managers themselves, starting with the 1985 Jarratt Report, commissioned by the vice-chancellors association. This document analysed universities as enterprises along the factory-model, and viewed academics as workers producing services (teaching and marking) and products (books and articles). This allowed managers to subject their employees to performance reviews, while making universities competitive bodies (competing first, serving wider ends second, if at all).

In economic terms this process entailed students becoming consumers; the gradual transferral of the cost of education from the state to students. On the level of discourse

it changed the understanding of education as a public good and an individual right to a narrow understanding of education as a good to be seized by the individual. The two main vectors of this process have been the gradual defunding of universities (dropping 36% per student from 1989 to 1997) and the introduction of student contributions in 1998 by the Blair government. Since then, the state has continued its steady withdrawal of funding. In 2004, £3000 top-up tuition fees were introduced. Overall, the UCU has calculated that the costs of studying for a degree have risen 312% since 1988, while they are set to rise another 101% by 2012.

In the future, universities will have to operate as corporations to survive; under the growing competitive pressures they will have an interest in offering as poor and little training as possible for the highest possible price, and in focusing exclusively on profitable research. This process will force most universities to fundamentally restructure their activities (programme closures, redundancies and 'efficiency savings'), while many will have to close altogether. Meanwhile, the existing multi-tier system will be entrenched, as student fees soar and 'bring about a much closer correlation between the reputational hierarchy of institutions and the social class of their student body' (S.Collini).

The gap between tuition fees for home and non-EU students (now paying around £10,000) is likely to narrow. As home student demand for HE falls as costs rise, more foreign students will have to be recruited. Increasingly they will be needed to bankroll the system, while the Government is likely to push on trying to reduce migration. Effectively thousands will be caught in the double squeeze of Britain's state racism and the inflated reputation of its universities.

In the UK, students - at least those of us who are not part of the large migrant student population - enter university at a young age, straight from a dreary system dominated by standardized tests and an early focus on future employability. But while college students have hitherto not been forced to work prior to university, many will as they loose the EMA. As a banner on the 10th of November said, 'Forget university, I can't even afford college any more. Where's my future?'

A great many of us who make it to university have to work to sustain ourselves through our studies. But not only work is required: since the introduction of top up fees it has become impossible to 'work yourself through university' - debt must be incurred unless you belong to the exploiting and

expropriating classes. Students at British universities are already amongst the most indebted in the world. With the introduction of higher fees debt levels will be pushed above £30,000 for a three year degree costing £6,000. Those paying £9,000 and living in London will face debt levels far higher than £40,000, even if they work part-time throughout their studies.

Fees and debt are not only ways to pay for education, but forms by which student life becomes different, tendentially in all its aspects. Hence the system casts students as consumers of their own education. Lecturers complain that students become demanding and spoiled, students that their lecturers don't 'deliver'. The system is set up to make us into stupid consumers. But not only that. We are expected to be calculating investors, thinking strategically about our future employability and earning capacities, instead of our desires to live and learn. In this, as in our edu-consumerism, students are cheered on by NUS leader Aaron Porter, who calls for 'a consumer revolution in education'.

However, the truth is that we face shoddy and humiliating 'student experiences'. Meanwhile the future - for those who can afford to be 'consumers and investors in education' in the first place - is increasingly uncertain. Selling the fruits of our future labour to the state might not be a sweet deal at all. Higher education still makes employment more likely, but with youth unemployment for adults under 25 soaring at 20.3% (making the total of unemployed youths 951,000), it is no longer a guarantee.

Of the few of us who will be lucky enough to find employment relevant to our degrees immediately upon graduation most will be enrolled into the stress inducing machine of self-realisation and overwork. More likely, however, we face shitty jobs at Top Shop or long periods of precarity - moving between overwork and unemployment, often initiated or interrupted by the mostly unpaid and fiercely exploitative labour of internships.

As in Tunisia, Greece and France, our movement of students, young graduates and unemployed workers is rebelling against the attacks on our presents and futures. However, to be successful we sense that our struggle must be something more than that: One not defending the dreams and institutions of the present that breed this crisis uncritically. We must be ready to imagine, demand and create a new future based on our new-found and undiscovered powers.



## A Strike in Tower Hamlets

RACHEL DRUMMOND

For those of us who work in Further Education, cuts are nothing new. In September, 2009 I took part in indefinite strike action by lecturers at Tower Hamlet's College. That sunny strike seems a long, long time ago now in this dark winter, but we need to keep re-remembering and re-learning what we discovered during those exceptional weeks.

The strike was unusual because we tried to operate with a minimum amount of hierarchy - resulting in a high level of engagement among individual strikers who did things off their own backs rather than leave it up to union reps or officials. This also allowed us at times to break free from the restraints of union legality and participate in unofficial walk-outs and mass insubordination. These moments let us feel our strength and gave us courage. Daily strike committees were open to everyone (although they would have been more effective had they not been boycotted by the other branch of the union, whose Socialist Workers Party leadership wanted their members to focus on fundraising and publicity rather than discussing and planning). We also held Strike Assemblies

- weekly meetings of all strikers and supporters, with up to 200 present. In this frequently electric atmosphere, a high level of political discussion developed and big decisions were made.

Our strength lay in the involvement of so many not just as activists but as theorists: we took time to discuss things, try out ideas, make sure everyone was on board. There are so many times when as workers you will be told there's no time - the situation is so urgent that there's no time for the luxury of discussion. This weakens struggles.

The result of the strike was ambiguous. Officially there were no compulsory redundancies, though some people were pressured into accepting greatly enhanced 'voluntary' redundancy. I think of it as a successful strike in that we were still strong when we went back, able to continue fighting off a lot with tremendous solidarity within the workforce, whereas elsewhere things had really descended into individualistic competition and backstabbing.

With new cuts coming we will now be invited to focus on imminent job losses. But the strongest thing we had was our willingness to fight on many fronts, many of these around issues of the purpose of education. We've fought on fees for learners, loss of

provision, as well as against the imposition of regimes of curriculum and planning in a sector that has a real history of radical pedagogy. Right now we are constrained by and under attack from the fact that funding is based on exam results. But if we were to put aside our knowledge of what really makes for a 'good' education, and devote ourselves solely to training students just to pass exams, this wouldn't work. A system that judges success upon very limited exam criteria discriminates inherently against our working-class and migrant students. On this terrain it is impossible to compete for funding. Right now, many of my ESOL students are under threat of being expelled if they do not pass the exam in Term 3. So we have to be clear about the extent to which the funding-achievement link is defeating us. We may as well keep fighting for real teaching and learning, which is probably incompatible with good exam results.

Our managers have changed our timetables so it's harder for teachers to meet, and our workload is impossible. Now the struggle is for time: time to speak to colleagues and comrades; time to relate to our students as human beings; time to think, and time to remember what it is that's worth fighting for.

## Our Violence

DR YOJO QUEEQUEG

Rather than focusing on acts of violence carried out by police, rather than peering at Westminster through lines of state control, we must recognise and reiterate our own responsibility for the violence that has taken place over the last few months. The idea that we are victims of the state must be overcome; we are actors within it, and it is ours to reclaim through the means we have available to us. More radical than resisting the kettle is surely resisting the idea of its existence. In Parliament Square on 9 December, there was no question that the police would detain without charge the thousands of protesters present. Those who stayed, for the most part, did so in the knowledge that they would not be let out for hours. The gathering of a contained mass became a tool of power, rather than an aberration of human rights. Kettling, whether through physical force, through media discourse, or through government threats, is a symptom of a weak state. It is with this image of a weak state that we must move forward as a movement. The strength of reclaiming the kettle, of taking responsibility and taking agency for and within our own confinement relies on a collective understanding that our physical presence is a threat to the state, and refusing to apologise for that. Full text available at <http://www.scribd.com/OptimismStrategy>

## Arrest as means

EDDIE MOLLOY

The past few months have witnessed the mass arrest of hundreds of students protesting the most recent and potentially fatal government onslaught on higher education. Arrest as a means to inhibit public protest through victimisation has been coupled with mass detention without trial, charge or legal basis in a practice that is euphemistically known as kettling. These parallel processes constitute the latest and most apparent expression of the violence that inheres in the very heart of our political and economic system, beset as it is by existential crises. The immediate agent of this violence is the police. The explicit function of this institution is to preserve the law as it is promulgated by the political class. When the containment of the ugly disease that is protest, disorder and refusal fails, and kettling is too deemed a failure, the tactic reverts to a more desperate level; one in which the police can be sure of their authority-giving authority: the power of arrest and the individualisation of the insurgent mass that refuses to be subdued. For every arrestee there stands one police officer on overtime. The 'humane' procedures have been abandoned in favour of individualisation, categorisation and neutralisation.

## Ecole Moderne

RADICAL EDUCATION FORUM

Elise and Celestin Freinet were communist educators active in France from the 1920s. Under the name Ecole Moderne, they and hundreds of students and educators across Europe produced a network of schools, each of which collectively owned and operated its own printing press. Students and teachers responded to the issues of their world through the collaborative production of newspapers, using it as the basis for learning skills in literacy, political analysis and transforming the relationships of their school. These papers were initiated by the creation of 'textes libres' or 'free texts' and collective discussion and disseminated for further response by students, teachers and other community members. It was of central importance to this movement that the production of language and analysis be connected to the production of new techniques for living. Parallel to the production of the papers, student-teacher councils reflected on the conditions of the production. They regularly changed roles to ensure that hierarchies and rigid group formations did not set in. Newspapers, as tangible objects and records of participant observation of the world were linked through an 'inter-school correspondence' network that shared principles of learning from experience and for social, anti-capitalist change.

Sourced from: <http://www.unesco.org>

## Translations

Translation is a practice. And as with every practice there are politics in translation.

The translation of the powerful reduces every experience from another context into a sentence coherent in a closed logic of language and singularly located experience. Our translation rails against this and looks for something different. It is about creating bridges, producing spaces between, making connections. Our practice is a process alive and pregnant with interaction, not aiming to shift a discourse from one position to another, reducing its difference to the limited logic of our own tongue.

Everyday we are engaged in processes of translation, with those with whom we share politics and with those with whom we do not, with people in spaces and milieus, and

also across them. Through translation we learn from each other and shape each other in the process.

In this section of The Paper we are not looking for the fidelity of translation but for achieving a betweenness, in which ideas, languages can be shared, interpreted, re-interpreted and retranslated. Practicing translation acts against enclosure - in the school, university or nation-state - and opens it up to making practical and theoretical connections. A hyper-textual space composed by many languages, for linking with other experiences to reshape our everyday politics in the urgent moment of the here and now.

## When the torture centre becomes a conference centre

Students and academics resist IGU conference in Military School, Chile

What would you do if you were told that the next inaugural lecture of your University is going to be in a Military School? What if the history of that Military School was closely tied to the murder and disappearance of thousands of people? Translate the same story to the post-dictatorship Chile and you will understand why geographers, particularly in Latin America, are astonished and worried about the decision of the International Geographic Union to hold its regional conference 2011 in the Military School General Bernardo O'Higgins of Santiago de Chile, one of the main operational bases of the bloody Chilean regime between 1973 and 1990.

What is outrageous to geographers is not only the historic symbolism of this place, but most of all how it demonstrates the continuation of strong links between geography and the military. For the regime, geography was a practical tool in psychological and territorial conquest and in the governing of space. Yet since the 1970s radical thinkers, in Chile and elsewhere, have sought to reconfigure geography as a tool for challenging injustices and inequalities, to think space as a political assemblage of power and struggles, as the composition of cultures, voices and claims; as a place in which to realise hope and transformation.

In this tradition, geography should be an instrument for achieving justice and equality. This is why breaking the spatial and material links between this discipline and the military is a crucial demand. Students and academics are asking IGU to postpone or move the conference and scholars to boycott it.

Petition: <http://t.co/WyzzNps>

## Valentines in Paris

Edu-factory Speed Dating for Student Movements, Paris, 11 - 13 February.

The list is too long and there is no end in sight. Eruptions of protests surrounding education have definitively affirmed themselves as one of the most potent opponents of contemporary crisis economics in Europe and beyond. Student movements have become the most incisive and transversal expression of social resistance. From London to Rome, students are taking to the streets and reclaiming not only free education, but an alternative to widening inequalities, economic injustice and the reorganization of human life itself around exploitation.

Academic rhythms, for teachers and students alike, increasingly resemble Taylorist prescriptions of menial tasks, locked inside infernal bureaucratic machines. Outside the academy, draconian austerity measures cut the future into chunks of unbearable debt and de-facto slavery. Sciences are chained to the services of corporate interests. Arts and literature, language and philosophy become luxuries for the rich few. Knowledge and innovation as well as the material conditions for life, created by social cooperation, are stolen and sold back to us for profit, at the cost of our time, freedom and security. These conditions reveal not the hideous managerial and bureaucratic capacity of capital, but the extraordinary power of a new society in becoming.

For this reason Edu-factory, together with students, collectives and activists from across the continent and beyond, has organised a transnational meeting in Paris on 11-13 February. To construct common strategies, rather than draw political lines on the basis of old ideologies; circulate ideas, share our collective intelligence and build new political spaces for this plural and changing multitude that refuses to be dominated, in the burning social struggles of contemporary Europe.

## Editorial

Το 'χουμε αισθανθεί στους δρόμους, σε καταλήψεις, σε πορείες και στο Top Shop. Σε συνελεύσεις, συνέδρια και συναντήσεις - κάθε φορά που βρισκόμαστε ανακαλύπτουμε ότι είναι ευρύτερο απ' όσα ποτεύαμε. Βρισκόμαστε στο μέσο των πιο συναρπαστικών φοιτητικών κινητοποιήσεων στη Βρετανία εδώ και δεκαετίες. Τους τελευταίους μήνες υπάρχει μια ενθουσιώδης έκρηξη οργάνωσης και δημιουργικότητας ενάντια στα κυβερνητικά σχέδια για λιτότητα. Και όχι μόνο ενάντια στις περικοπές στην εκπαίδευση, αλλά όλο και περισσότερο με στόχο να βρεθούν και να εφαρμοστούν καλύτεροι τρόποι διδασκαλίας, μάθησης και παραγωγής γνώσης. Μαθητές, φοιτητές και εργαζόμενοι στην εκπαίδευση - άνθρωποι από πολλά διαφορετικά πεδία 'χουμε κινητοποιηθεί και τώρα πρέπει να ανοίξουμε καλύτερους δρόμους επικοινωνίας και να αρχίσουμε να μαθαίνουμε ο ένας απ' τον άλλο.

Η έκδοση μιας εφημερίδας είναι μια στρατηγική κίνηση για την ανάπτυξη αυτής της αλληλεγγύης. Με την Εφημερίδα θέλουμε να δημιουργήσουμε ένα χώρο που θα μας επιτρέψει να σκεφτούμε, να ασκήσουμε κριτική και να μάθουμε απ' τις ενθουσιώδεις και εμπνευσμένες δράσεις στις οποίες όλοι μας συμμετέχουμε. Να φτιάξουμε έναν έντυπο τόπο συνάντησης για ριζοσπαστικές θεωρητικές αναλύσεις και σχολιασμό πάνω στις τακτικές και τις στρατηγικές μας. Πρέπει να αναπτύξουμε μια ενιαία συνείδηση ως κίνημα - ένα συλλογικό φαντασιακό. Χρειάζεται, επομένως, να γνωρίσουμε ποι είμαστε, πού είμαστε, γιατί αγωνιζόμαστε, τι μας ενώνει και τι μας χωρίζει.

Πίσω από το πνεύμα της Εφημερίδας βρίσκεται επίσης η δέσμευσή μας να δώσουμε το έναυσμα για αντιπαράθεση και αυτοκριτική. Να διευρύνουμε τους ορίζοντες του κινήματος και να επαναδιαπραγματευτούμε το όλο και τις πρακτικές της εκπαίδευσης μέσα στην κοινωνία. Αυτό μπορεί να γίνει μόνο αν πάρουμε θέση όχι απλά στα πλαίσια του φοιτητικού κινήματος, αλλά και στους ευρύτερους αγώνες που προκύπτουν καθημερινά ενάντια στη βαρβαρότητα της κυβέρνησης.

Η δημιουργία της Εφημερίδας ως αντικείμενο είναι κρίσιμη: όχι μόνο θα αποτελέσει ένα σημαντικό αρχείο και μέσο καταγραφής της εξέγερσης, αλλά και με τη διανομή της μπορεί να ενισχύσει τα δίκτυα επαφών. Αντί να κατοικεί στις συχνά ανώνυμες, σύντομες και αποσπασματικές συζητήσεις που κυριαρχούν στο διαδίκτυο, η Εφημερίδα θέλει να δημιουργήσει έναν συνεπή τόπο αντιπαράθεσης και να προσελκύσει ένα ευρύτερο φάσμα συμμετεχόντων. Δημιουργώντας ένα χώρο για περισσότερο επίμονο και σε βάθος αναλύσεις, η Εφημερίδα αναγνωρίζει ότι πολλά διακυβένονται σε αυτόν τον αγώνα - ότι πρέπει να αναπτύξουμε αναλύσεις και συλλογικές στρατηγικές πέρα από τον άμεσο αγώνα ενάντια στις περικοπές. Με το να διατυπώνει, να αναλύει και να φαντάζεται ένα παρελθόν, παρόν και μέλλον διαφορετικό από αυτό που μας λένε και μας πουλάνε, η Εφημερίδα μπορεί να μας ενεργοποιήσει και να μας εμπνεύσει ώστε να δράσουμε στο τώρα, μεταμορφώνοντας το παρόν μας.

Εδώ είναι λοιπόν η έκδοση μείον 1 της Εφημερίδας. Μείον 1 γιατί πλαισιώνεται από ερωτήσεις προς εσάς: Πώς πρέπει να είναι μια εφημερίδα από και για το κίνημα; Είναι δυνατόν να δημιουργηθεί μια εφημερίδα που μαθητές σχολείου και διδάσκοντες σε πανεπιστήμια, άνθρωποι που μαθαίνουν αγγλικά ως ξένη γλώσσα και εργαζόμενοι σε βιβλιοθήκες, όλοι να τη γράφουν δική τους; Μπορούμε να δημιουργήσουμε έναν τόπο ελιγκριούς δραστηριοποίησης και επαφής μεταξύ δικτύων, καταλήψεων και αυτόνομων εγχειρημάτων; Η έκδοση αυτή δημιουργήθηκε από μια εκδοτική ομάδα που συγκροτήθηκε επί τούτου και αποτελείται από ακτιβιστές, μαθητές, ταξίτες και καλλιτέχνες προερχόμενοι από ένα ευρύ ριζοσπαστικό πολιτικό υπόβαθρο. Πάρτε τη σαν ένα μήνυμα σε μουχάλι προς ήδη υπάρχοντα δίκτυα και εγχειρήματα, συντονιστικές επιτροπές και αφυπνισμένες πολιτικές συνειδήσεις: ένα κάλεσμα για τη συνεισφορά σας. Η Εφημερίδα είναι εδώ για να την κάνετε δική σας, να τη χρησιμοποιήσετε και να την εμπλουτίσετε.



# DIY GUIDE No. 1

# The Art of Shoplifting\*

A regular series of DIY and how to guides for making trouble and influencing people. The first in our series caused quite a stir the first time it was printed in 1995 by a student newspaper in Australia. Handy if you want a duck house for your pond.

CARMEN LAWRENCE

Shoplifting is a topic that is practically relevant to many and it should therefore not become an exclusive craft confined to a small shoplifting elite. On the contrary, shoplifting is an art that deserves the widest possible dissemination. For your convenience we have printed below a step by step guide to shoplifting. Good luck.

Within capitalism, most of us are either (1) alienated from our labour and hence dependent on the ruling classes for commodities as basic as food and clothing, (2) excluded from the division of labour, in which case we are likewise dependant on the State, or (3) performing unpaid and/or unrecognised labour and hence dependant on patriarchal relations for food, clothing, etcetera. In any case, our access to resources is severely limited by contemporary relations of domination. One partial solution to this problem may be to STEAL.

Sadly, however, many people living precariously on low incomes tend to either: (1) avoid shoplifting for anachronistic moral and/or ethical reasons; or (2) remain ignorant of the better methods and techniques of shoplifting, thus failing to maximise their lifting potential. From the onset, the golden rule of theft should be enunciated: NEVER STEAL FROM SOMEBODY WHO COULD CONCEIVABLY BE A COMRADE.

Hence kicking into a house on Bell Street with a beaten up old Mazda in the yard is irresponsible and counter-revolutionary! Be careful, too, about taking stuff from small 'corner store' type shops -- you could be ripping off someone in a situation not dissimilar to your own. On the whole, it is best to play it safe and go straight for the big corporate fuckers.

Some people will suggest that shoplifters are a selfish breed, since 'we all pay for it in the end' through inflated prices to cover losses and so forth. However, comrades, this and closely analogous arguments are used to justify lowering wages, breaking unions, lowering corporate taxation and taxation on the rich. What follows is a list of effective methods and observations that may prove useful.

## 0. Preparing oneself for the big haul

- If possible, you should always have some money on you when intending to

shoplift, because if you've got none, it's rather hard to argue that to steal the item was a spontaneous decision. As a result, if you've got no money and are caught shoplifting you are more than likely to be charged for burglary as well as theft.

- Buying something at the same time that you steal stuff doesn't necessarily ensure success. Approaching staff for items you are absolutely sure they don't have is just as good. Think of something that you know they don't have (i.e. a doona cover with a specific pattern on it or something equally obscure) and pretend that you are looking for this, so that you have an excuse for being there. If staff are ever suspicious of you or ask if they can help you, ask them if they've got the thing you are sure they don't have. Never screw this up -- if you do you will have to buy the item or they may realise that you are there to steal.

- It is always a good idea to carry a bag although you should never stash anything in it -- if security/sales staff are suss on you the first place that they'll check is your bag and it may just get you off the hook if they can't find anything suspicious inside of it.

## 1. On entering the maze

- Don't be put off by signs such as 'shoplifters will be prosecuted' or 'security police patrol this store'. Often this is just bluff anyway, and in any case there is no security measure that cannot be undone by a clever shoplifter or a quick talker. Do, however, keep your eye on security and be on the lookout for video surveillance cameras.

- Try to find where the video surveillance monitors are and who is watching them; often they are not even looking at them. See if you can get a glance at their monitor.

- It is a good idea to keep your back to the camera as much as possible without looking suspicious. Check out cameras (hold-up cameras) are often set up to check on employees, so they are not hard to keep your back turned to.

## 2 Blind-spots and other lifting techniques

- A blind-spot is a section of the store where you are barely visible and can thus feel free to both dump and collect stuff, without fear of being seen. Display units can make perfect blind-spots -- they ensure security is confident they have their eye on you, when in fact they can only see your

top half -- at the same time they enable you to keep your eye on security.

- Make sure your blind-spot is not under surveillance. Never hang around your blind-spot for too long. Most of all, be careful to never lead security to your blind-spot.

- A good method is to take everything you want to your blind-spot and collect it all later in one go, or better still get someone else to collect it for you. Getting someone else to collect for you can be a great system.

- Speaking of dunnies and change-rooms, one of the oldest tricks in the book is to put more than one garment on a hanger (works particularly well with women's underwear), go to the change-rooms and put the garment underneath what you are wearing. Alternatively, if you are a woman, you can slip your old bra on a hanger and put on the new one.

## 3. Leaving the store safely

- Always double back just as you are about to leave the store so that you can check if anyone is following you (99.9% of the time they will follow you out of the store before they approach you). Alternatively, go up and down an escalator or in a lift and press every button in the lift and it will be obvious if anyone is following you.

- If people are watching you, whatever you do, do not try to discreetly dump stuff unless you are absolutely sure that you can get away with it. If caught dumping stuff they usually won't charge you but they may fuck you around for a few hours.

- NEVER GET TOO CONFIDENT or you will start to make silly mistakes.

## 4. The end

Finally, if you get caught -- lie your teeth out! Never admit to premeditation. Always say that the opportunity arose, so you took it. Don't act tough or be a smart arse. Cry. Bawl. Admit a guilty conscience. Beg them not to call the cops. Tell them that CSV will take your kids off you and then weep. If the cops do arrive, it's a good idea to act scared shitless because they may assume you're a first offender and not bother to check your record. Don't antagonise the filth -- it is their personal discretion as to how bad you get busted.

\* As a result of blatant abuse of political power, the four editors of the student newspaper Rabelais were prosecuted for publishing this article. Despite threats of legal action, seven other student newspapers re-printed the article at the time. The case made it all the way to High Court of Australia, but in 1998 the charges against the editors were dropped.