

FREEDOM

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Vol 71 No 20 • 23 OCTOBER 2010

BOOKFAIR BONANZA

Anarchist rampage through the East End

This issue is slightly different from the usual format. We are featuring articles from groups who have meetings at this year's London Anarchist Bookfair (apologies to those who couldn't make it) to highlight the breadth and diversity of our movement. Those active political groups who are promoting radical ideas, or at least a radical alternative to capitalism, in the hope more people get inspired to become involved in some form of progressive anarchist initiative. We hope you enjoy the bookfair and we look forward to seeing you on the streets in the near future.

As the organisers of the event say, anarchists all over the UK are putting on successful events – bookfairs in Bristol, Manchester, Bradford, Dublin, Norwich, Oxford, Sheffield and Durham as well as Newcastle's Projectile festival. No-one can say that anarchists can't organise. These are great social events and a real opportunity to spread anarchist ideas as well as debating them.

We know anarchist politics aren't only about organising a bookfair. All of us in the bookfair collective would choose a big, effective, militant anarchist movement over a successful bookfair. Let's use these events to take things forward.

LENS CAP OI! ANARCHIST, UP YOURS



Freedom's biggest fan, sporting one of our new fashionably radical Freedom t-shirts, tells all those anonymous and oddly febrile internet weirdos, authoritarian left-wing wannabe Lenins and anti-working class Tory party policy makers what they can do with it. The future's ours, pal.

CON INSTIGATED IN EAST LONDON

An ambitious CON was initiated in September this year in the form of the Counter Olympics Network. As the real con of the London Olympics gets closer and closer, we have decided to organise around it and to use the spectacle of the games to build existing networks of struggle in East London and beyond.

Taking our cues from some of the successful action taken in Vancouver, Canada, earlier this year, we have established a network to resist the Olympics in our own city. We are under no illusions that we can stop it in its tracks, indeed the Olympic City Contract has already been signed, meaning that London is legally obliged to be host city now regardless of what financial losses may arise to the local and national state. That's all irrelevant anyway,

so long as the International Olympic Committee (IOC) gets its money.

Organising around the Olympics is challenging as it makes no sense to simply list all the obvious (and not so obvious) problems with the games and try to take them all on, as this is disempowering and will ultimately end in defeat. Instead, we feel it is essential to use the spectacle of the games to highlight struggles that are already happening here, over housing, gentrification, surveillance, ecology, etc. We can use the attention the Olympics has and will bring to the East End to our advantage, not by buying a ticket or buying into the false legacy promises, but by using this opportunity to bring people affected by the games together. Not only showing the

page 3

INSIDE ►►

Politics of surveillance page 3

After Spain, it's France page 7

Simon Chapman pages 8 and 9

Svartfrosk column page 10

Prison news page 12

Reviews pages 14 and 15

ISSN 0016-0504



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NEWS

IN BRIEF

COMMUNITY: The police community support officers (PCSO) are ten times more likely to be dismissed for misconduct than the real police according to new figures.

In the past five years, 122 PCSOs have been sacked for disciplinary offences ranging from theft to assault to inappropriate behaviour on duty, as compared with 94 police officers. Corruption amongst the plastic police is said to be rife.

LIVERPOOL: Spirit of Shankly, the radical supporters' union who advocate fan ownership of Liverpool FC, have received with caution the ruling by the high court that allows the sale of the football club from multi-millionaire American owners Tom Hicks and George Gillett who have been described as "asset strippers". The club is in debt to RBS to the tune of £200 million.

MINERS: It's almost too ironic, but entirely fitting, that Tory ex-prime minister Margaret Thatcher's 85th birthday celebrations were overshadowed by the emergence of the 33 Chilean miners who had spent 69 days trapped underground.

Let's hope that in future 13th October will be remembered for the way in which ordinary miners survived the brutal and unnecessary hardships of their job, rather than the birthday of someone who indulged much of her power seeking to destroy mining communities.

POLITICS: They are unelected, largely unaccountable and utterly impervious to public scrutiny, but now quangos – non-governmental organisations performing governmental functions – are on the way out. Under a move to limit 'big government', the coalition is scrapping or merging the various bodies, although only 29 will be abolished completely.

According to the taxpayers alliance, taxpayers are funding 1,162 quangos at a cost of nearly £64 billion.

SQUATTED: An empty police station has been squatted in Leytonstone, East London, in retaliation against police oppression.

The occupiers explain that "This is for everyone who has suffered injustice at the hands of the police".

A group of about 20 have set up home in the building which has not been used since its closure three years ago. The Met is trying to sell the site for about £1.5 million.

UNDERGROUND: RMT health and safety rep Eamonn Lynch was sacked from London Underground for following the instructions from the signal control room. The tube driver was told by the sacking panel he should have ignored the instructions.

In what is seen as a blatant example of victimisation – a tube driver who acted in exactly the same way only received a warning – the RMT are balloting workers for strike action to reinstate the worker.

LENS CAP FIGHTING IT OUT



Everybody's favourite reactionary mish-mash of wannabe football hooligans, mini-fuehrers and disgruntled racists descended on Leicester for their latest round of grimacing 'kettle and chant' protest. Whatever political agenda the EDL are seeking to establish, the tactic of annoying the local population by shouting at them its proving to be ineffective.

The state of the left-wing

Disturbing reports have been coming back from those who attended the Right to Work demonstration, organised by the Socialist Workers Party (SWP), in Birmingham at the start of Tory Party conference on Sunday 3rd October, about the behaviour of stewards in openly helping police to both isolate and detain protestors who they identified as anarchists.

It is understood that during the demonstration, which attracted more than 7,000 people from across the UK, stewards actively colluded with police in targeting certain demonstrators simply because of their political affiliations, and threatened other protestors if they didn't comply with their instructions. Chief steward for the march, Chris Bambery, was identified as one of those working most closely with police. Bambery is a dominant figure of the Right to Work campaign and also a leading member of the SWP.

Freedom have been given access to several signed witness statements from people who were present on the day, all identifying stewards collaborating with police against the anarchists. One statement read "Chris Bambery gathered other stewards with the intention of not allowing anarchists to join the march and form a block" and recounted an exchange: "Cop: 'I am a bit concerned about the red and black flags'. Steward: 'Give me a minute and I will find out more about where they're from. But they'll

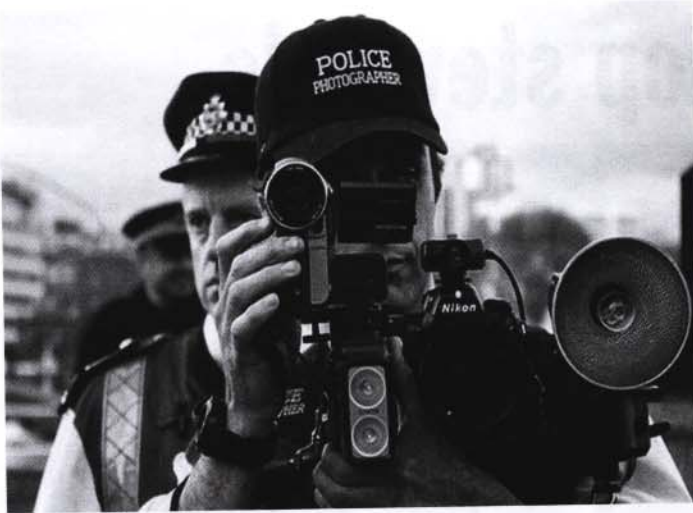
was heard saying "the anarchos are going to try and join the block from the sides, so if you see any of their flags or banners just stop them from joining"

Photos were taken that show stewards providing intelligence to police on various protestors.

Anarchists who were holding the banner 'Fuck big society smash the state' were told directly by Bambery "Put that banner away or I'll get you all nicked." In their statement they say "He then talked with police who told us that he had complained, therefore we had to put the banner away or face arrest." As the 'black bloc' was kettled by police, stewards were allowed to move freely between police lines and were in constant communication with the officer in charge. Ironically the Labour Party MP John McDonnell said in his speech from the platform "the warning to the Tories is: we're coming for you ... with our civil disobedience and direct action." A message seemingly lost on Bambery and his cronies.

This type of collusion between left-wing party officials and state is not particularly new. Unite Against Fascism (another front group for the SWP) handed over a member of the Anarchist Federation to police on an anti-EDL protest in Leeds last year.

Given the anti-cuts campaign is set to be as volatile and confrontational as the anti-poll tax campaign it is vital anarchists begin to acknowledge and understand the tactics



The politics of surveillance

Intelligence led policing and the 'disruption' of political organising

'Intelligence led' policing focuses not on the 'what' that people do wrong, but on the 'who' may be doing it. It is about identifying criminals even before they have committed the crime – even before they are born, according to Tony Blair. The aim then is to 'disrupt' criminal activity using all sorts of tactics from intervention in 'problem' families, to harassing kids on the street.

A very similar model is applied to public order situations, or as we know them, street protests. Intelligence is used to build up a picture of groups and individuals involved. That intelligence is used to inform 'disruption' activities – anything from undercover cops infiltrating and undermining anarchist groups, to setting up vehicle checkpoints stopping cars and harassing protesters on their way to climate camp. Disruption can mean kettles and stop and search operations, but it can

also mean publishing propaganda, stirring up division within and between groups and even arranging 'home visits' for young people identified as being 'at risk of extremism'.

Most police forces now have their own 'extremism' units or officers, but there are two big players in the political intelligence game. One, run by the Met's public order unit, CO11, focuses on London. The other, the National Public Order Intelligence Unit (NPOIU) gathers intel from across the country. Both are based in New Scotland Yard.

In today's world of high powered information management systems and data mining software, intelligence gathering is about quantity not quality. This is why FIT teams take large numbers of pictures, and record such crucial information as 'target X has just bought an ice-cream'. It's why they don't just want your photograph, they want know what demos you go on and who you said 'hello' to when you were on them; whether you held the banner, or went to the pub; what meetings you did or didn't attend and so on. FIT teams aren't the only source of data, of course. Add to that other police ops such as stop and search, internet sources such as Facebook

and Indymedia, and, of course, information obtained covertly.

Fitwatch is not just about taking pictures of coppers, any more than the FIT's job is just about taking pictures of us. As the 'domestic extremism' units obtain intelligence about us, we owe it to ourselves to get a better and clearer understanding of the way they operate and the things they do that make our work harder.

Getting hold of some of the data they hold on you, through the Data Protection Act (DPA), is one way of filling in some of the gaps. Fitwatch are holding two workshops at the bookfair, one of which is focused on DPA requests, how to make them, who to make them to, and what to ask for. The other is a general workshop to discuss the role of the intelligence units, what we know about them, what we think they know about us, and what we may be able to do about it.

- 'Opposing the domestic extremist units', 1pm to 1.50pm, Room EB4
- 'How to make a Data Protection Act request', 4pm to 4.50pm, Room EB2

CON instigated in East London

◀ page 1

unique problems the Olympics brings to London, and to all other cities it has devastated over the years, but highlighting how the Olympics affects class struggle.

The Olympics is so clearly an attack on the working class on so many levels, from compulsory purchase of land to the evictions of housing co-ops and allotments, from the destruction of community football pitches and the moving on of homeless people, from the increase in surveillance to the pricing out of so many people. This list could go on and on. It is essential that we tell the real story of the Olympics in East London and resist

the continuous attacks on the working class that it exacerbates. It directly affects our organising, because it encourages false hopes, for example that locals will get jobs and that there will be more social housing. People have realised this is absolutely not the case at the moment, but keep hoping that in the 'legacy' phase their hopes will somehow be met with something concrete.

The only good things to have come out of the Olympics in the past have been those fought for by us, for example a higher percentage of social housing was won in Canada by activists. We want to take the opportunity to add

London voices to those from other cities around the world who have challenged the Olympics.

We will be starting by holding monthly social events in the five Olympic boroughs with updates from Olympics and other local campaigns, short films about the Olympics in London and further afield, music and merriment if so desired.

Join CON for some working class games!
counterolympicsnetwork@aktivix.org

The next CON event will be held on Friday 26th November from 7pm at LARC (London Action Resource Centre), 62 Fieldgate Street, Whitechapel, London E1 1ES.

BOOKFAIR SPECIAL

Syndicalists and shop stewards

Members of the new shop stewards movement detail their meetings at this year's bookfair

Clashing with this year's anarchist bookfair is the TUC's march against the cuts, coinciding with the Tory government's 'Comprehensive Spending Review'. Several weeks before, the National Shop Stewards Network (NSSN), which lobbied the TUC at its conference, to take strong action against the cuts, met for its first scheduled national meeting since the AGM in the summer.

The organisation recently held an AGM, at which over 300 shop stewards and trade union activists attended as delegates. The autumn meeting of the body's steering group elected its officers, and the event saw the emergence of a syndicalist wing of the organisation. The syndicalists won a number of important positions within the organisation, and they aim to build on this by drawing others to their concrete proposals for how to take the network forward.

This is significant because shop steward movements have arisen in times of economic crisis in the past and, where syndicalists have taken the lead, these movements have been a profound challenge to government and the bosses. It is this co-ordination at the base of the unions, among the rank and file, that enables workers at the grassroots to take powerful action in their own interests without having to seek the approval first of those in the unions who might stand in their way. This is what makes this approach radical. And this is why the syndicalists in the shop stewards network mean to build the network, focusing on developing local organisation, activist skills and grassroots workers' power.

At this year's Anarchist Bookfair, strong parallels are being drawn with the revolutionary and epochal moments of Britain's past. The syndicalists in the NSSN will be holding a meeting to discuss the significance of the emergence of this new movement, and the work that it has been undertaking to date – including putting pressure on the TUC to take action. The strategy appears to have paid off, with the NSSN adding to calls inside the TUC's congress for a strong response leading to a stiffening of the trade union fightback. We are just at the beginning of what could be a revival of the trade unions at the grassroots, and syndicalists within the NSSN are pressing hard for concrete proposals to survey the organisation's membership and allocate training and support to enable comrades on the frontline to rebuild their branch structures, organise and take the fight to the enemy. This is a period of epochal significance for the workers' movement, and syndicalists in



Miners going into a mass meeting during the Cambrian Combine strike of 1910.

the NSSN urge anarchist comrades to come and join with them in discussion, at the Anarchist Bookfair to find out more.

The Cambrian Combine Strike

On 1st September 1910, 800 coal miners at the Ely Pit, Naval Colliery Company, Penygraig, Rhondda, were locked out. The issue was the price to be paid for a new seam of coal that the colliers felt was being underpaid. By November, 30,000 miners, in the Rhondda, Aberdare, Maeteg and Western Valleys were on strike or locked out.

During the course of the next eleven months, a momentous proletarian struggle unfolded in those unique valley towns. Mass picketing, involving thousands, not just members of the South Wales Miners Federation, but whole communities, women and children. Violence, mostly begun by police or soldiers, was endemic. Threats were made to shoot or burn down mine owners and managers in their homes. The Tonypandy Riot took place. Blackleg trains were stoned and halted.

The rich, powerful and famous all played their parts: Liberal Home Secretary Winston Churchill; legendary miners' leader William Abraham, 'Mabon'; revolutionary syndicalist miners William Mainwaring, Noan Ablett, CB Stanton and Noah Rees; General MacReady; Chief Magistrate Lleufer Thomas, always ready with the Riot Act; mine manager Leonard Llewellyn, Captain Lionel Lindsey of the Glamorgan Constabulary, and, last but not least, Samuel Rhys, a miner of Partridge Road, Tonypandy, who "died of injuries caused by a blunt instrument." The

been broken on heads. Some pitched battles involving close hand-to-hand fighting between nine thousand citizens and mounted and foot police, lasted *two to three hours*.

In the end, the strikers lost, but history had definitely been made. *The Miners' Next Step* was published in 1912. Mabon resigned, to be replaced by socialists. For a year, three-quarters of a century before 1984/5, a whole community had struck and organised sustained resistance against the full might of the state. Yet, for decades later, so-called 'Leninists' would chide syndicalists for failing to understand the power of the state.

Dave Chapple,
Chair, CWU Bristol and District Amalgamated Branch
Chair, NSSN

- A revolutionary centenary? The Cambrian Combine Strike and Tonypandy Riots of 1910, 11am to 11.50am, Room EB2

One hundred years ago a bitter year-long coal strike erupted in the Rhondda Valley. Was it both the start and the peak of British syndicalism? And why did the Russian revolution kill this tradition?

- Rebuilding the Workers Movement, 1pm to 1.50pm, Room EB4a

In 1919 parts of Britain were on the brink of revolution. The organisation which so threatened the state and capitalism was based around committees of shop stewards. That movement was built in a matter of years and decades. Today the working class is under attack, and we're not fit for the fight. Years of defeats and 'partnership' have weakened our organisations. Rebuilding our unions from the grassroots is the task of the NSSN. Come hear about the project so far, our future plans and what we can do to rebuild working class organisation

BOOKFAIR SPECIAL

PRESSING ON

Freedom Press continues to develop and expand, and remains an integral part of the London anarchist scene and the UK anarchist movement in general.

The political landscape is slowly changing, the decade of New Labour is over, and economically we are returning to a darker and more forbidding time.

The far right is emerging from out of the shadows on the coat-tails of EDL protests, which has seen reactionary forces growing in confidence.

The Labour Left, having been set loose from the constraints of government, will become just as much of a threat to a radical political agenda.

Anarchism has still yet to develop a means by which to address these changing circumstances, but at Freedom Press we are working constantly to ensure anarchism remains an accessible and relevant political force.

The bookshop is continuing to do a brisk trade, despite the recession. Since we moved the shop to the larger space downstairs, sales have almost doubled and continue to grow – which proves that there is an genuine interest in anarchist politics and a desire to discover and read about radical ideas.

Many people now are buying their books directly from the Freedom Press website which, especially for those living outside London, is a positive and welcome development. You can also subscribe to *Freedom* via our website.

The shop itself continues to be a hub for anarchists to meet, socialise and engage. LCAP, Corporate Watch and the Advisory Service for Squatters all continue to have their offices based in the building, and we have now opened an art gallery space on the second floor. We have already had three successful exhibitions ranging from evocative photographs from Palestine and protest London to 'counter cultural ephemera' from London's hip up-and-coming artists. As a meeting space, the likes of AF, Solfed and IWW all continue to hold regular meetings here.

The book *Beating the Fascists* is now available and yes, it's still a controversial subject matter amongst anarchists. It is also a relevant piece of living social and political history and, whatever the feeling of some, we recognise that the story is important enough to put out in the public domain. We ask only that you read the text and make up your own mind.

The paper is still the only regular anarchist publication that we have in the UK. We are always looking for people to write for *Freedom*. Tell us what your group is involved in, write articles on issues you think aren't being covered, write about your event, activity, actions and political ideas. *Freedom* newspaper is there to act as a conduit for anarchists to reach and inform a wider audience. Your paper. Your movement. Get writing.

Class War

Class War awoke from its semi-vegetative state at the Tolpuddle Festival in July. Some had declared the patient dead but a robust regime of heavy drinking ensured a lively presence on the Tolpuddle Martyrs march with particular invective being saved for the Prison officers Association pipe band.

The Class War banner was also to the fore at the Birmingham Tory Conference demo, where a mob of about 50 former and present Class warriors enlivened the day later on by roundly abusing every Tory in sight. So great was the press of the Class warriors at the pub bar that CW arranged a handsome collection for the hard pressed single barman on duty.

Noticeably, with the return of a Tory government, many former Class warriors are returning to the Colours. Class War has always had a good relationship with its ex-members, unlike many groups. A new edition of the paper – the first for two years – features a re-run of the infamous Thatcher with axe in head cover but this time featuring Snooty Cameron.

Class War's aim over the next six months will be to recreate the kind of street opposition to the poll Tax that is needed to stop the cuts. We aim to cause as much trouble, build a big street mob again and drink lots of alcohol. If you can find a better deal go for it.

Ian and Martin's annual address to the Movement, 2pm to 2.50pm, Lecture Room 1

Solidarity Federation

Over the past year, the Solidarity Federation has been involved in a number of campaigns. Nationally, we have continued to publish *Catalyst* and have now put out three issues in a newspaper format, distributing up to five thousand of each issue.

In the early months of this year, we did a

speaking tour in support of IWA members under attack. This included the Belgrade Six in Serbia and the FAU in Berlin, and there were protests outside both Serbian and German interests, supported by others like the AF. International solidarity has been an important part of our work over the last year. Members also participated in the IWA Summer camp in Spain.



Our Local in Brighton was heavily involved with the Stop the Cuts campaign at Sussex University, including a week long occupation in defiance of high court injunction. This was followed up by a successful national education conference together with anarchist students.

Locals in Liverpool, Brighton and the South West have done local newsletters, and in Manchester and Brighton have participated in Class Struggle Forums. In March Brighton SF called a Radical Workers' Bloc at the March for Jobs called by the local Trades Council. Liverpool SF did the same for the LibDem conference in September.

In London and Brighton, several sessions of organiser training were arranged and there is more to come, including hopefully outside the South East. We held a meeting on the CNT and its centenary in Manchester. In Nottingham, SF members spoke at a CNT-themed meeting and have been working with the Sparrow's Nest on archive material.

Solidarity support for Berns Salonger dispute, 11am to 11.50am, Room 324, Engineering building. Organised by the Cleaners Defence Committee, Solidarity Federation and IWW.

After the 2010 London Anarchist Bookfair why not come down to

FREEDOM PRESS
in Angel Alley, 84b Whitechapel High Street, London E1 7QX

Once again Freedom Bookshop will be hosting an après Bookfair social in Angel Alley, from 7pm until 11pm. Nibbles and various refreshments will be available, together with high quality repartee. All are welcome.

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INTERNATIONAL

IN BRIEF

BOLIVA: The government has said it has annulled a new coca production law which cut by two-thirds the number of coca leaves which growers could sell. The law triggered widespread protests by coca growers, who protested by blocking the main road to the city of La Paz from the Amazon region.

INDIA: The death toll in Kashmir reached 110 on the 16th October when 55 year old Ghulam Nabi Mir was allegedly beaten to death by the security forces when he went to evening prayers. Local journalists are forbidden from moving around and covering events. Although curfews have been lifted at the moment, knowing the Valley, it is only a deceptive calm amidst the storm.

IRELAND: There was mass unrest inside Dublin's biggest prison when 74 prisoners moved out to the recreation yard and refused to return to their cells. The disturbance began when a prisoner confronted a prison officer in the prison's A Wing. Chronic overcrowding is said to be the cause of mass violence in Mountjoy prison.

NETHERLANDS: Anti-fascists in Amsterdam have called for call out for resistance against pro-Wilders EDL demonstration. On 30th October the English Defence League (EDL) are planning a gathering on the Museumplein in Amsterdam in support of anti-Islamic politician Geert Wilders who's awaiting the verdict of his prosecution for inciting hatred. They also want to use this event to launch a pan-European movement with new divisions formed in the Netherlands and France.

SERBIA: East Europe showed that it still cannot accept homosexuality when the first gay pride parade in ten years, held in Belgrade, turned violent with rightist homophobes hurling Molotov cocktails, stun grenades and stones at the parade, injuring over 120 people. The counter-demonstrators chanted "Death to homosexuals!" and also attacked government offices and set fire to shops and vehicles.

SOUTH KOREA: Preparations are underway for the next G20 Summit in November. Concerned about protestors trying to disrupt the summit, authorities are constructing 38 separate checkpoints within a 600-metre radius from the site to block demonstrators from approaching the venue. Hundreds of residents in an isolated slum area near the venue will hold a rally on 4th November to oppose development. They have erected a 12-metre-high watchtower, vowing to continue their sit-in until the summit.

THAILAND: Ousted Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra's supporters, the Red Shirts have planned to hold a rally this Sunday to demand the release of their jailed comrades. Mostly poor and working class, the Reds plan to march from Bangkok which is under a state of emergency to Ayutthaya.

LENS CAP CROSSING THE LINE



The No Border camp in Brussels was marked by widespread arbitrary arrests and police violence, including scenes of torture and sexual abuses in the police stations. There were over 500 arrests and dozens of people injured. In retaliation, a police station had its windows smashed and police cars attacked and damaged.

Greek cops convicted

In a rare act of justice, the Greek special guards who caused the death of Alexandros Grigoropoulos, a 15 year old in Exarcheia district of Athens on the 6th December 2008, were convicted by a mixed court of three judges and four jurors in the town of Amfissa.

Epaminondas Korkoneas, who fired the shot that eventually killed Alex, was found guilty of murder (homicide with clear intention to cause harm) with a vote of four against three and sentenced to life imprisonment. Vasilis Saraliotis, the patrol partner, has been sentenced, with a vote of six against one, to ten years for being an accomplice.

Grigoropoulos's murder had sparked off a series of fierce riots in many cities of Greece including the neighbouring Thessaloniki. Nightly riots that continued for two weeks saw tens of buildings and scores of vehicles torched, shops looted, violent clashes between

protestors and riot police, incidents of school kids staging walkouts, throwing stones, paint bombs and water bottles, not to mention petrol bombs.

The anger that erupted was spontaneous even as leftist organisations called for organised demonstrations. With the economy collapsing all around Europe, biting unemployment and other socio-economic problems, the unprovoked killing of an adolescent was the last straw.

In the days immediately following the event people all over the world expressed their solidarity by protesting outside their respective Greek embassies. Some embassies were graffitied and in France there was a symbolic and peaceful occupation of the Greek consulate.

It may not all be over yet, as according to the reports, the convicted guards are set to appeal.

Notes from the US

Surveillance

Anti-war activists mounted a series of protests outside FBI offices in cities across the United States in late September soon after the FBI raided eight homes and the offices of peace activists in Chicago and Minneapolis. These included Jess Sundin, longtime anti-war activist in Minneapolis and member of the Anti-War Committee. Joe Iosbaker, an employee of the University of Illinois in Chicago and a steward for the trade union branch SEIU Local 73, had his home raided in Chicago. Another target of the raids was Hatem

Arab American Action Network in Chicago.

But most of those abused in this way had – significantly – also helped to organise or had attended protests at the Republican National Convention in St Paul, Minnesota, two years ago. Eight people were issued subpoenas to appear before a federal grand jury in Chicago. But they announced in October that they will defy this and not testify. "We have been targeted because of what we believe, what we say, who we know."

Another example: Pennsylvania Governor Ed Rendell paid a private firm to 'monitor' a

After Spain, it's France

France's workers are furiously opposing Nicolas Sarkozy's pension reforms even as they are being considered by the Senate. The right wing president plans to save 45 billion Euros by slashing budget deficit from 8% of the GDP to the EU-specified limit of 3% by increasing the minimum retirement age from 60 to 62 years, and from 65 to 67 for a full retirement pension. The motion has already been passed by the lower body of the French Parliament.

Workers are expressing their anger by striking in their millions all over France, with 330,000 marching in Paris alone. Transport staff, teachers, post office staff, printers, dockers and oil workers have all gone on strike. Although the police downplayed the event by giving lower numbers of demonstrators (1.2 million), the unions, including the largest union CGT claimed 3.5 million.

But the high point was reached when high school kids from over 300 schools joined in the fray, triggering fear among vested interests that this was a sign that the situation would worsen. Eight of the twelve oil refineries were closed causing panic of shortened fuel supply. Sarkozy has pledged not to cave in to the demands of the strikers to keep the retirement age where it is. True to his spirit, he has sent in the police, even as this article is written, to forcibly reopen the fuel depots. Workers reportedly have not put up any resistance but have instead chosen to picket other depots. There were some stone-throwing incidents, clashes between school youth and the police and a few arrests.

Transport, both within Paris and inter-provincial was seriously affected. Although commuters were inconvenienced, most of



them expressed sympathy with the strikers. According to a survey conducted by *Le Parisien*, about 69% supported strikes, and a respectable 61% supported continued strikes. The survey also found out that Sarkozy's government is highly unpopular.

Austerity measures, including raising retirement age and tightening tax measures, were announced by the current government in June. The French government is under pressure to cut spending soon, especially with the looming figure of trigger-happy Germany setting an example for the rest of Europe. No ruling government wants a situation like that in Greece a few months

ago. The mainstream media is doing its duty by calling the pension reforms in France "inevitable", while the finance minister described the strikes as "irresponsible".

The mood of radicals outside of the dubious Left is one of militant confrontation towards the government and that of extreme scepticism towards the trade unions. The fear once again is that trade unions tend to buckle rather too quickly under pressure and settle for mean deals.

Amidst doubts about whether France can sustain roll-on strikes, especially because of loss of pay, another strike is scheduled for the 16th of October.

Notes from the US

◀ page 6

number of local activist groups. The Philadelphia-based Institute of Terrorism and Research Response received US\$125,000 (£78,000) to gather material for state anti-terrorism bulletins. The bulletins published information on an anti-BP candlelight vigil, a gay and lesbian festival, and even a rally to support Rendell's own campaign to increase spending on education! The company that was engaged to do this surveillance work also monitored opponents of drilling in the Marcellus Shale and even recorded their plans to attend public hearings and to screen the documentary *Gasland*. In addition to law enforcement agencies, the 'intelligence' was also passed on to private entities, including gas companies.

A probe by the Justice Department itself was published last month. It found that the FBI improperly monitored activist groups and individuals between 2001 and 2006. The

investigation covered FBI spying on the Thomas Merton Center, People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals, Greenpeace, Catholic Worker, and at least one Quaker peace activist. The FBI was found by the Department to have opened and extended the monitoring even though it had no grounds to suspect illegal activity. Greenpeace members were put on a terrorism watch list after agents wrongly designated their non-violent civil disobedience as 'Acts of Terrorism'. In one case, FBI Director Robert Mueller was found to have provided Congress with false information when he claimed that a peace (and peaceful) rally in Pittsburgh was monitored because of intelligence that persons with links to international terrorism would be present. Investigators say Mueller's false testimony was unintentional because he was wrongly informed. He was head of the FBI at the time.

Louis Further

Congo rapes

In the Congo, the ones paying for the battle between the government and the militias are the women.

In 2009 alone 15,000 women were raped, with mass rapes being reported in July and August in the remote villages of Walikale. More than 50 of those raped were children.

The militias, rebels as well as the government troops of the Democratic Republic of Congo have been raping and killing women in the country, especially in the eastern region.

The UN peace-keeping forces have so far been useless in either protecting the women or preventing these crimes, or even punishing the rapists.

Margot Wallstrom, the special representative on sexual violence in conflict, says that rape in the Congo is "a tactic of war." So much for the emancipation of women.

FEATURE

Simon Chapman and the Thessalians

Exclusive interview with UK anarchist facing 10 years in Greek prison

What was happening in Thessaloniki in 2003 and why did you go?

In June 2003 there was going to be summit of the European Union heads of state. Previous summits had seen large mobilisations against them. I had been to a few info-nights about the coming mobilisations in Greece and we knew it could be a big one. I'd heard a lot about the anarchist scene in Greece, so I decided to go and find out for myself.

What was the mobilisation in Thessaloniki like?

There was a broad spectrum of people, from anarchists, migrant groups, extra-parliamentary left, communists, trade unionists and so on. There were people from all over Greece and a fair proportion of people from across Europe and the world.

There was a demonstration in solidarity with migrants on the day before the summit started. That passed off relatively peacefully. The next day, the EU Summit itself was held at a conference centre outside of Thessaloniki so people took hired coaches up there. The cops gassed everyone as per usual and it was pretty chaotic.

I arrived in Thessaloniki later that evening and headed for the Polytechnic, which had been occupied to function as a convergence space. The main demonstration would take place in central Thessaloniki the next day, 21st June 2003.

What happened on the day that you were arrested?

Various blocks left from the Polytechnic and started making their way towards the centre of town. We were near the back of one of them when tear gas canisters started raining down on us. There was total chaos, people running in all directions. I lost the people with me almost immediately.

I was lost in the gas cloud when suddenly I was hit very hard on my head and I tried to run and was hit many more times. I tried to keep moving but fell down to the pavement. By now there must have been at least four cops beating me all over, my head, my legs, everywhere. My glasses got kicked into my face and lost. If you have to rate cops for good beatings, then I reckon the Greeks are in the premier division.

I was dragged to the side of kerb and made to sit down. Riot police placed black rucksacks next to me and started collecting molotovs abandoned in the street and placing them next to me or in the rucksacks. I was taken down a side street and the squad

refused, so they gently persuaded me with batons and fists. I gave in. I had a strong impression of being fitted up.

So the cops made me carry two black rucksacks full of molotovs, strapped to my chest. Some of the bottles were leaking petrol and soon my shirt and trousers were completely soaked in it. If I had caught fire I would have been a human torch, no hope of survival. They put my hands in the twist position in rigid handcuffs, very tightly, behind my back.

The police took me out with them like a human shield to continue attacking the demonstrators, who were throwing molotovs and stones and anything they could find at the police, and therefore at me too. I had a cop holding each arm dragging me along, but of course they had armour and shields. I'm in the front-line, except on the wrong side. Every now and then the team of cops escorting me would stop for a break, and take turns beating me up. After two hours of this they took me to a hospital and I got my head stitched up.

There had been around a hundred arrests by the end of the evening, and they were gradually released over the next couple of days, leaving seven of us behind: Spyros, Dimitris and Michaelis (Greek), Fernando and Carlos (Spanish) and Kastro, a Syrian immigrant, and me.

A film crew had been nearby when the cops were planting the rucksacks on me, and this had been broadcast live nationally at the time, and then repeated on all the channels. My lawyer presented the video evidence and photos which clearly exonerated me. The prosecutor just stuffed the evidence in an envelope without looking at it and put it into a filing cabinet. He said something in Greek and our lawyers looked shocked. The seven of us were being remanded.

What was it like being a British prisoner in a Greek prison?

The other prisoners were generally sound. The first bit of Greek that I learnt was 'Give me a cigarette'. A few spoke English very well, so I picked up the rules, such as they existed. One guy – who on reflection seemed to be the prison daddy – spoke excellent English and told me that I had nothing to worry about – if I didn't start any trouble, I'd be fine. Except I couldn't see, or understand anyone, or work out how the fuck people live in a country where it is more than 45 degrees Celsius all day every day.

The first couple of weeks were the most difficult as I couldn't see anything – my glasses had been smashed when I was arrested. I'm really very short-sighted, but thankfully a friend knew where I had last had my eyes tested and she sorted me out some new specs and sent them over to



During protests around the EU summit in 2003, S who were also seen to plant incriminating evidence

the best days I had – hey, I could read! If only I had some books! And it's nice to recognise people in the corridor and not fall over their feet.

How did the hunger strike come about?

Kastro, one of the seven prisoners, wanted to start almost immediately in order for us to get bailed out of remand real quick, but we were told to wait a couple of months as the entire legal system in Greece grinds to a halt over the summer. So we had time to prepare ourselves – you can't just go from a normal diet to a hunger strike.

We ate well over the summer but then started reducing our intake, stopping eating red meat, then dairy products, then pasta, bread, then vegetables and so on, until in the last weeks before the hunger strike was due to begin in October, we survived on just fruit juice. So we had already lost a fair bit of weight by the time we officially notified the prison governor of the start of the hunger

Saloniki Four



John Chapman was badly beaten up by Greek police, and they put a bandage on him in the northern town of Thessaloniki.

Can you tell us something about the solidarity campaign that was forming in Britain and elsewhere? How did this affect you, the defendants?

It was vital for us in so many ways. Some things were just practical, like paying money into our prison accounts so we could buy extras from the shop. The campaign grew rapidly, so by the time the hunger strike started there were meetings, assemblies, demonstrations, occupations all over Greece, every day.

The London-based solidarity campaign were doing benefits, direct action, media interviews daily. The solidarity campaigns provided us with direct material assistance, and more importantly, hope. We never felt alone.

I received stacks of letters and books – writing to prisoners is so important, even if you don't have much to say. I'd get letters from places like Chile, with a photo of a solidarity demonstration outside the Greek embassy in Santiago. Writing to prisoners

somewhere else, an understanding of the prisoners' solitude.

What were your best and worst prison experiences?

They happened simultaneously: at the end of the hunger strike, we were suddenly told we were being released, and then we were told a minute later that our lovers and our friends had been arrested outside the prison. And there was a good chance that Kastro would be arrested by immigration police because they thought he was an illegal.

So we pushed these carts with our belongings, clothes, books and headed for the exit of Korydallos prison in Athens. And there are beautiful gardens, immaculate green lawns, flower beds all the way up to the main gate. This is the way that visitors come through, and there are dozens of rabbits hopping across the grass, eating the flowers. When we see this, we also know that there could be hundreds of riot police outside the prison gates.

It was a strange walk, knowing you're walking towards the prison exit, but at the same time we had no idea what waited for us on the other side.

How long were you locked up in total, and how did it feel being released?

I was arrested on 21st June and released on bail five months later on 27th November 2003. My hunger strike had lasted the last for 53 days. We were bailed but had to stay in Greece: this lasted a few months, until the charges against us were dropped in February 2004.

The night after our release there was a benefit party at Villa Amalias, a squat in Athens. We all went along but ended up being overwhelmed by how people are having a great celebration for our freedom, and they know everything about us through the solidarity campaign, but at the same time we don't really know anyone. Being lonely in a crowd of five hundred people.

Most of the ex-prisoners ended up sitting upstairs in a quiet room because, certainly for me, I wasn't ready to deal with that many people in one hit. I needed time to think about real life again, to start eating again, though being careful about what we ate so as to not over-stress our digestive systems. Lots of noodle soup.

Can you explain what happened during the first trial in 2008?

I got a call in autumn 2005 from my lawyer saying that the prosecutor had appealed against the original decision to drop the charges. There were a lot of legal arguments and appeals from both defence and prosecution over the next few years, until in the end a trial date was set for January 2008.

My lawyer had said it wasn't necessary for me to attend the trial, which was perhaps not a bright idea because I was convicted on

all counts – possession and use of explosives, the molotovs, resisting arrest and riot. I was sentenced to eight and a half years prison, suspended until the appeal trial which determines your final sentence. Three others of the original seven prisoners were also convicted and given similar sentences. Since we found out about the new trial date we have had a lot of preparation to do to get it right this time.

What are your feelings about the upcoming trial in January?

I had got psyched up for the appeal trial to take place in September recently, but for various reasons it got delayed until January 2011. It's frustrating, but at the same time the delay gives us more time to work on our defence and to raise funds to cover the court costs. The lawyers are working for free but there are court expenses that have to be paid.

How would you describe the Greek anarchist scene? Compared to the English?

In the major cities you see anarchist graffiti everywhere, and anarchist ideas seem to have a higher profile there. At the same time, their society is deeply polarised. The movement there is based on lots of small local groups that from time to time work together, or sometimes against each other. Here's another example of the difference – in London we have Critical Mass bicycle rides to stop the traffic. In Athens, there are motorbike demonstrations, three hundred motos roaring up to the prison gates. After revving their engines and making an incredible amount of noise, they split, but then regrouped and ended up outside the official residency of the prime minister of Greece. They got there before the pigs, who turned up too late, and then gassed everyone, including themselves. Anarchists in Greece get the job done.

Can you see a connection between the events of 2003 and the current economic and political situation in Greece?

The original slogans against the 2003 EU summit said 'No to the Europe of bankers and bosses'. The same is true today. There are millions on strike against bankers' austerity cuts across Europe, in Greece, in Germany, in France, everywhere. Our analysis of the conflict of interest between bosses, bankers and pigs on one side, and the working people on the other side has gained clarity in these years of capitalist crisis. We need to decide which side we are on. And also we have to be conscious of the consequences of resistance. They might beat us up, they might put us in prison, they might fuck us over for years. But the resistance is everywhere. And we won't stop.

To keep updated and donate visit the campaign website: <http://www.salonikisolidarity.org.uk/>

COMMENT

ABOUT FREEDOM

ANGEL ALLEY

If you are getting this at the bookfair, do come and visit our stall in the foyer to say hello, or any other constructive comments you feel appropriate. Among those on the stall you will find Dean, the editor of the paper, Andy who runs the bookshop and Scott who handles the distribution side and can deal with all the business-type enquiries, plus a variety of contributors, shop volunteers and various friends. Obviously we won't all be there all the time as, surprise, surprise, we'll be off to meetings, visiting other stalls and sneaking off to the pub. However we should all be around for the post-bookfair party from 7pm.

Meanwhile in the Alley we've had the usual eclectic mix of visitors, but special congratulations go to the muppets who put a sign up outside the shop saying "squatted police station will be resisting eviction" along with the location and date of said event. Imagine how we chortled when the local constabulary knocked on our door inquiring if they could come in and find out more!

It remains unchronicled who first called anarchism a movement, but its current direction was neatly summed up by this text from a legal observer on a recent demo "40 people moving towards town, with no plan."

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CONTACT DETAILS

Freedom Press, 84b Whitechapel High Street, London E1 7QX
Tel/fax: 020 7247 9249
www.freedompress.org.uk
Enquiries: info@freedompress.org.uk
Copy/Letters: copy@freedompress.org.uk
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NEXT ISSUE

The next issue will be dated 6th November 2010 and the last day to get copy to us for that issue will be Thursday 28th October. You can send your articles to us by email to copy@freedompress.org.uk or by post addressed to 'The Editors', Freedom, 84b Whitechapel High Street, London E1 7QX.

A sideways look

by SVARTFROSK

By the time this has been printed, we'll have a better idea of where the government intend to cut and who they want to attack. Regardless of the detail, there is something that doesn't add up in all the government's rhetoric so far.

They have focused on getting people on benefits into work. This is all well and good, though hardly new. Governments of all stripes have had this as their aim for most of my life. I've yet to hear the government minister make the case for putting people out of jobs onto benefits, though they do of course regularly make the case for putting people out of jobs. I suppose they think unemployed workers will somehow get 'soaked up' by the magic jobs sponge.

There are serious marginal costs for anyone coming off benefits, particularly into a low paid job. It's a good thing that the government recognise that's a problem, though my cynical side suspects any solution will take the form of more subsidy for tight-fisted employers.

Coupled with carrots, there will be sticks. There always are. People who refuse a job, any job, may lose their benefit. Overall benefits will be capped at £26,000 per family, including housing benefit, with the intention to get poor people to move away from wealthy areas and cut down the state subsidy to buy-to-let landlords. Being Tories, the government don't want to do anything to control the buy-to-let parasites' rents, they'd much rather stop poor people renting privately.

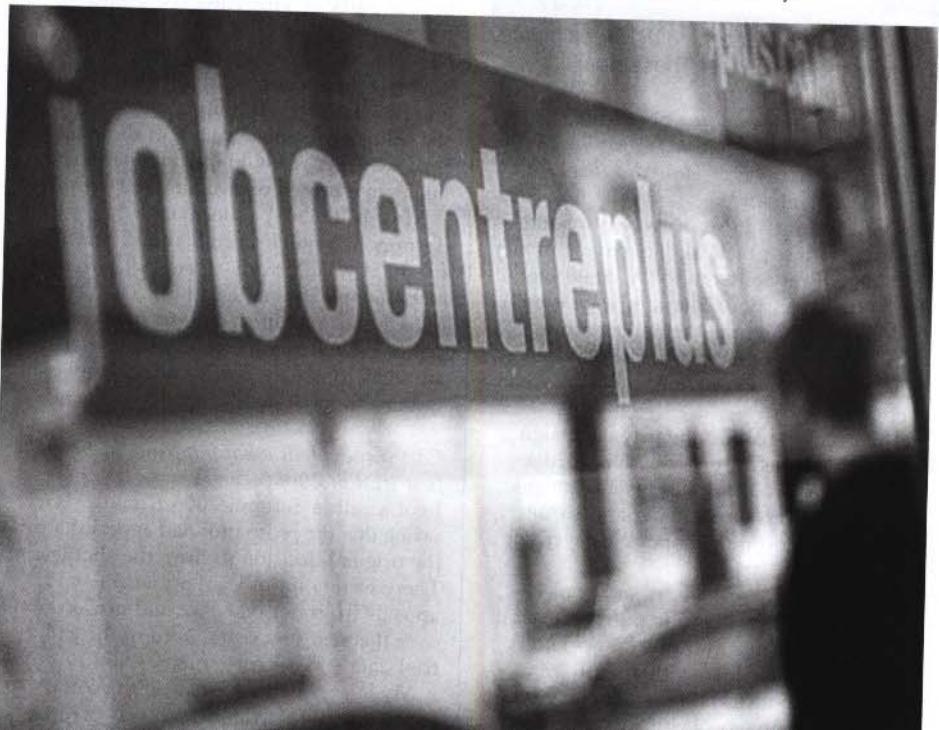
Other cuts include laying off loads of public sector workers, and getting people to retire later. All of these measures are likely to increase the number of people looking for

work. The only current government plan to reduce that number is the cap on immigration. But even there they can't agree – lots on the right from Vince Cable to the CBI oppose, while the likes of Rupert Murdoch and the *Daily Mail* vocally support it.

In terms of jobs being filled by migrants, most fall into two categories – specialist work that locals can't be found to do and poorly paid or soul-destroying drudgery no one who can claim benefits would dream of doing. In the former category fall things like chefs for Indian restaurants, specialist engineers, the elite in the City (well, no other normal rules apply to them, do they?) The latter includes cockle pickers, harvesters, office cleaners, chicken pluckers and the like. Already, the law acts as if only legal, documented workers do these jobs. The reality is very different and it suits the employers as undocumented workers are significantly cheaper than documented ones.

Clearly, the government want to force people currently on benefits into some of these jobs. Of course, the money available won't be enough for them to live on so they will get tax credits of one form or another – another hidden subsidy to employers who insist on low pay.

But the real question is where are all these jobs? If we're meant to work until we're pushing seventy we can't all stack shelves at B&Q. I said earlier that governments don't generally make the case for putting people out of work and onto benefits: unless the people were miners and the benefits were Disability Living Allowance, where a generation of the finest working class fighters were dumped to inoculate other industries from their militancy.



Precarious Workers United in Struggle: a perspective

This year witnessed numerous workplace struggles involving migrant workers best described as having precarious employment conditions compared to other unionised and relatively secure 'native' workers. The most notable of these precarious workers struggles this year were those of cleaners.

A notable struggle was that of UBS cleaners and the campaign to reinstate Alberto Durango. Earlier this year, in February, UBS switched to cut-price contractor Lancaster, effectively meaning a 10.75% pay cut for cleaning staff in its City of London offices. When the immigrant workforce protested this injustice, their elected shop steward Alberto Durango was fired by Lancaster in a blatant act of victimisation.

The resilience of the workers, and the solidarity initiatives, went some way to embarrassing the bank and its hiring Lancaster into a settlement. The concessions started filtering through around the time of a protest in April.

Coming out of the campaign at UBS there have been some significant achievements, including the organisation of the dispute itself (which had an impressive international response with solidarity demonstrations carried out abroad). Since Unite the Union's effective abandonment of the Justice for Cleaners campaign (initiated by Unite with the support of the Latin American Workers Association) it has been difficult for migrant cleaners to fight back against attacks on conditions, as displayed in the Willis and SOAS cleaners' disputes in 2009, both of which ended in defeat. As the deportation of a cleaner at another UBS office shows, the employers, their state and the borders regime still have very powerful weapons against precarious migrant workers.

Despite the difficulty of workplace organising in the face of Unite's refusal to take action, the UBS campaign meant a new type of organisation was needed. A cleaners' branch of the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) Union has been established so that the workers can have their own autonomous organisation, and not need the permission of full time officials in the big business unions to fight back. Moreover the Cleaners' Defence Committee, set up to organise solidarity protests, has proven successful in pulling together diverse forces around a radical cause – the intransigent defence of much-stigmatised precarious migrant workers.

The IWW will have a stall and various meetings at the London Anarchist Bookfair this year. Of particular interest to readers of this article will be a workshop titled; Workplace struggles and solidarity with precarious workers. We will have a panel of speakers from the organisations that took part in solidarity efforts with the cleaners, and will discuss the nature of the means and ends used in these struggles.

Industrial Workers of the World Organiser

Workplace struggles and solidarity with precarious workers, 3pm to 3.50pm, Room 325, Engineering building

A number of organisations involved in the campaigns and disputes have been invited to speak and explain their approach to the issues raised, so please join us to discuss.

Anarchist Federation

Over the last six months we've continued to publish and distribute several thousand copies of our monthly news-sheet *Resistance* and the new issue of our theoretical magazine *Organise!* will be appearing in time for the London Anarchist Bookfair. We've also continued to contribute articles for each issue of *Black Flag*. Local groups of the Anarchist Federation were instrumental in organising Anarchist Bookfairs in both Sheffield and Manchester, as well as having a stall and a speaker at the Bristol Bookfair. We've also produced a large number of pamphlets over the last year – the latest, *An Introduction to Anarchist Communism*, deals with what it means and how to get to it.

Students in the Anarchist Federation have produced the first issue of the news-sheet, *Anarchist Student*, distributed at a large number of universities around Britain for the start of the academic year and for fresher's fairs. We continue to be active in developing local groups and move towards regional co-ordinations. As groups and individuals we continue to be involved in activity in the neighbourhood and in the workplace.

Meetings organised by the AF at the bookfair.

- Stop (bleating on about) Tory Cuts, 12 noon to 12.50pm, Room 325, Engineering building
Since the general election a 'Tory cuts' rhetoric has been gushing from some of the Left 'socialist' parties. It was Labour that bailed the banks out with billions of pounds of public money. So why is there no attempt to use the memory of this to inform present struggles? We will discuss these and other issues relating to radical responses to the cuts agenda.
- Anarchist Feminism, 2pm to 2.50pm, Room EB1
This year has seen a great many feminist gatherings and conferences in the UK, and new anarcha-

feminist collectives springing up all over the place. A chance to discuss our progress over the last year, expand our networks, share news of projects we're involved in and look to the future.

- Reclaiming the Platform: Platformism, Especificismo and the British anarchist tradition, 5pm to 6pm, Room 325, Engineering building

The ideas forwarded in the Organisational Platform of Libertarian Communists has both been praised as a 'valuable historical reference', and denounced as an attempt to 'Bolshevise' anarchism. A discussion on the Platformist tradition.

Whitechapel Anarchist Group ITA

At the end of May we heard that the EDL were coming to Whitechapel on 20th June to protest against an Islamist conference. We immediately set to work planning what we were going to do to oppose their incursion. We sought to work with other local groups, attending two public meetings which left us frustrated by the stitch-up tactics of the UAF and some other organisations. Our position of 'a plague on both your houses', against Islamists and against the EDL, saw us branded racists and Islamophobes. We saw how groups with no connection to the area tried to make political capital out of the situation. In conjunction with some other elements of the local community we wanted to see a united effort against divisive threats from both the EDL and Islamist interlopers.

We have written a pamphlet about our efforts to organise against the EDL in the weeks leading up to the 20th June, when there was a UAF demonstration and it was unclear whether there would be an unofficial EDL turnout. We will be talking about this at a meeting at the Bookfair – anti-fascists and others interested in fighting back against the EDL should attend.

Community organising against the EDL, 4pm to 4.50pm, Room EB1

Whitechapel Anarchist Group share the lessons learned from working with community organisations in the East End of London against a threatened EDL incursion to protest against an Islamist conference.

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BOOKFAIR SPECIAL

PRISON NEWS

Since the last column covering the ConDem Coalition announcement on possible changes to prisoners' pay regulations, allowing deductions to be made into a central 'victims' fund', the accompanying apparent casual aside from Justice Secretary Ken Clarke about his aspiration that prisoners might in future receive the minimum wage has taken centre stage. Rather than being an off-the-cuff remark, it turned out to be a carefully planned preparing of the ground in advance of his keynote speech to the Conservative Party conference.

Clarke's 'Rehabilitation Revolution' has already raised cries of disbelief amongst the punitive Tory faithful, so it was no surprise that his speech the hall was made to a half-full and was greeted with a less than rapturous response. As an experienced politician, he had prepared some more traditional 'hang 'em flog 'em' fare to put on the menu, putting the boot into prisoners: "We need, in my opinion, to instil in our jails, a regime of hard work. Most prisoners lead a life of enforced, bored idleness, where even getting out of bed is optional. If we want to reduce the crimes ... we need as many as possible to get used to working hard for regular working hours ... to get those with the backbone to go straight, to handle a life without crime when they have finished their punishment."

Could almost have been Michael Howard up there, especially when he added: "So we will make it easier for Prison Governors to bring more private companies into jails to create well-run businesses employing prisoners in nine-to-five jobs." But this is not some revisiting of Thatcherite privatisation or a part of the ConDem Coalition agenda of a return to the Victorian values of thrift and self-reliance, of philanthropy and charities running basic public services and talk of the undeserving poor. It is in reality the long established pattern of importing practices from the US version of the Prison Industrial Complex, in this case the use of long-term prisoners as a pool of cheap labour.

Visit most maximum security prisons in the Sates and you'll find a call centre operated by prisoners booking flights, or prisoners assembling and repairing circuit boards for the big computer companies or making uniforms for McDonalds. It's big business and this is apparently what Clarke aims to do. However, the problems behind this idea are enormous, not least the financing the building of new workshops at a time of massive cutbacks. And the idea of paying a select group of apparently volunteer prisoners, those who had completed all the offending behaviour courses i.e. long-term prisoners, the minimum wage whilst the remaining prisoners are forced to compete for a limited number of compulsory shitty jobs for mere peanuts will inevitably lead to divisions amongst prisoners.

For more background on this issue see <http://www.againstprisonslavery.org/>



Corporate Watch

Corporate Watch HQ has been operating out of the charming Freedom Press building for over a year. We now have new co-op members and are expanding our areas of research-for-action. However, we are in dire need of more 'ethical' funds, so if you find yourself with any such funds, do think of us!

Recently we have made a blog outlining corporate complicity with the occupation of Palestine (corporateoccupation.wordpress.com); held a well attended symposium on the banking and finance sector; produced a briefing and DVD about DfID (the Department for International Development) which includes interviews with people in India about privatisation of the public sector amongst other issues; brought out a newsletter on the Unemployment Business which explored how companies are making money out of increasingly coercive measures to 'help' the unemployed get back into the job market; brought out a report and comic on the PR industry; been researching the London Olympics, the coach companies driving the EDL, carbon markets, migration, nano-technology, universities, the corporatisation of renewables, how the state protects corporations from dissent and various other lovely topics.

Corporate Watch meetings at the Bookfair.

- Tracking corporate complicity in Israeli apartheid and occupation, 12 noon to 12.50pm, Room EB2.
- The unemployment business, 2pm to 2.50pm, Room 324, Engineering building.

- Their crisis and ours: a discussion about financial capitalism, 3pm to 3.50pm, Room EB1.

London Coalition Against Poverty

It's just one headline after another. Some 82,000 in London face being kicked out of their homes as the new government takes those New Labour attacks on welfare that extra mile. Over million households will be affected across the country. And the 2.14 million incapacity benefit claimants Iain Duncan Smith wants to boot off the sick and reckons will be straight into work – hold on, what work is that? They're predicting 1.5 million job losses from public sector cutbacks. I mean, fair play, New Labour ran the same shit, so how can they complain? Then of course there's good old work-for-your benefits. Let's really clobber any of those greedy public sector workers who still have jobs by replacing them with £1.75 an hour slaves. And now large families are to pay the price for their irresponsible 'choices' with a cap on benefits of £26,000 a year.

But there are people fighting back, and this meeting isn't about bemoaning our fate (it's only our 'fate' if we let it happen). We'll be sharing how folk are resisting across the country, what we can learn from each other, and hopefully enthusing folk enough to join us at the National No-to-Welfare-Abolition Network meeting the next day.

Stop Welfare Abolition, 1pm to 1.50pm, Room EB1

The end of the road for Combat 18

EXCLUSIVE

After a brief consultation with close colleagues, the AFA chief steward decided to act on the information. The C18 pub was to be hit. Once the decision was taken, with a speed that caught police on the hop, the entire AFA stewards group, now numbering 150, simultaneously emerged from two adjacent pubs and promptly disappeared into the tube network. Of all the anti-fascists, as few as six knew of the destination, which created problems when they alighted, unexpectedly re-emerging out of Bow Road tube station, and headed directly for The Little Driver pub.

Alerted by the shouted warning from scouts, C18 poured out of the pub to do battle. In the dimly lit street, all they could possibly make out was that, ten abreast and at least ten deep, in tight formation, was the much hated enemy advancing towards them. A customised Zulu chant rumbled out from the attackers. It is likely the January gloom considerably enhanced the sense of menace exuded. While to the untutored shopper, it must have been an extraordinary sight, for C18 it must surely have carried the hallmarks of a nightmare. So when a distress flare flashed out from within the AFA ranks, hit an overhead bridge and screamed back over the heads of the fast approaching anti-fascists, like indomitable British infantry of yore, they never flinched. C18 did. As more came out of the pub, others broke and ran.

Suddenly, with the AFA front lines less than twenty yards from the pub, police poured from a neighbouring police station to try and head off the anti-fascist attack.

Denis: "Looking back on the police intervention now, who were obviously on standby to deal with any trouble from C18, ironically, though annoying at the time, it was probably fortunate. They probably did us a favour. Given the history of the organisations, together with a situation where C18 were already being driven back into the pub, clambering over each other to get as far away from the door as they could, but still trapped, it would not have been surprising in the carnage that would have followed if someone was killed."

...[T]he main AFA team, having been corralled and then herded on to a train specially commandeered for the purpose, were dispatched to Earls Court in west London as far from their opponents as geographically possible. When passengers asked police what was going on, the explanation provided for the disruption to the trains was that it was 'football related'.

At Earls Court, AFA organisers (having been briefed by the AFA intelligence officers of C18's plans to re-assemble at Waterloo), presented every appearance to watching police of having called it a day. Yet the



Riot police outside The Little Driver pub in Bow after the AFA attack on C18 in 1994.

moment police lost concentration AFA slipped away into the night. A police commander later admitted, the ability of the groups 'to find each other was uncanny'.

At Waterloo things quickly went from bad to worse for the Far Right. Joe: "Police just smashed their way through the doors. The level of noise, of smashing, crashing, screams was genuinely awesome. Frankly, police seemed out of control. Skinheads were being dragged out horizontally with coppers holding both legs and arms, and dropped face first on the pavement: seriously over the top." In the midst of such hysteria, the sight of two AFA 'faces' leaning on a railing apparently coolly surveying events was the last straw.

Andy: "By this time it was 9pm, the Bow attack had taken place about four hours earlier. Neither C18 nor the police would have expected to see us again. A couple of us on reconnaissance were standing in the shadow of a bridge, but even in the midst of all the turmoil someone picked us out among a small crowd stood watching. Suddenly, over the din there was an outraged shriek from a mob stood about thirty yards away. Gradually, more and more right-wingers were being alerted, as others grabbed them and pointed over. The level of anxiety at this point was such that it took them what seemed like a couple of minutes to assemble a force to confront just the two of us. As they approached, we walked slowly away down a dark and narrow passage. Deliberately, we

never looked back. As they got to the mouth of the alley a girl with them began screaming hysterically, 'It's a trap. It's a trap.' She repeated it over and over again. This must have totally spooked them as they stopped dead in their tracks as if they had just been warned the alleyway was mined!"

Unlike the Left (although Searchlight did feature a photo of the scene outside The Little Driver on the cover of their magazine), the *New Musical Express* of 22nd January 1994 seemed to recognise the significance of the militant achievement: "A memorial concert for Ian Stuart, the singer with skinhead band Skrewdriver, was cancelled on Saturday following a string of clashes between anti-fascists, police and nazis across London. Anti-Fascist Action said the weekend's events were a complete victory for their protesters, who dogged the nazis' movements throughout the day." Meanwhile Searchlight, even when condemning AFA for "sectarian obstinacy" for going it alone, was forced to admit The Little Driver had been "a major defeat for C18 and Blood & Honour."

This edited extract is taken from the new Freedom Press book, *Beating The Fascists: The untold Story of Anti-Fascist Action* by Sean Birchall, now available at £15 from Freedom bookshop, 84b Whitechapel High Street, London E1 7QX, or you can order post free from the above address (cheque payable to Freedom Press) or online from our website at freedompress.org.uk.

REVIEWS

WHAT'S ON

OCTOBER

■ **23rd London Anarchist Bookfair**, for all your radical requirements including books, talks, t-shirts, food and so much more... from 10am until 7pm at Queen Mary, University of London, Mile End Road, London E1 4NS, see anarchistbookfair.org.uk for details.

■ **23rd Radical Workers Bloc on Anti-Cuts March**, be a visible anti-capitalist presence on the demonstration, meet at RMT head office, 39 Chalton Street, London NW1 1JD, at 11am, email southlondonst@solfed.org.uk or see <http://libcom.org/forums/announcements/radical-workers-bloc-anti-cutsmarch-london-23rd-october-2010>.

■ **23rd and 24th Stop Nuclear Power Network national gathering**, a campaign to stop the building of a new nuclear reactor at Hinkley, near Bristol, the gathering will be at a venue in Bristol to be announced, for details see stophinkley.org or <http://stopnuclearpoweruk.net> or email noneuclear@aktivix.org

■ **30th West Midlands Vegan Festival** from 11am until 5pm at The Wolves Civic, North Street, Wolverhampton WV1 1RG see www.midlandsveganfestival.org.uk or call 01527 458395 for details. The first 200 visitors get a free goodie bag!

■ **30th Zero Carbon by 2030: Action for the Climate Emergency**, Friends House, Euston, London NW1 2BJ from 1pm to 9pm, phone 020 7833 9311, email info@campaigncc.org or see campaigncc.org for details.

NOVEMBER

■ **1st Devonport Big Blockade** at Devonport Dockyard and nuclear submarine base, Plymouth, crash space and food available, see website for more details, times, etc., at tridentploughshares.org/article1608, and for NVDA training beforehand call 08454 588363.

■ **6th Lancaster Anarchist Fair** at Friends Meeting House, Meeting House Lane, Lancaster LA1 1TX, from 10.30am until 5pm, a day to explore ideas central to anarchy, what it is and how it could provide us with the tools for a fair, co-operative and fun future, with workshops, stalls and food – everyone is welcome, email anarchyupnorth@riseup.net for details.

■ **13th Leeds Zine Fair** at Leeds University Union, Conference room from 10am, plus co-hosts, the radical printing collective Footprints, will be celebrating their 10th birthday with an after-party at The Common Place, 23-25 Wharf Street, Leeds LS2 7EQ, see footprinters.co.uk for more.

■ **14th SchNEWS Benefit** with the Tofu Love Frogs, plus support – Hackney's finest folk punkers come to Brighton for one night only at the Latest Music Bar, 14-17 Manchester Street, Brighton BN2 1TF, from 8pm, £5, phone (01273) 685913, email mail@schnews.org.uk or see schnews.org.uk for further details.

FILM

Winter's Bone

directed by Debra Granik

Seventeen year-old Ree Dolly looks after her young brother and sister deep in the Missouri Ozarks, with mother physically present but completely cranked-out and father absent on business – first cooking crystal meth, now apparently having skipped bail. Their tumbledown woodland plot is surety, so destitute family breakdown looms unless he's found. Worse, in grim midwinter with no income, training her siblings to hunt and gather assumes premature urgency – after all, “Never ask for what should be offered”; neither from your own nor certainly the government. So, between keeping home fires burning, Ree walks the hardscrabble hills visiting in vain forbidding neighbours – mostly kin – who know more than they're saying. Threatening hostility escalates inexorably into grievous bodily harm and horror, but persistence – and, eventually, reluctant support from unpredictably feral uncle Teardrop – infinitesimally softens the code of silence sufficiently for her to prove her dad's fate and save the day.

Cold Comfort Backwoods

Retaining the narrative trajectory of Daniel Woodrell's magnificent 2006 novel, the film sadly sacrifices its gripping Gothic ambience. Combining fierce love for his people with elegiac mournfulness at their downward spiral in the contemporary drugs economy, Woodrell's dense, hypnotic prose paralleled the implacable physicality of a freezing season with a community caught at the end of its tether – its integrity fatally degenerating after three centuries of stubbornness battling both the elements and alien impositions of mainstream American values. But Debra Granik substitutes anaemic, decidedly unmagical, social realism for this timeless, mythic resonance – diluting force and impact at every turn. Watery sunshine replaces mortal blizzards, yielding a merely slightly discomfiting cold snap (true, low budget production might otherwise face impossible technical challenges), and the Dolly youngsters seem correspondingly generally hale and hearty – more mildly bothered by temporary misfortune than teetering farther over the



precarious precipice even than previous generations.

Shifts in script emphasis compound cinematic anaesthesia, distancing us further from wrenching visceral engagement. For example, dialogic authenticity is faithfully reproduced but its expression in musical culture gratuitously stressed – a folkloric exoticism countering Ree's immediate preoccupations with unnecessary voyeuristic detail, undercutting empathetic immediacy with an anthropological sentimentality that the source scrupulously avoided. Or, her vague childhood fantasies of escaping dead-end deprivation into the military translate into impulsive last-ditch self-commodification – gently rebuffed, moreover, by a sympathetic army recruiter disproving her innate awareness of institutional enmity. Thankfully, though, helped by Jennifer Lawrence's unpretentious central performance, its cumulative travesties don't entirely suffocate *Winter's Bone's* insistence on the Ozarks denizens' inherent potential – even in the most unpromising internal and external circumstances still depending on intelligent refusal of colonial authority. Similarly, complicating classical patterns of female power and male dominance, the women dish out blows as harsh as their men yet harbour the greatest promise of pragmatic redemption while repudiating primitive accumulation from their precious environment. As a bonus, through close participation with locals (many in minor roles), historic media caricatures – from *Beverly Hillbillies* and *Deliverance* to countless cult grotesqueries of inbred cretinism – are decisively laid to rest.

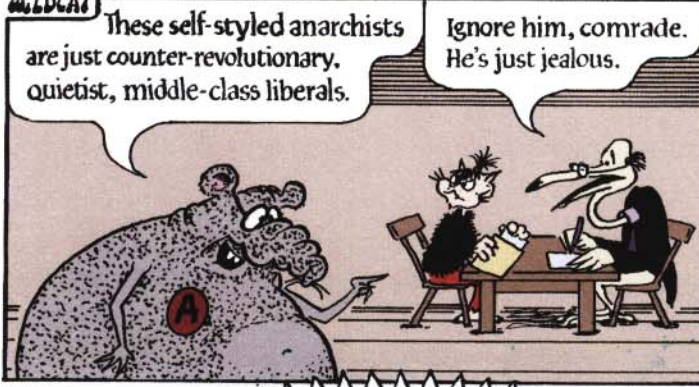
www.tomjennings.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk
<http://libcom.org/blog/4271>

QUIZ ANSWERS

1. Fruit bats. Research by Chinese and British researchers documented it and found it increased copulation time. Insert joke about foreplay.
2. In *The Peter Principle Revisited: A Computational Study*, Alessandro Pluchino, Andrea Rapisarda and Cesare Garofalo demonstrated mathematically that promoting people at random was most efficient.

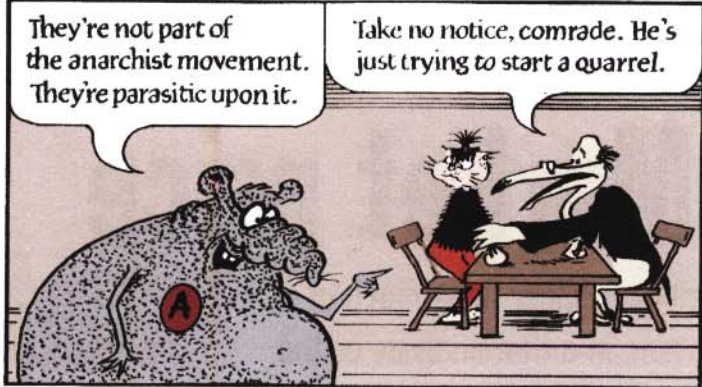
- names than nameless cows, according to Catherine Douglas and Peter Rowlinson of Newcastle University.
4. Taxi drivers. In a paper from scientists at UCL called *Navigation-related structural change in the hippocampi of taxi drivers*, published in 2000, found that the posterior hippocampi were significantly larger than control subjects, deducing that this area

WLDGAS



These self-styled anarchists are just counter-revolutionary, quietist, middle-class liberals.

Ignore him, comrade. He's just jealous.



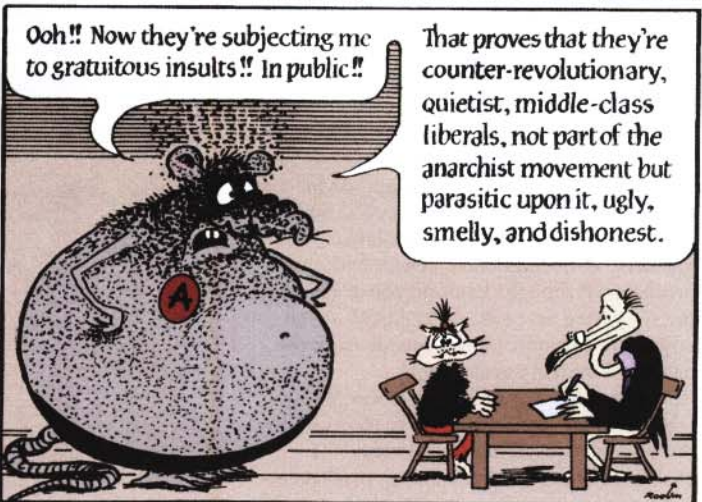
They're not part of the anarchist movement. They're parasitic upon it.

Take no notice, comrade. He's just trying to start a quarrel.



They're ugly, smelly, and dishonest...

You're damaging the anarchist movement with your scurrilous attacks on other anarchists!!



Ooh!! Now they're subjecting me to gratuitous insults!! In public!!

That proves that they're counter-revolutionary, quietist, middle-class liberals, not part of the anarchist movement but parasitic upon it, ugly, smelly, and dishonest.

Review

◀ page 15

flaws of market society Patel explains the concept of social markets: a society in which value is created, and major economic decisions are made democratically to the benefit of society, such that people then trade within the boundaries set by democratic decisions made on re-imagined commons.

Throughout Raj Patel argues persuasively and with originality that market society, and its anti-social ascribing of value, is causing great harm to the society in which it's based. He sees hope lying in new forms of participatory democracy based on re-invigorated and re-imagined commons, and he explores inspiring social movements that

are trying to take decision-making power back from corporations and government and create new forms of participatory democracy. *The Value of Nothing* in an essential guide to the flaws inherent in capitalism and their effects on society. It is argued with lucidity and originality and it is an extremely entertaining read – I stayed up until 3am reading because it was so captivating. Everything is explained simply and clearly, and reading it is extremely thought-provoking and enjoyable. I would recommend it to everyone looking to understand the current predicament of our society.

The Value of Nothing: How to Reshape Market Society and Redefine Democracy by Raj Patel, Portobello Books Ltd., £12.99

THE QUIZ

1. Various prudes think sex in other species is purely for procreation. Which animal has recently been documented engaging in fellatio, thus disproving this daft idea?
2. According to studies at the University of Catania in Italy, how could organisations improve their efficiency?
3. Why should farmers give cows names?
4. Which group of London workers have a more highly-developed hippocampus?

Answers on page 14

The Anarchist Quiz Book compiled by Martin Howard with illustrations by Paul Petard, is available at £5 (post free) from Freedom Press, 84b Whitechapel High Street, London E1 7QX or freedompress.org.uk.

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