

# FREEDOM

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## A NEW STUDENT MOVEMENT

**Protests, riots, occupations  
— the defiance of a new  
generation takes hold**

Wednesday 24th November was the National Walkout and Day of Protest Against Tuition Fees. The co-ordinated mobilisation, dubbed Day X, saw thousands upon thousands of students from cities across the UK walk out of class to attend demonstrations in the biggest wave of student unrest seen for decades.

In London over 10,000 students from schools and colleges took to the streets for the second time within a month to protest directly outside Parliament against the rise in tuition fees. Despite being penned-in down Whitehall for several hours in the freezing weather, and under constant attack from riot police, the mood and energy of the kettled crowd remained angry and unapologetic, a reminder that despite the frenzied media backlash and the threats of police reprisals, students were not afraid to come out once again and make their voices heard.

The *Freedom* editors were out and about during the London demo, with one being trapped in the kettle late into the evening. Even with the cold, police violence and lack of food or toilet facilities, she said the students

page 3 ►►

### LENS CAP UNMOVED



Students at University College London discuss organising forthcoming actions while occupying part of the campus as part of the ongoing protests against education cuts. UCL was one of 19 universities who went into occupation on 24th November as a response to the Con-Dems proposal for tuition fees increases and slashing the education budget.

## LEWISHAM TOWN HALL STORMED

On the day the Labour-controlled Lewisham council voted through £16 million worth of public sector cuts to the borough, local activists and anarchists stormed the town hall in an attempt to disrupt the meeting voicing their anger at the betrayal of the of one of the poorest boroughs in London.

Lewisham, thought to be the first council in the UK to put the coalition's cuts into action, was besieged by around 400 protestors, including many anarchists and a group of Goldsmiths students who came down to support the demonstration. Local anti-cuts activists and campaigners made speeches outside before the crowd surged forward in an attempt to break through the police and security guarding the entrance. Some 40

occupy the reception area. There were already activists inside the council meeting and chaos ensued as police panicked, hitting out randomly. Smoke grenades were let off, as were fire alarms, and people began fighting back and de-arresting others. Riot police were deployed along with dogs and eventually police horses. The whole area was cordoned off as police tried to regain control.

Lewisham Anti-Cuts Alliance, who had previously occupied the council chambers, claim the cuts will hit the poor most, affecting child care services, local libraries, advice centres and jobs at the council, with at least £60m stripped from the budget over the next three years. This sets the scene for future anti-cuts initiatives where every council in the

### INSIDE ►►

**Pension raid just the start** page 3

**A brief history of kettling** page 5

**Beating the Fascists** pages 8 and 9

**Svartfrosk column** page 10

**Daniel Cohn-Bendit** page 7

**Reviews** pages 14 and 15

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## NEWS

### IN BRIEF

**FOOTBALL:** Events took a decidedly odd turn during the unprecedented Scottish referees strike recently after 31 of the 33 registered match officials voted to refuse to officiate league games on Saturday 27th and Sunday 28th November for fear of their personal safety both on the pitch, and from fans. Officials from Portugal drafted in to replace them pulled out in solidarity with their colleagues. The Portuguese refs did an instant u-turn at Glasgow airport heading straight to the departure lounge after they found out the true nature of their duties. Referees from Iceland, Israel, Norway, Poland and Wales also refused to cross the picket line, which left the Scottish FA trawling the rest of the globe for scab refs.

**DOMESTIC EXTREMISM:** Despite the English Defence League's propensity for extreme views, violent behaviour and general public disorder, it seems the police still don't regard their activities as worth monitoring.

The anti-Islam football hooligan group officially come below animal rights activists, eco-warriors and pissed-off students in terms being a threat according to Detective Chief Superintendent Adrian Tudway, who recently took over the role of national co-ordinator for domestic extremism – the body charged with “targeting small groups which they believe are bent on violence”. In an ironic twist, the top cop described his new role as “ACPO's goalkeeper” (ACPO being one of those shadowy private and unaccountable policing organisations that co-ordinates policy on political activists and public order). Do the boys in blue know something we don't?

**HEALTH:** Primary care trusts (PCTs), the bodies that buy hospital and community care for patients and control the National Health Service's £100bn budget at the local level, are not in meltdown according to Tory health secretary Andrew Lansley, despite figures that show more than 2,000 managers have agreed to a voluntary resignation scheme, and despite the chief executive of the NHS himself openly declaring PCTs are in fact in meltdown.

Lansley is not known for his connection with reality. During the expenses scandal it was discovered he spent more than £4,000 of taxpayers' money renovating his country home months before he sold it and flipped his expenses claim to his London flat, where he spent thousands more.

**LOCAL GOVERNMENT:** The GMB general workers union, who represent manual workers in local government and the health service, have added up the total notifications of confirmed job losses and have revealed the total is an astonishing 50,665 across 45 UK councils. The biggest single loss is at Lancashire County Council with a confirmed 6,000 job being axed. These are not connected to the estimated 140,000 job losses predicted to go next year by the Local Government

### LENS CAP PUTTING THE BOOT IN



Bristol's arch mischief-makers make their feeling known about the coalition government cuts. The work was done by the Saint-Just Mob (named after the notorious French revolutionary) subverters who have been out and about under the cover of darkness re-decorating Bristol's commercial advertising landscape for the past 10 years.

## Immigration changes attack on workers

The goalposts have changed, yet again, for non-EU nationals working in the UK as the Tories start fulfilment of their promise for immigration restrictions. On 23rd November Theresa May, Home Secretary, announced the first wave of immigration cuts. Despite the media coverage – particularly in the business press – of the new restrictions the government can only make a superficial gesture towards appeasing anti-immigration tabloids, as the Home Office has no control over EU migrants. As a result, the immigration cap seems an ill thought out policy to prove the Tories have a ‘hard stance on immigration’. On closer inspection though, the new rules erode foreign workers' control over their lives and place it in the hands of Home Office approved bosses.

This first wave of immigration reform affects Tier 1 (Highly Skilled Workers) and Tier 2 (Skilled Workers). Tier 1 visas allowed for a migrant to work in the UK with no restrictions: they could change jobs, leave a job, or not work at all. As long as the worker was earning enough money, the visa could be renewed. Tier 1 visa holders have no recourse to public benefits - the tabloid frenzy over foreign workers scrounging benefits is complete bollocks. These visas were issued to the person, not their job. Currently, 13,000 people a year issued a Tier 1 visa, and under the new restrictions this will be cut to only 1,000

liquid capital, elite sports stars, and some specialist scientists. The Tier 1 visa effectively no longer exists.

Instead, all workers will now have to enter the UK under the Tier 2 visa scheme. The lions' share of this tier is now inter-company transfers (someone from Lloyds in New York is transferred to London) and only employees earning £40,000-plus per annum will be allowed to stay over 12 months, once again favouring the very wealthy. Workers who simply want to work in the UK must be sponsored by their employer. Employer sponsorship means that if a foreign worker changes jobs, leaves their job, or is fired they lose their visa and have only 23 days to leave the country. This tenuous position is furthered by the Home Office only allowing ‘trusted’ employers to hire foreign workers. Part of a trusted employers responsibilities require them to install software to directly report to the Home Office about their Tier 2 employee's activities.

On paper, the immigration cap for workers isn't catastrophic, from 30,000 foreign workers to 21,700. The real change is that visas for workers are no longer issued to people, they are issued to jobs. Under the new rules foreign workers do not have control over their own lives and are stripped of any ability to resist exploitation: constantly under government surveillance



# Pension raid just the start

## Fat cats are renewing their war against the old with a new £100 billion pension raid

You'd think that ten years on, after a mountain of cuts, closures and restrictions, the pensions crisis, originally sparked by the dot com crash, would be nearing an end. But like a dog returning to its vomit, the business community is far from done chewing on the remains of its workers' retirement funds.

Last time saw the spinning off of some funds so companies weren't liable for them any more, the switching over of others to lower-paying versions and the closure of funds to new entrants.

This time around the assault is two-fold. On the one hand sources in the financial press are warning of a £66bn shortfall in the collective pension liabilities of the FTSE 100 list of Britain's biggest companies. This is

likely to lead to further closures, spin-offs and attacks.

Related to this is a stealthy supporting move from the government, which is passing a law allowing companies to shift how they calculate inflation from RPI to the typically far lower CPI measure. It's thought this will strip £100bn directly out of the contributions made by companies to their employees' futures. But after years of big firms shifting away from offering their staff final salary pensions, how can the liabilities of these companies possibly still be so high as to 'justify' such measures?

At the high-point of the pensions 'crisis' in 2003, liabilities for British pension pots had spiked from practically zero to £100bn following the dot com crash in 2000, augmented by Gordon Brown's disastrous 'pension holiday' which allowed companies to stop paying into their employee funds.

In 2007, however, that dropped to a mere £3bn. Now it's around the £66bn mark again. What's going on?

The reason for this apparently wild swerving is that as pension pots act mainly as investment funds in the stock market, every time the market falls over it looks like they are failing to cope. When it recovers, it looks like the liabilities have disappeared.

The key factor for workers is that FTSE 100 firms have used the crashes in 2000 and 2008 as excuses for a massive private-sector destruction of final-salary pensions, where payout was based on your wage at retirement, replacing them with the much lower average-wage pension.

The object of cutting down these liabilities is to minimise the payouts given to workers via the company pension contributions, using words like 'inevitable' and 'ageing population' as a smokescreen.

In reality, the life expectancy of the working class is not rising nearly quickly enough to justify these measures – and companies who originally dropped their contributions in the 1990s have still not brought them up to snuff.

Rob Ray

## A new student movement

◀ page 1

were absolutely committed to continue to protesting the cuts 'by any means necessary'.

On the same day, 19 universities, including Manchester, Birmingham, Newcastle and Sheffield, were occupied, with more planned at later dates. The level of participation took university authorities by surprise, with many unprepared to deal with both the numbers and determination of the occupiers.

Each occupation issued its own demands, resolving to remain until they were met. Most centred on challenging the coalition's education policy, forcing management to condemn the cuts, reassess teaching budgets and staffing cuts, with many asking to make public the finances

press several universities are still in occupation despite legal threats and attempts to forcibly remove them.

When *Freedom* visited the occupation at University College London, spirits were high with students busy preparing for the 30th November protest. The room was buzzing with activity; banners and placards being made, statements being written, events being organised and around plastered across the walls were messages of solidarity and support from other universities, public figure and protest groups from across the globe.

The second national walkout and day of action was 30th November – called, predictably

to street in cities throughout the UK. In London protestors avoided police kettles by splitting into smaller groups and moving autonomously and instinctively in many different directions. Imagination and quick-wittedness seem to be the key to these student mobilisations.

What is the next step for this growing movement? These are certainly heady days with a feeling anything is possible, worth trying and, with the right amount of conviction, energy and momentum, achievable. This generation with nothing to lose and everything to play for is ushering in a new era of militant activity and political action that can only be a catalyst and inspiration. As anarchists it

## ANALYSIS

# Crisis? What crisis?

The government's attack on the welfare state is based on the lie that it is necessary to cut back on public spending in order to reduce the budget deficit and offset the economic recession, implying in the process that our problems are due to the so-called 'scroungers' – which in their vocabulary would include the entire public sector. A common sense question immediately springs to mind: if the state does not spend on its public (for whom it was supposed to have been created), then what the hell else does it spend on? Put another way: what other expenses does the state have?

Let's begin with public sector spending. The total spending in this area this year has been around £661 billion, with welfare and education costs amounting to £105 billion and £86 billion respectively.<sup>1</sup> This is measured against a resident population of 61.8 million (2009) and a current national debt and deficit of £1000.4 billion.<sup>2</sup> Let us now compare this with how much it spends on other things.

## Military

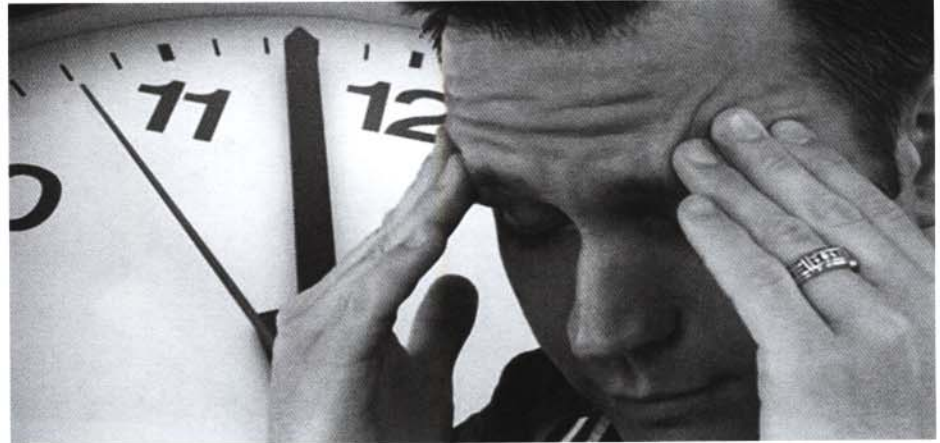
Government ministers have stated the cost of renewing Britain's nuclear defence will be at least £20 billion, with an added £1 billion year on year to maintain it. As far back as 2007 Tony Blair, then Prime minister, suggested the real cost of Trident would be as high as £100 billion.

In 2009, at the peak of the current global recession, world military expenditure actually increased by 5.9% totalling \$1,531 billion (£1,040 billion) of which the UK took 4.5% of the world share.<sup>3</sup> In the last ten years UK military spending increased by 28% to £58 billion in 2009, making it the third highest spender (in cash terms) on Defence in the world behind the United States and China. Spending on Defence represents some 5.8% of total UK Government expenditure.<sup>4</sup>

**It is well enough that people of the nation do not understand our banking and monetary system, for if they did, I believe there would be a revolution before tomorrow morning. (Henry Ford)**

## Police

England and Wales has 43 separate police forces of which the Metropolitan (London) is the largest with a force of 52,111 people. The total police grant for 2010/11 is nearly £4.9 billion<sup>5</sup> making it the most expensive police force in the world and none more effective for it. According to United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, England and Wales has the highest crime rate among developed countries for rape, burglary and robbery.<sup>6</sup> But, as long as the cops bear up



protesters and manage to stifle dissent, who cares, right?

## Surveillance

In an internal report senior Scotland Yard officer admitted that just one crime is solved a year by every 1,000 CCTV cameras available despite spending over £500 million on their implementation and upkeep.<sup>7</sup> For example, it cost the City of London £12 million in initial investment and a further £2.25 million annually to maintain its 619 cameras. There is no agreed total on how many cameras are owned and operated by government and police, figures ranging from one to four cameras per 1,000 people. So, if they are not used to solve crimes, what are they used for? Spying, maybe?

## Bank bailouts

Banks are now taking the lion's share of taxpayers' money. Worldwide losses caused by banks' excessive lending with money they did not have is estimated to run into trillions of dollars. While here in UK the total money spent on bailouts and fiscal stimulus totalled 19.8% of GDP (March 2009): £25 billion for Northern Rock (September 2007), £42 billion for Bradford and Bingley (September 2008), £37 billion for RBS, Lloyds, HBOS and recapitalisation (October 2008), £25.5 billion for more recapitalisation of RBS (February 2009), and £10 billion on Lloyds again (March 2009).

There are more bailouts coming with £7 billion dedicated to Ireland where a lot of UK banks had engaged in binge-lending. To add insult to injury, the Treasury spent £150 million to pay private consultants and experts, such as Goldman Sachs, to advise the government on how to clean up the mess!<sup>8</sup>

Not all of this is paid for by the taxpayers. A lot of it is borrowed from outside the country which then makes a big hole in the budget. Perhaps, Mr Cameron forgot to mention this aspect.

Apart from all this, there's all the big money that big corporations owe in taxes – Vodafone's £6 billion and RBS's £25 billion

that it does not appear necessary to recover. Also, there is the monthly cost of £1.3/3.7 million for deporting illegal immigrants (over £100 million in the last five years).<sup>9</sup> It might prove to be a lot cheaper to keep them here engaged as part of society.

Besides stirring up mass hysteria about wasteful spending the government, more importantly, is trying to rally as much public support as is possible towards propping up and selling an economic system that has obviously, colossally failed. There is more unfazed talk about handing over more of our public services to predatory private enterprises under the pretext of having no money. It looks like the only way to prevent our lives and liberties from being sold off in chunks is to be more militant in guarding them. The time for diplomacy is long gone.

## Footnotes

- 1 HM Treasury, [http://hm-treasury.gov.uk/pespub\\_index.htm](http://hm-treasury.gov.uk/pespub_index.htm), [http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/national\\_statistics.htm](http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/national_statistics.htm)
- 2 National Office of Statistics, <http://www.statistics.gov.uk/cci/nugget.asp?id=277>
- 3 Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, <http://www.sipri.org/research/armaments/milex/resultoutput/trends>
- 4 Ministry of Defence, <http://www.mod.uk/DefenceInternet/AboutDefence/Organisation/KeyFactsAboutDefence/DefenceSpending.htm>
- 5 The police grant report (England and Wales) 2010/11, <http://www.official-documents.gov.uk/document/hc1011/hc00/0047/0047.asp>
- 6 United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, <http://www.unodc.org/unodc/search.html?q=crime+statistics>
- 7 *Independent*, 24th August 2009, <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/cctv-cameras-help-to-solve-one-in-every-1000-crimes-1776678.html>
- 8 *Daily Mail*, 2nd December 2009, <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-1232446/Treasury-spent-150million-bank-bailout-experts.html>
- 9 *Independent*, 8th September 2010, <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/100-million-spent-on-asylum-deportation-flights-2073711.html>

## IN BRIEF

On the same day as school student National Walkout Against Tuition Fees on Wednesday 24th November, some 19 universities were occupied by students and staff as a protest against the proposed cuts to education by the coalition government. Despite many only lasting a day, at the time of going to press, some five days on, we report on some of those still in occupation.

**LONDON:** SOAS, the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, was occupied by over 150 students. Despite management applying for a high court injunction to have them forcibly removed, the occupiers remained defiant. This was after the administration refused all requests by the occupiers to negotiate. They continue to hold public events in the Brunei suite, including educational workshops, lectures and music events.

<http://soasoccupation2010.wordpress.com/>

**PLYMOUTH:** Around 20 students at the University of Plymouth are currently still in occupation with a self-designated protest zone, and are determined not to leave it until their demands are heard and satisfied. There is a live feed from the internet so people across the globe can watch in real time their occupation.

Live at <http://www.justin.tv/psac#/w/592542544>

**CAMBRIDGE:** Well over 100 students and others are occupying the Senior Combination room at the heart of the administrative headquarters. Groups are spreading leaflets around town promoting the demands, as well as a significant number of people at the occupation playing music, watching moving and writing reports on-line.

<http://www.defendededucation.co.uk/>

**NEWCASTLE:** After organising a teach-in, students democratically voted for continued action and have since occupied the Fine Arts Building of the University, with workshops and alternative lectures for students, and are completely happy for normal lectures to continue in the occupied lecture theatre. They also encourage people to come and visit

**EDINBURGH:** Having successfully occupied with hundreds of students the occupiers went on to negotiate with administration and although their demands have yet to be discussed its understood the occupiers are seeking to expand the struggle to involve all those who will be affected by the cuts.

<http://edinunianticuts.wordpress.com/>

**CARDIFF:** Management are currently preventing occupiers from accessing toilets, food and water from being delivered easily, and people from joining the occupation. Despite this they are 'staying put' until the university begin negotiations. Rallies have been called outside the main building and they are organising teach-ins.

<http://cardiffoccupation.wordpress.com/>

# A brief history of kettling

The police tactic of 'kettling' was first used at N30, the anti-WTO summit protest at Euston station, London, November 1999. It was introduced after the disastrous policing efforts during J18 (Carnival Against Capital) some months previously where anti-capitalists and anarchist demonstrators roamed free throughout the city of London causing mayhem as part of the global protests against the G8 summit.

The process of kettling involves lines of police forcefully corralling people together into a space then surrounding the whole group on all sides preventing them from leaving the cordoned-in area. Any attempt by people to leave the cordon would result in physically being attacked by police (usually with batons, often with riot shields, boots and fists) in order to preserve the kettle. Detention in this manner would last several hours. After people have become bored, tired and cold they would be released in a controlled fashion, usually one person at a time, after being searched, photographed and had their names and addresses taken.

So successful was the kettling tactic that it was implemented at all future potentially inflammatory 'mass demonstrations' as a method of controlling, subduing and ultimately criminalising protestors. (Early kettling procedure went hand in hand with the misuse of 'section 60' order whereby police took the personal details and pictures of all those in the kettle for their database).

Although not defined in law (it still is simply a police tactic) it was given the green light by the High Court after some protestors questioned the legality of their seven-hour kettling in Oxford Circus on Mayday 2001 (pictured below). The courts ruled that the

police could under certain circumstances detain people against their will for long periods of time to prevent outbreaks of violence and criminal acts – and typically a breach of the peace. The example they gave was the detaining of football supporters in the ground while opposing fans left the area. The question of the fact most of the 2,000 people detained in Oxford Circus were in fact law abiding was described by the judge as "unfortunate".

In terms of legal issues, human rights lawyers have condemned the courts' decision as perverse and the practice is currently being challenged in the European courts, but for now it seems the police can continue the tactic, along with all the violence and thuggery that goes with it, under protection of the law.

The anarchist group the Wombles developed a strategy (borrowed heavily from the Italian radical left movement Tute Bianche) of wearing padding and protective headgear and using reinforced banners to break through police lines on demonstrations. While this proved very effective in the short term – the police had no idea how to handle such a disregard from their authority, it had to rely on everyone else adopting the same strategy of forcefully breaking out of the kettle to be truly successful. In the end it was seen as vanguardist (by the left, without a hint of irony) or too specialised to be universally adopted by everyone.

The real purpose of the kettle is to ensure people are dissuaded enough not to attend future protests – the law of diminishing returns – which actually succeeded throughout much of the 2000s. This generation of protestors, from what we've seen, aren't going to be that easily put off.



## INTERNATIONAL

### IN BRIEF

**AFGHANISTAN:** An Afghan border policeman turned his weapon against Nato troops during a training mission killing six service members in eastern Afghanistan on 29th November. The deaths brings the death toll of coalition forces to 668 this year, the highest annual loss since the US-led invasion in late 2001.

**BANGLADESH:** Workers at Maddyapara Granite Mining Company in Dinajpur walked out on indefinite strike in protest at the sacking of five workers, demanding withdrawal of case filed against them by the authorities. A total of 292 miners staged the wildcat strike and issued a seven-point demand including regularisation of jobs, the employment of local youths in the company, starting of three shifts and removal of some management officials, and the reinstatement of the sacked workers and the charges against them dropped.

**CANADA:** Over 100 migrant farm workers employed at Ghesquiere Plants Ltd. in Ontario are facing deportation after staging a wildcat strike to demanding thousands of dollars in unpaid wages from the struggling company. The migrant workers from Mexico, Jamaica, Trinidad and Barbados were angered at the overcrowded and unsanitary living conditions they had to suffer along with wages being withheld by the company. They are among the 20,000 migrant workers who come to Ontario every year to plant and harvest fruit, vegetables and other crops – work that most Canadians are not prepared to do.

**IRELAND:** One of the largest demonstrations in the Irish Republic's history brought more than 100,000 people on to Dublin's streets in protest over the international bail-out and four years of austerity ahead. Public service workers, students and left wing political groups and anarchist groups, including Workers Solidarity Movement (WSM) marched through the city under the banner of the Irish Congress of Trade Unions (ICTU) to demand an end to the imposed austerity measures. The WSM highlighted the fact that ICTU can't be trusted to organise what is needed, a general strike. More about the issues here: <http://www.wsm.ie/c/ictu-demonstrate-imf-ecb-ireland>

**MEXICO:** The latest UN climate change conference (COP 16) in Cancun took great care to downgrade expectations to avoid a repeat of the acrimonious failure of the last such summit in Copenhagen. Over 22,000 people, including 9,000 official delegates plus journalists, environmentalists and others attended the 194 nation summit to tackle crucial environmental issues. But without the presence of most of the western industrial nations it was an opportunity for the leaders of the 'global south' countries to declare 'the rich are holding humanity to ransom' over

### LENS CAP 60,000 GREEKS REMEMBER



Riot police in Athens march in front of a wall-painted slogan reading 'The troika [meaning the IMF, EU and ECB] is not an image on your TV screens; our response is given in the streets' during one of the biggest demonstrations Greece has seen in recent times, commemorating the Polytechnic uprising on 17th November.

## Italian student protests erupt

Italy erupted in a wave of protests on 25th November against the introduction of government reforms to education currently being discussed by parliament which will see cuts of \$12 billion and loss of 130,000 education-related jobs if implemented.

It was the second day of protests by thousands of students throughout Italy after a day of clashes with police outside the senate in Rome as they tried to occupy the building.

Spending cuts by governments throughout the European Union have sparked massive street protests and union strikes and Italian politicians increasingly fear they will have to appeal to the EU for a financial bail-out.

In Pisa, a human chain of thousands of demonstrators prevented tourists from entering the tower by as several protesters scaled the 57-metre-high landmark and unfurled a massive banner reading 'No to the Gelmini

reform' after education minister Mariastella Gelmini.

Outside the Roman Coliseum thousands of demonstrators marched around the 2,000 year-old monument with banners reading 'No profits off our future', while Turin's nineteenth century Mole Antonelliana landmark was occupied by students.

The Italian parliament is debating a bill presented by education minister that includes cutting funds to faculties and courses and eliminating altogether some areas of study and force schools that are running at deficit to close.

Another day of protest was marked on 30th November by students across Italy with groups now demanding the resignation of the whole government if they continue with the severe measures which would ruin future generations access to a decent education.

## Notes from the US

### History

Two reports were published in November detailing secret and disgusting events from the the United States' past. A paper from the US's own 'Justice' Department revealed that the US government knowingly provided a sanctuary for an as yet undisclosed number of Nazi officials immediately after the end of the Second World War. These included Otto Von Bolschwing, who facilitated the extermination of Jews in Germany – he eventually worked with the CIA. Earlier, in the 1940s, according to research by medical historian, Susan

of Guatemalans with syphilis and gonorrhoea in 'experiments' conducted without the subjects' agreement. Then a new study by the BBVA Bancomer Foundation has found that Arizona's notorious anti-immigrant law has led to a mass exodus (100,000 since the start of 2010) of Latinos from the state.

### Terrorism

The US's present terrorist pretensions continue unabated: one of Obama's election pledges was to close the Guantanamo Bay prison; his administration has now all but dropped plans to close the facility, citing lack of funds to relocate its

# Beware of the yammering Marcets

## Rob Ray looks at the EU's liquidity crisis

It's important in the context of the recent problems in Ireland to understand what the word Markets actually stands for and why it should really be spelled with a C rather than a K – it's a Mass of Arrogant Raging Capitalists Endlessly Threatening States.

Though sparked off by the credit crunch and picking on Ireland early due to its housing crash, the Marcets are taking an opportunity to practice shock doctrine tactics, using a projected lack of growth to justify a widescale withholding of cash from EU economies until they 'balance the books' and 'become more competitive' (i.e. destroy the rules, regulations and welfare systems which maintain living standards within the zone).

And now they're done with forcing ever-greater austerity measures on Taoiseach Cowen, with their allies in the EU 'bailing Ireland out' at an eye-popping 5.8% per annum, the vultures are starting to eye up Portugal, Spain, Italy and Belgium.

At issue is these countries' budget deficits which, like that of Ireland, are higher than the Marcets are comfortable with (in itself this is a major point of argument, historically no EU state bar perhaps Greece is in massively greater debt than has been usual since the Second World War).

These deficits are being continually worsened by 'liquidity issues' – where states can only get cash forwarded to pay everyday bills at punitive rates of interest. In order to 'improve Market confidence' and lower these rates, they are made to force austerity measures through which in turn dampen



growth, causing yet more problems.

Recent trading trends for example have seen government bonds (basically tax-backed IOUs) spike with investors demanding yields of around 4% from Spain and 3% from Italy, the two countries after Portugal on the hitlist. Even in Germany, widely considered to be the EU-zone's sugar daddy, bond yields have risen above the 2% mark. By contrast, two-year US Treasury bonds offer a mere 0.45% interest rate.

As the smaller economies succumb to this vicious circle and fall over, the large countries, principally Germany, bail them out, thus weakening their own hand and leaving them in turn open to Marcet attacks. Most analysts have named Spain as the make or break economy in this case, with one economist

noting it's "too big to fail, too big to save." While Spain's economy is considered more 'robust' than the other Piigs members (Portugal, Ireland, Italy, Greece, Spain) if its banks, particularly Santander, were to falter it could be brought to its knees, and with it the rest of Europe.

At root, this is the neoliberal austerity regimes first tried out by Milton Friedman, General Pinochet and the Chicago boys in Chile, followed by Argentina in the 1990s, writ large. The Marcets have finally gotten confident enough to take a stab at utterly destroying Europe's social safety nets for good – aided and abetted by governments which, rather than gang up and fight, are doing their best to accommodate every demand the Marcets can dream up.

## Notes from the US

◀ page 6

inmates! An official said, "Gitmo is going to remain open for the foreseeable future." At the same time, the White House said that it expects Khalid Sheikh Mohammed, the self-proclaimed mastermind of the 9/11 attacks, to remain jailed without trial indefinitely.

Another major promise of Obama's was to end the war on Afghanistan. In fact, the government is soon to make a formal announcement that the occupation will last at least until 2014; that any commitment to withdrawal won't be binding and could well slip again. But it gets worse: the administration is significantly expanding its military operations in Yemen – probably by building military bases in remote areas of the country and backing them by US Special Operations Forces, perhaps under CIA control. Analogously, the state's response to a federal lawsuit to challenge this filed by the American Civil Liberties Union

Rights was that the White House has an inalienable right to target and assassinate American citizens anywhere in the world if they pose a threat to the United States.

### Poverty

All of that will cost a pretty penny, for sure. It's a good job none of it will go to people who need it. It was reported in mid-November by the US Department of Agriculture that the number of households getting emergency food aid has all but doubled since the start of the recession – from 3.9 million (in 2007) to 5.6 million last year. Over ten times that (59 million) have had to go without health insurance for at least some of 2010. According to the US Center for Disease Control and Prevention, many people lacked insurance although they did have medical conditions or diseases which required treatment.

## Turkish anarchist tales

Women abused by their husbands in the eastern province of Van, Turkey, now have somewhere to turn to, thanks to the efforts of the city's resident 'anarchist', 46-year-old retired shoe factory worker Suna Sahin.

Since retiring from her job in 2007, Sahin has helped hundreds of women exposed to violence at home thanks to the organisation she helped form, the Blue Lake, inspired by the province's iconic lake.

The objective of the association is to reach out to those women who are victims of violence and to mobilise women by providing social, economic and cultural opportunities, Sahin said.

The early experiences led Sahin to become Van's 'anarchist', although she would be better described as a feminist. The label, however, tends to be applied to anyone who

## FEATURE

# On the untold story of Anti Fas

## The final part of our extended review of *Beating the Fascists* – its insights and implications

Red Action (RA) was created as a split from the SWP in 1980 and yet while some RA stuff is archived online, it is remarkable that their seminal founding statement 'We are Red Action' (WARA) is neither available in print nor online. So what BTF does concentrate on just one aspect of that founding statement – militant anti-fascism. Yet what was fundamental about WARA was its statement of repositioning the working class at the centre of left wing politics from where it had been dislodged or had voluntarily withdrawn in disgust. Thirty years on that is even more important with left wing politics identified by so many as middle class and against the interests of ordinary working class people. So essentially the IWCA (Independent Working Class Association) was the enactment of the principles of WARA. I am sure RA would argue they had to do the hard work first and force the BNP into making their withdrawal from the streets. But, as someone active in local politics in much of this period, I rarely thought and I am only aware of issues in a few places where the far right were a real threat to local organising. I and others did not argue against militant anti-fascism, but that it ought to be part of 'community self defence', and in fact Class War proposed the concept of Communities of Resistance in 1992, a few years before AFA did as part of their correct move to 'filling the vacuum'. I would argue that if RA had built the IWCA from 1980 we would be in a far better place than we are now.

Quite rightly *Beating the Fascists* notes the ANL (Anti Nazi League) only pushed British loyalism/fascism into the background in 1979. It never got rid of it whatever ANL say. Equally that is all AFA did, but they were more honest about it arguing there were merely operating to keep 'the vacuum' fascist-free. I remember arguing for community style politics in the late 80s and being told it was not possible due to the far right though when this was simply not true – most groups operated with no opposition whatsoever from the far right

### Nationalism

Another area anarchists will no doubt take issue with *Beating the Fascists* and RA is over their uncritical, indeed supportive, attitude to nationalism. We have always noted how nationalism divides while trying at the same time to do what we can to support those oppressed by imperialism. For those in the north of Ireland that included supporting Troops Out etc., but not active support for the IRA as one member of RA went on to be. *Beating the Fascists* is in my mind completely uncritical of the actions of Patrick Hayes, and in my opinion knows it is on dodgy ground by only mentioning his role in the Harrods bomb, as if this was a 'class' attack. But he was involved with a cell that placed bombs in areas where innocent working class people could have been killed, at Tottenham Court Road, Camden Market, Woodgrange Park, etc., in 1992. In 1992 the armed struggle was not working and Adams and McGuinness had long come to that conclusion. Many anarchists would argue that the takeover of the civil rights movement by nationalists led to that massive and tragic loss of 3,000 people in the 30 year long bloody stalemate. Bizarrely RA also went backwards politically in this period swapping allegiance from the progressive IRSP (Irish Republican Socialist Party) to the nationalist SF (Sinn Fein). Another strange admission regards another RA turned IRA member, Liam Heffernan's whose conviction is mentioned, but not that he was set up by MI5.

The later move to the IWCA politics is in my opinion an acknowledgement that Irish politics could never build mass politics in this country. If you are directly associated with those who are bombing, whatever the rights and wrongs it will not work. And bizarrely the important lessons learnt from those trips to Belfast first with TOM (Troops Out Movement) and later by themselves (I always regret not going) was the community organising strategy being pushed on the streets, is simply not mentioned in *Beating the Fascists*. As working class revolutionary socialists I believe they came to see that socialism starts at home and support for Irish nationalism simply doesn't work on the streets. While it is true that from Ireland



Above, anti-racists in New Cross Road block the 1977; below left, AFA sticker; below right, by Jar

communities organised and how we could use this over here.

And this is why this book is so crucial as from a working class perspective it has looked around, surveyed, acted, reflected and come to conclusions that we must be fools to ignore.

RA/AFA were sometimes accused of parachuting into areas, i.e. turning up to batter some fash but then disappearing. The accusation was that then local leftists or Asians would get the backlash. *Beating the Fascists* tries to make out that this was not the case but, as AFAs efforts were rarely part of a community defence strategy, this did happen. To be honest though it is hard not to agree with AFAs lack of sympathy for the SWP when they got battered, so committed were the SWP in refusing to use physical defence (or attack) themselves yet happy to expend so much energy attacking ideologically those who did.

Imagine if RA/AFA had taken the IWCA turn in 1980. It is not hard, albeit in my case with hindsight, to see in the 1979 election a historic defeat for the Left both masked by and highlighted by the failure of the NF to break through. Militant anti-fascism had played a role in putting off the middle classes

**ANTI  
FASCIST  
ACTION  
IN THE AREA**



# Antifascist Action



Route of the National Front as they try to march from New Cross to Lewisham on 13th August 1978. In 1995 the BNP nationally had had enough, and the policy of 'street warfare' was ditched.

violence, and the efforts of the ANL and the likes of Brian Clough in decrying the Nazism of the NF in the media and the role of the RAR (Rock Against Racism) in creating a decent anti-NF youth movement had played a role but there is simply no question that critical factor in the overwhelmingly failure of the NF to break through was the newly militant Tory Party led by Thatcher and the failure of the Left in the 1970s.

**In the absence of class, race;  
in the absence of socialism,  
nationalism.**

The years 1993–95 were a critical time for AFA. In Millwall ward on the then fiercely independent Isle of Dogs the BNP got Derek Beackon elected and then increased their vote at the next election, though lost the seat. The book notes that due to Island geography, both physical and social, AFA were simply not able to operate there but also BNP were starting to operate a low key, low publicity D2D campaign that broke them in the years

Lecomber said, “the days of street warfare were over, no more marches, no more punch ups” and that was the start of the new BNP and the end of AFA.

By 1995 AFA and Red Action had decided a new strategy was needed. In their *Filling the Vacuum* they stated, “Ultimately the challenge for AFA is not only to destroy the BNP in working class areas but to replace them there. So the political message, to have resonance, will have to be deeper and more comprehensive. A straightforward antifascist parable, a simple refutation of the ‘radical’ in nationalism will, on its own, prove unsatisfactory. If AFA’s efforts are to culminate in victory we must seek to replace them, but to replace them we must not only outviolence them, we must also out radicalise them” (<http://libcom.org/library/filling-vacuum-london-afa>).

Finally, were they right to abandon militant anti-fascism? Of course it is a bit of a cheek for anyone to doubt their motivations, especially seeing their previous absolute commitment. I would argue that instead AFA have simply just found a better way of confronting fascism. I think they also came more and more to understand, as working class socialists, how anti-fascism is

left. The issue is power and confidence. We need to get power but people do not have the confidence to do anything about it all. Since the 70s the Left have really only a strategy of building the party. AFA/RA/IWCA argued that instead we need to build from the base winning small victories to allow gain confidence, not alone, and that to me is the basis of working class anarchism. What is sad is it is not happening.

Nick Griffin at RWB (Red White and Blue festival) 2001 said: “We’ve got Red Action and people like that saying they are going to fill it, but we don’t see them on the streets, we don’t see them in the estates, we don’t see them helping people on the estates ... we are there and Red Action and AFA and the rest of them are not there. We are the ones filling the space to the Left of Labour where the working class have been neglected for 30 years.”

Tony Lecomber, the architect of the change, describing the shift from the BNP’s street strategy to its door-to-door strategy, noted: “I wondered about the wisdom of putting these words into print lest the excitable want to re-live those times ... I had to [lest some felt the need] to drift back to those confrontational days.” In 2001 the BNP polled 47,000 which had increased to 563,000 by the 2010 Parliament Election and nearly one million in the Euro election of 2009.

**Richard Price  
Hackney**

Postscript: There is a brief reference to Eva Rosenhaft in *Beating the Fascists*. She wrote in depth about the fight against the Nazis in 1930s Berlin. Her book is essential reading for anti-fascists and destroys the liberal and Leninist anti-fascist myth of the KPD failing to stop the Nazis. It is called, by the way, *Beating the Fascists!* Maybe that was why there was no bibliography!



## COMMENT

## ABOUT FREEDOM

## ANGEL ALLEY

First, the bad news. Due to the financial crisis, subscription rates will have to go up in the new year. The new rates will be revealed in the next issue, but you can avoid the hike by resubscribing now.

The good news is that the *Freedom* Seasonal Festive Party will be on Saturday 18th December, starting at 2pm and going on until the early evening. Bring your mates, and don't forget your shopping list for all those wonderful books you want to give as gifts for Crimbo.

Meanwhile, we live in exciting times! So exciting, in fact, that on Tuesday we closed up the shop and went out to support the students. So, if this issue lands on your doormat just a little later than usual, then it's because we're still thawing out after running around London in the snow trying to keep up with the kids both physically and politically. What was most impressive was how quickly the students and school-kids have picked up on 'kettling' and how to avoid it. The result being that the cops have been given a good old fashioned run around. Well done!

You can watch Andy embarrass himself giving a legal talk at the UCL occupation here: [guardian.co.uk/education/video/2010/nov/30/student-protests-university-occupation-video?intcmp=239](http://guardian.co.uk/education/video/2010/nov/30/student-protests-university-occupation-video?intcmp=239)

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## NEXT ISSUE

The next issue will be dated 18th December 2010 and the last day to get copy to us for that issue will be Thursday 9th December. You can send your articles to us by email to [copy@freedompress.org.uk](mailto:copy@freedompress.org.uk) or by post addressed to 'The Editors', Freedom, 84b Whitechapel High Street, London E1 7QX

## A sideways look

by SVARTFROSK

After the first student protests I had a lot of interesting conversations with workmates, ranging from the obvious disdain to almost enthusiastic support. One argument that didn't go down too well though was when I suggested that breaking windows wasn't violence.

The most obvious riposte from one colleague was that it may not have been violence, but it was certainly intimidation. I think this is a fair enough argument, but one that needs addressing by putting it into context. No one who isn't some fetishist for Parliament would imagine that the student demonstrations would have been covered by the media if there hadn't been broken glass. Even the national papers picked up on that. The point has been made by many of the students themselves that millions marched against the Iraq war. Peacefully. They were ignored.

While the coalition still intend to push on with their plans, many of us have been heartened by the students' bravery and even the simple response of standing up for themselves. It's perhaps telling that the last major upsurge of unrest was against the poll tax, back in 1990. Many of these student demonstrators weren't even born then, and hardly any were alive during the miners' strike, the defeat of which cast a pall over any sort of socialist politics since. The students wonder why there aren't more out there with them. It's because many know no better, and many are still nursing the wounds of previous defeat. The prospect of changing the passivity in this country is a hopeful sign of the protests. At its heart is a recognition that you have to fight for yourselves – you certainly can't rely on politicians as the Lib Dems have shown.

But breaking a few windows isn't just about getting media coverage. It is an act that is in itself transgressive – directly confronting the norms of everyday society. For many involved, it will probably be the first step to developing their own political ideas and identity, and gaining in confidence. It carries risks, but what doesn't?

Despite property destruction being newsworthy, it should not be a core tactic. The police are expecting it, hence the planted van on the second fees demo in London. In the 1980s, there were Stop The City demonstrations, intended to disrupt business as usual. Since then, the traffic generated by business has massively increased, so much so that the State now regulates it in the form of the Congestion Charge, a way of pricing poorer people off the road. Most major cities have a number of pinch-points for traffic. Don't worry about marching from A to B and agreeing where the police are going to kettle you. Be flexible, mobile and pick some alternative targets. It warms my heart that Vodafone have already been on the end of quite a few occupations. But as one of their employees said to a picket in Northampton, 'it isn't just Vodafone'.

The young people organising these protests, occupations and actions are learning as they go along. *Daily Mail* types will tut that they are sacrificing their education for protest. To me, the boot is on the other foot – they are learning far more than they would at school or college. Who they can trust; who's full of hot air; what the police are really like; never to trust a politician – any politician, even one who says he's your friend and calls your anger 'justifiable'.



## On Proudhon

Iain McKay's regular contributions to *Freedom* (and other libertarian journals) are ever a 'must' – his overview of Proudhon's *The General Idea of the Revolution in the Nineteenth Century*, published in *Freedom*, roughly a year ago, inspired me to spend rewarding hours giving the text a careful read. Background reading of this kind is especially essential for libertarians such as myself, with a long 'history' in the traditional Marxist orbit – and hence 'blinded' before objective truth much more than appreciated at the time.

The now imminent publication (readers have been waiting for this for a year now) of McKay's Proudhon anthology, *Property is Theft* [see *Freedom*, 20th November 2010], promises to be an important revelation of the prescience of early anarchist thinkers when they encountered (and battled with) the Marxian authoritarian option.

Marx and Proudhon met and discussed during the mid 1840s – Marx asked him to join forces with himself and Engels in laying the foundations of the new worldwide 'revolutionary movement'. It is pleasing to note (from the 'internet preview') that Iain's anthology will include Proudhon's letter to Marx, dated 17th May 1846, where he shows that he (like Bakunin) correctly fore-saw the inevitable outcome of Marx's totalitarian 'methodology'. There is one paragraph in Proudhon's letter that bears quoting – and re-quoting:

"We can look together, if you will, for the laws of society, the way in which these laws are manifested, the progress we are making in uncovering them. But God, after having knocked down all a *priori* dogmatism, let us not in turn dream of making our own, of indoctrinating the people. Do not fall into the same contradiction of your countryman Martin Luther, who, after having overturned Catholic theology, immediately set about with the help of excommunications and anathemas to found a Protestant theology. For the last three centuries, Germany has been largely engaged in tearing down all that Luther built. We should not leave humanity with a similar

mess as a result of our own efforts. With all my heart, I applaud your idea of bringing all opinions to light; let us show the world an example of learned and insightful tolerance, let us not be the apostles of a new religion, one that makes itself a religion of reason, a religion of logic. We should welcome and encourage all protestations. Let us get rid of all divisiveness, all mysticism. Let us never consider a question exhausted, and when we do get down to our last argument, let's start again if need be with wit and irony! I will join your organisation on that condition – or else not."

Bob Potter

## The A on the Van

I have been to both student demonstrations, among many disturbing facts mainly from the media, authorities and police, two things bothered me and made me write this comradely criticism: the anarchist 'A' on the van and these lines from Whitechapel Anarchist Group's website (italics are mine):

"... chairs stolen from cafes like 'pert' and smashed against various buildings windows (*sadly the glass being too strong to break*) the mob carried on moving, circling back and running up the strand, *vandalising* continuing the whole way up to convent garden where the police started appearing again and the mob started to disperse, disappearing into the shoppers around."

"The more opposition on the streets the better, with the ballot box unable to bring about change, the unions paralysed, and 'the left' boring the fuck out of everyone *there's little else that can be done* except resort to *violence and vandalism* on the streets aimed at the police and state."

People were fooled and played the right wing media game to smash an empty van and to place an A on it, so those in charge of brainwashing can have enough material to work on it. And the second one was a total

disaster with dispersing one thousand people within 20 minutes (something that police didn't manage to do in few hours!). What was achieved is described above, and not, for instance, a more eye catching move of thousands around the touristic places.

Don't take me wrong, I blame the state, corporations and police for every single destruction happened during the demonstrations, but let's face it in a very pragmatic way if our politics were right or wrong. The main argument behind the direct actions at Millbank tower and the actions on 24th was to grasp the media attention, something which was almost impossible with a numerous but mute demonstration. But why did we need the media attention? Not to be able to connect with millions out there which are not being informed otherwise? There has never been any change without some popular support, and popular support doesn't come from just talking about people but is to be able to connect with them.

And here is my criticism – when, for the majority of people anarchism is a synonym to violence, destruction and disorder, how can you connect with them? Probably the only time anarchists can grasp the media attention directly to them is by being accused of vandalism and violence. This is not helping us in collecting more people around anarchist values and ideas which are in nature non-violent (I mean a very broad meaning of violence including exploitation and...).

So comrades, I want to suggest that we should learn this lesson from Greeks: we won't let anyone to smash something under the anarchist banner which may politically be damaging to the struggles of others. Any direct action should be aimed, planned and thought for its consequences. Obviously the source of violence is the state, and any self-defence is not a violent act to be blamed. It's only then that we can reach more people in our struggle.

Ramtin

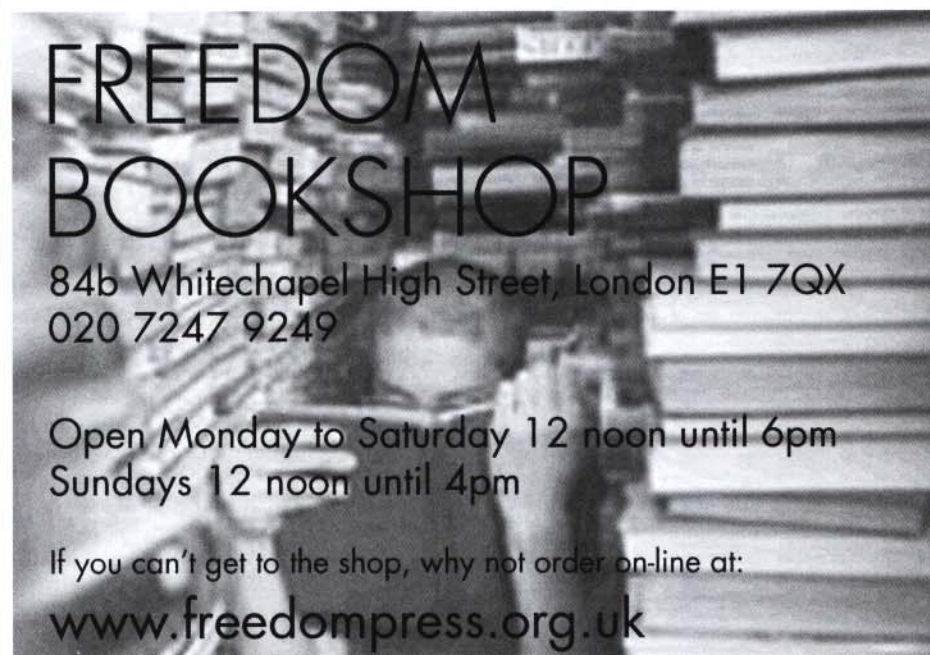
## Immigration changes attack on workers

◀ page 2

their bosses discretion. This is a dangerous precedent that should concern all workers.

This is only beginning, by 2015 the coalition wants to limit immigration from approximately 200,000 non-EU foreigners to 'tens of thousands'. That means that many people already here will be forced to leave when their visa expires and cannot be renewed. Students, Tier 5 workers, family and settlement visas are all in the firing line. And like any border control, it's not about people, it's about money.

A longer analysis of the Points Based Immigration System (PBS) is in the current issue of *Black Flag*



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## GETTING ACTIVE

### PRISON NEWS

There are some of these columns where it proves quiet easy to decide on the issue to be covered, for example the disturbances at Moorland and Warren Hill youth prisons in the last issue. Then there are columns, such as this one, where there has been so much interesting and important prison-related news in the previous two weeks that it creates a dilemma, especially when so much of it relates directly to previously covered news items and one has only 450 words in which to do it.

So this column, do I write about the blockading of dozens of prisons across France by screws using burning tyres and pallets after the four biggest prison officers' unions called a 24-hour national strike against their working conditions and government budgetary restrictions on 15th November; or about the riots on the same day protesting the miserable, unsanitary conditions endured by prisoners in French jails, such as the one at Europe's biggest prison, the 3,800-bed Fleury-Mérogis maison d'arrêt, which saw hundreds of prisoners set light to their beds and parts of the prison as riot police fired tear gas and attacked them with batons; or about Canadian screws protesting the announcement of a \$45 million prison expansion programme, whilst the Canadian prisons' watchdog condemned the country's prisons as overcrowded and unsafe; or the increasingly overcrowded prisons in Italy, up 5% on last year; or that 10 of the 1,100 deaths from cholera in Haiti so far have been in the grossly overcrowded National Penitentiary in Port-au-Prince?

Maybe, given the previous column, I should write about the five-hour protest by prisoners at HMYOI Stoke Heath as the last issue went to press; that researchers at the University of Exeter have found that young offenders in England and Wales are three times more likely to have suffered a traumatic brain injury (TBI) than their 'non-offending' (sic) counterparts (something that tallies with US research findings that between 25% and 87% of adult prisoners had suffered a TBI prior to imprisonment); or that a fire in El Salvador at a youth detention facility for gang members resulted in 20 deaths, with only 4 of the 42 prisoners in the affected building emerging unharmed (the death toll was so high as 'security concerns' stopped emergency services being allowed into the dilapidated and overcrowded facility)?

Then there is the quiet dropping of Ken Clarke's 'rehabilitation revolution' plans for the introduction of minimum-maximum sentences because it proved too expensive to implement; the call for 'military only' wings in Scottish prisons as there are so many ex-forces prisoners currently banged-up; or the results of an independent investigation into the 55 unnatural deaths last year in South African prisons finding that most deaths were due to beating by screws but that no one had been charged over any of the deaths. Some issues, this column could fill the whole of the paper.



The Solidarity Federation's statement on the Battle of Millbank was released too late for publication in the last issue of *Freedom*. We reproduce it here as offers an important political perspective on the current upsurge in student militant activity.

Solidarity Federation, which helped organise the Radical Workers' and Students Bloc at the NUS/UCU education march derides "absurd and patronising" attempts to blame it for damage at Tory HQ – and calls for increasing direct action against cuts.

News reporters have been indulging in some imaginative speculation over the last few days suggesting that the temporary occupation of the Conservative Party headquarters on 10th November was down to an internet conspiracy consisting of, among other groups, the Solidarity Federation. This is sensationalist nonsense.

Of course some of our members – those studying or working in higher education – were at the demonstration, but we cannot take credit for the storming of 30 Millbank when even a brief look at the video and photo evidence available shows that a wide cross-section of the national student community took part.

It is absurd and grossly patronising to attempt to pin the day's hugely unpredictable events on the heads of an apparent 'hardcore of troublemakers' or 'protest junkies', in articles that sit alongside footage of student participants confirming that this was their first ever demonstration. Even if we were inclined to manipulate and control crowds, the chances of us successfully doing so as a small minority in the midst of irate thousands are surely minimal. What must really terrify the politicians is to see how red and black flags and masks were hugely outnumbered

cuts to their education – cuts which now bear the fingerprints of all three major political parties.

Against this backdrop then, the treachery of NUS President Aaron Porter, who called the occupation "despicable" and accused genuinely angry students of "hijacking" his march, looks worse and worse. We can only assume that Porter is concerned about the effect that this will have on his credentials as a future Labour Party high-flyer, following in the footsteps of Jack Straw, Phil Woolas, and the like in using the NUS as a stepping stone into professional politics. A photograph of Porter with the word 'DESPICABLE' has now gone viral online, surely only the first step in the gradual abandonment of the NUS as the self-appointed campus spokesperson.

Following the demonstration we have already seen occupations at the London School of Economics and Manchester University – which would tally with a variety of other tactics that we would advocate as next steps in the fight for education. We also call on students to join the next big walkout on 24th November, co-ordinating with the UCU union and other university staff while also reaching out to school sixth formers who are looking at paying £50,000 to £60,000 for an undergraduate degree.

We hope students will be the first of many to directly reject the cuts which affect us all and we will continue to organise against this scorched-earth austerity plan in our workplaces and neighbourhoods, democratically and independently of union leaders and politicians bleating the mantra 'business as usual'. Only through struggle – direct action and solidarity between workers, students, the unemployed and the retired – can we fight back in this class war of the rich

# I am a megaphone

**A 1968 interview with Daniel Cohn-Bendit, a radical who was part of the student uprising in Paris that year against a repressive French government**

*How do you describe your political position?*  
Basically I am an anarchist... a Marxist-anarchist.

*Some journalists have described you as the leader of the revolution.*

Let them write their rubbish. These people will never be able to understand that the student movement doesn't need any chiefs. I am neither a leader nor a professional revolutionary. I am simply a mouthpiece, a megaphone.

*Would you support a Popular Front?*

A Popular Front at the moment would be an extremely positive step in clarifying the situation: the masses would end up by understanding better the nature of the trade-union bureaucracy and the traditional working-class parties, and then an alternative on the left of the Communist Party could easily be formed.

*Isn't that a little bit of an over-simplification?*

Not at all. Look, there are two extreme possibilities: on the one hand the victory of a fascist-type reaction and the relative defeat of the proletariat for a least a decade. On the other hand there might be the development of a situation like that in Russia at the beginning of this century; 1905 or else February 1917. If it turns out to be a February 1917 situation, say we have a so-called Popular Front with a Kerensky by the name of Mitterrand or Waldeck-Rochet. Certainly there is no shortage of Mensheviks: the difficulty is to find any Bolsheviks!

*But is it possible to have a French revolution in a vacuum?*

No. The revolution in one country is certainly not feasible. Also from an economic point of view. An economic crisis, caused for example by social conflict, cannot remain isolated in one country. Nor a financial crisis, a dollar crisis, transcends as you know all countries. The system is international. However we have to begin by undermining each particular part of it, and in Paris that's what we have begun. In Paris the situation could truly be described as pre-revolutionary.

*What is the role of the Communist Party in all this?*

The Party is one of the two power-structures which at the moment are propping each other up. De Gaulle and his State on the one



power in the State. The Party is on the defensive because it is obliged to defend its position of power within the working-class movement. Our action, by contrast, is offensive: that is its advantage. All these intermediate and transitory objectives arising from the present situation, all the strong pressures from below, are pushing away at the old structures of power. You know, in this situation, the Party hasn't very much will to take the reins of the bourgeois state into its hands. Moscow is certainly against it: they have very much more reliance on the General than on the little bureaucrats of the French Communist Party.

*Consequently a Popular Front would detach the masses from the Party?*

Yes, that's more or less the idea, but don't forget that in reality the whole thing is very much more complex. The existence of the Party is an objective reality, one can't decide from one day to another to eliminate it. It is thanks to the Party and the CGT that the concept of the class-struggle has kept its significance in the working-class consciousness. Our accomplishment will be to make conscious the divisions which exist between the declarations of the Party and its actual reformist politics. In the struggles of the last few days we have made enormous strides.

*But the workers haven't let you enter the factories?*

It's not true. The functionaries of the Party have only partially succeeded in closing the factory gates on us. They have had to do this so as not to lose their position of power, but this has cost them and is going to cost

*Do you think of the student movement as a new International?*

At the moment there are individual contacts and group contacts on an international level, but it is not yet possible to speak of common action. Action is born from below, from the actual situation. It's just the same as in the struggle against capitalism.

*Are you thinking, then, of intensifying contact?*

Certainly, but that is not the central problem. Co-ordination would be a positive gain, but the Student International doesn't interest me. It doesn't interest me at all. What we need to form is a new revolutionary left, of which the student movement would be a component. Otherwise the student movement will remain isolated, within the limits of a movement of protest. But we may already be overcoming this. In France, in Italy, and to some extent in Germany, there are already links with the working class, even if they are only at a local level.

*What do you think will be the organisational form of the new revolutionary movement?*

It isn't yet possible to say ... We are creating groups at the bottom: workers and students who collaborate for local action. But I don't think it's possible to be more precise than this.

*Perhaps they are already the Bolsheviks of the new revolution, perhaps they have already decided to institute the dictatorship of the proletariat?*

No, not the dictatorship of the proletariat. We are against all authority.

This interview from 23rd May 1968 was originally

## REVIEWS

WHAT'S ON  
DECEMBER

■ **4th** Global Day of Action on climate change, march on Parliament for Climate Justice and be part of a Global Day of Action on climate, assemble at 12 noon at Speakers Corner, Hyde Park, London for Zero Carbon March, then 2pm rally in Parliament Square, for details phone 020 7833 9311, see [globalclimatecampaign.org](http://globalclimatecampaign.org) or [campaigncc.org](http://campaigncc.org).

■ **4th** Norfolk march against the cuts, join in as Norwich erupts in a conflagration of public discontent at the cuts, meet 12 noon at Chapelfield Gardens, Norwich, NR2 1SU and then march to the Forum, for details email [ncac@btconnect.com](mailto:ncac@btconnect.com) or see [norfolkcoalitionagainstcuts.org](http://norfolkcoalitionagainstcuts.org).

■ **4th** National Day of Action Against Tax-avoiders, targeting companies who are avoiding corporate tax, as the burden of the financial crisis falls on the poorest – see the website for further details, <http://ukuncut.wordpress.com>.

■ **11th** 'Do the anarchists have an answer to the economic crisis?', Northern Anarchist Network meeting at Bolton Socialist Club, 16 Wood Street, Bolton BL1 1DY, for details contact 0161 793 5122 – the Northern Anarchist Network (NAN) is a regional body of both unaffiliated and organised anarchists whose supporters have joined many struggles and it emphasises local action and responsibility.

■ **11th** Stop the English Nationalist Alliance, a nationalist group with links to the EDL and March For England, who plan to hand in an anti-Islam letter to 10 Downing Street at 1pm, so meet at Whitehall in London just before 1pm to oppose them (note this demo was originally planned for 20th November), for more information email [camdenantifash@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:camdenantifash@yahoo.co.uk).

■ **until 31st** SiegeMemory, an interactive documentary by Rob Conway exploring how the Siege of Sidney Street of 1911 is remembered today, weaving together interviews with working class East Enders, historians, anarchists and academics to tell an exciting story in a interactive non-linear manner – an exhibition will be showing at Freedom's Autonomy Club Gallery, 84b Whitechapel High Street, London E1 7QX throughout December during shop hours, see [siegememory.net/](http://siegememory.net/) or [freedompress.org.uk/news/tag/art-exhibition/](http://freedompress.org.uk/news/tag/art-exhibition/) for details.

## JANUARY

■ **15th** Musical protest to cancel the arms fair at the Excel Exhibition Centre – protest during the Boat Show at ExCel to get the arms fair at that location cancelled, musical and non-musical supporters needed, meet outside the western entrance to Excel Exhibition Centre, Royal Victoria Dock, London E16 1XL from 2pm until 5pm (from Custom House DLR station just follow the signs to the ExCel Centre).

## FILM

## Let Me In

directed by Matt Reeves, 2010

It's arguable that, as the infinitely less adept American counterparts clunk their way through near verbatim dialogue, something has been lost in translation. However this fails to mitigate the exasperating disappointment of this gutless rehash.

*Let Me In*, a remake of the 2008 Swedish film *Let the Right One In*, concerns the burgeoning relationship between two 12-year-old outcasts: Owen (Kodi Smit-McPhee), a vulnerable pre-teen, and Abby (Chloe Moretz), who may or may not be a vampire.

With *Let the Right One In*, Tomas Alfredson's direction, steeped in a very social-realist tradition, was restrained and articulate; Hoytema's gently probing camera lingering over the players, voicing those quiet moments of consternation, of childlike infatuation, of intimacy, moments of gauche interactions, of oblique threat and of the loneliness of childhood. It was truly heartfelt and challenging.

Matt Reeves' version (produced by the resurrected Hammer films, recently purchased by the Dutch media mogul John de Mol), shorn of all the original's quiet nuance, plays out like a great, bloated, American slap in the face. Every equivocal touch explained away, in the fear that the average viewer couldn't

possibly countenance such an intellectual and emotional engagement (let alone read subtitles).

Stylistically, those elegantly rendered set-pieces that leapt from the screen in the Swedish precursor barely resonate here. Instead they are inundated with paroxysms of blood and viscera and clunky CGI, gently assuaging our fears that this could be anything other than another Hollywood sanctioned operation, at once palliative, pugilistic and, of course, profitable. From an auditory perspective, the beautifully recorded sound adopted in *Let the Right One In* has been eschewed for an overwrought symphonic score, helpfully reminding the audience when to acknowledge the otherwise undetectable suspense or pathos.

Elsewhere, the protagonists' relationship has been refracted through a fashionably prurient gaze, sexualizing their intentions, abandoning the far more sincere meditation on unconditional love as characterised by the original.

The emergence of the American remake is artless and venal. It insults the Western viewer; it debases the artistic integrity of potentially great US directors and leaves the foreign originals to languish in abject cultdom.

See *Let the Right One In* instead.

Keir Brisbane-Langsdon



## QUIZ ANSWERS

1. George Osborne. Subsequently he, along with a host of right-wing commentators have argued that Dublin's policy of ferocious cuts to public services, wages and welfare were the model to be emulated.
2. He's so impressed with the success of Ireland's low-tax economy that he's using about £9 billion of Treasury money to lend to Ireland to help with their "shining example".
3. One was Labour, one was Lib Dem and

it, yeah, right.

4. It was the phrase used by Danny Alexander in a secret pre-election Lib Dem report. He wrote "On tuition fees we should seek agreement on part-time students and leave the rest. We will have clear yellow water with the other [parties] on raising the tuition fee cap, so let us not cause ourselves more headaches." Hmm, politicians lying to get votes, whatever next? Bears passing some clear yellow water next time they're

# Back to the future

Two heavily-hyped British media events link economics and social reproduction with sharply contrasting uses of nostalgia, according to Tom Jennings

Shane Meadows' four-parter *This Is England '86*, on Channel 4 in September, reconstitutes the cast of his 2006 film (see *Freedom*, 30th June/14th July 2007), depicting its characters' continuing misadventures three years later. The skinhead subculture whose ambivalences the earlier work unpicked – here echoing only in fading NF graffiti – has diluted further into post-punk, goth, mod and casual crossovers – a stylistic promiscuity mirroring diverse fortunes among the misfit members of the gang who, nevertheless, retain the fierce loyalty Meadows sees as emblematic of the times in the depressed post-industrial contexts he excavates so convincingly. And although again structured by the involvement of Shaun (Thomas Turgoose) with his old mates, the original semi-autobiographical focus loosens, allowing a more fully-realised ensemble to grapple with the challenges of young working-class adulthood when prospects are dire and dubious certainties of the past disappear in the austerity and hopelessness inflicted by rampant Tories.

In such inauspicious circumstances the 'imagined community' of nation coheres no better than the England football team at World Cups then or now. *This Is England '86* renders the concrete damage to the social fabric under Thatcher most explicit in a gamut of family stresses and dysfunctions which friendship networks struggle to support, ameliorate or redeem – beginning and ending with failed attempts by Woody (Joe Gilgun) and Lol (Vicky McClure), whose relationship always was the group's centre of gravity, to marry. Their cheap and cheerful ceremonials fall foul, however, of material, social and historical stumbling blocks which threaten to foreclose on any future together. His promotion to foreman at work risks turning him into a facsimile of his father, thus bringing her abused background intolerably into conscious relief in a transfixing narrative strand escalating towards unlikely resolution. Skillfully melding the mildly comic, sympathetically grotesque and downright horrific without ever detracting from serious concern, the script furthermore sketches comparably tangled personal tensions and pressures across the board in a compelling portrait of a desolate generation boding their own coming of age.

Switching format seems natural, given



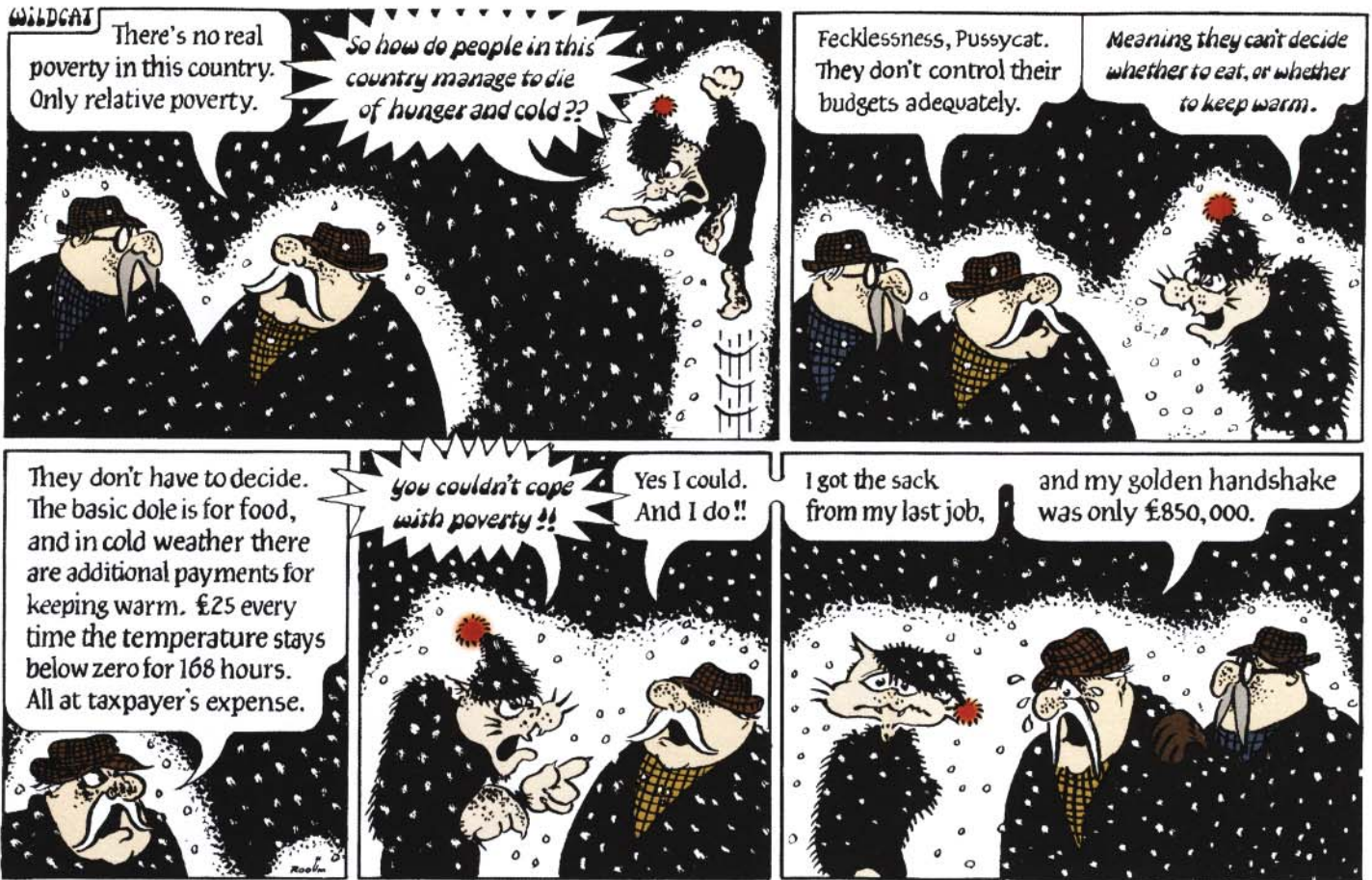
social realism by Alan Clarke, Ken Loach and Mike Leigh which couldn't get film funding – and for the discipline of television production he enlisted co-writer Jack Thorne, with the first two slightly disjointed episodes directed by Tom Harper. The trademark collaborative practice with a superb cast shines through, improvising everything from dialogue to design and costume, placing a premium on the awkward naturalism of time, place and interaction rather than slavish devotion to seamless superficial simulation. This approach favours narratives weaving together multiple characters without relegating subsidiary roles as mere props for conflicted heroes – which previous work, including *This Is England*, did. This augurs well for emphasising the open-endedness of real communities with potential for resilience, autonomous agency and creativity as well as regression, submission and malice. Expect *This Is England '90* next – another World Cup, more youth cultural shifts – in a marvellously resonant saga of modern UK history.

## Ghosts of Crises Past

*Made In Dagenham* has been touted as the latest international Brit crossover honouring ordinary people's lives. Directed by Nigel Cole – who previously made *Calendar Girls* (about the Yorkshire Women's Institute charity pin-up project) – the commercial pitch flaunts a legacy of Ealing and *Carry On* comedies and recent social-realist recuperations like *The Full Monty*. Celebrating the 1968 strike by sewing machinists enraged at being reclassified 'unskilled', which shut down Ford's Essex car plant and eventually resulted in landmark legislation, the film certainly

determination of working-class women facing concerted public and private pressure and patronisation from bosses, politicians, union bureaucrats, the media and their own men-folk. Meticulous visual design and authentic settings complement the overly bright and breezy filming of predictably sexed-up characters, but an agile script ably combining gallows and gutter humour and genuine warmth and respect works courtesy of excellent acting – especially by Sally Hawkins as initially reluctant spokeswoman Rita O'Grady gradually growing in confidence leading her workmates towards winning the day.

Interesting gestures also contextualise developments in the postwar political and social background, where the social-democratic settlement of full employment and welfare depended on trade union power tenuously taming grassroots militancy. Nonetheless clashes with corporate and political establishments escalated in the 'Swinging Sixties' whose consumer culture had yet to trickle down meaningfully to the lower-classes – but unfortunately most of the relevant narrative strands are decisively botched here. We don't sense the everyday intelligent combativeness among contemporary factory workers beyond stereotypes of striking 'at the drop of a hat', and the creepy collaborationism and manipulative agendas of union, company and government functionaries are similarly caricatured. The wider impact of Women's Lib likewise translates into ludicrous episodes like the boss's wife whispering moral solidarity while lending Rita her Biba frock – with other vexed questions of family conflict and gender roles



## Review

◀ page 15

wish-fulfilled away or magnified into melodramatic excess. Still, labour disputes are rarely portrayed favourably at the pictures – let alone with female protagonists acting on their own account who are, moreover, successful.

But actually, of course, these strikers effectively lost – fobbed off with a marginal wage rise (semi-skilled regrading waited until 1984, after a longer strike) and the liberal sop of ‘rights’ to equal pay which, in practice, is currently even further away while jobs are generally ‘re-evaluated’ downwards into part-time precarity. Given such rich material and the benefit of substantial hindsight, crowd-pleasing populism could surely have been

accomplished without so thoroughly falsifying the significance of these events at the time and since. Sadly the film-makers had neither the requisite wit nor will. Instead – milking the overweening ‘uplifting’ imperative – not only are our brave heroines portrayed as unequivocally victorious, but sick-making end-credits then claim that the world’s therefore a better place, with Ford thereafter transformed into a model of global ‘best practice’! *Made in Dagenham*’s nostalgic sentimentality and inspirational entertainment thus seem firmly predicated upon failing to learn from history.

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

*This Is England '86* is available now on DVD. *Made in Dagenham* is on general release.

## THE QUIZ

1. Who proclaimed, in 2006, that neo-liberal Ireland was a “shining example of long-term economic policymaking” which showed “how to run an economy”?
2. What has been one of his recent actions in regard to Ireland?
3. Tory minister Eric Pickles wants to stop councils paying their chief executives too much. What was the political complexion of the eight councils which paid the most when he announced the plan in 2008?
4. How has “clear yellow water” confirmed what anarchists knew all along?

Answers on page 14

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