

# FREEDOM

Bookfair Souvenir Special

FINAL EDITION

OCTOBER 2014

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# 1886 - 2014

# FREEDOM IS DEAD.

# LONG LIVE FREEDOM!

THE FUTURE OF FREEDOM INSIDE THIS FINAL EDITION...



# FROM THE EDITORS

## THE END OF FREEDOM?

ALTHOUGH THIS IS THE LAST PRINT EDITION OF FREEDOM, a newspaper with a significant legacy, it does not mean it is the end. The reasons for closing the paper are more fully discussed in the 'Transforming Freedom' article across the page, and, needless to say, when the decision to close Freedom came the voting on the collective was overwhelmingly in favour of closure.

Of course this is not the end of Freedom's news output, but instead the beginning of its transformation. In the next few weeks focus will be placed squarely on our news website. This has been a long time coming. Freedom has undoubtedly lagged behind other anarchist groups in building and maintaining a web presence. It allows us to publish content that is more up to date, more frequent and more focused. An occasional freesheet will be produced, collating the best of our website, to be distributed at demonstrations, meetings and on the street.

Freedom was founded as a resource for the entirety of the anarchist movement, not tied to a particular organisation. As we migrate online this ideal is still in place. We want to represent a broad range of Anarchist news, opinions and discussion. The Freedom collective is a tool to be used by all anarchists, and although we say goodbye to part of our past in this issue, we are looking towards what we hope is a brighter future.

**Freedom was founded as a resource for the entirety of the anarchist movement, as we migrate online this ideal is still in place**

Freedom Newspaper is also intrinsically linked, of course, with the Freedom Bookshop. Although we are the editors of the Newspaper, we are also both regular volunteers in the shop. The last 18 or so months have been quite a journey for the Bookshop. Since the firebombing that occurred on 01/02/2013, the rebuilding of the downstairs shop has been a gradual process and it is finally looking in great shape again! We would like to take this opportunity in our editorial to extend our sincere thanks to all those who helped us with the rebuilding effort. Your time, energy and enthusiasm has been a gift, and embodies the spirit that allows Freedom to continue to operate as space that provides safety and support to those who seek us out.

We have also been busy over the summer hosting events. July saw the successful launch party for our new website, which included a rather

popular anarcho-quiz with prizes! We also had a great barbecue to launch our sale, which is still going on (the sale not the barbecue unfortunately). On the horizon there's a party to mark one hundred years on from us kicking Kropotkin OUT of Freedom (check out the piece on page 8 for more information) so make sure you get yourself down to Angel Alley and join in the fun.

## THE IMPORTANCE OF AFEM

An absolutely essential part of anarchism is identifying and dismantling hierarchies of power. The pro-active discussion of the importance of feminism within anarchist movements is a vital ingredient of progress, and the importance of having an intersectional movement should not be forgotten. The AFem conference on the 19th of October, at Queen Mary University of London, seeks to address these issues in a self-organised and conscious capacity. Feminism is not a 'one size fits all' philosophy and specifically identifying how we can tackle the oppression faced by the many different people in and out of our movement should be central to these discussions.

**An essential part of anarchism is identifying and dismantling hierarchies of power. The pro-active discussion of the importance of feminism within anarchist movements is a vital ingredient of progress.**

The conference offers a variety of sessions that focus on topics such as sex work, gender, disability and Anarcha-Feminism on an international scale, with sessions on Latin America and the Middle East, and is open to all those who directly experience gender oppression. The events of last year's Anarchist Bookfair show the need for creating spaces and setting out principals that define the level of safety people are entitled to, and ensuring that they exist when discussing issues that directly relate to their own experiences of gender oppression. The AFem conference is both forward thinking and radical, and it deserves our support.

SO that's it from us, folks. We hope you enjoy reading this very special edition of the paper. It was a privilege to put it together and be able to leave our mark on this definitive moment in our history. As we've said, it's not the end, but the beginning of something new for Freedom Newspaper. We look forward to working with our comrades and contributors as we build Freedom News into the resource for Anarchism and activists that is has such potential to be.

**Ella Harrison & Adam Barr**



Picture courtesy of Guy Smallman

# TRANSFORMING FREEDOM

**FROM ITS REVIVAL IN 1945 TILL HIS DEATH IN 2001, FREEDOM WAS IN EFFECT**

**THE PERSONAL FIEF OF VERNON RICHARDS.**

"Vero" was certainly a controversial character in the anarchist movement but to his credit he left Freedom, inadvertently perhaps, in the control of the active anarchist movement. Since 2001 Freedom has been run by a collective of around a dozen members while the building is owned in trust by different comrades by way of a holding company called Friends of Freedom Press.

Politically this has produced a shift. Comrades got involved with Freedom who were already active in the anarchist milieu and whose primary loyalties weren't to the "Freedom Group" but to anarchism in general. This produced a consequential shift to a "journal of anarchist socialism", the subtitle of the very first issue of Freedom in 1886, and away from the evolutionary and liberal view Freedom had represented since the 1950s.

**Since 2001 Freedom has been run by a collective while the building is owned in trust by the Friends of Freedom Press.**

The results have been manifold: the shop has been moved downstairs, doubling turnover and rooms above let to activist groups. We now have The Advisory Service for Squatters, Corporatwatch, Haven Distribution and London Coalition against Poverty who share an office with Solfed and Afed. Perhaps more importantly Freedom is not at the behest of people with private incomes. This means no more publishing anthologies of personal photo collections, or the shop being controlled by someone who can volunteer all the time because they've got a trust fund. As a building, publishing house, radical meeting space, drop in legal advice centre and general anarcho-hang-out it has gone from strength to strength. But what about the Paper?

In the Anarchist Bookfair 2009 edition of Freedom, the then editors set out a strategy for the future of the paper. The core of this was having Freedom as a non-sectarian organ distributed by all the national federations and by independent local and campaigning groups. In parallel, Black Flag was put forward as a pan-movement theoretical magazine- the hope being that selling these at stalls and demos could be combined with local freesheets. To sum up, the editorial said:

"For Freedom to achieve its aims, the Anarchist Movement needs to distribute

With all praise to the few individuals who carried on selling the paper to the very end, this proved impossible. Leaving aside the practical problems of a newspaper that was never new (a consequence of the printing/folding process more than shortage of good contributors) very few people wanted to distribute it. Anecdotaly those Comrades who subscribed were doing it largely because they felt they were "supporting" the paper- which was losing money at a rate of around £7,000 a year. Moving to a monthly in 2010 cut this to around £3,000 but this was a retrograde step to stave off the inevitable. Towards the end of 2011 it was clear that the paper couldn't continue bar a miracle and we paid redundancy to our layout/admin person before we ran out of money.

Then on the 1st February 2012 we got firebombed! The Fash to the rescue! We were inundated by donations and offers of help and though it was a great strain we kept the paper coming out because it would come over as an obvious defeat if the far right could claim they had shut it down. However there was one thing that people wouldn't help with after the fire: selling the paper. What's more people on the Freedom Collective didn't want to sell the paper. Meantime Freedom was forced to publicly advertise for an editor having been unable to find anyone through inquiries in the movement. Although many people applied, only one turned out to be an anarchist! Short of becoming a radical media magazine and apply for arts council funding we decided to wrap up the print version and go online.

When the Freedom Collective decided to stop the print version of the paper many of us thought it would cause a shitstorm in our already troubled movement. We were considering a big meeting at the Bookfair to explain why we had give up on the last regular for sale Anarchist newspaper in Britain and foregone £10,000 a year's worth of free printing, courtesy of Aldgate Press. However, the silence was deafening. Roughly 30 out of 225 paid up subscribers replied and one person came to a monthly Freedom meeting to find out why.

The movement had voted with its feet, and it was not by shuffling them along to the nearest demo to sell a paper. Never mind, Kropotkin might have started it but we fucking finished it!

**Andy Meinke**



Picture courtesy of Alvin Tostig



# AN EVICTED FLAT WON'T DISEMPOWER THE FOCUS E15 COMMUNITY

ON THE 7TH OF OCTOBER 2014, UNDER THREAT OF PHYSICAL EVICTION FROM NEWHAM COUNCIL, I helped the last members involved in the occupation of four vacant flats on the Carpenters Estate, to remove their belongings from the building. The Focus E15 mums, whose story has spread across the country like wildfire since they took over the flats just over two weeks ago, had known this day was coming. But there was still a feeling of sadness as this community left 80-86 Doran Walk this morning and watched contracted security guards re-occupy the block and seal it up to prevent others in need from calling the flats their homes.

More conservative voices have decried the illegality of the occupation, pinning blame for their situation squarely on the mums, rather than an out-of-control free market which has priced out large swathes of its intended 'customers.' In practice, this has meant that untold numbers of people – like those kicked-out of Focus E15 last year – have been forced into the indignities of couch surfing, rodent-infested private rentals, and even rough sleeping.

**The Focus E15 mums have reminded us that unjust laws can't stop us from coming together to meet our collective needs.**



Picture by Liam Barrington-Bush

This is unacceptable at the best of times, and is morally criminal at a time when community members estimate that the Carpenters Estate alone has at least four hundred unoccupied flats within its boundaries, and shuttered and rotting, just as 80-86 Doran Walk will be after yesterday's eviction. While the mums – and others who had also been evicted from the Focus E15 want to them. And it is being shown in East London, hostel last year – are no longer living on the Carpenters Estate, they have offered lessons to others around the country who have found good homes sit empty.

When we break laws like these, we often end up building the communities that help us weather the kinds of storms that invariably lie ahead. There's very little that brings people together quite like constructively breaking a law that is obviously corrupt, ridiculous and/or morally bankrupt. In our disobedience, we remind ourselves what we are capable of achieving together, while gradually undermining the wider legitimacy of the law to govern ours or others' lives... and we tend to make friends along the way!

**a new kind of housing and a new kind of politics may have shown its early shoots in E15**

A two-week squat is hardly the answer to the complex and multi-layered set of issues that have culminated in London's current housing mess, but it does offer a set of tools that can be adapted and adopted in borough after borough, empty estate after empty estate. These tools can help us to address immediate needs, build local community, and make the case for new relationships to government, to the market, and to each other. This hint at a new kind of housing and a new kind of politics may have shown its early shoots in E15, but it's well within the reach of the rest of us to help it grow in our own post codes.

The Focus E15 mums will keep up pressure on Newham Council via community outreach on Stratford Broadway every Saturday, 12-2pm. There will be a public meeting where next steps will be discussed at 6:30pm on October 20th in E15. Watch the Focus E15 Facebook page for details.

Liam Barrington-Bush

Liam Barrington-Bush Tweets as @hackofalltrades.

## LA SQUATTA CONTINUA: THE YEAR FROM ADVISORY SERVICE FOR SQUATTERS

### SOME GLIMMERS OF HOPE IN A SEA OF DESPONDENCY:

Since squatting residential properties in England and Wales was criminalised in September 2012, we have unsurprisingly seen squatting significantly reduced in London, where much of it used to take place.

It's not clear where all the people have gone. Some are keeping their heads down and still squatting, including in residential properties if there's no owner making accusations to the cops. Increasing numbers are squatting in larger groups in less suitable non-residential properties, and are being more easily guilt-tripped into allowing in more people evicted from nearby.

**Since squatting residential properties in England and Wales was criminalised, we have seen squatting significantly reduced**

Some have gone over to the other side, becoming "guardians" or anti-squatters as they're known in Holland where it began. Of course those who were previously attracted to squatting because it was easy and didn't require any political involvement would get the same thrill from being a guardian and paying less money than the extortionate London norm. Guardian companies are often not that good at securing places as they treat people badly enough that they'll often leave. This often means the place can still be squatted.

Others of course have moved into the private sector, paying increasingly extortionate rent to the sort of landlords who support the Tory party and its policies, as planned.

So, a victory for the state, with the threat of extending the criminalisation to non-residential properties ever in the background.

### SOCIAL HOUSING NOT SOCIAL CLEANSING

However, it's good that we can talk about some recent victories. ASS has always argued that occupying somewhere as a protest, rather than to live in, is not a criminal offence, and recently we have seen the old tactic re-used under these new conditions. Probably the best example of this has been the Focus E15 mothers. Evicted from their hostel and fighting to stay in Newham, occupying a small block on the Carpenters Estate, run down by the council and surrounded by Olympic development and private tower blocks. The council's dodgy attempts to get an Interim Possession Order against the occupiers not only failed but gave them more publicity and put more pressure on the council to negotiate improved policies.

This was after housing campaigners in Southwark and Camden had got away with occupying houses being sold by the council. They didn't last long but made their point. In one case people were arrested and charged but the charges thrown out of court. Of course in the old days they could have occupied properly and lived in these properties rather than just a temporary protest.

Housing campaigners are forced once again to demand the populating and requisition of empty properties, and to do it themselves at least symbolically. This was the history of the squatting movement of the 60s and 70s, leading to a massive expansion of social housing, through co-ops and councils being encouraged to take empties from speculators etc.

**a combination of networking, legal pressure and chutzpah still works!**

Other good news came recently when Tower Hamlets council was forced to remove security guards who were keeping most of the inhabitants of a squat out, and keeping one squatter in. A combination of legal threats, campaigning and occasionally enough people hanging around for someone to get over the 15-foot wall got the council to decide it wasn't worth it. There's still plans to sue, and attempts are being made to learn how we could have dealt with this quicker, but clearly a combination of networking, legal pressure and chutzpah still works.



**STOP THE CRIMINALISATION OF SQUATTING**

**REQUISITION ALL EMPTIES**



# COPS OFF CAMPUS IN THE DOCK

**IF IT WASN'T FOR THE VIOLENT EVICTION** OF A PEACEFUL OCCUPATION OF SENATE HOUSE THE DAY BEFORE (on Wednesday 4th December 2013), the anti police #copsoffcampus demonstration, organised for the next day, might not had happened at all. As it was the callout paid off, and the protest saw the angriest and politically aware confrontations since the tuition fee mobilisations of 2010. A wider analysis of these protests still needs to be written: how they were organised, the dynamics of the march and how they were inevitably killed by Trotskyist groups like the Socialist Party. Presented here are excerpts of notes taken from the trial of 2 protesters who were among those mass arrested near Gower Street. Both defendants were acquitted.

that officer is using excessive force on a protester lying prone on the ground.' Harman: 'I can't comment.'

CC speaks his own defence

The protest was about police violence on campus. I covered my face partly because it was a cold day but also because I believe in our civil liberty to protest anonymously. The atmosphere to begin with was carnivalesque – there were people with musical instruments, people in costumes, people chanting. Then somebody said there were police inside the university building, which was ironic since the protest was 'cops off campus' and students were locked out of the building. The police were behind the gates of Senate House using overhead baton strikes against protesters, and when they couldn't reach them that way, they'd jab protesters with the ends of the batons. The crowd started chanting 'Shame on you!'

Another serial of officers waded into the crowd, pushing people, trying to form a line across the gates. I put my placard in front of Inspector Brockway's face. As he said in his evidence, it was only 'quite near' his face, and he put his hand between it and his face and pushed it away. I was getting a message across, not using the placard as a weapon. The placard was commissioned by me for my newspaper from artist Peter Willets [?] and it was a play on the Metropolitan Police slogan 'Total Policing'. As well as saying 'Total c\*unts' – I put an asterisk to make sure it wasn't offensive – it also had other words on it describing the Metropolitan police: violent, racist, petty, barbaric, London't biggest gang.

At this point PC Smythe grabs me by the wrist. I think he's trying to take my placard away from me. He's pulling me and the placard and trying to grab me. I think losing my placard would infringe my right to protest, which is exactly what this protest is about. I want to get away to continue to protest peacefully. I say 'get your fucking hands off me', and I say this because he has his fucking hands on me.

Then Smythe smashes me down into a headlock. There's no advance warning and I didn't believe I was under arrest. I put my hands up and my knee up to try to leverage myself out of his grip. Two others in the crowd saw the assault by PC Smythe and helped to pull his arms

so I could get away.

At the other cordon in Russell Square police also had their batons drawn which was provocative at a protest against police violence. I was angry because I'd just been assaulted by an enormous man. There was a lot of adrenaline. I was not just shouting 'fuck the police'. I was shouting 'no justice, no peace, fuck the police'. I thought it was pretty ironic that the police were being violent at a protest against police violence. There's the chant 'Who killed Mark Duggan' and I'm saying 'YOU killed Mark Duggan', which is true because the Metropolitan Police did kill Mark Duggan. So I was standing there showing my placard to the police, getting my message across. [picture here?] Then it started raining, and I went to Costa Coffee.

Later I find the remainder of the protest up on Euston Road. It's a cat and mouse situation with the protest being chased by police down Euston Road towards the top of Gower Street. There are several lines of police there stopping people from going south.

Outside Euston Square station, I see a police officer assaulting a man I now know to be CB. The man has a bicycle, long red hair and trainers. CB says something to the officer as he walks past, and gesticulates. The officer catches what he says and grabs CB. CB is 19 or 20 and very skinny. The officer is a massive guy. He probably has a stone for every year of CB's age. CB would not have been able to pull him to the floor. The officer pushes him to the ground.

I've been to many protests and this was easily the most violence I've seen at a protest. I've seen much more hostile crowds provoke less of a reaction from the police. But we've heard the reason for this violence already from the officers' evidence. The police believed there to be 'anarchist elements' at the protest. Remember how the City of London police had a campaign telling people to shop their 'anarchist neighbours' as terrorists.

I was shocked by the violence. I wanted to stop CB being beaten up. I saw something illegal and I wanted to stop it. I grabbed the arm of the officer on CB, but lost my grip.

Then other officers rushed in, rucking

and mawing like in a rugby scrum. One of the officers runs in from about 5 feet away with his fist and arm up like this, and jumps on CB. If Inspector Harman had been trying to pull off the officers I would never have touched him. But he was going in to assist the assault. I had already been the victim of an assault that day. Just as I would on the street I saw a little kid being beaten up by a massive guy – doesn't matter if that massive guy is wearing a uniform – I would intervene. I was attempting to remove Harman from the area, essentially, because he seemed to be piling in to the assault on CB. There were lots of people there, because all those people thought there was an assault going on. The police have portrayed them as a mob but I would call them concerned and brave citizens.

At this point I was in a state of fear and panic. I flipped off Inspector Harman's hat. Flicking his cap was a non-violent act which was intended to distract him from participating in the attack on CB. Then I was running away. I saw him coming at me with his fist raised. It's absolute nonsense to say that I struck him in the throat. It's possible that someone else did, but I was running away. It was like a war-zone, people screaming and crying. You just want to get out of there.

Then I am grabbed from behind by two officers – I am grabbed in the face and they smash my head into a plate glass window. At no stage do any of these people say I am under arrest. I say, 'What the actual fuck are you doing?' The response is a punch in the face by a third officer. They damage my nose so that I can't breathe properly for 3-4 weeks. As if that isn't enough, as they drag me into a containment, I am pushed again to the ground by a fourth officer and he stands over me, stamping on my legs. It was like a bar fight. That level of violence was completely unnecessary. I was pulled into a containment and later arrested to prevent breach of the peace. That containment was not already in place as Harman said. When that incident happened, it was a bunch of bunch of riot cops running around. I was angry that I had been assaulted violently by several members of the Metropolitan Police and yet I was the one in custody.

CC appears in court charged with two counts of assault PC after mass-arrest at Cops Off Campus demo 5th Dec 2013. The case against his co-defendant, RB, also charged with assault PC, is thrown out at half-time for lack of evidence.

'Victim' No. 1: PC Smythe

'I felt his knee sweep across my thigh and groin. I have absolutely no doubt that he was trying to knee me in the testicles.'

Under cross-examination:

Shown this photo: [headlock]

Smythe: 'I think that was completely justified. They were coming into my personal space.'

'Victim' No. 2: Inspector Harman (Hatman?)

'Our intention was to clear a sterile area, to clear the protesters out of the area'

'I saw a male officer grabbed by a protester (CB) causing the officer to fall forward to the floor. I ran through and pushed protesters away and picked the officer up. Someone grabbed my hat. Various hats had been lost or stolen that day, so I put my hand onto my hat, to grab onto my hat. Then I felt someone strike my throat. I couldn't go after them because of the other protesters.'

Under cross-examination:

Defence barrister Dan from HJA: [shows this footage] 'That officer [you ran to assist] has now gone back to CB and is delivering punches to CB. It looks like



picture by Ambar Sethi



# BITCOINS AND COIN BYTES

IN OUR DIGITAL AGE, MONEY IS INCREASINGLY ELECTRONIC IN NATURE. BANK CHEQUES HAVE ALL BUT DISAPPEARED, AND NOTES AND COINS FACE STIFF COMPETITION FROM CHIP-AND-PIN, CONTACTLESS AND PRE-PAYMENT SYSTEMS. IN THE ONLINE REALM, PAYMENT SOLUTIONS SUCH AS WORLDPAY AND THE UBIQUITOUS PAYPAL HAVE HELPED TO DRIVE THE NEW CASHLESS WORLD OF THE RETAIL WEB.

Ever since the needs of the dominant economic class pushed beyond the limits of simple bartering, a monetary system has provided a means to abstract value to support commerce and exchange. Through the growth of capitalism, modern banking and financial systems developed to underpin trade, and bits of paper and small circles of metal changed hands within the expanding economy. Since it was first minted, money has remained a fiction, the operation of which depends on the shared acceptance by those using it of its transferability.

One recent development in the world of online currency that has attracted a great deal of media attention is the emergence of Bitcoins: a new attempt to create a digital monetary network outside government control.

The technology underpinning Bitcoins is complex. In essence, a Bitcoin is the encoding of a notional 'value' assigned to a newly mined virtual coin each time a computer programme completes an agreed processing cycle. The more times that the software completes the loop, the more Bitcoins are generated, and the greater the cumulative balance added to the ledger. Bitcoins have no intrinsic worth; but are an attempt to assign and encode a redeemable value.

## Bitcoins are a new attempt to create a digital monetary network outside government control

Key to Bitcoin transfers is the sharing of an encrypted token which, when passed to a recipient, allows the received coins to be accessed. Beneath this hi-tech layer, Bitcoins rely on the same 'circle of trust' between payer and payee as all other monetary systems. Transfer fees can be levied. Eventually one recipient in the chain is going to want to transfer their Bitcoin stash into traditional currency.

Bitcoins are distinguished by the anonymity and confidentiality of the transfer and its independence from any official channels of exchange. Peer-to-peer transactions are not easily auditable by any state agency. Unlike traditional currencies which are aligned with state systems and national economies (or, as in the case of the Euro, a transnational economic group), the Bitcoin system is stateless; operating beyond the governance which controls national banking networks.

The Bitcoin network is not immune to the dangers which confront normal monetary systems. The trading value of Bitcoins has fluctuated wildly, rising and plummeting without warning. Governments buy and sell currency on the international exchanges to try to keep the value of their national currency stable. No such agency exists in the Bitcoin system, so the currency settles wherever the market drives it.

Several Bitcoin exchanges (virtual transfer hubs for the digital currency) have been taken offline following network and hardware failures. The exchanges have proven irresistible to hackers who enjoy disrupting new technologies and pirates hoping to steal the currency. As a result, the operation of the Bitcoin network has remained flaky, and reliance on it something of a gamble. Given the growing effectiveness of state surveillance of the web, claims that Bitcoin transfers are



from Bitcoin.org

untraceable also remain unproven.

Some radical free-marketers have promoted Bitcoins as a competitor to the state-regulated financial sector, and on the fringes of the online capitalist economy Bitcoins are being accepted for some transactions. So how has the global financial system responded to the Bitcoin breakthrough? To date, the scale of exchange leveraged through Bitcoins has remained infinitesimal when compared to the volumes circulating in the international money markets; so fat-cat bankers have not felt under undue pressure.

The US government has moved to shut down high profile black-market Bitcoin exchanges, including the Silk Road; while Chinese authorities have outlawed the currency. Yet many capitalists advocate absorbing a regulated Bitcoin system into the banking mainstream.

## the simple truth about Bitcoins is: it's only money - as inherently 'subversive' as a book token

Bitcoins have obvious attractions for anyone wanting to transfer money securely and anonymously - be they members of a criminal conspiracy, theist fanatics, state agents, or international revolutionaries. However, the innovative technology which makes it possible should not be allowed to obscure the simple truth about Bitcoins: it's only money. To that extent, a Bitcoin is as inherently 'subversive' as a book token.

The global system of monetary exchange will not face a genuine challenge from the actions of a tiny group of technologists, but only from the emergence of a mass movement which rejects outright the systems of alienation and profit.

Rich Cross

# PRIDE AND NOSTALGIA

I RECENTLY WENT TO SEE THE FILM 'PRIDE' WHICH IS BASED ON EVENTS IN THE MID 1980S WHEN A GROUP OF GAY ACTIVISTS (LGSM) DECIDED TO RAISE MONEY TO HELP SUPPORT THE STRIKING MINERS.

Despite encountering reluctance from the miners they make contact with a small mining village in South Wales. The film explores the relational dynamics within the group, within the mining community and between the two as the village and then the wider mining community (generally) overcome their prejudice, eventually reciprocating the solidarity shown to them by the Lesbian and Gay community in London.

**The film explores the dynamics within the group, within the mining community and between the two as the village and then the wider mining community overcome their prejudice**

I went to see the film in Leicester Square, where at the end there was spontaneous applause. Afterwards I had a look on social media to see what other people thought of the film and one commenter had posted that it made them feel nostalgic for a time they hadn't known. While in no way wanting to question this person's experience or self diagnosis I wonder if they were really experiencing 'nostalgia'. Nostalgia is a looking back to something that 'was', it can easily be impotent. My own experience watching the film was that it evoked a sense of yearning; for community,



screenshot from trailer, creative commons.

for solidarity, for hope, for being able to live with a sense of purpose and in a way that makes a difference. These are the life experiences that we should all yearn for, what 'Pride' did so effectively was remind us of that.

**The film evoked a sense of yearning; for community, for solidarity, for hope, for being able to live in a way that makes a difference.**

Mark Fisher in his book 'Ghosts of my Life' (1) writes about how we can be 'haunted' by a sense of what was, but also of what could have been, of lost possibilities and futures (2). This sense of being haunted by, of alienation from and frustration with the lived present as so much less than we hoped for is something many of us experience but it is not

something we should allow to dominate our thinking, emotions or view of what is possible. Rather this sense of 'hauntedness' should act as a catalyst propelling us into attempting to construct the sorts of community, relationships and positive activity that we feel the lack of.

**In 'Ghosts of my Life' Mark Fisher writes how we can be 'haunted' by a sense of what was, but also of what could have been**

I suspect that is why 'Pride' has been such an important film for people, it has reminded them of what is really important, of the value of what they are similarly experiencing or the need to find/build what they are missing. Our response to it should not be a sigh but a grateful recognition that it has rekindled the desire to experience the quality of communal, purposeful life, with all its up and downs, represented in the film.

Each of us has to choose between replicating Bryan Adams (dreadful) song 'Summer of '69' elevating the past as a 'golden age' or finding ways of transposing those feeling of hope and yearning that 'Pride' evoked into constructive action.

Bibliography.

(1) Fisher, M. (2014), 'Ghosts of my Life. Writings on Depression, Hauntology and Lost Futures' Zero Books, Winchester.

(2) <http://www.zero-books.net/books/ghosts-my-life>

Tim Forster





**Anti-Clockwise from top left:**

August saw London's largest ever pro-Palestine demo, where an estimated 150000 people took to the streets to protest Israeli war crimes in Gaza.

Workers at the Ritzy Cinema took militant strike action for better pay and, in September, won!

Supporters of Calais Migrant Solidarity leave informative messages behind on a road sign after a solidarity action in September.

Anti-Fascists hold a dangerous gang member at bay at the annual 'humiliate the fash' day otherwise known as March For England in April.

40,000 marched through London as part of the international People's Climate March, timed to coincide with the World Leaders' Climate Summit.

An effigy of Secretary of Justice Chris Grayling, only slightly less gross than the real thing, at a demonstration against proposed reforms to Legal Aid back in May.

The bin that shook the world. The media's favourite image of the Cops Off Campus demo last December, where students protested the presence and heavy handed tactics of police at UK Universities.





# A RADICAL YEAR

## IN PICTURES



Special thanks to Guy Smallman for photography



# THE ANARCHIST FEDERATION

**THE ANARCHIST FEDERATION HAS BEEN GOING 28 YEARS.** We experienced our most recent growth in 2010-11 at the height of the actions against fees and cuts. Even as one of the larger anarchist organisations in Britain we are still small in absolute numbers. We recognise the need to continue to look for practical unity in our movement wherever possible and to support independent initiatives, such as the next issue of Black Flag which will come out again this Bookfair after a yearlong gap. At the same time, we steadfastly continue to reject populism, electoralism and anti-organisational tendencies to instead promote a social and communist anarchism.

As we covered our take on the situation 'at home' in the last issue of Organise! magazine (issue 82, May 2014), we'll use the opportunity offered to us by the Freedom editors to update readers on what is going on in our international, the International of Anarchist Federations/Internationale des Fédérations Anarchistes (IFA), founded in 1968.

**Afed steadfastly continue to reject populism, electoralism and anti-organisational tendencies to instead promote a social and communist anarchism.**

Important things are happening in Central Europe and the Balkans. Freedom readers will be familiar, even if they don't know the details, about an uprising in Slovenia in 2012-13 which brought people on to the streets across the country (full story in Organise! 83). The FAO was instrumental in creating a strong libertarian current. Internationalism has been strengthened in the region with the continuation of communications helped by successive anarchist bookfairs, the latest of these having taken place this year in Bosnia. As the joint participant statement read, "The need to confront nationalist ideology from a radical and anti-authoritarian perspective brought us together in Mostar on the 5th and 6th of September 2014, for the 8th Balkan Anarchist Bookfair. We came from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Serbia, Slovenia, Albania, Romania, Greece and other countries outside the Balkan area. The true nature of nationalism is nowhere more obvious than in Mostar, a city divided in two, with the signs of wartime

brutality still evident in the streets of the city. It is essential to realize that this division was not the cause of war, but the consequence of wars and nationalist ideologies created by the ruling class." Repression is also a constant feature for anarchists in the Balkans and Central Europe, including Belarus where we supported comrades undertaking speaking tours in Western Europe and with practical solidarity, and previously we joined the support for the Belgrade 6 prisoners in Serbia.



Another important area for IFA is North Africa and the Middle East. Renewed communication started in Tunisia several years ago resulting from the 'Arab Spring'. Anarchists are most recently experiencing repression in Egypt. Thanks to the FA's outreach we now have much better connections into the region which means more direct solidarity is possible. Elsewhere, IFA has been quick to support emerging initiatives such as the Observatorio Crítico in Cuba and its exciting new connection through Taller

Libertario Alfredo López in Havana with the comrades of Kiskeya Libertaria in the Dominican Republic, who have now come together to form a Spanish-speaking Caribbean Anarchist Federation. This adds to existing links in Central and South America. Other meaningful contacts are being developed with anarchists in Greece, Iraq (Kurdish), Turkey, Poland, Iceland, the Philippines and Korea.

Being involved in IFA is always interesting. We are a grouping of social anarchist federations, not a single international anarchist federation with uniform ideas and structures between all of its member organisations. It has taken many years of membership for the AF to understand the effects of differences in levels of consensus required for decision making. A more obvious challenge is language. As the AF (and this surely applies to the whole of the anarchist movement in Britain) we know we don't translate nearly enough material ourselves and so we benefit greatly from the efforts of comrades in other countries who handle the enduring privilege of English as a language of international communication with no complaint (the other main language of communication in IFA is Spanish). Currently the German speaking federation (FdA) has tasked the whole of IFA to understand our constitutional differences even better so we can work together most efficiently.

**The IFA is a grouping of social anarchist federations, not a single international anarchist federation with uniform ideas and structures between all of its member organisations.**

Face-to-face meeting is vital to IFA. We meet 2-3 times a year at formal delegate meetings (Commission de relations de l'internationale des fédérations anarchistes, CRIFA) and at bookfairs. This year we will welcome IFA comrades, amongst other international participants, at AFem 2014 as well as the London bookfair.

Mike, AF International Secretariat Coordinator & IFA contact.

[www.afed.org.uk](http://www.afed.org.uk)

## KICKING KROPOTKIN OUT OF FREEDOM

**One of the key concepts of anarchism** IS THAT OF THE "LEADERSHIP OF IDEAS" NOT INDIVIDUALS, however great their reputation or however much they have contributed to the movement. Freedom has been put to this test many times on this in its history but most famously in 1914 when Peter Kropotkin, lead writer for the paper since it's founding in 1886 advocated supporting the Allies in the First World War.

Tom Keell was the editor at the time and took the classic anarchist line that no war was worth fighting but the class war. He met Kropotkin in a café in Oxford St to sort the issue out, later recalling

"He evidently thought he could not write a pro-war article in view of my opposition, so we agreed he should do one on communal kitchens as he thought there would soon be a food shortage in the country"

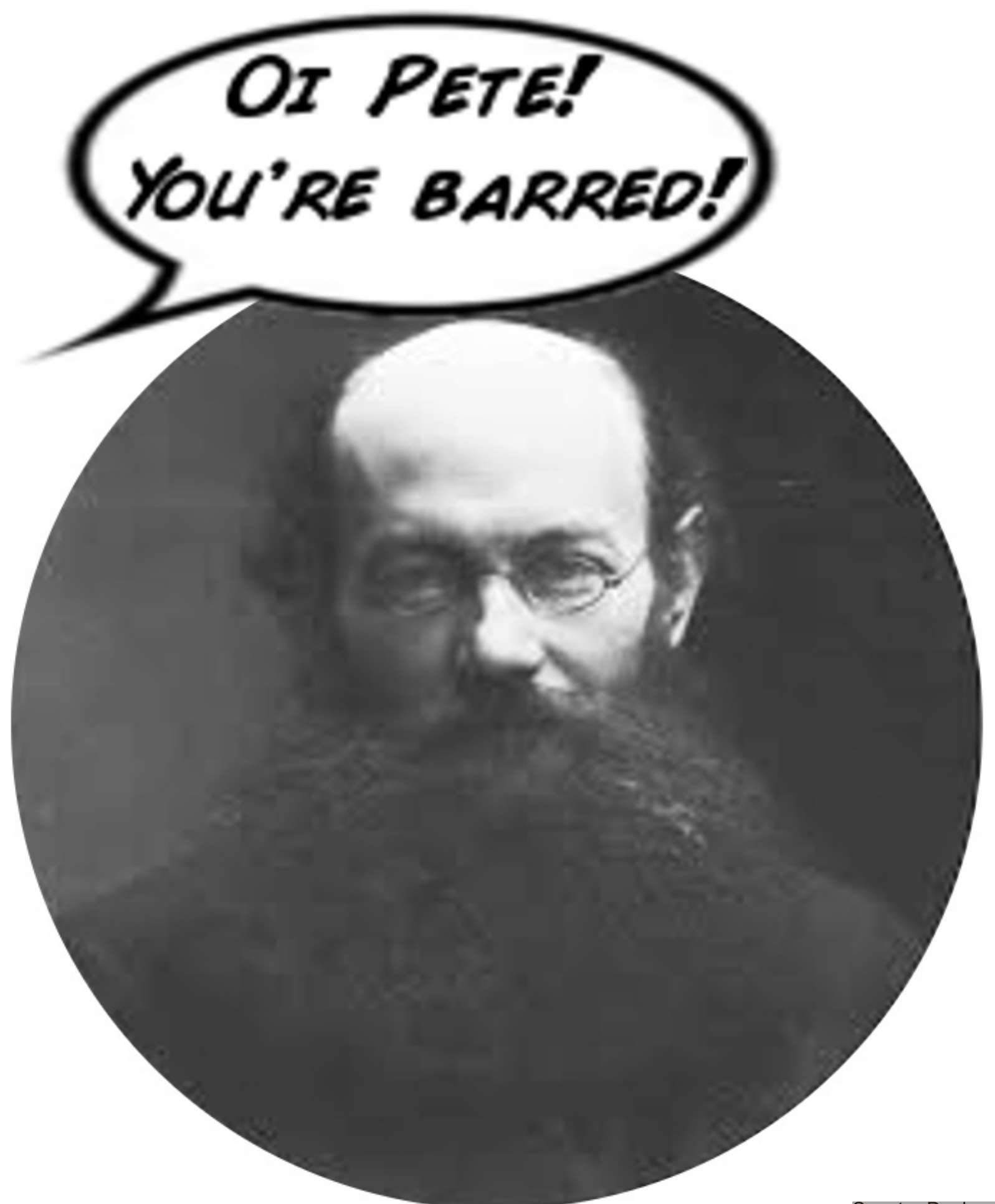
**Freedom was put to this test in 1914 when Peter Kropotkin, lead writer for the paper since it's founding in 1886 advocated supporting the Allies in the First World War.**

However in the October issue Kropotkin did a out and out pro-war piece declaring "since 1871 Germany has been a standing menace to European progress" with Keell replying. The debate continued into the November issue and then with a final meeting

between Keel and Kropotkin in Brighton, livened by Peter having brought a wounded army officer round for tea. After this the paper took an all out anti-war line and Kropotkin never wrote for it again. The row however continued with Keell being denounced at the Anarchist Conference of 1915 for his "undemocratic seizure of the paper" by George Cores a former co-editor of the paper. They continued to bicker unhappily until 1927 when Freedom closed down only for Cores to run a short lived revival from 1930 to 1933. "A curiously depressing paper with memories of the old days interspersed with obituaries" More of this, and plenty of other stories of mirth and woe in the anarchist scene of the period are contained in our new edition of John Quails "The Slow Burning Fuse". Of course nothing so foolish could happen in today's totally sorted, really on it anarchist movement, could it?

To celebrate we're having a party marking the 100th anniversary of the feeble fudged process that eventually showed "The Anarchist formally known as Prince" the door. Featuring a half price offer on all Freedom Press' titles, 2pm Saturday 22nd November in the shop. Anyone not banned or expelled welcome!

Andy Meinke





# HOXTON MARKET FORCES

A piano teeters on the edge  
of the top floor, Balfron Tower.  
The seconds before it plummets,  
the electricity of coming rent rises  
runs through the assembled.  
Gone are the aerosoled (classic)  
cock and balls, paintbrushed  
football teams. 'Artists' are the  
rats that herald the plague.  
A stabbed local lad's claret  
is tweeted, selfied and playlisted;  
the Jobcentre now a bar  
where trust funds flaunt their edge:  
irony is when they don't have the balls  
to flick two fingers to our face,  
yet they're two fingers still.  
The piano powers down  
as our rents soar up.  
The crash is a certain music:  
a cacophony of notes. Pound notes.

[Tim Wells]

## HAVEN DISTRIBUTION

**HAVEN DISTRIBUTION** AIMS TO PROVIDE PRACTICAL SUPPORT TO PRISONERS WITHIN THE UK BY:

-Purchasing educational literature for inmates who are currently attending courses whilst in prison;

-Providing dictionaries in English and other languages to inmates whose first language is not English;

-Providing large print dictionaries and books on improving reading and writing skills to inmates with dyslexia;

If you are a prisoner attending an educational course such as NVQ, Open University, A Level, etc., and would like help in purchasing specific course literature, we may be able to help.

Haven Distribution will purchase books for prisoners' courses to a maximum of £20 per person, per calendar year. We encourage prisoners to leave the books in the prison library once the course is finished so that other prisoners can use them.

Haven also provides prisoners a free catalogue of donated books from publishers, and books that are bought cheaply from remainder bookshops. These books range from Social Sciences such as Philosophy and Criminology, to Black Interest and political science, plus some fiction and graphic novels.

If you would like an application form, please send a stamped self-addressed envelope to us at Haven Distribution, 27 Old Gloucester St, London, WC1N 3XX. Due to limited resources,



## IDENTITY, RACE AND POLITICS

**WHILE SOME FRAMEWORK** OF ANTI OPPRESSION WORK IS CLEARLY NEEDED IN LIGHT OF INSTITUTIONAL DISCRIMINATION OF PEOPLE OF COLOUR AND MINORITIES, safer spaces policy and race become problematic when we allow white-majority groups to categorise what is and isn't racism. The left is grossly unprepared for the change of demographics in the United Kingdom; by 2050, the UK will be a majority people of colour\* country. How will the left respond to this?

It is undeniable that the left has a serious problem with race. There is a historical white-washing of people of colour in the far left movement, and a very big problem with essentialising (and ignoring) Global South peoples, struggles and identities. Too, there is silence on issues that effect people of colour; how many Anarchist Black Cross groups wrote to figures such as Moazzam Begg, or Talha Ahsan? Or any POC political prisoners at all, given how much the prison industrial complex targets people of colour, and specifically black young men? Or how many anarchists support the work of Southall Black Sisters?

**There is a historical white-washing of people of colour in the far left movement, and a very big problem with essentialising (and ignoring) Global South peoples, struggles and identities.**

This is all reflective of our imperialist history that we teach children in school and subtle microaggressions in society, which unconsciously govern how we conduct ourselves as poc and as non-poc. The left does not operate in a vacuum, thus we are not immune to the United Kingdom's post-colonial legacy, or its broken relationship with race.

Anti-racist and anti-oppression work is grounded in somewhat idealist theories surrounding power, maintaining that it is innately 'white privilege' as a psychological attitude and de-facto position for "passing people". I feel that this is not the case; racism

is structural and it is mainly caused and perpetuated by the state and by capitalism. Consciousness-raising and circle-jerk leftie discussions (which for much of the time, leave out people of colour) will not change inherently racist structures.

No demographic of people are inherently homogenised, or the same. The fetishisation of intersectionality looks at ideas around sex, race, and sexuality as non-changing entities with certain ways of organising amongst themselves. No one person can, for example, claim to speak for all people of colour, all LGBT people. These self-elected representatives represent nothing more than social ideas of an 'Other' formed by a larger population, surrounding a group they do not know a whole lot about. This is one way in which the left unwittingly ends up tokenising people of colour, in order to add more legitimacy to their movement. Political opinions between people from the same 'background' is essentially silenced as the white left picks the person who they agree with the most, because 'x says this, and she is x too'.

**The left unwittingly ends up tokenising people of colour, in order to add more legitimacy to their movement.**

Given the hyper-capitalist, gendered and racialised setting of the politics of the United Kingdom, first with the internal colonisation of Celtic lands and then the expansion of Empire into Africa and Asia, amongst others, leaves serious holes in the politics of the left. Leftist movements will not be able to survive without realising the true effects of white supremacy and patriarchy, and its internal problematic relationship with race and identity.

\*While there are inherent flaws with the term person of colour, I have preferred to use this term over Sivanandan's 'politically Black term', for numerous reasons.

Yasmin Begum



# ONE DOOR FOR ALL: CLASS WAR'S CAMPAIGN AGAINST 'POOR DOORS' IN LONDON

FOR THREE MONTHS NOW CLASS WAR HAVE BEEN ORGANISING WEEKLY DEMONSTRATIONS OUTSIDE A BLOCK OF FLATS NEXT TO ALDGATE EAST STATION IN LONDON. The flats at One Commercial Street were developed by Redrow and contain a mix of luxury apartments and affordable housing for social housing tenants. In the phenomenon known as 'Poor Doors' the development creates social segregation between the people who can afford the luxury apartments and those that qualify for social housing.

The difference between the two sets of occupiers is stark. The poor door isn't just a name; it literally exists, in this case down a dark alley to the side of the building. This door has, at times, been broken leaving the tenants with a lack of security and the lifts have also broken and not been repaired speedily. Meanwhile the rich door has a spacious foyer complete with concierge. Once inside the building it is impossible for someone living there to pass from the luxury side to the social housing area or vice versa.

**'Poor Doors' create social segregation between people who can afford luxury apartments and those that qualify for social housing.**

Of course it's nothing new and these developments can be found in other parts of London, the rest of the UK and abroad. However, the position of this development, right on the edge of The City highlights the gentrification of the east end, acting as both a symbolic and a practical focus point. Property developers are always telling us it's about 'location' so that's why Class War are there, right at the heart of the problems caused when communities face an influx of the rich and working class people are side-lined as a result. It's also worth remembering that we are witnessing similar attacks on working class communities very close to this development. The amazing fight back by the Focus E15 Mothers is a shining example of resistance in the face of adversity and it was fantastic to see the group attend one of our early Poor Doors demos. Similarly the issue of rising rents by greedy landlords has been highlighted in nearby Hoxton by the New Era housing campaign. The seemingly disparate issues and protests are of course connected and we need to work on joining the dots.

The protest grew modestly. The first few weeks were simply a matter of turning up and hoping we would have some form of impact. On the second week we were accompanied by some plain clothes cops who identified themselves when rich residents started to throw urine down from the luxury flats. For the next few weeks we then had a small police presence and then after seven weeks they stopped turning up. All that changed on 24th September when a small group of protesters got inside the rich foyer and occupied it. Naturally the police were called and this ensured a great turnout from local residents and passers-by who were interested and engaged on the issue. The result is a continued police presence for subsequent weeks.

**People across the east end have seen their communities damaged and edged out as areas become gentrified.**

Poor doors is an issue that people get and understand. At one of the demos I spoke to a local resident who told me that the alley with the poor doors offers zero security. They explained that life was exceedingly hard when the lift broke and repairs took weeks. People across the east end have seen gentrification and social cleansing cause a great deal of pain. They've seen their communities damaged as they've become ever more edged out by the inevitable swanky cafes, bars and restaurants that have sprung up as areas become gentrified. It's impossible for many to stay involved in their communities as many goods and services become unaffordable.

Class War is taking the view that we can change the situation. We've been highlighting it every week because it doesn't have to stay the same. Of course, this needs boots on the ground, week in and week out. By doing so we hope to build a movement up that can challenge the rich and the politicians that do their bidding. I should also point out that it's exceedingly good fun. These protests are about challenging the rich and powerful but in doing so we're not talking about just standing with a banner or doing an A-B march. We like our protests to be lively and imaginative!

Come and join us at the Poor Doors demo, every Wednesday from 6pm at One Commercial Street.. It is literally right next to Aldgate East station. We will also be planning a special one off demo at the same location on the evening of the London Anarchist Bookfair, Saturday 18th October.

Jon Bigger



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mylondondiary.co.uk



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## A Class Act

It's the thin veneer that's so insulting,  
As if we should be grateful  
That they feel the need to lie, at all.  
Decisions have been taken,  
Still, they are consulting their 'key stakeholders',  
The ones that fall between the quite unloved unlucky  
And the unfortunate but undeserving poor.  
They'll play no real part in the big debate:  
Why do the 'haves' need so much more to motivate  
them,  
Whilst the 'have-nots', apparently, need so much less?  
How did we get into our present, sorry state?  
And can we trust the ones who say  
That they'll extract us from this mess?  
There seems to me to be a fundamental, fatal, flaw,  
A massive fault line in the master plan:  
They want it both ways; want to get well  
In the good times and the bad,  
They want you with your head down, working for the  
man,  
They want to stop you spotting you've been had,  
Whilst those who want for nothing?  
They want more.  
So now we've government by clever knotting of the old  
school tie,  
And they'll do very nicely, thank you, out of boom or  
bust,  
So ask yourself 'what does this signify?'  
A nasty accident or a betrayal of trust?  
The fact is, this is something that we've seen before:  
This is a class act, that's what this is;  
This is war.

[Grim Chip]



# AFEM2014

**ORIGINALLY PUBLISHED ON OUR WEBSITE,** Freedom News is delighted to bring to you an interview with one of the organisers of Afem 2014 on the eve of the conference. It will be held on October 19th, 2014 at Queen Mary University of London.

**How are you organising the conference- have you started from scratch or are you modelling its organisation on tried and tested methods such as the Anarchist Bookfair?**

We are organising the conference in strands, with a goal of various sessions/workshops/meetings to be held within each strand. Strands include: International Anarchafeminism, Sexism within our movement, Workplace organisation, Control of our bodies, Anti-fascism, People of Colour, Sex work, and Gender. We're still confirming meetings and speakers within these strands so if anyone has an idea for a discussion that they'd like to propose please get in touch! We are certainly building off of the bookfair, although also hoping to improve upon the model in some ways! We all feel strongly that a robust safer spaces policy is needed and are working on putting one together which we will be using during the conference. I think many of us have had unfortunately had bad experiences with misogynist anarchists at the bookfair and are looking forward to having our own conference where they are not welcome.

**Who is involved in the organisation of the Afem conference? Are you a coalition of different groups, or a collective of individuals? A bit of both?**

We are a bit of both – we are individuals, some of us are involved in anarchist organisations, some are not. We have the official support of the Anarchist Federation and the Solidarity Federation and both of these organisations have contributed resources to help make AFem2014 happen, but members are involved as individuals. I'm

participating in organising the conference because I've found that I get a big charge out of meeting other anarchafeminists. I went to an anarchafeminist conference in Manchester a few years ago and learned some good stuff. I think the international and intersectional focus is a strength and I'm looking forward to the day.

**You have a clear policy on involvement, in that it is for those who 'are the targets of gender oppression.' Why do you feel this was a necessary policy for the conference? Were you specifically trying to address the 'everyone is oppressed by sexism' claim, often used by cis-men for example, that frequently downplays issues of privilege or experience of said oppression/violence?**

We've had lots of discussions about who we wanted to involve in organising the conference, and who we wanted the conference to be open to, and arrived at the current policy after a lot of thought. We wanted to try holding a conference that focuses on making space for anarchists who are often marginalised within the anarchist movement. I don't think that we were specifically trying to answer the claim, but our policy definitely takes into account the concerns of some of us about the conference being open to cis-men, because we don't consider cis-men to be the targets of gender oppression; they hold the privileged position within the patriarchy, and thus we don't think this is a space for them.

**In the road to organising and setting up AFem, what have been the main barriers or obstacles you have had to overcome to get to this point?**

The main barriers we have had to overcome have been organisational rather than external – we live in different countries and our UK organisers are spread out all over the island. We have had lots of helpful feedback from various people and groups since

we put out our first statement, but definitely the majority of feedback has been constructive even when it has been critical.

**Although there is of course no definitive answer in terms of 'outreach', do you feel it is more important to reach out to those outside of anarchism as a movement, or to reach out to those already within it in an attempt to change the dialogue around feminism?**

We decided that for this first conference, we would focus on those within the anarchist movement for the most part – this is partially the reason for holding the conference the day after the Anarchist Bookfair when more anarchists than usual will already be in London. There are lots of possibilities open for future conferences!

**How best can those interested in AFem support the conference?**

Anyone who is interested in supporting the conference can share our website and fundraising campaign on any social media they use and print and put up our posters (available on the website) wherever they live. Fundraising campaign: <https://fundrazr.com/campaigns/2mmvd/sh/23Rrn4> Website: <http://afem2014.wordpress.com/>

Anyone who is the target of gender oppression, by which we mean sexism, misogyny, trans misogyny, cissexism, transphobia and binarism, is welcome to help us in organising the conference. There is definitely still time to get involved. We've still got space for more speakers and meetings on the agenda. And of course, please come in October! It is important to note, as I pointed out in question 3, that we do not consider cis-men to be targets of gender oppression.

## AFem2014 Anarcha-Feminist Conference

Queen Mary  
University of London

October 19th  
2014

AFem 2014 is the initiative of a collective of anarcha-feminists from various countries and backgrounds. We want to build for the transformation of our own experience within the anarchist movement, and towards toppling all institutions and ideas which oppress us.

The event takes place the day after the London Anarchist Bookfair, and at the same venue: **Queen Mary, University of London, Mile End Road, London, E1 4NS.**

So far people are organising sessions on the following themes: Abortion, Internationalism, Gender, History of Anarcha-Feminism, Organising in the Workplace, People of Colour & Anarchism, Sex Work, Working in Anarchist Organisations, and Anarcha-Feminism & Academia.

Please get in touch for further information on our attendance policy, accessibility & childcare information, the event timetable, or if you would like to be involved in hosting a session.

**Contact us:**  
[afem2014.wordpress.com](http://afem2014.wordpress.com)  
[afem@afed.org.uk](mailto:afem@afed.org.uk)  
[twitter.com/AFem2014](https://twitter.com/AFem2014)

**Donate towards costs at:**  
<https://fundrazr.com/campaigns/2mmvd>



# FORWARD SLASH: "THE WEEKEND"

I want neon \ I want chrome

I want car headlights, streetlights, reflected in puddles

I want loud music, I want it louder//

I want fluorescent pink // I want inner city foxes and 3am

There's a riot in my ribcage matches my feet pounding pavement

This city is mine.

I want anarchy I want a signal

I want last orders

I am the thing you never asked for but ended up with anyway

I am looking fine in this dress // I am unnecessary

I am looking for a fight; I am throwing out these heels

I am howling at the sea \ I am wading in, nude

I am the wood-chip roof / I am the smell of booze

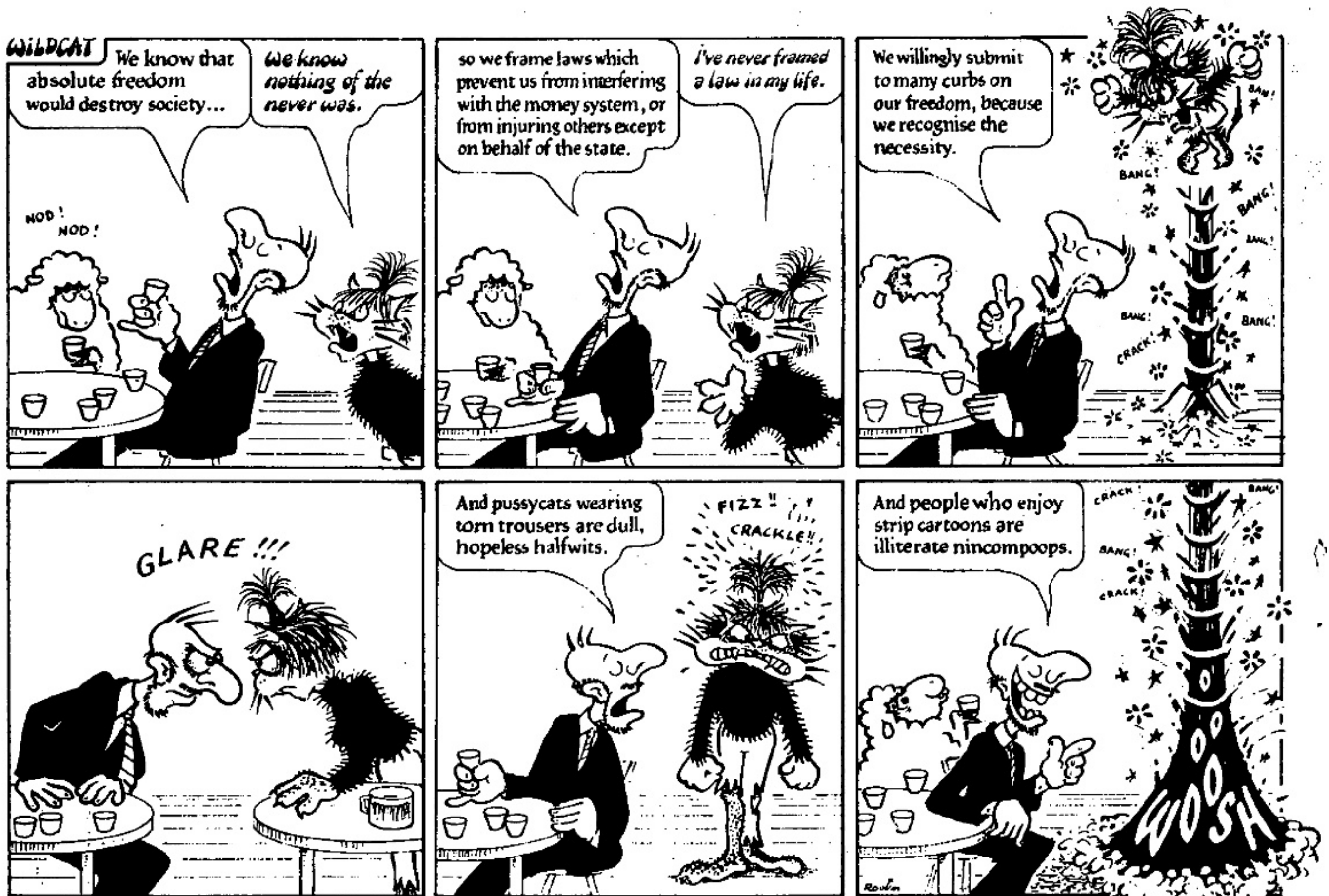
I am the striped waltzers and the spotted teacups

I am 24-hr rolling news // I am double yellows

I am driftwood I am shingle beaches that cut your feet

And I will not let you forget easily.

[Charlotte Henson]



Wildcat by Donald Room