

NEWS

NEWS IN BRIEF

CONSTRUCTION: Ongoing demonstrations by workers at the massive chemical plant in Hull, angry at job losses, have been stopped after the intervention of the union to prevent further unrest. The unofficial protest is now in its fifth week and started when 400 workers who were working for Redhall Engineering on the BP-led Vivergo consortium biofuels project were laid off. The workers have been blocking the roads and disrupting traffic to and from the plant demanding their jobs back. They have also staged a sit-in at the plant to highlight their unfair treatment. The change of tactics from picketing to direct action saw the police arrest disgruntled workers.

FINANCE: As if to prove they are all in it together, the world's third largest accountancy firm PriceWaterhouseCoopers have been paid a quacking £322 million to close down Lehman Brothers European operation. Lehman, one of the biggest global investment banks, hit the headlines when it declared itself bankrupt during the economic collapse of 2008, mainly due to its dodgy business dealings and underhand trading. It is the single highest sum earned from a UK corporate failure.

HEALTH: Adrian Fawcett is CEO of UK's biggest private healthcare provider General Healthcare Group who are looking to take over the NHS when the Tories give them the green light, a job he took on after being the boss at Punch Taverns the massive pub chain. When accused of treating health service as a commodity Fawcett replied, smiling, "A lot from the leisure industry can be applied to health." Punch Taverns have just announced the closure of 2,500 pubs.

POLITICS: Old habits die hard for the new labour middle class spiv and unrepentant war criminal. Tony Blair is to make a quick £500,000 for a six day speaking tour Down Under from cardboard box tycoon who it's emerged had to pay £20 million in a price fixing settlement. Aussie's third richest man, Anthony Pratt, was fined when his company was caught conspiring to inflate the price of their product with other market leaders. The lecture promises a "unique insights into leadership and negotiation" from Blair.

SOCIAL MEDIA: It's not only black bloc extremists who favour social networking sites as a tool for mischief making. ACAS, the industrial conciliation service, has warned that the accessibility and speed of tools such as Twitter, YouTube and Facebook mean that workers can be mobilised quicker than ever before. Citing the Lindsey oil refinery wildcat strikes as a prime example ACAS chief Peter Harwood warns "The threat of unofficial industrial action is one that both employers and unions are wary of. The lack of official leadership in such disputes means negotiating can be complex and a resolution harder to achieve." Amen to that.

LENS CAP A SAD LOSS



Noreen MacDowell, known to many activists as a brilliant political filmmaker and radical, has died of pneumonia aged 60. In her time she was a member of such groups as Big Flame, the Red Ladder theatre group and Newsreel Collective (which made films on the Grunwick strike amongst others) and spent her life marrying the creative arts with a searing political edge. An inspiring and inspired individual.

Claimants causing havoc

Protests took place around the country on 14th April as part of the Third National Day of Action Against Benefit Cuts. Over forty local radical and claimants groups, including Haringey Solidarity Group and Edinburgh Coalition Against Poverty, organised co-ordinated actions and events to highlight the unfair discriminatory changes to the benefits system. Millions are set to be affected by savage cuts to housing, disability, sickness and welfare benefits with many slipping even further below the poverty line.

The poorest and most vulnerable are being asked to pay for the mistakes and extravagances of the richest. Meanwhile companies like Atos Origin and A4e are set to rake in hundreds of millions on government contracts to bully and intimidate people from claiming the pittance handed out in benefit payments.

A demonstration of 100 people gathered outside the *Daily Mail* head office in West London demanding the end to the lies they print about disabled people and benefit claimants.

The *Daily Mail's* Scotland offices were also targeted with activists invading their offices to distribute information and tell the faceless hacks personally what they think of the *Daily Mail's* abuse of disabled people. Prior to this the group has demonstrated outside the Glasgow offices of Atos Origin, the company responsible for health testing benefit claimants in an attempt to strip people of benefits.

Atos Origin was the focus of many protests around the country. Their testing centre Edinburgh was picketed whilst over 40 people protested outside their premises in Dundee.

In Brighton the Computer Says No play was performed outside Atos offices to an enthusiastic crowd and heavy police presence. Liverpool and Leeds both saw demonstrations outside Atos, organised by local Solidarity Federation branches and the Black Triangle Anti Defamation Campaign.

An early morning demonstration in Islington saw a crowd gather outside the North London Atos testing centre, and demonstrations also took place outside Atos in Bristol as well as in Burnley, Poole and Truro town centres.

The Work Capability Assessments carried out by Atos have been heavily criticised by CAB, the Child Poverty Action Group and others as being unfair and not based on medical opinion. The process is driven by the government cutting £2.5 billion from Employment Support Allowance to pay for the public debt caused by the bank bailouts.

The Armchair Army, Virtual Resistance and Troll A Tory ensured that those unable to attend protests in person could make their feelings heard. Hundreds of online activists wrote to MPs, media outlets or trolled Tory websites throughout the day.

Anti-benefit cuts campaigners are now calling for an escalation. A week of action against Atos Origin has been called, beginning on 9th May. Watch this space for further details.



Left, Deptford's Social Centre Plus successfully resisted eviction; right, the Okasional Café in Manchester remains open.

Social centres resist eviction

Anti-cuts activists defy bailiffs and keep open

Anarchists, anti-cuts activists, and community campaigners who occupied a disused job centre in south London successfully resisted an attempt to evict them early on Tuesday morning 12th April. Over 60 people gathered outside the squatted building, renamed Social Centre Plus (SCP) on Deptford High Street, linking arms and blocking the front door to prevent High Court bailiffs and builders – backed up by a vanload of police – from entering.

Their success followed an hour-long stand-off, during which the bailiffs, from Locks Bury Services, met with the site's landlord, Paul Jackson, outside the café opposite Social Centre Plus, whose owner also wanted the space for a high society art exhibition. Eventually the police informed the bailiffs that they had no intention of intervening, and recommended that they come back another day. Members of the local

community remained outside for most of the morning, celebrating the success for South East London's anti-cuts movement.

Despite the threat that bailiffs could return unannounced at any time, SCP remains committed to continuing even if they do have to move on from the current premises. The night before the date of eviction they hosted a public meeting to coordinate further activities against the government's ongoing cuts where the NHS, local education and attacks to quality of housing were amongst the issues discussed. Local residents who want to join the borough's fight back against the cuts are encouraged to get in touch or come along to one of the open days.

Activists, including members of South London Solidarity Federation, originally occupied the disused job centre on 12th March as a response to the brutal cuts to public services being carried out at both a local and national level, with the intention of creating a public space for members of the local community, that can share, contribute to, and create a truly social building and a hub of local opposition to the cuts programme.

They had already had numerous cafés, film nights and workshops before receiving their eviction papers.

This self-organised space, run by people from a variety of backgrounds, remains a catalyst for social and political change based on the principles of direct action, solidarity and self-organisation.

- Meanwhile in Manchester the Okasional café squatted social centre was attacked by police who attempted to gain entry illegally in the early hours of the morning on 16th April after a stand-off with the occupants. Having been prevented from entering, the police, numbering some twenty officers including police dogs, set about damaging the premises and attacking people at random. Despite this, the squatted space continues to hold a daily café, and function as a radical space for meetings, organising actions, workshops and events.

The Okasional Café is put together by a loose non-hierarchical collective of people who have taken empty buildings in Manchester and transformed them into public spaces.

A right royal cock-up

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organiser', who is quoted throughout the article, in a gas mask kneeling in front of an assortment of equipment and weaponry to be used to disrupt the wedding. The two common features of all these articles are the word 'anarchist' and the name Chris Knight.

Knight, who is not an anarchist but an eccentric and outspoken academic, has been feeding the press these stories; making media pronouncements about what 'we' are going to do on 29th April. Given that no legitimate anarchist group had offered any information concerning their activities for the royal wedding, we have to ask whose agenda is being followed and to what end?

Freedom has reliable information as to the identity of the people involved in the posed photograph – the person in the gas mask and the person who took the photo. Neither of them are anarchists, and the photographer has links with the English Defence League, although he denies any active involvement, as well as Chris Knight. We do not know how much they were paid for their story. What is clear is that Knight, along with the other provocateurs, are in the business of making claims to the press (as he did during the G20 protests in 2009 – see page 4 of this issue) about anarchists which are picked up by the police as 'legitimate intelligence'.

This intelligence is then used to target genuine known anarchists. At the Home Affairs Committee hearing on policing, Assistant Commissioner with the Metropolitan Police Service Lynne Owens said of the royal wedding "It is a security event, which will give us different powers under terrorism and other legislation, and we now have a much broader intelligence picture about the sort of protest activity that we can expect" and went to hint at the suspension of certain legal rights, adding "the application of the Human Rights Act, might be different for the royal wedding." We have all been warned.

ANALYSIS

G20 policing in the dock

Counting the cost of state sanctioned violence

The anti-G20 protests in the heart of London's financial district on 1st April 2009 still resonate with interesting if uncertain implications for anarchists and radicals two years on. What was an expansive, intense and violent policing operation, as thousands of protesters were kettled and beaten with impunity as they converged on the Bank of England in the heart of the City, and later at the 'climate camp' protest situated some distance away where police savaged peaceful protesters who they had trapped at Bishopsgate, mainly young activists in a makeshift camp outside the European Climate Exchange. Both of these incidents have come under public and legal scrutiny, in the way the police handled the protest and the manner in which they enforced the law.

The G20 policing operation marks an ugly low in recent public order policing, where one person was killed by the actions of the riot squad and many others sustained severe injuries. The Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO), the private company who are tasked with devising operational procedures on behalf of police, have developed a secretive public order policy that involves ensuring political demonstrations become off-putting through a brutal and unpalatable course of action to 'encourage' people not to return to or attend future protests.

It is within this parameter that two cases have come before the legal authorities concerning the policing of the G20 protests. The inquest into the death of Ian Tomlinson, as reported previously by *Freedom* and which is still ongoing, and a judicial review brought before the High Court recently by three climate camp activists who were amongst the 5,000-strong crowd contained and beaten by police at Bishopsgate – both offer us useful perspectives on the strategy of political policing.

In an extraordinary, yet indecisive, judgement the High Court ruled the police did act unlawfully against the climate camp activists in the disproportionate use of force and containing them in the manner in which they did. On the surface what looks like an



impressive victory for the protesters is in reality couched in terms that actually reinforce police powers and, crucially, their actions. The kettling tactic, which is at present being challenged in the European courts, was declared unlawful in this circumstance only because there was no imminent threat of breach of the peace to justify containment. That is, if the threat of violence is great enough kettling is still a lawful and justified police tactic in the eyes of the law. It is worth pointing out a comment made by the judges that the kettle at the Bank of England is "not criticised in these proceedings as unlawful".

What the judges did criticise was actions of individual officers. In a telling remark they stated: "The Climate Camp was not a violent crowd, although some individual police officers appear from their note books to have thought wrongly that they were." The shield strikes – thrusting the sides of the riot shield into the faces of trapped protesters – came under particular criticism as not being recognised as a lawful use of force by the court stating the instructions by senior officers were "very general and imprecise and may not have been fully conveyed to individual officers, some of whom appear not to have been trained for crowd control operations of this kind." What was not challenged or even explored was that this kind of violence was sanctioned, expected and ordered at the highest level.

In that respect we have to look at the war of words which was played out between the police and the G20 Meltdown protest organiser Chris Knight.

Far from being an anarchist, Chris Knight is a privileged academic whose role at these

events seems to be providing the police with the ammunition needed to execute high levels of violence against protesters. His provocative and often inappropriate media outbursts allowed the police strategists the opportunity to legally justify their 'heavy-handed approach'. In the judge's ruling it stated that the senior officer based his decision to impose a kettle at the Bank of England in part on "intelligence about those organising the events".

Equally at the Ian Tomlinson inquest, attended most days by the editor of *Freedom*, the police witness statements and testimony all point to an increased expectation of violence on the day as a direct result of media coverage of the escalating war of words. It was Knight who famously said to the press "The message to police is 'if you press your nuclear button, I'll press mine'. It sounds like a threat? Well, yeah – don't do it. If you want violence, you'll get it." And it was, as revealed at the Tomlinson inquest, a senior officer who briefed his riot police to treat "violent activists with an iron fist".

Anarchists have always been used as scapegoats by the state to justify their increasingly repressive measures towards political dissent. The likely outcome of the High Court climate camp ruling is that kettling will in future be determined by the amount of disorder expected and expressed, yet the 'hardcore of troublemakers' will continue to be targeted by police, perhaps before they arrive at the demonstration, where 'preventative policing' takes on a new and darker tone. It is also obvious that other elements are using anarchists for their own particular purpose – something we as a movement should be aware of.



NEWS IN BRIEF

May 1st is still an anarchist day, and here are some of the events organised around the country to celebrate the history and its political significance of the occasion.

BRIGHTON: Saturday 30th April, mass street party and protest in central Brighton. Our lives are under attack. Our future is being sacrificed to increase the power of an elite. The bankers' crisis is being used as an excuse to push through a far-right agenda of vicious cuts – cuts which will hurt the poorest and line the pockets of the rich. The NHS, Education and Welfare systems are being stripped back while the bankers are being paid million pound bonuses. Their only answer to the disaster is more of the same, capitalism with the gloves off. More wars, more ecological devastation and we're being asked to pay for it. We are being robbed blind – it's time to reclaim what is ours.

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

LONDON: On Sunday 1st May meet at 11am, Clerkenwell Green for the Anarchist Public Assembly with speakers, music, infostalls, food. In the winter of 2010 students showed that it isn't only opinion polls or media corporations that can set the agenda. Suddenly the talk changed from how we could best afford this crisis to whether we could actually resist the austerity measures. If we believe we can do more than change the agenda, we have to start acting like it – and we have to start saying it. These are our services, these are our workplaces, these are our streets. This is our day. This is a day to celebrate ourselves and our struggle together, to take pride in the fight and our ability to carry it out. It's hopefully going to be sunny, wear shorts – bring your friends, families and co-workers.

ELSEWHERE IN THE CAPITAL: Big Society Soundsystem are having their Mayday Bash on the underground, Jubilee line. They say it's "an illegitimate party commencing on public transport until we're removed... and finally a chill out in the park for beers."

PORTSMOUTH: Sunday 1st May, assemble at 12:30 in Victoria Park by the workers memorial and make our way to Southsea Common. As the government proposes to ban the Mayday bank holiday, plans for marches are popping up all across the country, and Portsmouth is no exception. The march has been called by Portsmouth Against the Cuts Together (PACT) which highlights the cuts as a class issue, making us pay for a crisis not of our creation. Portsmouth Anarchists are calling for anarchists from all across Hampshire and beyond to come to the march and to assemble on the common for a meeting in the hope of creating a Hampshire-wide network of anarchists to organise against the cuts. So follow the red and black flags!

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

A mayday for May Day?

So the expected plans of the ConDem Coalition to get rid of the May Day bank holiday have been announced, albeit with the myth of consultation. At least the bastards are being honest – they are doing it purely to boost tourism, business, and profits. Into the mix they introduce an unhealthy dose of nationalism with the suggestion it move to St George's day in April, or a new Trafalgar day in October. But we know nationalism is always a fallback option for politicians in a time of crisis. And of course, removing the bank holiday from early May does mean the historic international workers day continues to be airbrushed from history, along with so many of our other radical histories.

But does the loss of the May Day bank holiday really matter? International workers day on 1st May has been with us for over a century, since it was adopted by the Second International a few years after the murders and mayhem in Chicago in 1886. However the May Day bank holiday was only introduced in the UK in the late 1970s, at the end of decade of enhanced class warfare, and more often than not the holiday does not even occur on 1st May. It has in fact been a distraction from the reality of May Day, an attempt perhaps by the ruling class to remove the focus from the 1st May international celebration of working class

struggle, to just another paid day off granted us by the charity of our masters. Well bollocks to that, celebrating May Day on any day other than 1st May is frankly absurd. We are all for as many paid days off as possible, but what we really want goes much further and deeper than that, and means making every day like a May Day. So by all means defend the May Day bank holiday, but more importantly celebrate May Day on 1st May.

May Day will continue to be celebrated around the world on 1st May, be it for its original pagan roots or more recently for its celebration of workers struggles, and preferably for both. We don't need permission from the bosses or the state to celebrate our histories and traditions, and we shouldn't bother asking. Just do it.

Reports on the streets indicate that Bristol may well see a Celebration of May Day parade this year, following discussions involving individuals from a large number of groups. It is believed they will go public with their plans for an inclusive public event in a few weeks time. Keep your eyes peeled for news of how you can join in.

Bristol Anarchist Bookfair Collective

The Bristol Anarchist Bookfair Collective will be holding their annual bookfair on 7th May this year (see page 1).



INTERNATIONAL

IN BRIEF

Chilean anarchist prisoners on hunger strike April 11th 2011 marked the 50th day on hunger strike for the Chilean comrades listed below who stopped taking food on 21st February. They have so far spent 180 days in prison accused of membership of an illegal organisation and some specific individual charges relating to attacks attributed to anarchists over the last few years. The long term state repression and persecution of these anarchists has become known as 'the Bombs Case'. This information is correct as of April 2011.

- **Mónica Caballero:** Prosecutors seeking ten year sentence for membership of an illegal organisation and ten years for being linked to a bomb attack on a church in 2009.
- **Andrea Urzúa:** Prosecutors seeking ten year sentence for membership of an illegal organisation.
- **Pablo Morales:** Prosecutors effectively seeking a 20 year minimum sentence for being an alleged leader of the 'illegal organisation'.
- **Rodolfo Retamales:** Prosecutors effectively seeking a 20 year minimum sentence for being an alleged leader of the 'illegal organisation'.
- **Vinicio Aguilera:** Prosecutors seeking ten year sentence for membership of an illegal organisation.
- **Felipe Guerra:** Prosecutors seeking ten year sentence for membership of an illegal organisation and ten years for being linked to a bomb attack on a police station in 2009.
- **Carlos Riverosp:** Prosecutors seeking ten year sentence for membership of an illegal organisation plus three years for being the alleged financier of the association.
- **Camilo Pérez:** Prosecutors seeking ten year sentence for membership of an illegal organisation.
- **Francisco Solar:** Prosecutors seeking ten year sentence for membership of an illegal organisation plus 15 years for being linked to bomb attacks on the National Intelligence Agency in 2007 and an electricity company in 2007.
- **Omar Hermosilla:** Prosecutors seeking ten year sentence for membership of an illegal organisation plus three years for being the alleged financier of the association.

The following comrades have been bailed with strict conditions:

- **Cristián Cancino:** prosecutors seeking ten year sentence for membership of an illegal organisation.
- **Diego Morales:** prosecutors seeking ten year sentence for membership of an illegal organisation.
- **Candelaria Cortez:** prosecutors seeking ten years for membership of an illegal organisation plus ten years for being linked to a bomb attack on a car dealership in 2007.
- **Iván Goldenberg:** prosecutors seeking 540 days for possession of and carrying an illegal firearm.

More information: <http://www.brightonabc.org.uk/>

LENS CAP NUCLEAR NIGHTMARE



Protests have been held outside the headquarters of Tokyo Electric Power Company demanding an immediate stoppage of the country's nuclear development plans. Banners included 'No Nukes' and 'Nuclear Kills All Life'. Authorities have said that the area around the Fukushima plant has become uninhabitable for the next 10 to 20 years, but experts argue it will be a century before the place becomes entirely safe for habitation.

Anti-anarchist crackdown

In a repressive wave against anarchist insurrectionaries across Italy, five comrades of the Bologna group Fuoroligo have been arrested, and seven others have been cautioned and put under restrictions. According to recent updates a sixth anarchist has been arrested in the city of Ferrara. The arrested have been charged with 'subversive association with criminal intent'. The five arrested – Martino Trevisan, Robert Ferro, Nicusor Roman, Stefania Carolei, and Pistolesi Anna Maria – have been kept in Dozza prison in Bologna.

So far, 60 raids have been conducted in 16 cities – Modena, Rome, Padova, Trento, Reggio Calabria, Ancona, Turin, Lecce, Naples, Trieste, Genoa, Teramo, Forli, Ravenna and Milan – by the Bologna section of the Italian political police called Digos under the central command of the Prevention Police, called

Ucigos. The entire operation has been co-ordinated by the magistrate of Bologna.

It is not certain when the investigation began. According to two anarchist reports, it began either in 2006 or 2009. The raids were in response to the several incendiary bomb attacks carried out by insurrectionary anarchists against banks, Bologna migrants detention centre, and especially against the offices of ENI, the Italian energy multinational in Bologna, on 29th March 2011. The week before attacks were also carried out against the IBM offices in Bologna which were claimed by Earth Liberation Front.

According to anarchist reports there is no clear evidence linking the comrades of Fuoroligo with ENI attacks. Recent attacks on embassies in Rome by the Informal Anarchist Federation may have provided added incentive for the raids.

Notes from the US

Cuts

The United States congress is as aggressive in adversely affecting people's lives as the government is in the UK: plans in the budgets being prepared at the moment seem likely to target organisations long considered inimical to right wing doctrine: as previously reported in *Freedom*, these include National Public Radio, Planned Parenthood and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). These are not exactly radical entities; indeed, the EPA's Office of Radiation and Indoor Air

(ORIA) has recently prepared an update of the 1992 'Protective Action Guides' for radiation exposure so as to minimise the perceived risk after the Japan meltdown; and at a time when Obama is still pushing nuclear power.

House Budget Committee Chair Paul Ryan is outlining a budget that would cut more than US\$4 (£2.5) trillion from federal spending in the course of the next ten years affecting Medicare (which pays most of the health-care costs for nearly 50 million elderly and

Libya in conflict

Two UK anarchists send a report from the frontline of the ongoing Libya uprising

In the city of Misrata, the only city in the west of Libya not under control of Gaddafi's forces, the situation is desperate. The whole of the city is besieged with no escape except by Mediterranean Sea, its only lifeline.

The rules of war do not apply here, there is no exit strategy and no escape route, the motto of the people in Libya is 'victory or death'. This is not a war of two sides, but a civilian population held captive by a well equipped military force.

The organisation for the defence of the city is manned only by civilians. Roadblocks on the streets constructed from scrap metal and sand, are controlled by the 'Shabab', the youth armed only with small arms and some only with Molotov Cocktails, to defend themselves against the possibility of invasion by tanks.

On a corner the rebel's red, black and green flag flies, ridden with bullet holes it has become a surrogate target when humans are not available. At the position, we met ordinary people, teachers, engineers and students. They were eating chocolates captured from Gaddafi forces. "They eat sweets and drink Pepsi and bring us nothing but guns!" one fighter shouts.

"We have some weapons we have taken from the Gaddafi militias, like SPGs" says Muhamed Agila, a Misrata resident, "but we will not use them, it is not safe, people live here, this is our home we don't want to destroy our home. We don't want to hurt the people. They [Gaddafi's forces] don't care what they use. You can see the destruction everywhere."

We visited the city's hospitals and spoke with a number of doctors who explained the impact that the fighting is having on the city. Tens of people die every day here under



A Libyan rebel fighter walks between piles of sand that are being used as roadblocks in a neighbourhood bordering Tripoli Street in Misrata.

bombardment from Gaddafi's forces most are injured by shrapnel from tanks, mortars and bullets.

Children are suffering in this siege with 20 children killed in Misrata alone, the youngest victim aged only nine months. We saw with our own eyes the body of a three year old girl shot through the head by one of Gaddafi's bullets. Her father, a doctor working in one of the city's hospitals had been kidnapped only a day earlier. Grenade rounds lie unexploded around the streets and children have been finding them and picking them up to play with.

As medical teams here struggle to save the lives of those caught in this conflict they also come under fire. Ambulances come under regular fire from troops, with snipers aiming for the petrol tanks in attempts to blow them up. We met one young driver from the Red Crescent, who was shot in the arm, he was lucky, with many of his colleagues having been killed.

The people of Misrata remain defiant in the midst of this chaos. At the candle-lit vigil for two young men killed in yesterday's fighting the whole of Zawiya al-Majohb's population turns out to chant in a show of unity surrounding the two shrouded bodies in coffins. The people here do not have any clear ideological or political aspirations. The two most common chants, 'Free Libya, Gaddafi has to go' in Arabic, along with cries of 'Allahu Akbar', 'God is great' would encompass their principal motivations. The people here are religious, but they look more to western democracy for their political influence than to political Islam and Al-Qaeda. In Benghazi, people make their calls to NATO help them win their fight. For now, the people of Misrata must rely on their own resolve and faith to defend themselves as NATO seem to sleep while the people here cannot.

Read the full unedited article on the Freedom Press website at www.freedompress.org.uk

Notes from the US

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disabled people) and Medicaid schemes. It's being suggested that this will effectively end the provision. If Medicaid is similarly wrecked, there would be reduced benefits and fewer people would be eligible.

In the first full week of April the government nearly shut down until all sides of the elite made a deal amongst themselves, not to increase taxes for those best able to pay them; nor to plan to gather the many billions which the already rich and the powerful evade every year; still less to cut spending on weaponry, which recent polls demonstrate many in the country really want. Indeed, according to the

Stockholm International Peace Research Institute the United States increased such spending by nearly 3% percent to almost US\$700 (£428) billion in 2010. But to cut US\$38 (£23) billion in spending for the final six months of the current fiscal year. And of course, it'll be the poor and needy who suffer the most.

Environment

As BP tries to restart offshore drilling at ten existing wells in the Gulf after the disaster it caused there exactly a year ago and with new manslaughter charges pending, Transocean, the company that owned the rig that exploded

and caused the largest oil spill in US history – and this is not made up – has just awarded its top executives bonuses for achieving what it described as the "best year in safety performance in our company's history." The figure awarded Transocean CEO Steve Newman was almost US\$400,000 (£245,000).

So let's end with some good news: a poll published earlier this month by GlobeScan reveals that fewer than three in five (59%) of all Americans asked believe that free market capitalism as the best system for the future. This is down from 80% in 2002.

Louis Further

FEATURE

Kicker conspiracy: how footba

An interview with anarchist footballer and author about the beautiful game

The Austrian-born anarchist author and former semi-professional football player, Gabriel Kuhn, recently released his newest book with PM Press, *Soccer vs. the State: Tackling Football and Radical Politics*. We talked to Kuhn about football, anarchism, and sports in a better world.

Freedom: *Is there anything intrinsically 'anarchistic' about football?*

Gabriel Kuhn: I'm tempted to say that there isn't anything intrinsically anarchistic about anything. If anarchy was that easy, we'd have more of it. However, I think that almost everything has anarchistic potential, and it is this potential that anarchists have to tease out. This is also true in football. If you are able to tame the game's competitive character, football can be a wonderful exercise in community building. If you focus on football's role as the game of the masses, it can serve as a vehicle to challenge the powerful. If you embrace the beauty and the joy of the game, you reject it as an industry. I would say that it is in this sense that *Soccer vs. the State* is trying to strengthen the radical – or anarchistic – dimensions of the sport.

How was football received by anarchism? How could we characterise the relationship between the two historically?

Early on, there was a lot of scepticism within the anarchist movement. The opium-for-the-masses argument was strong, both in Europe and in Latin America. It remained that way well into the 1930s. There is a text in *Soccer vs. the State* that was published in the 1920s by German anarcho-syndicalists. It basically blames football for distracting the workers from political organising.

Things were never that clear-cut, though. One of the pioneers of soccer in the United States was a Dutch-born IWW activist by the name of Nicolaas Steelink. And during the Spanish Revolution, soccer games were regularly arranged by anarchists in Barcelona.

Today, soccer might still be eyed sceptically in some anarchist circles, but overall I think the reception has changed. Particularly in North America, soccer has become really popular among anarchists. I guess it is mainly the internationalism that is appealing. We must not forget that conservative US talk show hosts like Glenn Beck still blasted soccer as un-American during the 2010 Men's World Cup.

Also in Europe and Latin America, increasing numbers of closet anarchist football fans have come out into the open. The FC St Pauli phenomenon certainly had a

huge impact. Since a bunch of squatting punks and anarchists took over the St Pauli stands in the mid-1990s it has become significantly easier for anarchists worldwide to relate positively to the game. I welcome this development, of course. Football plays a huge role in communities across the world, and it's important that anarchist voices have a presence.

Where did the perception of football as 22 cretins chasing a lump of leather come from? Was it always thus? How did it become the preserve of the working class?

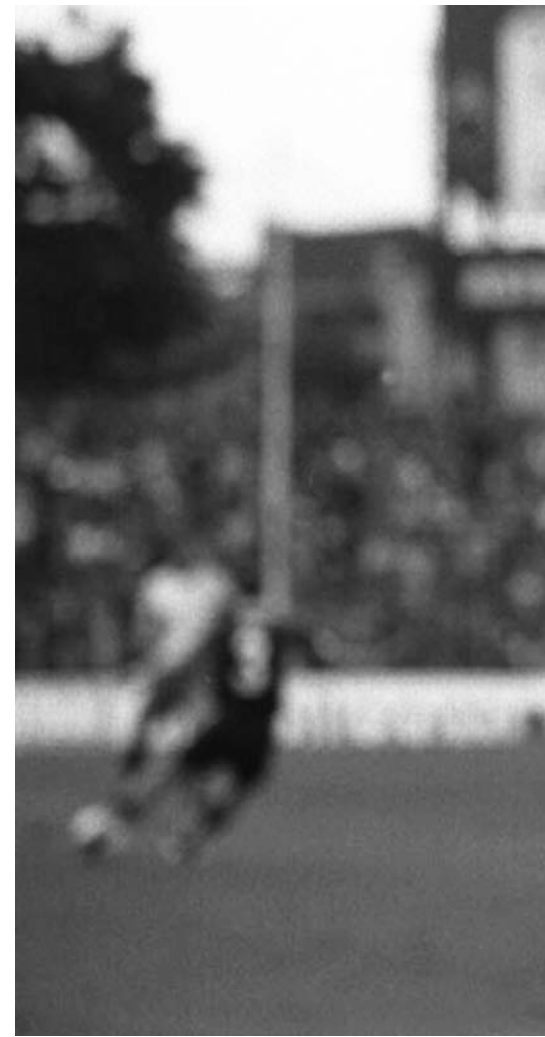
Since football has always been popular with the masses, it has always had to endure the ridicule of the cultural elite. This is true for every pop cultural phenomenon. There also exists an intellectual arrogance, often expressed in the form of a general disdain for physical exercise and play. Needless to say, such attitudes are rather silly. We must not let them bother us. Who cares what self-appointed cultural and intellectual elites think?

The reason why football is so popular with the working class is probably simple. Football is a straightforward game that doesn't require much equipment. It can practically be played anywhere and under all circumstances. This also gives it a distinctively democratic character. For more than a hundred years, football has been one of the few social fields in which class differences haven't necessarily translated into a disadvantage for the poor and underprivileged. The development of a football player is far less dependent on economic resources than the development of, say, a tennis player or a golfer. Nor does a lack of formal education give you less authority in discussing the line-up and the tactics of, say, the English national team. It is largely these aspects that give football its unrivalled global role as the people's game.

How did capitalism take over football... was it inevitable?

Perhaps it was inevitable in the sense that capitalism is taking over everything that promises profit. However, capitalism has never been completely distinguished from football. If we look at the origins of many of the leading clubs in the late nineteenth century, they were already exploited by companies and factory owners, at least for prestige. So the ever increasing commercialisation we have witnessed in the twentieth century was not the result of an outside force but of an intrinsic logic, if you will.

Over the last twenty years, the commercialisation has taken on a particular momentum. Football has turned into a spectacle that people could have hardly foreseen when World Cup Willie was sold as the first official World Cup mascot in England in 1966. Champions Leagues, a 32-team Men's World Cup roster, multi-billion dollar TV contracts, celebrity players, and a ruthless merchandise



industry that doesn't even stop short of selling corporate-sponsored jerseys to the average football supporter are all expressions of this. Hardly any of it can be encouraging for a radical football fan.

For me, the response has to be two-fold. Within the professional game, we have to campaign against the exploitation of both spectators and players – and I'm not talking about the obscenely rich top 0.5% of professional players, but about the tens of thousands of football professionals who live under precarious conditions, particularly migrant players from Africa.

Within the world of football in general, it is important to support grassroots initiatives that do not only promise all the fun in a politically sound and non-commercial environment but also create opportunities for effective community organising and everyday political activism.

Can you give examples?

I think you find one of the best in the UK with the Easton Cowboys and Cowgirls Sports Club hailing from Bristol. The Easton Cowboys and Cowgirls have managed to

I fell foul of the state



form local alliances that many political organisations can only dream of and to establish worldwide connections that translate directly into international solidarity work. There is an excellent article about the Easton Cowboys and Cowgirls included in *Soccer vs. the State*, written by Roger Wilson – I really encourage everyone to read it!

Why did football become so macho... was it always so?

Especially in the UK, women's football became really popular during World War One. In 1920, the best women's team at the time, the Dick, Kerr's Ladies, played their main rivals, St Helen's Ladies, at a legendary game at Liverpool's Goodison Park in front of a crowd of 53,000. Soon after, the English FA officially banned women's football. Many other national FA's followed suit. A great number of these bans weren't lifted before the 1970s. This halted the development of the women's game for fifty years and effectively turned football into a men's only affair. These bans marked perhaps the single most scandalous chapter of football history and reflected the deeply rooted patriarchal

structures that have haunted the game from its beginnings.

Luckily, things have changed in the last twenty years – slowly but steadily. There remains a lot to be done, though, both in strengthening the women's game and in erasing sexist attitudes from the men's game. In terms of heteronormativity, the struggle has only just begun. It will be a long but terribly important fight to rid football of homophobia!

Where have the changes come from?

Social movements have been a big factor, as always. Groups that had long been excluded from football started demanding their place: women, people of colour, gays and lesbians, people with disabilities and others.

Another factor is that forms of oppression have become more flexible. Traditionally excluded social groups are increasingly wooed as consumers. The trend to turn football stadiums into shopping malls reflects this. It is a development that does have certain progressive dimensions as it allows a number of people to feel comfortable in a space that didn't feel very welcoming before. However,

these forms of increased inclusion are offset by new forms of exclusion, mainly economic ones. What we really need is social change apart from corporate interest.

Are there any major 'left-wing' teams today?

The way professional football works today, I don't think you can be major and left-wing at the same time. There are some big clubs – the FC Barcelona probably being the most prominent example – that stand for values such as independence, social awareness, and participatory democracy. However, the money and the power involved, the demands of success, the unsettling notions of loyalty and rivalry – none of this sits well with what I see as the core values of left-wing politics, namely justice and solidarity. But this doesn't make the progressive elements less valuable, nor does it mean that anarchists can't enjoy football on the highest level. The challenge is to bolster the left-wing dimensions that exist and to oppose those that reflect and perpetuate an unjust political and economic system.

How can we as anarchists develop football?

On the professional level, we can campaign for more democracy within the football associations, for more supporter influence, for a more inclusive environment, for less corporate control, for players' unions, and for a just division of resources, including equitable salaries.

On the grassroots level, we can strengthen the communal aspect of the game, keep the competitiveness at bay, and meet all players with respect.

At the risk of sounding moralistic, I also believe that notions of fair play are important: so-called tactical fouls, diving, trash talking, etc., have no place in radical football, no matter the level.

Which team do you support? How do you justify it?

I guess I'm in the lucky position that the Nick Hornby model of never-ending devotion to your childhood team doesn't apply to me. There really isn't any particular team I support; it's more of a game-to-game decision. This also means that I'm fairly flexible with my justifications. As for many people, rooting for the underdog is a common choice. Other choices are supporting a team that represents a community I sympathise with or that has players, managers, or fans I like. The only irrational obsessions I keep concern teams I have always disliked: Bayern Munich and the German national team. I seem to have a hard time getting over that.

The Freedom Bookshop (Angel Alley, 84b Whitechapel High Street, London E1 7QX) will host the London launch of *Soccer vs. the State* on Sunday 8th May at 3 pm. Meet Gabriel Kuhn and continue the discussion!

COMMENT

ABOUT FREEDOM

ANGEL ALLEY

Readers will note that with the latest rise in UK postal prices we have had to put up subscriptions for the first time in three years. Apologies to airmail subscribers for the big price hike, but when we checked we found it cost more to send than the actual old subs rate, but we have managed to keep down the surface rate.

We have commenced a review of the future of the paper. Currently the paper loses around £10,000 a year, which we have met largely from generous donations from readers. Barring any future bequests, the paper will run out of money towards the end of next year. Consequently we are exploring all options for a sustainable future and will be entering into a dialogue with the wider movement as to what it needs. There will be a public meeting to debate this at the London Anarchist Bookfair in October, but in the meantime do feel free to send us any constructive ideas you may have.

Publishing-wise we are bringing out a new Harold Barclay title on religion, reprinting his *The State* and are in negotiations with Active Distribution over a joint publication of *Breaking Free*.

SUBSCRIPTIONS

This is issue is vol 72 no 08, so if the number above your name on the address label is 7208 or less, then your subscription is now due for renewal. There's a renewal form on page 16 of this issue or you can subscribe online at freedompress.org.uk/news/subscribe or, if you don't want to worry in the future about remembering to renew, ask us to send you a standing order form by emailing subs@freedompress.org.uk or write to us at 'Subscriptions', Freedom, 84b Whitechapel High Street, London E1 7QX. Unfortunately our subscription rates have to increase, so any subscribers paying by Standing Order are asked to contact their bank to update the amount payable.

CONTACT DETAILS

Freedom Press, 84b Whitechapel High Street, London E1 7QX
Tel/fax: 020 7247 9249

www.freedompress.org.uk

Enquiries: info@freedompress.org.uk

Copy/Letters: copy@freedompress.org.uk

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NEXT ISSUE

The next issue will be dated 7th May 2011 and the last day to get copy to us for that issue will be Thursday 28th April. You can send your articles to us by email to copy@freedompress.org.uk or by post addressed to 'The Editors', Freedom, 84b Whitechapel High Street, London E1 7QX.

A sideways look

by SVARTFROSK

One of the few things that all sides of the political divide agree on is that administration is something that can be easily cut. Administration as a function is conflated with bureaucracy, and no one would defend that, least of all me. But is it the same thing?

I don't believe it is and will try and show why. Bureaucracy is a term reminiscent of the Soviet Union or EU – faceless unaccountable officials making decisions far removed from common sense. However, if we pick apart this tabloid definition, we might ask how much more accountable are officials under 'democracy'. Or what 'common sense' is, and whether the decisions to slash public spending to bail out banks counts.

In reality, in all forms of hierarchical rule, officials ultimately dance to the tune of the ruling class. So EU officials work hard for the interests of multinational corporations, and Soviet officials worked for the interests of the Communist Party. The fact that they had to be in the CP to be officials is not significant – all state systems require high level officials to be on-board. If you think I'm wrong, ask yourself why there are no high ranking officials in Britain with a background in, say Class War or al-Muhajiroun? Any job with even a tiny bit of power is vetted, and the questions asked include membership of political organisations that don't support parliamentary democracy.

Administration is something that is necessary in all organisations. Small ones can get away without formal admin sometimes, but even then it is pushing it. Administration is the process of running an organisation. It can involve keeping in touch with people, looking after finances, booking rooms and sending out notifications. There are lots of administra-

tive tasks that any organisation needs to do, just to survive. Those that do them badly often don't survive, or end up fracturing because without administration there can be no accountability. Those of us who've been around plenty of anarchist groups may recognise this – it shades into the tyranny of structurelessness, whereby groups are dominated by one or two individuals because there are no structures to hold them to account.

Apply the same principles to public services, which according to politicians need less administration. If admin staff are cut, do the processes still need to happen? I agree some don't, but if they do, who does them? So, a nurse might record the medicines given to a patient, on a device by the bedside. That information might well be crucial for the patient's future care – but passing it on in a useful way requires admin or back office functions.

Where I work an admin post was recently transferred to a third party company as part of the cuts. The end result is that my colleagues and I have spent a lot more time dealing with that third party. I could have been doing my own work, which still needs doing, hence a cut in admin usually means an increase in workload for those left. Only one of my mates ever had a secretary at his job – he worked in the City. They wanted him managing funds, not typing letters or arranging meetings. His management saw that those things were necessary so they employed someone to do it.

So whenever a politician talks about 'protecting front line services', remember that what they mean is increasing the workload and stress on front line services by ill thought-out cuts to back office functions.

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Visibly organising?

I note the letters of complaint from members of the Anarchist Federation in issues 72 07 (9th April) and 72 05 (12th March).

Obviously the editors of *Freedom* are well known for their sarcasm and they frequently slag off groups, but one wonders why the AF have no regulars on the *Freedom* paper team when the far smaller Solidarity Federation have two, as indeed do the titchy sized Liberty and Solidarity. There's clearly no policy in the AF against *Freedom* since there's an AF member volunteering in the shop and on the Freedom collective. A hundred and fifty members can't all be illiterate, so is there a residual fear of Veró's ghost stalking 84b, or is it simply that newer AF members (and it has had exponential growth in the last two years) don't know that *Freedom* wants them to write for it.

Pho Nenayme

Ex AF member (personal capacity)

Why we lost at Wapping

One of the most surprising reasons put up for the loss of the strike is that by an ex-national official, who claims that we lost (in part) because his car was sequestered by the government. Perhaps he had some devastating plan that would destroy Murdoch and the car was essential, perhaps not. And there were plenty of other reasons like: the State, the scabs, the police, the fact that Fleet Street, never joined us on strike, the lack of activity by print workers and by the so called left wing. If 10% of people are left wing and if 10% of them had come to Wapping, that would be 80,000 people in London, Murdoch would never have got his papers out. We can also add to the growing list a Union Leadership who never really supported us and when the going got tough they stabbed us in the back. The TUC supported us like a rope supports the hanging man, once you have the TUC on your side; it really is the kiss of death. And then we can blame the Branch, the Region and of course the loss of a National Officials jam jar.

It should be remembered that 25 years ago the Print was the Jewel in the crown of British Trade Unionism, we had the highest wages, the best conditions, the shortest hours, we had a three night week in some shops, etc. The basis of our organisation was the Chapel, the workplace organisation. And it had served us well for generations, that is why Murdoch realised, while we were in Fleet Street, we were in control. Break the Chapel break the Union. In effect we were locked out, replaced by scabs recruited by another Trade Union.

The Union was not designed to deal with this extraordinary situation. New organisations had to be made, somewhere of course, the flying pickets, countless pickets consisting of all numbers from one to 50,000, meetings in Car Parks. One on a street corner, after a rumour had gone about that the Calls Office

was bugged. Someone remarked 'this is how the IRA started'. Nor was there much doubt where the leadership stood. The General Secretary of SOGAT was booed off the stage at a strikers meeting in Central Hall. In the miners' strike they were starved back to work, we were keeping our heads above water, we had the will to go on and we had growing support the year-long picket proved that. What we did not have was the organisation.

Many people had talked about this new organisation, but no-one did it. For us around picket, we too failed, even to form a flying picket, which would have been pretty easy and then we could have introduced, etc., etc., but we didn't. And so when the leadership told us to walk away from Wapping, we muttered, uttered dark threats, stamped our feet and walked away from Wapping with a hatred of authority and a heavy heart. It was like the end of a love affair, something you want to go on, but know can't. We had put a year of a life into this.

LETTERS AND COMMENT

And just to make it topical, there are at the moment a lot of organisation opposing the cuts without leaders or constitutions, if they organise the struggle then maybe we'll have a chance to win. If the TUC and the Labour Party get the leadership of the struggle then we're fucked. All pickets are urged to join the struggle.

sparrow

Wapping: 25 years on, an exhibition with dramatic images and accounts of the dispute and the challenges for print and media workers with pictures, leaflets, posters and memorabilia on display. This exhibition commemorates the determined resistance of the sacked printworkers and the refuseniks. Just as importantly, it will relate the experiences of the time to the politics and circumstances of today.

Wapping: 25 years on is at the Marx Memorial Library 37a Clerkenwell Green, London EC1R 0DU from 1st until 31st May, open Monday to Friday from 11am to 5pm. For further information contact: 020 7253 1485, info@marx-memorial-library.org, or go to www.marx-memorial-library.org



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GETTING ACTIVE

PRISON NEWS

Recent columns have sought to highlight the large-scale acts of resistance to prison regimes in a number of Middle Eastern and North African states that have mirrored the blossoming of resistance during the so-called 'Arab Spring' taking place on the streets across the regions. And the latest to feel the wrath of a repressed people is Lebanon's notorious Roumieh prison, northeast of Beirut – though this was hardly surprising given its long and bloody history of prisoners' mutinies.

Originally built to house 1,500 prisoners, Roumieh regularly holds up to 4,000 men, women and juveniles (65% of the country's prison population) in grossly overcrowded conditions. Four-fifths of these are remand prisoners, many having been held for two or more years, with little chance of standing trial in the foreseeable future. And the spark that ignited these tinderbox conditions was the increasingly universal prison issue of illicit mobile phones.

On Saturday 2nd April, following increased cell searches and widespread rumours of plans to jam cell phone communications, prisoners mutinied, setting fire to bedding and smashing doors and windows in Block D, demanding an amnesty for unconvicted prisoners and better prison conditions. The protest quickly spread to the other three prison buildings. Police and ISF soldiers were summoned amidst rumours of guards being taken hostage. Prisoners' families also staged protests across the country, setting fire to tyres and blockading major roads. Sunday saw the protest apparently end, with all hostages being released, only for it to erupt again the next day, when three prison guards and a gendarme were taken hostage. An attempt by police commandos to end the protests on the Monday failed.

The following day moves to head-off further protests saw the interim Interior Minister, Ziad Baroud, promise a new draft law to grant amnesty, despite there currently being no government to actually pass the law. Families again protested outside Roumieh, setting fire to tyres and fighting with riot police, whilst electricity to the prison was cut off to prevent mobiles being charged and prevent prisoners contacting local press and radio. Late Tuesday security forces using rubber bullets, stun grenades and teargas stormed the prison. Two prisoners died and 45 were injured, as prisoners fought riot police with sticks and Molotovs.

Even with the prison on lockdown, protests continued for the rest of the week: there were further incidents of hostage taking as well as a number of acts of self-mutilation in protest against the installation of new cell phone jamming equipment, human rights groups with food and medicine supplies were refused entry, whilst the mother of one Roumieh prisoners also tried to set herself on fire to demand the release of all prisoners; all amidst tales of retaliation from guards and ISF soldiers. Given past history, this only marks a lull in the storm.



● **Whitechapel Anarchist Group (WAG)** have decided to evolve into a London-wide anarchist organisation.

WAG began life as part of a local anarchist group initiative across London, where they involved themselves with a number of community projects and local issues, but soon found universal notoriety with their provocative and entertaining statements and propaganda.

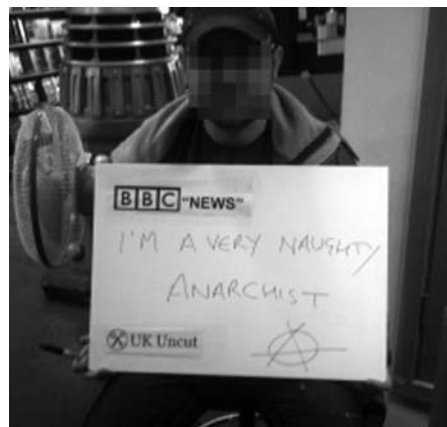
Hitting the headlines during the ill-fated G20 protests, WAG continued to develop a dual process of engaging in mass actions, often as the only voice of anarchist reason, and organising daily around their area.

With the student uprising and anti-cuts movement taking hold, WAG now see their role as providing something greater and more ambitious from the anarchist movement. The end of WAG is the beginning of a new area of anarchist agitation in the capital. To read their full statement go to <http://whitechapelanarchistgroup.wordpress.com/>

● **Members of Liverpool Solidarity Federation** joined members of Liverpool Uncut for an occupation of BBC Radio Merseyside (pictured below).

Over a dozen people entered the building and staged a sit-in to protest against 'the appalling coverage' of UK Uncut actions in London on 26th March.

One occupier commented that "on March 26th, UK Uncut felt the blunt end of state repression," adding "Together with the



roaming blockade formed by the Radical Workers' Bloc, they caused significant economic damage."

Members of Liverpool SolFed were amongst those who signed the open letter to UK Uncut (which can be viewed on the *Freedom* website) stating "dividing 'good' and 'bad' protest serves only to legitimise police violence and repression."

This is not the first time that Liverpool SolFed have engaged in practical solidarity at Radio Merseyside. Previously, members had joined the NUJ picket lines in support of the staff pensions dispute.

See <http://liverpoolsolfed.wordpress.com/>

● **Brighton Anti-fascists** is a new group formed as a response to a recent increase in nationalist and fascist activity in the area.

An open meeting to discuss methods and tactics for combating racism and fascism is scheduled for Sunday 24th April at Cowley Club. They wish to confront any fascist/racist activities by encouraging mass direct action amongst other methods. They are not aligned with any political party, nor do they co-operate with any, they also don't work with the police. They try to organise as a non-hierarchical group.

Those interested in getting involved should contact them via their website at <http://brightonantifascists.wordpress.com/>

● **Activists from the campaign group, Boycott EDF** brought London rush hour traffic to a standstill on the 11th April to protest against EDF Energy's plans to build a new generation of nuclear power stations in the UK. All four lanes of the A302 outside EDF Energy's headquarters in Grosvenor Place – which runs alongside the gardens of Buckingham Palace – were sealed off shortly after 8am using 14-foot tripods, and declared a 'nuclear disaster area' (pictured above).

"EDF has spent a massive amount of money marketing itself as an environment-friendly company," said a spokesperson for the group. "The truth is it's planning to lumber us with an outdated form of energy that is incredibly dangerous, extremely expensive and completely unnecessary."

See <http://boycottedf.org.uk/>

Brixton Riots, April 1981

An eyewitness account by the 'We Want to Riot, Not To Work Collective'

By now the social and economic background to the Brixton riots will be familiar to most people. A housing waiting list, in the borough in which Brixton is situated, of 18,000; a third of the housing stock sub-standard; high unemployment with about two out of three of the unemployed being black; a high robbery rate (in fact the highest in London, it being twice the nearest figure); next to no social amenities.

The area around the Railton Road (Frontline/Mayall Road triangle) is inhabited by mainly black council tenants and white squatters (leftists/anarchists/marginals). Empty houses are also used by local blacks as drinking and gambling clubs, dope centres and venues for all-night 'Blues' parties with sound systems pumping out non-stop reggae. Down the Frontline a black crafts centre has recently started in one empty building and further down a former black bookshop is now a squatted anarchist bookshop. People down here tend to live on the left-overs of capitalist society.

Operations such as the one in 1978, when the SPG [Special Patrol Group – the more violent forerunner to the TSG riot police] sealed off the Frontline and searched anybody and everybody, have caused outrage. Blacks, especially the second generation, are, on the whole defiant. The cops constantly use the SUS laws to stop and search young blacks. And they do this with vengeance.

With such everyday deprivation and such mindless state bullying, for being deprived, the one thing which united the disparate elements of the Frontline community is a burning hatred for the cops. Only a few months ago Lambeth Council published a report criticising the cops and predicting trouble. The constant intense policing of Brixton and of the Frontline in particular was heightened in the week leading up to the riots.

At 11pm on Friday 3rd April, the Frontline area around Dexter and Leeson Roads was sealed off by cops with no-one being allowed in or out for over an hour. Over 20 arrests were made. Then, in the following week, Operation Swamp 81 saw over 1,000 people (mainly young blacks) stopped and searched. This was all adding to the increasing frustration of local people.

Friday 10th April

On Friday 10th at about 5pm a young black man with a knife wound was stopped on the Frontline by cops. What followed is the source of many different stories. Whatever happened (and it isn't necessary to seek



justification for what followed anyway) the cops were attacked by a gang of locals, the young bloke freed and taken to hospital.

Sat 11th April

The cops took this as a challenge and so the following day, Saturday 11th, the Frontline was under police occupation. Usually the cops patrol the Frontline. But on that Saturday they parked up and down the Frontline every 50 yards, just sitting in their vans waiting for something to happen. It was a warm day so the Frontline was full of people standing around doing the usual things and, this time, eyeing the occupation force with hatred. All afternoon most people expected trouble of some sort.

At about 5pm in the afternoon a plain-clothes cop received the free gift of a brick on the head for wanting to search a black guy's car. Up in Atlantic Road an arrest was attempted and this further angered an already angry crowd. Most of this crowd was gathered in the space at the apex itself and at the beginning of Atlantic Road. The odd brick began to fly at the cops isolated in the crowd. A window was smashed. Tension rose. Electric.

Battle lines were now clearly drawn and the first barrage of bricks flew in the direction of the cops. They threw a few back and charged. At first we retreated a little but – realising we were many, they were few – we stopped. Then, spontaneously, the whole afternoon's tension being released like a spring, we charged them. A massive surge of adrenalin. A scramble for bricks. A hail of bricks. The cops are confused as they realise they are no longer in control. Puppets without a role. They look at us, at one another and around themselves. Them. Run. Away. Down

Mayall Road, leaving their vehicles in our hands. In the twinkling of a rioting eye the vehicles are smashed up and turned over.

It is now dark and we worm our way through back streets, avoiding cop cordons. We approach the top of the Frontline along Kellett Road and are met with an unbelievable sight. Three rows of cops stretch across the Frontline, facing into it. A non-stop hail of bricks batters their shields. Then suddenly a molotov (the first I've ever seen) comes up and over and smash! lands on some shields, which are hurriedly dropped. The Frontline is barricaded with burning vehicles. I'm elated and pissed off. Elated that the Frontline is a no go area and pissed off that I'm now cut off from defending it. I look around. Exhausted and injured cops sitting on the ground smoking fags.

The fires, the cops, the atmosphere. Class war. I wander back along Brixton Road surveying damage. Only a few civilians are about now. Cops are in control. Get off the streets. One last look at the blitzed Frontline in the dawn light and then sleep. I dream of cops, cops and more cops. Tired, hungover. Rage at the newspaper. Commissioner McNee and others have the gall to blame 'outside agitators'. (The cops were the outside agitators.)

Difficult to judge the atmosphere. People having to re-think, trying to get these extraordinary events in perspective. It is now a higher level of confrontation. All the shops in the market and main road areas are boarded up. For how long? There is talk of more 'aid' for the community. Sticking plaster for leprosy. Class society is rotten through and through. Where will the next eruption take place? The struggle here is far from over.

REVIEWS

WHAT'S ON

APRIL

■ **27th SchMOVIES** presents *American Hardcore: The History of American Punk Rock 1980–1986*, free/donation, 8pm at the Cowley Club, 12 London Road, Brighton BN1 4JA, call 01273 696104 or email cowleyclub@riseup.net for details.

MAY

■ **2nd** The road to Haymarket, May Day and its relevance today, from 7.30 to 10.30pm at The Cube Cinema, Dove Street South, Bristol BS2 8JD, £3/4 donation, films and discussion on the origins of May Day and its relevance to struggles today, see bristolanarchistbookfair.org for details.

■ **4th** *Viva Mexico* from 7.30 to 10.30pm Hamilton House, 80 Stokes Croft, Bristol BS1 3QY, donation, brilliant new film *Viva Mexico* about the Zapatistas is now touring the UK, with talk by the director, hosted by Bristol-Zapatista solidarity group, Kiptik, for more information see kiptik.org or vivamexicofilm.com/eng.html

■ **4th** Gustav Landauer and Early German Anarchism (“Landauer is the most important agitator of the radical and revolutionary movement in the entire country” – from Landauer’s 1893 German police file), a book talk by Gabriel Kuhn (author of *Sober Living For The Revolution* and *Soccer vs. The State*), 7pm, Cowley Books, 12 London Road, Brighton BN1 4JA, for details email cowleybooks@gmail.com or see www.cowleyclub.org.uk.

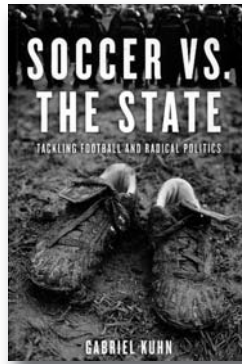
■ **7th** Bristol anarchist bookfair 2011 – in the tradition of May Day, resistance and alternatives to cuts, an anarchist antidote to a week of royal weddings, local elections and dodgy referendums, and more cuts, offering all things anarchist with stalls, meetings, films, vegan café, kids space and more, plus an after party nearby as well, at Hamilton House, 80 Stokes Croft, Bristol BS1 3QY from 10.30am to 6.30pm, see <http://www.bristolanarchistbookfair.org> for details.

■ **9th** The Medical Foundation for the Care of Victims of Torture (speaker to be confirmed), a News From Nowhere Club event at The Epicentre, West Street, Leytonstone, London E11 4LJ, 7.30pm buffet, 8pm talk and discussion, for details see newsfromnowhereclub.org or call 020 8555 5248.

■ **11th** ‘Workers Of The World, Embrace!’ Homophobia in the French Extreme Left (Daniel Guerin, his synthesis of Anarchism and Marxism and his revolutionary defence of free love and homosexuality), a book talk by David Berry (author of *The History of the French Anarchist Movement 1917–1945*) 7pm, Cowley Books, 12 London Road, Brighton BN1 4JA, email cowleybooks@gmail.com or see www.cowleyclub.org.uk.

■ **25th SchMOVIES** presents *Reclaim the Streets – the movie*, free/donation, 8pm at the Cowley Club, 12 London Road, Brighton BN1 4JA, call 01273 696104 or email cowleyclub@riseup.net for details.

BOOK



Soccer vs. the State: Tackling Football and Radical Politics
by Gabriel Kuhn

“I enjoy making Revolution! I enjoy going to football!” (Antonio Negri).

The relationship between the ‘Beautiful Idea’ and the ‘Beautiful Game’ is a complex, frustrating and fraught one, but at its intersections are where some of the most interesting dialogues in the anarchist movement are located.

Football and anarchism developed roughly in historical tandem, with the Workers movement formalising around the same time as the British Football Association (FA) was founded in October 1863. By 1871 we have more or less the modern game with the regulations established (no hands in the out-field, no shin kicking), but they are relatively simple and few, leaving loads of room for creative innovation. This is what makes football ‘beautiful’ and unpredictable, and there have been many attempts to stifle that over the years, with the low score rate leaving plenty of scope for sensational surprise outcomes and luck. Football is the sport like no other, where the underdog can flourish.

And here we see possible comparisons with anarchism: “The ball has no attribute of power. The passer does not own the ball; he possesses the ball in the sense of Proudhon. The passer remains the master of the act. As in libertarian society, he is free to do what he wants. However, he cannot exist alone, he cannot progress alone, and he cannot survive alone. Here is where the principle of mutual aid comes into play, as explained by Peter Kropotkin...” (Wally Rosell from ‘Albert Camus, the Anarchists and Football’).

Not that the anarchist movement embraced the game of two halves with universal love and affection, as this rant from Germany in the 1920s shows: “May God punish England! Not for nationalistic reasons, but because the English people invented football! Football is a counter-revolutionary phenomenon. Proletarians between the age of eighteen and twenty five, i.e. exactly those who have the strength to break their chains, have no time for the revolution because they play soccer...” (Free Workers Union Germany).

But of course we also see the viral rise of capitalism, which wasted no time in taming the game. So whilst the working classes tended to play and embrace the game, it tended to be administered and financed by capitalist industry. (The toffs tended towards rugby, which was non-professional and a suitable recreation for those whose purpose was to administer the empire.) Standardised measuring, bookkeeping and the strict invigilation of time have been sited as examples of the influence of the emergent bourgeois-capitalist culture. But “[w]e don’t want to consume football, we want football to be ours! It was ours before capitalism took it away!” (Danilo Cajazeira, founding member of Autonomos FC).

Kuhn’s wonderful, accessible and necessary book develops football’s beginnings through the tribalism, sexism (women’s football was banned by the FA from the 1921 till 1971) and bigotry that qualified the game during much of the 20th century. But the bulk of the book concerns the radical responses to this. Full of radical debate and loads of interviews and source material, *Soccer vs. the State* is fucking good!

“Football has proven time and time again that it contains a magic, immensely powerful element, not unlike the stuff that religions are made of...” (Christophe Huette).

M.

Soccer vs. the State: Tackling Football and Radical Politics by Gabriel Kuhn, published by PM Press, £12.99.

See also pages 8 and 9 of this issue for an interview with Gabriel Kuhn.

ABOUT ANARCHISM

Nicolas Walter with an introduction by Natasha Walter

Available from Freedom Press, £4.20 (post free worldwide)

QUIZ ANSWERS

1. Honoré de Balzac
2. He said the allegations were preposterous. He had actually been airbrushed in when the campaign realised a leaflet with no black faces would look bad in London. Not sure that’s any better, though.
3. Because pools longer than that need two

- lifeguards. Truly we live in a world run by mean-spirited bean-counters.
4. Longest period after an election without a government, then at 249 days. Things carry on there, and attempts by students to run a Tunisian-style street campaign demanding a government have fallen flat.

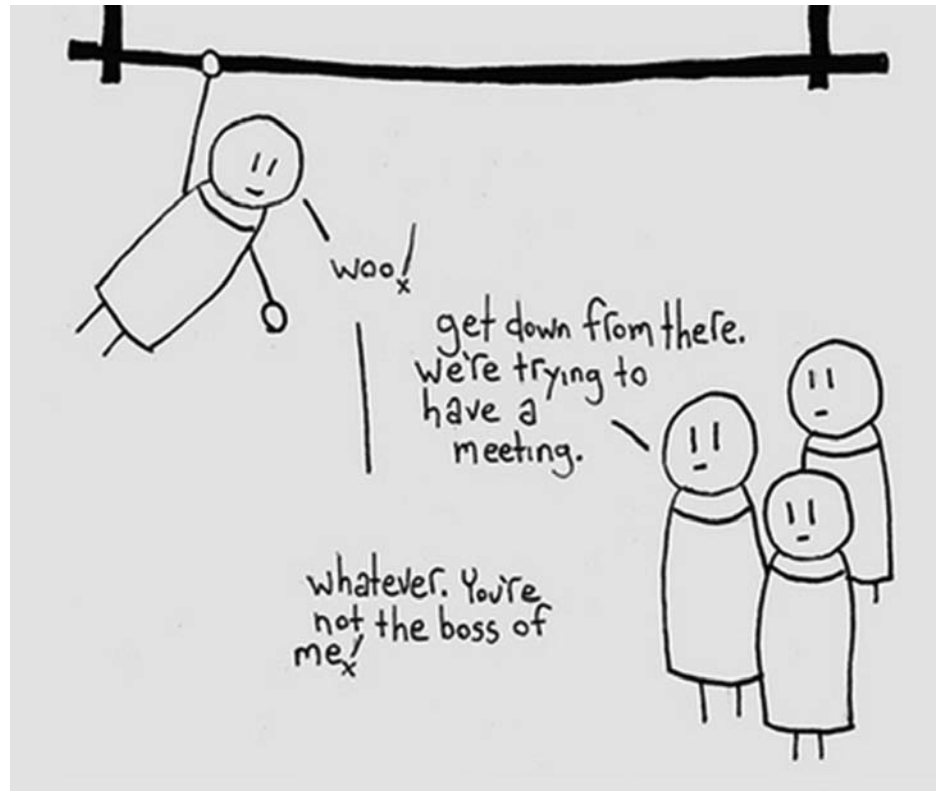
Altogether now...

Joe Maguire discovers much to recommend in a recent book on successful egalitarian collective practice

I was tickled recently to find Climate Camp spent five days trying to reach a consensus over whether to disband. Along with an overdrawn practice to the point of tedium, consensus has hand signals that work in tandem with the process that are, as someone put it, “alienating culty shit”. So after a little grating I was pleased to discover *Come Hell or High Water* by Delfina Vannucci and Richard Singer was not about consensus but rather the methodology behind egalitarian decision making, democratic and otherwise.

Some people have complained about the pessimistic tone of the book. It's not a 'How to' book, but rather takes up where collectives often get it wrong, from the practical view of two veterans. It's not earth-shattering (for a better piece see Jo Freeman's *Untying the Knot*), but it makes a few keen points in its hundred and twenty odd pages that are worth considering, if not for any reason other than the sheer number of meetings you are likely to attend.

Firstly the book looks at how a good collective operates; the authors want to imbue *process* as being more central than the result thereof. Think about a parallel like discussion on 'means and ends' not on fetishising procedure. Collectives should be a reflection of the collaboration of all parties concerned. Leading on from this, groups need to address dynamics that create power imbalances (such as uneven spread of skills and roles) and ensure transparency is maintained to keep the group functioning.

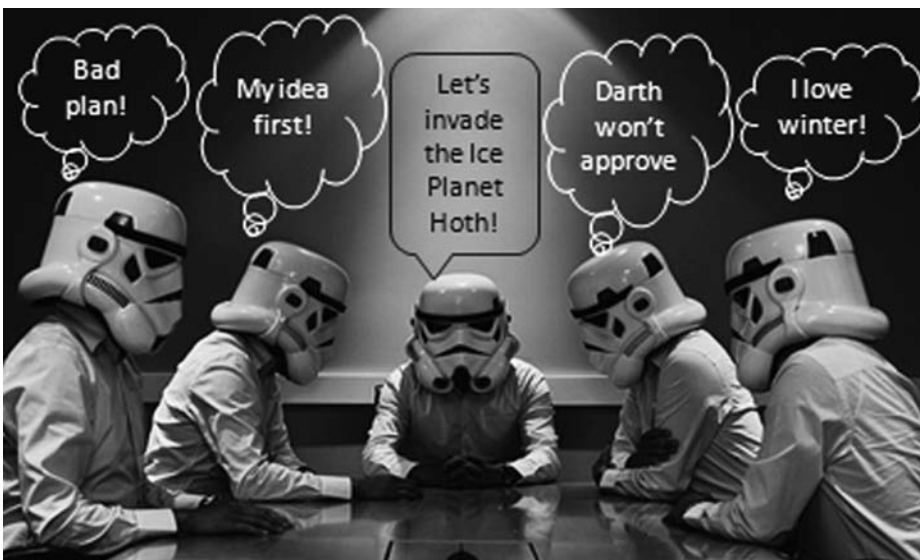


Some of us may recognise the following individual and group trait identifiers: apathy, irregular meetings, lack of consultation, clear acknowledged leadership, not following of due process, personal smears, lack of first hand knowledge, intimidating behaviour, lack of transparency, subversion of collective principles, emotional blackmail, paranoia, egoism, knowledge whoring, deliberate shutting down of debate, employment of straw-men style arguments, not sharing out tasks and pulling rank. These run counter to the egalitarian ethos of any collective and by acknowledging these adversities the authors

want to postulate a number of solutions to help collectives get back on track.

Firstly we should not substitute our criticisms of praxis with decency or politeness: “[T]he traditional Anglo-Saxon Protestant niceties such as not saying anything if one doesn't have anything nice to say, never expressing negative criticism, and rushing to smooth over disagreements are incompatible with working collectively” (pages 42–3). Following on from this there are a number of related factors: How do you deal with personal feuds? Persons who have fallen foul of the group? People who don't 'gel'?

The authors argue dissent and disagreement should be seen as the wellspring of any group (which I think reflects badly on groups whose only glue is simply measured solely in terms of friendship). Grievances should be aired openly, and along with recognising respect for racial and sexual oppression, groups should be lenient on personality traits which can sometimes make group dynamics difficult. The group should not come down as a judge in personal warring and should not attempt to suppress it either. And if group discipline is a factor, all manner of sanctions and stripping of rights should be considered before the eject button is finally pushed. I was disappointed and thought this detail lacked an understanding on how sexual abuse would be dealt with if the dispute is one person's word against another, as unfortunately this is a very real scenario that has cropped up several times.





Review

◀ page 15

While authoritarian behaviour can exert itself in cliques of an unstructured group, it can also manifest through anal adherence to procedure. To some extent this goes hand in hand with 'pulling rank'. The book rightfully points out that egalitarian groups are not meritocracies for ageing revolutionaries and the alleviation of attempts to 'micromanage' should come down to effective chairing.

The nightmare of group dynamics can result in nothing short of show trials which can be harrowing for recipients. The book's case is that if we want to go beyond this society and create a new one, we have to acknowledge this society's legal safeguards and checks for the accused and seek to

better them, rather than concentrate all the functions in a few hands so they can carry out judgement and execution against a foreseen offence. It's on this latter point I thought the book really hit its stride, pushing proactive rather than reactive thinking.

I was disappointed recallable mandates were not discussed at any length in the book – my feeling being that these are central to anarchism becoming a functioning mass movement – but mandated sub-committees seemed to have got a mention. So go figure. All in all this a book with something we should all be able to take something from.

Come Hell or High Water: A Handbook on Collective Process Gone Awry by Delfina Vannucci and Richard Singer, AK Press, £6.00.

THE QUIZ

- Which conservative novelist said "Bureaucracy is a giant mechanism operated by pygmies"?
- The Yes to AV campaign was criticised after airbrushing black poet Benjamin Zephaniah out of promotional leaflets distributed outside of London. How did Zephaniah react?
- Why are new swimming pools usually only 25 metres long?
- On 17th February, what welcome world record did Belgium regain?

Answers on page 14

The Anarchist Quiz Book compiled by Martin Howard, with illustrations by Paul Petard, £5 (post free) from freedompress.org.uk.

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