

## NINE ANTI-FASCISTS WIN

### Conspiracy trails ends with all defendants acquitted

The nine political activists accused of conspiracy to commit violent disorder have all been found not guilty at Blackfriars Crown Court. It took less than an hour for the jury to return its verdict on the defendants after an exhausting three week trial costing hundreds of thousands of pounds of public money. *Freedom* was present in court to hear the result.

It was late in the afternoon, after the judge spent most of the day summing up, when the jury foreperson read out the nine unanimous 'not guilty' verdicts to a packed courtroom which erupted into wild applause from the public gallery, filled with family, friends and supporters, and the defendants who, looking visibly relieved, cheered and hugged each other.

This was the second of two trials brought against 23 people who were all arrested for their involvement in an anti-fascist mobilisation to protest against a Blood & Honour gig in 2009 in South London. Blood & Honour is a pan-European music network of openly racist neo-nazis promoting racial hatred and right wing ideology.

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### LENS CAP ANARCHISTS OUT ON THE STREETS



November is going to be a busy month for political demonstrations. The massive 9th November student mobilisation, bringing forward the anger and resentment of the past year in education, bracketing the month with the groundbreaking 30th November public sector strike. Anarchists will be out there organising, agitating and confronting the state – let's ensure we do it in a robust and visible fashion.

Photograph © Max Reeves

## ANARCHIST HIP-HOP UK TOUR

Test Their Logik, the Toronto based hip-hop crew, have just finished their first ever tour of the UK to packed venues and appreciative audiences throughout the country, climaxing with an incredible performance at this year's London anarchist bookfair. Claiming not to be rappers but revolutionaries that rap, the duo, Testament and Illogik, perform inspired and unapologetic music about grassroots resistance to capitalism in an informed and compelling fashion – the message never overwhelms the music. The tour was a massive success and they promise to be back in the near future.

In 2010 they were involved in the G20 protests in Toronto, and were arrested and charged with conspiracy and other indictable offences, as part of a massive repression of Canada's political scene. Although they were

never convicted – the prosecutor told the judge “We know they did it but we don't have the proof” – they released a benefit album, *Arrested Development*, with all the proceeds going to the current G20 defendants. They were also for a time banned from associating with each other and performing together as a group.

They remain one of the very few overt political voices on the music scene. As they themselves say, “We're here to change hip-hop and steal its soul back from the glorified violence, materialism, sexism and racism that the music industry creates, promotes and markets for their own capitalist purposes. The revolution will not be signed to a record deal... DIY or die.”

Hopefully *Freedom* will have an interview with the pair in our next issue. See <http://www.testtheirlogik.com/>

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ISSN 0016-0504



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## NEWS

## NEWS IN BRIEF

## Geordie bookfair

The North East has been making a name for itself as a centre for radical activity and has recently established a tradition of regular working class bookfairs. These are entirely self-organised events and, although they carry with them a recognisable anarchist involvement, the politics on offer are broad enough to attract all kinds of people. The idea came about because as the organisers say: "There are no bookshops in the North East for working class people to view our history and contemporary movements' literature." So in 2007 the working class bookfair was born offering books, magazines and pamphlets covering local and general history, Marxism, environment, sport, culture, railways, mining, fiction, social science, co-operatives, economics, anarchism, international relations, socialism, trade unions, sex, drugs & rock 'n' roll...

People who will be in attendance this year are Tyne & Wear Left Unity, Sunderland Welfare Action Group, IWW, SPGB, Class War, NUM, unofficial sparks (who are teaching anarchists and Marxists about spontaneity), Mayday books, North East Anarchists, the Black Bloc (if we can find them), and many more.

The Working Class Bookfair, Saturday 5th November from 11.30am until 4.30pm at The Bridge Hotel, Castlegarth, Newcastle, NE1 1RQ, tel 07931301901, <http://workingclassbookfair.vpweb.com/>

## Haringey freesheet

Along with the London anarchist bookfair, Haringey Solidarity Group remains an institution in the capital that can be relied upon to deliver. Starting life as the old Anti-Poll Tax group in Haringey, North London, they have consolidated their political influence in the area to become respected, but still very much militant, members of the community. Always fighting for a community based political engagement – they were one of the key groups to set up the Radical London initiative – their freesheet *Totally Independent* is always worth a read wherever you are from. Their autumn issue sees HSG if full agitational flow reflecting of the August riots in Tottenham and offering up a map of the entire borough with past and future struggles plotted across the page. It's an impressive feat, as is the list of active groups in the area, the Haringey Independent Cinema and the Wards Corner campaign keeping the local market local. [www.haringey.org.uk](http://www.haringey.org.uk)

## AF Organise!

To celebrate it twenty five years in existence, the Anarchist Federation have produced a special anniversary edition of its magazine *Organise!* Featuring local anti-cuts organising, the Paris Commune, the Mexican Revolution, The Great Unrest 1910–14, anarchist sculptor H.G. Brzeska, book review of *Ghost Dancers* and an obituary of Bob Miller. Well worth £2.50 of anybody's money. [www.afed.org.uk](http://www.afed.org.uk)

## LENS CAP OCCUPY EVERYWHERE



October 15th was a global day of action against the financial system. There was over 950 separate protests in 80 different countries around the world, mostly marked by a mass occupation of the financial area of their respective cities, replicating the original Occupy Wall Street in New York. Manchester, Bristol and London all had mass assemblies.

## Kettling police powers

Kettling the Powers of the Police is a new campaign, aiming to take on 'the worst of the worst' of police powers and practices.

The campaign is an initiative developed by the Network for Police Monitoring in collaboration with a range of other protest, community and legal groups. It will push for an end to the abuse of police powers, the unrestrained use of surveillance and unending expansion of public order and protest laws, and all groups affected by policing issues are being invited to join in.

The campaign statement of intent states "no matter how often or how powerfully concerns are raised about the disproportionate use of extensive police powers, little seems to change. Both ineffective reform and the promise that human rights laws alone can provide a realistic defence against oppressive policing of protest and of black and working class communities have failed to contain the police's capacity to regulate and enforce public order in whatever way they see fit.

"The time has come to fundamentally change the debate. Instead of just reacting to brutal kettling and arbitrary assault of protesters, new revelations about indiscriminate intelligence gathering or the latest evidence of misuse of stop and search, we need to start demanding that draconian police powers are abolished instead of reformed."

It calls for "A new approach towards public protest that recognises its value as a positive and essential expression rather than an inconvenient nuisance that must be contained".

One of the initial objectives of the campaign is to build a 'dossier of evidence' of incidents where the policing has been excessive or unreasonable. Many such incidents are currently unreported and a dossier will bring to public attention the scale and range of the problems being faced.

The dossier will compile evidence in four key areas:

- Public order policing – kettling, dispersal, pre-emptive arrests, use of force and the failure to facilitate protest.
- Surveillance – police photography and filming, databases, facial recognition and gathering of intelligence.
- Community harassment – stop and search, stop and account and other measures targeting specific communities or groups
- Custody, bail and sentencing – abuse in custody, misuse of police bail/bail conditions and over-charging.

They are calling on lawyers, frontline groups, and individuals with experiences of police misuse of powers, activist and protest groups, bereaved families and deaths in custody campaigns to join and actively support this campaign.

Network for Police Monitoring involves a lot of anti-capitalist and summit protest veterans and came out of the initial monitoring of the unlawful activities of the Forward Intelligence Teams during demonstrations.

Email [info@networkforpolicemonitoring.org.uk](mailto:info@networkforpolicemonitoring.org.uk) for further information



Schools that are no longer 'profitable' are at risk of closure. From left to right, protests at Wakeman School and Arts College, Shrewsbury; Gillian Palmer was met by a line of silent pupils at Blackheath Bluecoat, Greenwich; pupils from Nottingham's Gedling School protest.

# Educating who about what

## School pupils discover direct action

The politicisation of the younger generation is escalating as school pupils across the country are recognising their ability to take collective action. As the economic certainties of the austerity measures begin to have a direct impact on those with most to lose, schools are increasingly becoming a focus for militant action.

Along with the big student demonstrations – the 9th November national day of action is intended amongst other things to encourage school pupils in a mass walkout as a show of solidarity with students and workers in education – those schools that are no longer 'profitable' and at risk of closure are now part of a growing movement of dissent against the cuts to education.

In September Shropshire council made its final decision to close Wakeman School and Arts College, Shrewsbury, a fortnight after it achieved its best ever GCSE results. The

Conservative-controlled authority said it was due to the school's "financial sustainability", rather than its standard of education. It is the only secondary school in Shropshire affected by the cuts, and the only one located in the town centre, and is by far the largest school on the council's closure list.

As a response pupils from the arts college, who have been actively campaigning against its closure since February, took action outside the council cabinet meeting, some even donning white overalls. This kind of student-led action is becoming more commonplace.

Pupils at Blackheath Bluecoat, Greenwich, staged a silent protest on 10th October against the proposed closure of their school, during a council staff visit. Gillian Palmer, Greenwich council's director of children's services who has approved the move, was met by a line of pupils who stood silently holding banners and placards as she entered the school.

There were angrier scenes the following day as parents confronted Palmer at a public meeting about the closure. Parents refused

to be split into smaller groups, shouting 'Together we stand', with one parent receiving huge applause when she shouted "You've got a fight on your hands. If you want a fight you've got one."

The school in South London is destined to close in 2013 after a report presented to the council stated it was over £1m in debt and "unsustainable" in the present economic climate. Blackheath Bluecoat was the school Stephen Lawrence was studying at when he was murdered by a racist gang.

In Nottingham as many as sixty pupils held regular protests, largely organised by two twelve year old pupils, against the closure of Gedling School, which continued throughout the year, although the school has now been saved after private sponsors came forward to turn it into an academy school.

These actions are just an indicator of the level of anger being expressed by the next generation who, having never had the luxury of a private education, are seeing their opportunity at a decent education being sold off.

## Nine anti-fascists win

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The nine were arrested as part of a massive police operation to arrest and charge as many people as possible for the incident on the platform of Welling station in March 2009. Despite intense provocation from the prosecutor, who attempted to bully his way through the evidence, the jury remained unconvinced that any of the nine had been involved in a conspiracy to commit violent disorder.

It was clear to those in court that the prosecution had no intention of presenting a case for conspiracy, but was relying solely on the video footage of that single incident at the station, and the social connections of those involved. Prosecution evidence included a breakdown of all the phone calls made by

defendants to each other, text messages and even screenshots of their Facebook pages. Not one piece of evidence revealed a plan, a prior agreement or even awareness of what was to happen on the platform.

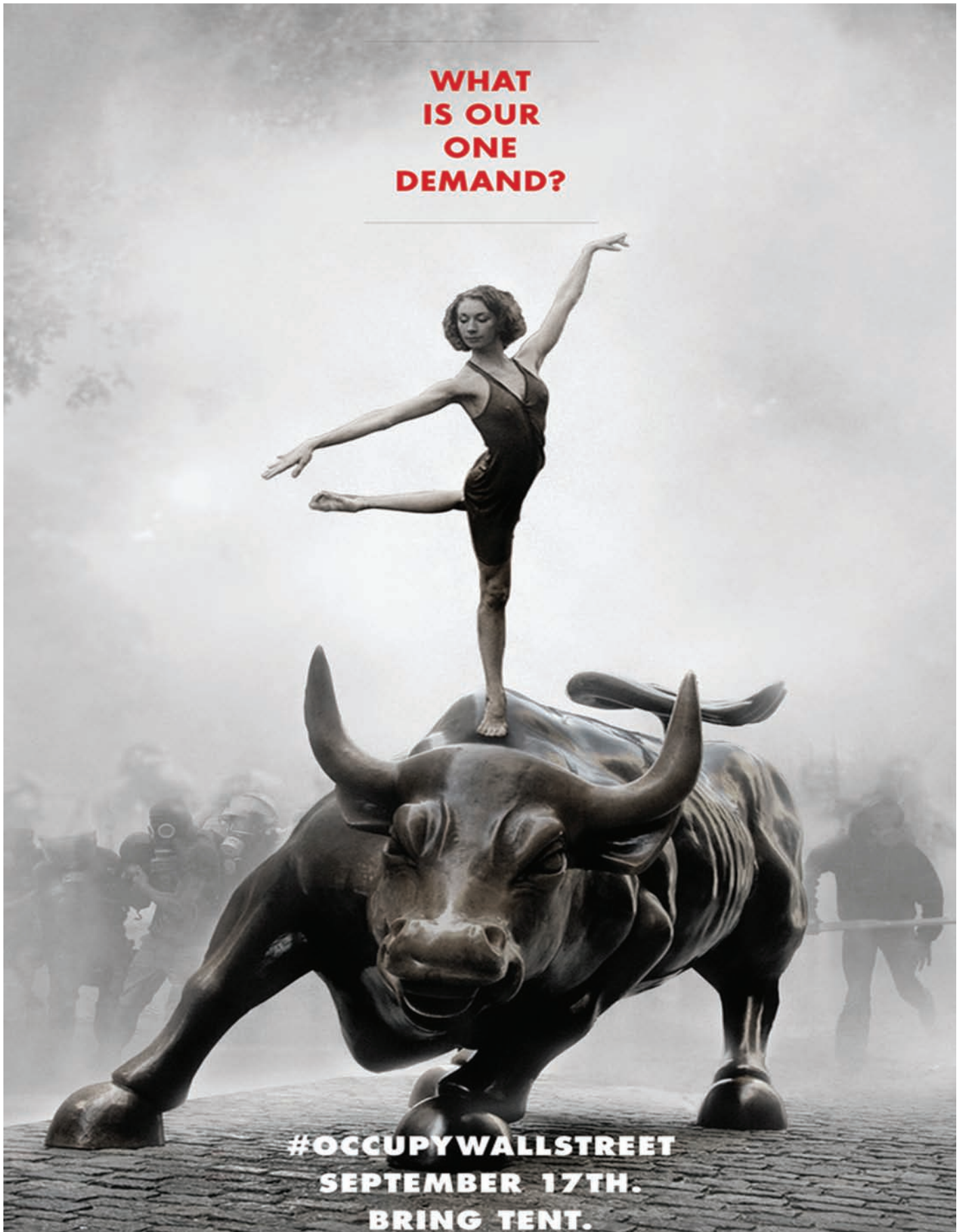
The question is why did the CPS go on to attempt to prosecute 23 people for conspiracy, when no evidence of conspiracy was ever presented in court at either trial?

Clearly this was a state operation to effectively neutralise the activities of those associated with militant anti-fascism. When people's houses were raided some four months after the incident police took leaflets, stickers, newsletters and other material directly associated with militant anti-fascism as the CPS attempted to

construct a case for guilt by political association. This is an incredibly important political trial, and one we should not underestimate the outcome of. Or its significance. It was a direct attempt by the state to set a very dangerous precedence where radicals could be tried simply by associating with other radicals, or for their political affiliations. Thankfully for the most part they did not succeed.

Of the 23 original arrests, three people had their charges dropped before coming to trial, 13 were found not guilty and seven were found guilty, six of whom are currently serving prison sentences of between 15 and 21 months. Check Freedom website for their addresses to write to them.

## THE BIG PICTURE



After the initial occupation New York, police instigated a mass arrest of 700 people on Brooklyn Bridge to quell the protest without success. Since that time occupations of public spaces have been springing up spontaneously in over 100 cities across the USA. Despite the obvious police repression (hundreds were beaten and arrested en masse in Boston) support seems to be growing with labour unions such as teachers, transit workers and steel unions, adding their voice of solidarity.

# Occupation of Wall Street

## The dawn of a new American uprising, or a formulaic reaction bound to fizzle out?

The belly of the beast, the finance capital of the world's richest country, is experiencing some uncomfortable rumble. Wall Street (the equivalent of London's City) has been directly targeted by protesters as the focus of their anger. On 17th September around a thousand protesters marched towards Wall Street and the stock exchange in order to occupy it; seeing it blocked by the police they marched around the area and finally settled down in a park nearby, originally called the Liberty Plaza, now called Zuccotti Park. The occupation has now entered a third successive month with participants numbering around 5,000 during the day, and hundreds pitching tents at night.

The call for occupation was made by the hacktivist group Anonymous in alliance with the culture jammers, Adbusters, as early as July this year. This call-out turned out to be a self-fulfilling prophecy with even the Department of Homeland Security sending out a warning bulletin on 2nd September to businesses on Wall Street. So, although the initial call-out was for 20,000 people to take Wall Street, it is pleasantly surprising to see it become reality at all. It shows how much animus there is among the vast majority of the people (the working class poor and middle-income groups) and how desperately they need someone – anyone – to provide an avenue for them to take action.

To give a sense of the composition of the crowd, a report by the California Independent Voter Network notes, "There are students, professionals, workers and unemployed among them. In the crowd, one can find disillusioned Democrats, Ron Paul Republicans, third party and Independent political activists, anarchists and members of the hacktivist collective Anonymous, among others." Protesters describe themselves as being mostly under 30 years of age, over-educated and underemployed or jobless.

There are many interesting aspects to this protest – and instructive for those protesting here in the UK. For example, the occupiers have been and intend to be peaceful, although according to the state police department the

protesters have no permit to either hold demonstrations or have spontaneous marches in the area – which they have been doing blatantly so far. As a result of their actions, the police have barricaded Wall Street, shutting it down to all traffic except VIPs and the people who work there. This could already be claimed as a victory for the protesters.

Moreover, the occupiers have no leaders. The camp, reportedly inspired by Tahrir Square, is organised entirely non-hierarchically. Since the occupiers say they intend to remain there for months, they are thinking tactically and already sorting out working groups to manage all the requirements. Again, inspired by the Spanish people's assemblies, the protesters are holding daily 'general assemblies' to discuss and decide political questions, what changes they would like to see, and generally envision a better future for all. People, apparently from all over the world, are donating money for food to be sent to the protesters. Food Not Bombs have also donated food.



### Conflicting picture

So, what are their demands? So far, the focus is severely anti-banks and anti-corporates. They seem to want the US to be – to sum up the protesters' sentiment – 'restored to the people'. For instance, Adbusters' slogan is "Democracy Not Corporatocracy" and to be rid of "the financial Gomorrah of America" symbolised by Wall Street.

More specifically, they are demanding a presidential commission to be set up to initiate the end of corporate financial influence on American politics (such as through large donations to hand-picked candidates who will then do the corporates' bidding). The demand is understandable since recently the US Supreme Court declared corporates to be 'people' (!) and thus granting them the haloed first amendment rights (of which campaign finance forms one), although it is not clear why the protesters think that the President would do such a thing and undermine his/her own advantage. Unfortunately, these democratic protests, not just in the US but also everywhere else, tend to share this



naïve quality of making sharp distinctions between business interests and political interests – distinctions that are fast disappearing.

To illustrate, a group called US Day of Rage has set up a website by the same name and is calling for such occupations and people's assemblies to be set up in many cities across the country. There appear to be plans to occupy Freedom Plaza in Washington DC on 6th October this year. This website lists its objectives as "free and fair elections", thus proliferating the idea that if only mega-corporations were removed from the picture, politicians would not become corrupt, and power would be handed back to the people. They say, "Free and fair elections produce the kind of stewardship our nation desperately needs, because they ensure that citizens can influence their destiny, and make genuine contributions to society."

On the other hand, another website called Occupy Wall Street (whether this is the official group behind the protest or not is unclear) has broader, overtly anarchist tones, even as it seems to support electoral reform. It makes statements such as: "If you agree that state and corporation are merely two sides of the same oppressive power structure, if you realise how media distorts things to preserve it, how it pits the people against the people to remain in power, then you might be one of us." and, "We call for workers to not only strike, but seize their workplaces collectively, and to organise them democratically."

Only time will tell which of the above two tendencies can capture popular imagination and become dominant in the near future. Also, at this point it is a matter of speculation if the protesters manage to get large numbers of people angry enough to, say, storm Wall Street, or just degenerate into a tourist curio (much like our Parliament Square campers) who have the feel-good factor of 'protest' but offer no means of self-empowerment or solutions to changing the present state of things.



## ANALYSIS

# Defendants need your help

## Witness appeal by legal support groups

Anarchists, perhaps more than any other political grouping, have always excelled in solidarity and support work. It is because we challenge the authority of government and the legitimacy of the state that we often face the severest hostility and repression from them, and we understand what is required in supporting others against that same hostility and repression.

At the moment there is a massive campaign by the state to subdue the wave of unrest and disquiet being expressed by all sections of society. The use of physical force by police is matched by the use of judicial force in the courts. What we are witnessing through this process is the state re-asserting its own conditions of social participation upon us. This is where politics becomes real – in the mass detentions and arrests, in the prison cells and police stations, in the broken bones and hospital treatment of protesters, and in the propaganda machine of the mainstream press that chooses to vilify and demonise any voice of dissent however expressed.

Legal Defence and Monitoring Group (LDMG) and Green and Black Cross, both organisations with close anarchist affiliations, are at the forefront of legal support for those arrested and charged during the various mass protests and demonstrations and have issued an urgent appeal for witnesses.

26th March, 30th June

Your help is needed if you attended any of the big student protests, especially 9th December, plus 26th March TUC demonstration (UK Uncut, Piccadilly, Oxford Street, Trafalgar Square) and 30th June public sector strike

**Ceilidh benefit night  
for anti-fascist prisoners**



the victoria pub  
451 queensbridge road  
dalston, london e8 3as

7.30pm-till late  
£3/£5 entry

**Friday 28th October**

with the London Radical Ceilidh Collective  
A night of frenzied fiddles, mournful mandolins  
and foot slamm'n' dancing songs.

A benefit night for six imprisoned antifascists  
who were set up and jailed by the state on  
bogus conspiracy charges.  
They are inside for us, we are outside for them!



and march, all in central London. What you saw during these demos might stop more people going to prison.

The job of LDMG and Green and Black Cross is to stop people going to prison by helping people prepare their best defence – but of late we are spending way too much time preparing people for prison instead, and many of the cases could have been so different if we had more witnesses come forward. It is hard to know if you could be useful as a witness but we hope to find that out if you get in touch with some basic information.

It is often the case during a trial that it is simply the police version of events against the defendant and it is often blatantly obvious that the police are lying (yes, shock horror). The judge and the jury often believe the police version of events in most cases (yes, more shock horror). And it often doesn't matter if defendants are telling the truth, if they don't have their own witnesses; they have far less chance of being believed and therefore being found not guilty.

Judges dealing with these cases are being incredibly harsh in their sentencing, harsher than many of us have ever known before, and things show no sign of easing up as the public's memories of the protests fades.

It seems like the courts are sending out a massive message to anyone who dares to challenge the cuts and the system that is behind them that people dare not protest and we need to support all those going through this court process. It could easily have been any one of us who were arrested and preparing for the possibility of prison right now.

There is no sense or justice in many of these arrests. Some people were trying to protect themselves and those around them when attacked by police in an unprovoked manner, many weren't even doing that, they were simply 'in the wrong place at the wrong time'.

So far it has mainly been people pleading guilty that have been sentenced but trials are now starting to take place and the gaps in the defence for some are huge as many defendants believe that if they get up on the stand and tell the truth, they will be found not guilty. Sadly it just doesn't work like that.

In our experience it is people who have witnesses who are more likely to be found 'not guilty'.

As we approach the one year mark for some of these protests, many of those facing charges are incredibly stressed and others completely terrified of what lies ahead if they are found guilty and it is heartbreaking to see, especially when you know that it doesn't have to be like that.

What little justice there is seems to have gone out the window. Their best hope is other people!

9th December

There is an appeal for specific incidents of the student demonstration on 9th December.

- People who witnessed the policeman falling off his horse and/or witnessed the police charge into the crowd.
- If you were in Parliament Square or Broad Sanctuary (in front of Westminster Abbey) during 2pm and 3.30pm
- Witnesses to events near the Treasury from about 5.30pm to 8.30pm.

Get in touch and tell us which protests you were on and where you were. You can leave it that vague for now. We will get in touch with you about specifics if you were in a place where people are calling for witnesses.

- LDMG  
<http://ldmg.org.uk/>
- Green and Black Cross  
<http://greenandblackcross.org>

If you think that you can help please get in touch with LDMG and GBC

ldmgmail@yahoo.co.uk

## FREEDOM STOCKISTS

You can pick up your copy of *Freedom* at any of the outlets listed below. All are either social centres or political bookshops and as such should be supported as part of our radical culture. If you can't see your town or city mentioned, or you know of places that should be stocking the paper, then get in touch and tell us which shop, social centre, venue, political space or social environment should be selling the UK's only general anarchist newspaper.

### LONDON

- **Freedom Bookshop**, 84b Whitechapel High Street, London E1 7QX, tel 020 7247 9249  
email [shop@freedompress.org.uk](mailto:shop@freedompress.org.uk)  
<http://www.freedompress.org.uk/>
- **Housmans Bookshop**, 5 Caledonian Road, London N1 9DX, tel 020 7837 4473  
email [shop@housmans.com](mailto:shop@housmans.com)  
<http://www.housmans.com/>
- **London Action Resource Centre (LARC)**, 62 Fieldgate Street, London E1 1ES  
tel 020 7377 9088, <http://www.londonarc.org/>
- **56A Infoshop**, 56 Crampton Street, London SE17 3AE, email [info@56a.org.uk](mailto:info@56a.org.uk)  
<http://www.56a.org.uk/>

### BRIGHTON

- **Cowley Club Social Centre**, 12 London Road, Brighton BN1 4JA, tel 01273 696104  
email [cowleyclub@riseup.net](mailto:cowleyclub@riseup.net)  
<http://cowleyclub.org.uk/>

### BRISTOL

- **Kebele Social Centre**, 14 Robertson Road, Bristol BS5 6JY, tel 0117 9513086,  
email [kebelesocialcentre@riseup.net](mailto:kebelesocialcentre@riseup.net)  
<http://www.kebelecoop.org>

### NOTTINGHAM

- **Sumac Centre**, 245 Gladstone Street, Nottingham NG7 6HX, tel 0115 960 8254,  
email [sumac@veggies.org.uk](mailto:sumac@veggies.org.uk)  
<http://www.veggies.org.uk/sumac>

### LIVERPOOL

- **News from Nowhere Bookshop**, 96 Bold Street, Liverpool L1 4HY, tel 0151 708 7270  
email [nfn@newsfromnowhere.org.uk](mailto:nfn@newsfromnowhere.org.uk)  
<http://www.newsfromnowhere.org.uk/>

### EDINBURGH

- **Autonomous Centre of Edinburgh (ACE)**  
17 West Montgomery Place, Edinburgh EH7 5HA  
tel 0131 557 6242  
email [ace@autonomous.org.uk](mailto:ace@autonomous.org.uk)  
<http://www.autonomous.org.uk/>
- **Word Power Books**, 43-45 West Nicolson Street, Edinburgh EH8 9DB, tel 0131 662 9112  
email [books@word-power.co.uk](mailto:books@word-power.co.uk)  
<http://www.word-power.co.uk/>
- **AK Press online**, AK Distribution, PO Box 12766, Edinburgh, Scotland EH8 9YE  
email [ak@akedin.demon.co.uk](mailto:ak@akedin.demon.co.uk)  
<http://www.akuk.com/>

### SOUTHAMPTON

- **October Books**, 243 Portswood Road, Southampton SO17 2NG, tel 023 8058 1030  
email [info@octoberbooks.org](mailto:info@octoberbooks.org)

# Meet you at the barricades

If you are reading this before 1st November, chances are you would have picked up your copy of *Freedom* at the London anarchist bookfair.

The bookfair remains the UK's biggest and best-known anarchist event in the UK, and certainly the most popular. Each year it draws in a greater numbers of people, thousands upon thousands who come from across the globe primarily to pick up literature, discuss ideas and socialise in a politically sympathetic environment. It continues to play an essential role in galvanising a movement often slow in promoting our own political activities and celebrating our own concrete achievements.

The key to the success of the London bookfair is the sheer range of subject matter on offer. From the dazzling encyclopaedias of the theoretical heavyweights to the hastily stapled pamphlets declaring some lost political cause, the variety of printed material is overwhelming, and it is a triumph of anarchism that so much can be embraced, endorsed and ultimately expressed within such a small movement.

Written texts, whether books, pamphlets, propaganda papers, news-sheets or simple leaflets, remain the backbone of this movement – that desire to communicate an idea, to express a viewpoint, to explain a situation, to invest our politics with a sense of purpose, a sense of involvement, to make a connection in the real world.

That said, UK anarchism suffers from a chronic lack of confidence. Given the period we are living through this is an absolute

travesty. At a time when we no longer have to apologise for our politics or couch our ideas in a more amenable language, when social conflict has become absolutely normalised, we shouldn't be afraid of taking our place at the barricades. Now more than ever anarchists should be proud to organise as anarchists.

When the *New York Times* can trumpet within its pages "Anarchism has been the reigning spirit of left-wing protest movements for nearly the past half century, as it is in Zuccotti Park [the Wall Street occupation]. In this recent incarnation, anarchism, for the most part, is not so much a theory of the absence of government, but a theory of self-organization, or direct democracy," then we really do need to shift up a gear and begin taking our activities seriously and putting ourselves out there.

*Freedom* is attempting to play its part in all this. In the column on the left are the current outlets that stock the paper, but we want the paper available across the country in every major city, we want people to have easy access to anarchist ideas, whether they engage with them critically or not, we want to be able to promote our own anarchist voices rather than relying on the mainstream press for the occasional sympathetic ear, or flashing headlines recording some political stunt or other. Anarchism as a political entity, as a movement, as a body of people committed to a revolutionary idea, should be recognisable, identifiable and right in the thick of things.



## INTERNATIONAL

### CHILE'S GROWING STUDENT MOVEMENT

The new wave of student protests in Chile has entered its sixth month. Following the breakdown of negotiations between student representatives and government officials on the implementation of educational and other reforms, students took to the streets the very next day. The government once again resorted to severe repression through the notorious Carabineras, Chile's militarised police force, much like UK's TSG riot cops.

Carabineras, including mounted police, prevented a peaceful student march from gathering and demonstrating, attacking them with water cannons and tear gas. Students then turned confrontational, pelting rocks, building barricades and setting them on fire. Serious skirmishes occurred in several other cities. Protests continued past midnight, leading to 250 arrests with 45 people injured including 30 cops.

According to new penal code additions made recently by billionaire President Pinera, demonstrators and student occupiers targeting any public area or building, especially those who are hooded, masked, or fighting the police, will be punished severely with a prison term of 541 days to three years. This is almost at the same time that he gave a glowing UN speech about how 'noble' the student movement in Chile is.

Students and teachers who marched in late September encountered similar repression. A city mayor closed down several high schools occupied by students and called in the police to violently remove the protesters, further angering the public. Students, however, tried their best to stop the cops by building barricades with chairs and desks. Such state violence has been condemned even by the Journalists Association of Chile.

Ordinary people have again come out in full support of the students, banging their pots and pans on their demonstrations, and Pinera's already low support is dropping precipitously. Student and union leaders have called for another national shutdown on 19th October. However, the student leadership is considering changing tactics since years of internal protest has produced no results. The body leading the protests, Confederation of University Students (CONFECH), is seeking to build international support by sending delegates to the UN, EU, OECD, Paris and German authorities and universities. They are also building links with student and labour organisations throughout South America. Intriguingly, the IMF produced a report on the region in which it recommends Chile government to raise corporate taxes and increase public funding.

However, the move away from direct action methods and towards already discredited international organisations is slightly worrying, because it could cripple the grass-roots independence of the movement. On the other hand it could lead to a resurgence of the Left in the region.

### LENS CAP GUJARAT



The highly endangered Asiatic lions to be found in the Gir forest sanctuary in Gujarat, India, have been put on a recovery list as their numbers are expanding slightly to over 400, and moving beyond the confines of the sanctuary.

## Greece set for winter of rage

Since late September, Greece is seeing a resurgence of large-scale social unrest as workers launch repeated waves of strike action. Enraged by the government's decision to implement a new round of austerity cuts; public transport workers have called a series of 24- and 48-hour strikes causing serious disruption. It included a 48-hour strike by taxi-owners.

In a testament to how serious the situation is, even customs officials have been walking off their jobs, causing Macedonian businesses operating through Greece enormous losses. Other government officials including tax office and finance ministry employees have also gone on 48-hour strikes. Doctors and nurses struck on 5th October, leaving hospitals to function on emergency staff. On 26th September even the police and the

Special Guards protested by hanging a huge black banner in the capital, Athens.

There have been minor confrontations between stone-pelting youth and cops using tear gas. Thousands marched in Athens and Thessaloniki, and several schools and government offices remained shut. On 5th October hundreds of airliners ground to a halt, while transport workers struck again for the sixth time on 10th October.

Greece's two big unions, private sector GSEE and public sector ADEDY have called for a general strike on 19th October. Ironically, Chilean students and unions have called for a national shutdown on the same day. A day before, on 18th October, workers of state-owned companies – including oil refineries, power stations, port and water operators – will be going on strike.

## Notes from the US

What some even inside the United States are seeing as a global movement was first manifested in New York from mid-September as 'Occupy Wall Street' [see page 4 of this issue]. Within a few days, similar protests (at the greed and corruption of the 1% at the expense of the 99%) took place in Austin, Boston, Chicago, Knoxville, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Seattle and other north American cities. The website Occupy Together, the effective clearing house for the movement, at press time claimed parallel actions in 1,324 cities. The State and its elite obviously took it seriously – after a week or so of ignoring, then attempts at ridicule. Increasingly large numbers of people have

been arrested and abused. On 1st October (when the disproportionately high number of more than 700 demonstrators were arrested) and 5th police tactics were particularly appalling. These included mass beating, confiscation of equipment, deception about routes for marches, taunting and other forms of violence. Videos posted online show police pepper-spraying groups of young women, for example, while they were surrounded by a police netting.

Despite the mass arrests, the camp continues... the views of one protester, 'Jason': "People are realising that we are all one and that is our governments that work against us



# Workers' deaths on the rise

## Suicides in China's electronics industry

The Chinese are not mourning the death of the entrepreneur Steve Jobs, the CEO of Apple, the leading electronics goods brand. For beleaguered workers at outsourced industrial plants across China, the only legacy Jobs has left is death and misery. Early this month one worker at a Shengdu manufacturing plant jumped to his death and two more tried to do the same and survived. This brings the death toll from the past few years anywhere from 12 to 17 (numbers vary according to reports).

The centre of the controversy are the Foxconn manufacturing plants, owned by the Taiwanese electronics company, Foxconn Technology Group. They are the largest private employers in China with over one million workers, and assemble products like iPhones, iPads, iPods, etc., for Apple, Sony and Nokia. Foxconn is listed 112th on the Forbes list and generates around 40% of the electronics industry revenue.

Although, according to investigators who have visited the Foxconn plants, they are not exactly Dickensian sweatshops, labour conditions are still less than satisfactory, with workers forced to work overtime – well over the legal limit – and overloaded with large quotas. Although their wages were recently raised marginally, they are still not paid living wages. The Hong Kong-based non-profit NGO watchdog SACOM (Students and Scholars Against Corporate Misbehaviour) has produced several reports in the last few years accusing both Apple and its contractors like Foxconn of failing to uphold minimal labour standards and of not responding to their accusations.



Indeed, the contractors' labour record is bleak. In May this year, a serious explosion at Foxconn's Chengdu plant killed three and injured fifteen. In 2009, at the Taiwanese Wintek electronic plants (another Apple contractor) well over a 100 workers fell ill through n-hexane poisoning. N-hexane is a toxic chemical used to polish iPhone touchscreens. In 2010 eight more workers suffered poisoning at another Chinese plant. Several more have tried to jump to their deaths at Foxconn plants across China, to prevent which large nets have been put up around the buildings. Apple and its contractors have also been accused of not compensating victims' families, or trying to fire compensated workers.

Foxconn incidents prove that one need not work in sweatshops in slave-like conditions to suffer agony. Unstimulating, underpaid, repetitive and exhausting work is painful and disempowering enough to drive people to kill themselves. What the European working class escaped in the twentieth century has been conveniently passed on to the Asian working class. But when the latter start agitating for their rights and refuse to sacrifice themselves, where then for capitalism? Who will mass produce its glittering goods in noxious conditions? However, we have quite some way to go before capitalism comes full circle and reaches the end of its tether.

## Notes from the US

◀ page 8

to keep everyone down. That's how the one percent gets away with it, is by dividing us up and people not realising that we are all one and that's what this movement is about."

At the same time, increasing numbers of trade unions are officially supporting the movement – the SEIU 1199 healthcare workers and Transport Workers Union members in New York City (attorneys for whom attempted to obtain a temporary federal restraining order to prevent the police from commandeering buses operated by its members to ferry protesters who had been arrested) are just two.

### Environment

In September the Government Accountability Office published a report advising that the

US government has lost nearly three tons of nuclear material that it had shipped overseas. Almost 6,000 pounds of highly enriched uranium and separated plutonium cannot now be traced. This is enough to make dozens of nuclear weapons.

Then, the National Weather Service reported that Texas experienced the hottest summer in US history this year. Its average of 86.8 degrees Fahrenheit from June to August beat Oklahoma's record of 85.2°F set in 1934. That state averaged 86.5°F itself this year.

The heat has produced the severest drought in Texas since the 1950s and the single driest year since 1895, resulting in an estimated US\$5.2 (£3.4) billion in damage from crop losses and massive wildfires.

Louis Further

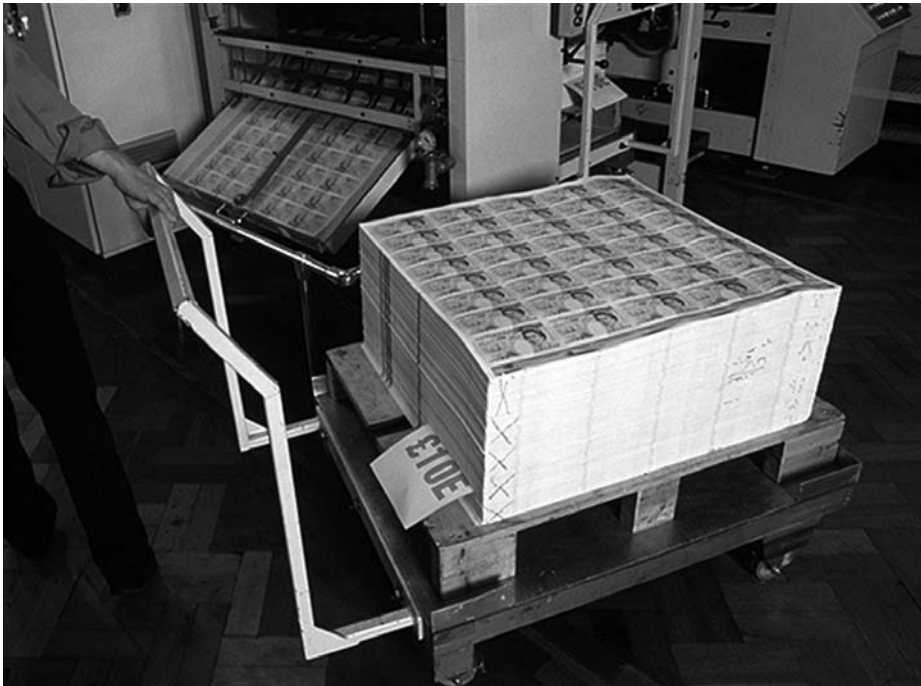
## Famine and rape

As an adjunct to the story of famine in Somalia, and largely unreported, Somali women fleeing hunger and emaciation in their region are being raped, sometimes gang-raped, in large numbers. Many of these assaults occur on their journey from Somalia to Kenya. But many also face continued sexual assaults afterwards, from strangers and partners. Some are forced to have sex in return for material needs.

Many of these women have also witnessed rape at gunpoint of other women in front of their own families. Most refuse to report these incidents for fear of being ostracised from their husbands and families. This is an eerily familiar story, repeated across Africa, in regions riven by civil war, such as Congo, where women are repeatedly raped in refugee camps.

## ECONOMICS

# Second wave of crisis



## The real cost of keeping us poor

Bank of England chairman Mervin King now openly admits that this might be the worst economic crisis in the history of capitalism.

Those in positions of power and responsibility are supposed to play it cool. They are supposed to understate bad news and overstate good ones. But doing so is proving to be a difficult job now that financial experts and economists are sounding well nigh apocalyptic, implying that a double-dip recession, if not a second credit crunch, is just a matter of time. It is difficult to say what form it will take, although most are agreed that it will come from the Eurozone.

### Bail-outs and downgrades

There are good reasons for thinking so. Twelve UK banks and building societies – including Lloyds TSB, Santander, RBS and Nationwide – have been downgraded by Moody's, one of the world's big three credit rating agencies. This means 'market confidence' in the government's willingness to bail them out is at an all time low. Both Italy's and Spain's sovereign credit ratings (their ability to expand their economies and pay off external debt) have been downgraded by Moody's, Standard and Poor, and more recently by Fitch. Bailed-out Franco-Belgian bank Daxia is going under and requires a second rescue.

Is this bad? It seems so, as a direct result of the downgrades Prudential, the large UK based insurance company, which provides pension-related services has slashed its annuities (similar to a pension fund) to its customers. Observers fear that other companies

will follow this example and cut their pensions too.

Added to that the European Central Bank (ECB) which controls the Eurozone has rushed in to extend direct, unlimited short-term and long-term loans to European banks. This is done to solve an immediate liquidity crisis, that is, to make sure that banks have enough money to lend to each other, since banks have massively reduced interbank lending due to many banks' exposure to bad Greek debts.

### Creating money

England, on the other hand, has taken the much-tabooed route of increasing money supply to spur economic growth. This process is euphemistically known as quantitative easing, or QE, where a central bank virtually creates money and with it buys assets (usually government bonds) in large quantities. This money then circulates through the banking sector, where it is hoped that the banks will lend to businesses. The problem with this method is that it risks driving up an inflation that is already running at a painful 4.5% (measured by the Consumer Price Index).

The Bank of England had already released £200bn through a first round of QE in 2009 at the beginning of the crisis. Now it has added £75bn more, which came as a shock to the system. Other central banks are expected to follow, but they are resisting. The BoE expects food and fuel costs to fall next year, which it thinks will absorb the inflation, but manufacturing costs (both of raw materials and price of finished products) are rising steeply. This will push up the prices of retail goods, passing on that burden once again to ordinary consumers – you and I. This manufacturing cost (measured by the

Producers Price Index) has to be factored in before measuring real inflation.

Besides, hoping that banks will lend to medium and small businesses in a *laissez faire* economy is unreliable, since they have no legal obligation to do so. This is why even some Liberal Democrats are calling for the nationalisation of certain banks like RBS so that they can be forced to lend. This is in the midst of fears that RBS may need another bailout.

To add to these local woes, Germany and France agreed in late September to extend the bailout package for Greece, Portugal and Ireland to €780bn or £670bn from the initial €440bn or £383bn. UK taxpayers are already contributing £12.5bn to this package. We don't know yet if this contribution will be increased. All we know is that the people here or anywhere else are in no mood for generosity. It may well be that UK's austerity scheme could be expanded further, as is happening in Europe, even as liberal and Left experts argue for more spending to stimulate the economy. Portugal and Greece are held ransom by the unholy trinity of the EU, the ECB and the IMF who are using this opportunity to force cruel, neoliberal reforms upon those countries, and ruling elites everywhere are abiding by it.

### No way out

Right now we are in a no exit situation. A second credit crunch will make things a lot worse than they already are. Politicians of all stripes are utterly clueless and cannot think beyond austerity because that's what the financial system wants of them. Social



spending coupled with an unregulated finance economy has proved to be utterly unsustainable with its extreme debt levels and rapid transfer of wealth to a small financial elite. Whether functional or in breakdown this system is disastrous to the ordinary masses. Therefore a mere anti-cuts appeal will not succeed in mitigating our long-term problems. Hope lies only in a meaningful anti-capitalist movement that will make its resistance systemic rather than focussing on single issues like 'greedy bankers', 'corrupt politicians' or 'anti-cuts'.

# A short history of Freedom Press

## PART ONE

A four part series to celebrate 125 years of *Freedom*, Donald Room traces the turbulent history of the UK longest running anarchist paper

This is not a piece of original research, but a scissors-and-paste work from secondary sources, with the addition of my own memories from the 1940s onwards. It is adapted from my article in the internet publication *Information for Social Change* Number 27, summer 2008.

These days, Freedom Press has an amicable relationship with all other anarchist groups and publishers, but this has not always been the case. There have been denunciations of *Freedom* and Freedom Press as “anti-anarchist”, and actual physical attacks on Freedom group members. *Freedom* did not mention such incidents when they occurred, and Freedom Press histories mention them only rarely, because *Freedom* is a vehicle for expressing anarchist ideas, not for pursuing quarrels and splits. But they did occur, and I hope it will do no harm to recall them now. I will not give the personal names of people who are, or may be, still alive.

Anarchism is an ethical doctrine, “a concept of what ought to be” which holds that nobody should be threatened into obedience, and that all social relationships should be of voluntary co-operation. In Britain in the 1880s, the term anarchism was claimed by three different schools of thought.

Anarchist socialism or anarchist communism demanded economic equality as essential to general freedom from intimidation. Today this is often referred to simply as anarchism, without qualifications.

Individualist anarchism was opposed to central government but would allow trade, and differences in wealth. The name is confusing, because all anarchism is about individual freedom. A better name is anarcho-capitalism.

Anarcho-syndicalism advocated that societies should be democratically organised through trade unions.

In the 1880s, the American individualist anarchist paper,

*Liberty*, was available in Britain on subscription. The first anarchist newspaper published in Britain, from 1879, was *Freiheit*, in the German language. The first British anarchist paper in English was *The English Freiheit*, a translation of *Freiheit*, sold outside the Old Bailey where *Freiheit*'s publisher Johann Most was on trial in 1881.

In March 1885, an anarchist paper called *The Anarchist* was started in London by Henry Seymour, who was himself an individualist anarchist, but recruited fellow editors who were anarchist socialists. One of these was Charlotte Wilson (pictured below), a member of the Fabian Society, who later wrote the Fabian Society pamphlet on anarchism (and left when the Fabian Society became committed to parliamentary democracy). Wilson persuaded George Bernard Shaw to write an anarchist article for the first issue of *The Anarchist*. Shaw told Seymour it “was written more to show Mrs Wilson my idea of the line an anarchist paper should take ... than as an expression of my own opinions”.

In March 1886, the anarchist Peter Kropotkin was released from prison in France, and Charlotte Wilson invited him to London to join the editors of *The Anarchist*. Seymour wrote to a friend that his anarchist individualism had been sidelined by anarchist communists who only wanted to write, leaving him to do the production work and bear most of the cost. He told the anarchist communists to start a paper of their own, which they did. The first issue of *Freedom* appeared in September 1886 (bearing the date October 1886, pictured above). Charlotte Wilson was editor and publisher, and Kropotkin the main theoretical columnist. *Freedom* never acknowledged its origin as a breakaway from *The Anarchist*, but its first issue denounced Individualist Anarchism as “a round square, a contradiction in set terms”.

Wilson persuaded Annie Besant to provide a publishing office at Charles Bradlaugh's Freethought Press, and William Morris to provide printing services at the Socialist League. In January 1888, Bradlaugh decided he did not want anarchists in the Freethought Press building, and the Freedom group had seven different addresses in the next ten years, during which, in 1895, Charlotte Wilson resigned and was replaced as publisher by Alfred Marsh, a violinist.

In 1898, *Freedom* acquired its own printing facilities. The nieces and nephew of the artist Dante Gabriel Rossetti were publishers and printers of *The Torch*, a journal of anarchist commun-

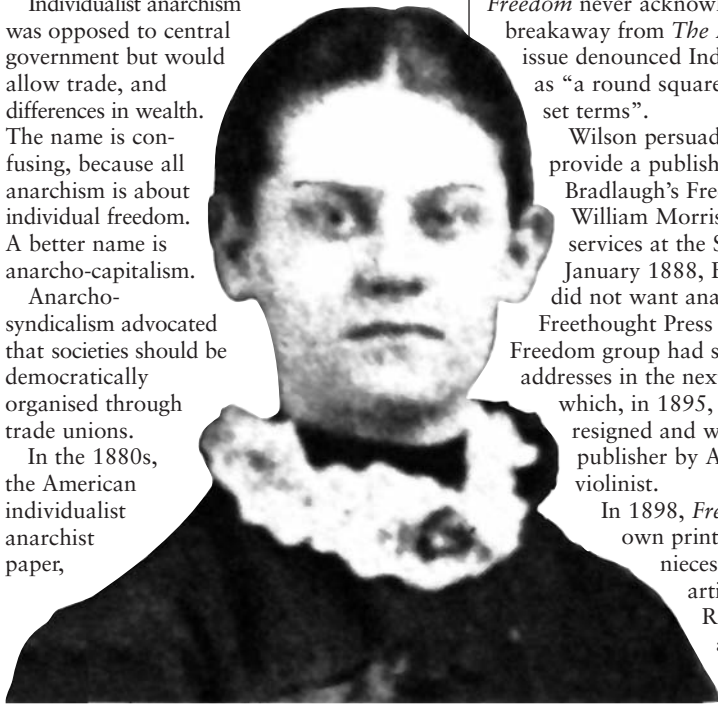


*ism*, for which they rented a workshop at 127 Ossulston Street, near Kings Cross. They decided to cease publication, and arranged for the Freedom group to take over the workshop. Two sympathisers bought the printing equipment and donated it to *Freedom*, which stayed in Ossulston Street for the next thirty years. The hand-operated press dated from about 1820, and needed three operators; two to load the paper and pull the handle, and one to take the paper off. A comrade who was a trained compositor, Tom Cantwell, set the type in the room upstairs.

In 1902 Cantwell had a stroke which prevented him from working, and his place as compositor was taken by Tom Keell, a compositor at *The Spectator*. In 1907 the Freedom group took on a second paper, *Voice of Labour*. Tom Keell then left *The Spectator* for a wage paid by the Freedom group, for which he acted as compositor of both papers, editor of *Freedom*, and manager of the press.

Most of the Freedom group were of the artisan class, but the founding editor Wilson was a wealthy stockbroker's wife, and the best-known contributor Kropotkin was a Russian prince in exile, who made a good living writing geographical articles for *Encyclopaedia Britannica*. In 1897 a writer in another anarchist paper wrote that *Freedom* was “a philosophical, middle-class organ, not intelligible to the working classes ... less revolutionary than *Comic Cuts* ... edited and managed by an inaccessible group of arrogant persons worse than the Pope and his seventy cardinals and written by fossilised old quill-drivers”. *Freedom* did not respond.

To be continued in our December issue.



## FEATURE

# GOING BEYOND P

## Iain McKay on re-imagining social organisation after the state

The ConDem's are continuing the grand tradition of all governments in proving anarchists right. Our so-called representatives are able to ignore their manifestos, are free to break their solemn pre-election pledges and vote as they like – all in the interests of capital.

The Lib-Dems are just the latest of a long line of politicians who say one thing during elections and then turn round and do the exact opposite once in office. The Tories, as expected, are imposing another top-down re-organisation of the NHS in England in order to privatise it after proclaiming the NHS was safe in their hands in the election. In America, Republican governors are trying to strip unionised workers of their rights – after failing to mention any of this in their election.

Anarchists are not surprised. Pierre-Joseph Proudhon, the father of anarchism, was right – nothing resembles a monarchy more than centralised democracy for “the Representatives, once elected, are the masters; all the rest obey. They are subjects, to be governed and to be taxed.” A nation as one unit picking its rulers every few years is no democracy. Every government confirms Proudhon's dismissal of laws: “Spider webs for the rich and powerful, steel chains for the weak and poor, fishing nets in the hands of the Government.”

Is there an alternative to a system which reduces liberty to the ability ‘to pick rulers’ every four or five years?

### The nature of the State

First, we need to understand *what* the state is and *why* it is structured as it is.

Any logical and straightforward theory of the State, argued Michael Bakunin, is essentially founded upon the principle of *authority*, that is the eminently theological, metaphysical, and political idea that the masses, *always* incapable of governing themselves, must at all times submit to the beneficent yoke of a wisdom and a justice imposed upon them, in some way or other, from above.

The reason why the state is structured hierarchically is not hard to understand given its role. “In a society based on the principle of inequality of conditions,” Proudhon argued, government is “a system of insurance for the class which exploits and owns against that which is exploited and owns nothing.” It is “inevitably enchained to capital and directed against the proletariat.” For if the people *did* govern themselves then it is unlikely they would tolerate economic rule by the capitalist class:

“To attack the central power, to strip it of its prerogatives, to decentralise, to dissolve authority, would have been to abandon to the people the control of its affairs, to run the risk of a truly popular revolution. That is why the bourgeoisie sought to reinforce the central government even more.”

Thus anarchists are against the state because it is an instrument of class rule, a social structure organised to ensure centralised, hierarchical top-down power and the exclusion of the people. We deny the State because we affirm that the people, that society, that the mass, can and ought to govern itself by itself and we affirm that which the founders of States have never believed in, the personality and autonomy of the masses. So “no establishment of authority, no organisation of the collective force from without, is henceforth possible for us ... the only way to organise democratic government is to abolish government.”

So anarchy implies self-managed associations. Yet we cannot live isolated lives nor can we all assemble to discuss large-scale issues and problems. Anarchist theory has long had an answer to how we co-ordinate joint activity – decentralisation requires federalism. Just as individuals federate to form groups, so groups federate together to manage joint interests and issues. We aim to replace representative democracy with self-managed associations federated by means of mandated and recallable delegates. Only in this way can we achieve anarchy by governing ourselves.

In short, anarchists recognise that social organisation does not equal the state. To be free, libertarians have always argued, we need to end the state and the capitalist system it protects. We argue that social and economic federalism is the means replace the state with a social system based on, and protective of, liberty.

### Proudhon and the 1848 Revolution

The argument that genuine democracy (self-government) necessitates mandating and recalling delegates was first raised within the socialist movement by Proudhon. In March 1848, in his second pamphlet of the 1848 revolution he argued that mandating and recalling elected people was essential for genuine social self-government: “In the end, we are all voters; we can choose the most worthy. We can do more; we can follow them step-by-step in their legislative acts and their votes; we will make them transmit our arguments and our documents; we will suggest our will to them, and when we are disinterested, we will recall and dismiss them.

“The choice of talents, the imperative mandate, and permanent revocability are the most immediate and incontestable consequences of the electoral principle. It is the inevitable program of all democracy.”



The rue de Rivoli after the fights and the fires of the

Proudhon noted that few democrats actually embraced this position, something which has not changed. In November 1848 he returned to this theme in an election manifesto: “Besides universal suffrage and as a consequence of universal suffrage, we want implementation of the imperative mandate. Politicians balk at it! Which means that in their eyes, the people, in electing representatives, do not appoint mandatories but rather abjure their sovereignty! ... That is assuredly not socialism: it is not even democracy.” With tens of thousands of working class people reading his articles, Proudhon popularised the necessity of mandates and recall within the popular movement.

### Bakunin and the Paris Commune

The revolutionary anarchist Michael Bakunin continued in the path Proudhon forged. Like the French anarchist he argued for a

# PICKING RULERS



Paris during the Paris Commune in 1871. In the background is the Hôtel de Ville de Paris, the burnt-out headquarters of the Commune.

decentralised, federated communal socialism based on delegate rather than representative democracy: “the Alliance of all labour associations ... will constitute the Commune ... there will be a standing federation of the barricades and a Revolutionary Communal Council ... [made up of] delegates ... invested with binding mandates and accountable and revocable at all times ... Since it is the people which must make the revolution everywhere, and since the ultimate direction of it must at all times be vested in the people organised into a free federation of agricultural and industrial organisations ... organised from the bottom up through revolutionary delegation.”

These ideas were not for some future revolution. They had to be applied now, in the labour movement. The construction workers’ union, argued Bakunin, “simply left all decision-making to their committees”

and in “this manner power gravitated to the committees, and by a species of fiction characteristic of all governments the committees substituted their own will and their own ideas for that of the membership.” To combat this bureaucracy, the union “sections could only defend their rights and their autonomy in only one way: the workers called general membership meetings.” In “these popular assemblies” the issues were “amply discussed and the most progressive opinion prevailed.” Elected delegates would report “regularly to the membership” and be subject to “instant recall.”

Bakunin’s vision of a federation of workers’ councils based on mandated and recallable delegates dates from 1868. It makes a mockery of Lenin’s claims, trotted out to this day by his followers, that while Marxists see the need for an “organisation of the armed workers, after the type of the

Commune” anarchists “have a very vague idea of *what* the proletariat will put in its place.” In reality, *anarchists* had a very firm idea of how a free socialist system would be organised – decades before Lenin saw the importance soviets in 1917 and years before the Paris Commune of 1871.

The Paris Commune’s ‘Declaration to the French People’ proclaimed that one of the “inherent rights of the Commune” was election of officials under “the permanent right of control and revocation” and the “permanent intervention of citizens in communal affairs.” Unity would be achieved by “the voluntary association of all local initiatives” in a “delegation of federated Communes” based on “the realisation and the practice of the same principles” applied locally.

Marx, for his part, wrote one of his best works on the revolt: *The Civil War in France*.

## FEATURE

## Going beyond picking rulers

◀ page 13

The Commune “was formed of the municipal councillors, chosen by universal suffrage in the various wards of the town, responsible and revocable at short terms” and the “rough sketch of national organisation” produced by the Communards specified a federation of communes based on delegates “at any time revocable and bound by the *mandat impératif* (formal instructions) of his constituents.” These ideas obviously reflect the ideas Proudhon and his colleagues had raised over 20 years previously. This is unsurprising, given that his followers (the Mutualists) played a key part in the 1871 revolt (indeed, the “rough sketch” was written by a Mutualist).

Yet even if we ignore, as Marx did, the Mutualists, the Commune’s libertarian ideas can be seen if we compare Proudhon’s arguments from 1848 and Marx’s reporting 23 years later. Thus we find Marx proclaiming the Commune “was to be a working, not a parliamentary body, executive and legislative at the same time.” For Proudhon it was “not enough to say that one is opposed to the presidency unless one also does away with ministries, the eternal focus of political ambition. It is up to the National Assembly, through organisation of its committees, to exercise executive power, just the way it exercises legislative power through its joint deliberations and votes.”

So it is important when reading Marx’s *The Civil War in France* that much of it is simply reporting. He may have been agreeing with the actions of the Communards, but that does not change the awkward fact that he is not presenting his notions of social organisation but rather summarising the actions of people heavily influenced by his arch rival Proudhon. This means that when Marxists point to that work as evidence for Marxism’s “democratic essence” it misses the point – it is a libertarian-infused work because it is describing a libertarian-infused revolt! Bakunin quite rightly proclaimed that the Paris Commune was, in part, a “practical demonstration” of libertarian socialist ideas, “a bold, clearly formulated negation of the State.” As one anarchist summarised: “comparison will show that the programme set out [by the Commune] is ... the system of Federalism, which Bakunin had been advocating for years, and which had first been enunciated by Proudhon. The Proudhonists ... exercised considerable influence in the Commune. This ‘political form’ was therefore not ‘at last’ discovered; it had been discovered years ago; and now it was proven to be correct by the very fact that in the crisis the Paris workers adopted it almost automatically, under the pressure of circumstance, rather than as the result of theory, as being the form most suitable to express working class aspirations.”

## A Marxist aside

The Paris Commune, it must be noted, brought the contradictions of the Marxist attacks on anarchism to the surface. Thus



we find Engels attacking anarchists for holding certain position yet praising the 1871 revolution when it implemented *exactly the same ideas*. For example, in his deeply inaccurate diatribe ‘The Bakuninists at Work’, he was keen to distort the federalist ideas of anarchism, dismissing “the so-called principles of anarchy, free federation of independent groups.” Compare this to his praise for the Paris Commune which, he gushed, refuted Blanquist notions when it “appealed to [the provinces] to form a free federation of all French Communes ... a national organisation which for the first time was really created by the nation itself.”

Both Marx praised the Commune for implementing binding mandates yet this did not stop Engels attacking anarchist support for them as being part of Bakunin’s plans to control the IWMA. For “a secret society,” he argued, “there is nothing more convenient than the imperative mandate” as all its members vote one way, while the others will “contradict one another.” Without these mandates, “the common sense of the independent delegates will swiftly unite them in a common party against the party of the secret society.” Obviously the notion that delegates from a group should reflect the wishes of that group was lost on Engels. He even questioned the utility of this system for “if all electors gave their delegates imperative mandates concerning all points in the agenda, meetings and debates of the delegates would be superfluous.”

Clearly a “free federation” of Communes and binding mandates are bad when anarchists advocate them but excellent when workers in revolt implement them! Why this was the case Engels failed to explain.

Trotskyists regularly pay lip-service to the Commune and the imperative mandate. SWP’s Chris Harman argued that the “whole experience of the workers’ movement internationally teaches that only by regular elections, combined with the right of recall by shop-floor meetings can rank-and-file delegates be made really responsible to those who elect them.” (*Bureaucracy and Revolution in Eastern Europe*, pages 238–9)

Needless to say, Harman fails to note that it was Proudhon and Bakunin, not Marx, who first recognised the importance of recall

and argued for it in the workers’ movement. He also does not square his words with Bolshevik practice (such as packing, gerrymandering and disbanding soviets with non-Bolshevik majorities) which rejected this experience once they were in power. Or, for that matter, Trotsky’s 1936 summary that the “revolutionary dictatorship of a proletarian party” is “an objective necessity” and that the “revolutionary party (vanguard) which renounces its own dictatorship surrenders the masses to the counter-revolution.”

It is easy to work out why...

## Conclusions

Lenin argued that what the proletariat will put in that state’s place “is suggested by the highly instructive material furnished by the Paris Commune.” Anarchists would agree – adding that we had been advocating these ideas *before* 1871 and our ideas had *directly* influenced the revolt. So it is fair to say that it was *Marx*, not the world, who had “at last discovered” the political form “under which to work out the economic emancipation of labour” in 1871. The French working class, however, had been aware of the necessity for a decentralised federation of communes based on mandated and recallable delegates since at least 1848.

It could be argued that while anarchists were the first to integrate imperative mandates and recall into socialist theory and systematically advocate it, the likes of Proudhon and Bakunin were just repeating ideas already current in radical working class circles. Perhaps, but this should not be used to diminish their contributions nor their early recognition of the importance of these concepts. Particularly as everyday statism confirms our critique and life confirms our alternative.

There is an alternative to the ritualistic picking of masters every few years. We can organise ourselves to govern our own affairs and, by means of mandating and recalling delegates, ensure that we create a social organisation based on liberty. Until we do, we will be ruled by the few in the interests of the few – that we get to pick the person who will misrepresent us just adds insult to injury!

## PRISON NEWS

To comrades worldwide, I send out this communiqué from inside the prison HMP Wormwood Scrubs in London, UK. I have been sentenced to imprisonment for 18 months.

This sentence has been intensely pursued since 2009 by the Metropolitan Police, British Transport Police, and the greedy barristers of the ancient and outdated English judicial system, which in my case was presided over by the dinosaur H.O. Blacksell QC and his posh puppy Mark Trafford.

Under the context of conspiracy, the court invented a guilty verdict, whereby no evidence was required. One for all and all for one, unless of course you hadn't previously had the nerve to challenge the way in which a system, made by the rich and to protect the rich, wants us to live. Despite serving a sentence, it is forever held against you, which is quite handy, should one be a tad short of the annoying thing called evidence.

In a straight contradiction to what the justice system tries to preach, they have exposed themselves as nothing more than a posh gang of thugs, with huge prisons to keep us locked-up, out of sight, out of rights!

This is not unique to England and it is evident in most countries. With the breakdown of their economic system, their thuggish behaviour is becoming more and more exposed. From Athens, our inspiration, to London, it's time to stand up and stand united, with passion and determination.

I send my support and solidarity to the comrades, in prisons and on the streets, who have courageously decided to say enough is enough. No more of the 'Rule of the Rich'. No more shall they be able to hide behind their legal arguments and pseudo-democratic excuses. No more shall they be able to hide behind their polluted cloud of justice when it's so apparent that it's nothing more than a tool of repression, by which a big, fat, wigged-up bastard can, without remorse or humanity, destroy the lives of people on a daily basis, without any consequences or questions being asked of him. Only a few dictators have had such powers at their disposal.

It's time to judge our judges. I know about 85,678 people in England alone, who'd like a word or two with these infallible keepers of the rich man's democracy.

To the rich man's justice – fuck you hard and rot in pieces!

Thomas Blak  
anarchist prisoner

- Thomas Blak A5728CE  
HMP Wormwood Scrubs, PO Box 757,  
Du Cane Road, London W12 OAE

Check the Freedom website regularly for updates on the six anti-fascist prisoners.

# Love's labours lost

Prison labour appears to be the Coalition's current criminological flavour of the month. It seems the answer to all their problems: financial – the potential to generate a vast income from the hiring out prisoners to private companies; rehabilitation – helping indoctrinate its iconic feral underclass into the benefits of real wage slavery, cutting the recidivism rate and creating eager new drones to fill all the dull drudge jobs that are currently occupied by all those nasty foreign workers that the Tories wish to see banished from Blighty's shores.

Unlike countries such as China, with its classical fascist model of corporate state Laogai prison industries and which operates a myriad of enterprises – everything from packing China tea and making joss sticks all the way up to commercial vehicle manufacture and uranium mining; or Germany, where prisoners are expected to work in order to 'pay for their keep'; prison labour in the UK has never really been about generating capital from a captive workforce, other than on a small haphazard scale, or even about prisoners having to work for their supper.

Instead it has largely been about keeping a restive population occupied – a hangover from the Victorian era when hard labour was transformed from merely being a punishment to fulfilling the role of keeping idle hands busy, providing meaningless activity, *à la* crank and treadmill, to tire out the prison population so they had no energy left to cause their keepers any problems. This role has largely mutated, under the Incentives and Earned Privileges scheme, into a fully-fledged system of order and control; one

where a limited number of jobs are farmed out to prisoners, alongside graded levels of wages and perks (access to a rented television, enhanced visits, more private cash, etc.), all earned on the basis of one's compliance with the prison regime's rules and codes of conduct. Keep your nose clean, tug your forelock and you will get ahead.

Many of these jobs are also essential to the everyday running of prisons: cooking and cleaning for the prisoners and the manufacture of almost everything that is consumed within a prison on a daily basis – from socks and y-fronts to cell furniture and the very prison bars themselves – all except locks and keys of course (and note that prison is the only public sector arena where the cleaning contract has never been privatised). All this provides an essential subsidy that has helped maintain an ever-growing prison population, but one that the Coalition has decided needs extra income: hence the so-called Rehabilitation Revolution with its 'real working prisons' and the decision to finally enable the Prisoners' Earnings Act 1996.

Yet what exactly is the reality, what great strides has the Coalition actually made in its criminological crusade? Well, next to none – they have increased the hours worked in HMP Bristol from 20 to 33 hours a week and introduced a 40% Victim Support levy from prisoners wages. Except the first only covers 30 prisoners in the prison's recycling workshop and the latter effects just 450 in open prisons, unfortunately those nearing the end of long sentences working day release jobs and least able to resist the changes.



Prisoners on the treadmill at Pentonville Prison, London, in 1895.

## COMMENT

## ABOUT FREEDOM

## ANGEL ALLEY

The Alliance of Radical Booksellers has officially been launched, which should see a healthy and more fruitful relationship between the more politically motivated sellers of radical literature. There will be a list of the shops up on the website very soon. Despite the internet, people are still buying and still want real books, so it's up to us to ensure they get those books. Nik, who works at Housmans bookshop in Kings Cross and whose original idea this was, takes up the narrative: "There are still some wonderful bookshops out there, working hard to keep progressive books on our high streets. The Alliance of Radical Booksellers hopes to pick up where the Federation of Radical Booksellers left off – as an organisation which allows its member booksellers to support each other, promote one another's work, and sell books together."

In terms of the situation in the shop, we have now got ourselves a proper cleaning rota, and we've got ourselves a proper mop and bucket and everything, which means the place will be looking a little more shop-like and a little less squat-like in the future. Come on down and have a browse around, make yourself a coffee (Zapatista, naturally) and have a chat about the state of anarchist politics today. You are always welcome.

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## NEXT ISSUE

The next issue will be dated December 2011 and the last day to get copy to us for that issue will be Tuesday 15th November. You can send your articles to us by email to [copy@freedompress.org.uk](mailto:copy@freedompress.org.uk) or by post to 'The Editors', Freedom, 84b Whitechapel High Street, London E1 7QX.

## A sideways look

by SVARTFROSK

Housing charity Shelter have reported on the plight of people renting from private landlords. They have defined rent as unaffordable if it is more than 35% of average local take home pay. Using this benchmark, over half of local authorities are unaffordable. Figures for London show that in most boroughs, the cost of private renting is over 50% of the average local wage. Nor is this just a London thing, with other cities in the south and rural areas also having this mismatch between earnings and rent.

Shelter interviewed some families who were having to cut back on food in order to pay their rent. It obviously is an issue that affects the young disproportionately. It is exacerbated in many parts of London where even families have no chance of getting social housing.

How we got here is twofold. Wages have been falling in real terms since the 1970s. And with housing, from about the same time, virtually no new council housing was built. What there was got sold under right to buy or, in the case of less popular areas, knocked down. In addition, changes in family structure and immigration meant demand grew. Rather than tackle this problem, successive governments tried to recreate a private rented sector, through massive subsidies to landlords paid for by housing benefit, hence all the buy-to-let landlords.

Now that those subsidies are unaffordable, the government's policy is to make it the tenant's responsibility. There are new 'affordable rents' which will be up to 80% of market rents. Westminster council have calculated that the capped housing benefit rent would require a salary of over £77,000 for a two bedroom flat.

Any sensible person would see the need for a massive programme of housebuilding, at least in London, the South East and rural areas. It's unlikely to happen, in part because there is no political will. But the other reason it won't happen is that the government's changes to housing benefit have the net effect of making housing landlords look like a riskier

investment. At present housing benefit is usually paid direct to social landlords, like housing associations. The government want to pay it direct to the tenants, which is fair enough. But all parties know that this means in some cases there will be bigger temptations than the rent. Bad news for housing associations' finances, which means they will find it harder to borrow.

The private rented sector also ranges from relatively responsible landlords, who keep to their contracts and carry out repairs, to people who make Rachman look like a humanitarian. The BBC reported on the case of a young couple in Kent whose landlady changed their locks. A couple of days later the woman lost her baby, and while she was keen not to apportion blame, she did say that the stress may have been a factor. The media is forever telling us that there is no such thing as the class war any more. There clearly is, and dodgy landlords are on the other side.

Part and parcel of anarchism is fighting the battles you find yourself facing. I don't rent, but a quick heads up around my local group suggests almost everyone else does, from a private landlord. It is very difficult to organise around private housing issues, because they are individualised. The growing solidarity networks in the US and Canada have tackled this and I was lucky enough to see a presentation on it by a member of SeaSol, based in Seattle. If we are to fight on the issues that affect us, surely this must be one?

Stealing deposits is against the law. The fact that it happens so often shows how useless the law can be. Learning that the law is not there to help you when you've been wronged is one step on the road to politicisation. People affected can go the tiresome, expensive legal route, which is stacked in landlords' favour. Or they can take direct action with all its risks, and the useful side effect of building confidence. And if you've been empowered once, in a fight against a dodgy landlord, next time it might be against a dodgy boss.





## Counting the cost

I am surprised that an anarchist 'economist' (?) offering such an 'overview' should have swallowed the cynically misleading aims of mainstream 'economics' – 'full employment' and 'economic growth' – so completely.

The rational aim of 'the economy' is/should be to meet society's/individuals' needs for goods and services efficiently, with minimal demand for 'employment' and use of non-renewable resources, i.e. allowing maximal time and freedom for self-chosen 'leisure' occupation, without destroying the environment on which we depend for survival.

Instead, mainstream 'economists' aim for maximisation of wage-slavery, and of waste of resources via planned obsolescence, ever-changing fashions, armament production and wars.

Between the last two 'World Wars', a movement was fast growing, demanding distribution of 'the wages of the machine' as 'national dividends' – a birthright, unconditional lifelong entitlement to a share of the potential abundance which 'the common cultural inheritance' of the infrastructure, knowledge, tools and machines built up over past centuries made possible.

This was seen as introducing the 'economic democracy' and 'individual sovereignty' which independent income gives – a very anarchical idea?

This movement, Social Credit, was at the time, widely debated in the mainstream media – press and radio – and formed part of university study by the economics departments. It predicted the inevitability of WW2, if its reforms were not adopted. However, the 'money masters' – the leading bankers – were determined to retain their profitable privilege of money creation, and used their financial power to promote opposition to this reform among their chosen economists (they funded the LSE) and politicians, as well as journalists who all misinterpreted the proposals and then demolished these miss-interpretations.

After WW2, this history was eliminated from university courses, and mention of it was banned in the mainstream media.

The basic source of most of the current world problems is the debt-generating 'fractional reserve' system of money-creation. Virtually all the money present society uses enters circulation when banks create it by making interest-bearing loans – which therefore require and ever-growing money supply to 'service' these loans, leading to continuous inflation; failing this, recession, or as is now threatening, total collapse!

Brian Leslie

## School or weapons factory?

Like so many others, Bristol University has deep links with those producing arms for nasty dictators. Many leaders in the UK spoke in support of protesters in the Middle

East this spring. However, they were silent about how the uprisings were put down – using weapons made in Britain, and sold with help from the British government.

BAe Systems for example – one of the largest arms dealers in the world – is very involved in University life. Despite involvement in numerous corruption scandals, and having sold weapons to dictatorships (including Saudi Arabia, Zimbabwe and East Timor), this company is invited back year after year to recruit Bristol students. They are at every engineering careers fair, where students are told about exciting careers opportunities, with no mention that it might be wrong to work for such a company. The university's involvement in this deadly trade goes far deeper than acting as a recruitment agency. From 2001 to 2006, staff at Bristol University took on about a hundred military-related projects, taking at least £12 million from arms dealers and military organisations. While students and staff are actively resisting the presence of arms companies, the situation is only likely to get worse. The present cuts mean that universities are acting more and more like private businesses, which rely on money from companies like BAE Systems. Unless we can halt the cuts agenda, the situation is likely to get worse. Issue 4 of 1831 the Bristol Anarchist Federation newsheet, see <https://bristolaf.wordpress.com/>

## Anarchist appeal

This is an appeal to individual and collective good souls to help Marseille's International research centre on anarchism so the archives of the libertarian movement can be stored safely once and for all.

The international research centre on anarchism (CIRA being its French acronym – <http://cira.marseille.free.fr>) of Marseille was founded in 1965 by René Bianco, a

legendary figure of the regional anarchist scene, with the help of a few libertarian friends. CIRA Marseille is a member of the international federation of libertarian research and documentation centres (FICEDL, see <http://ficedl.info>).

For the past 46 years, CIRA Marseille has been collecting, filing and storing everything and anything on anarchism so that its archives are now comprised of thousands of books, pamphlets, booklets, newspapers, posters, leaflets, academic studies, postcards, films, as well as personal archives donated by activists. Most of the documents are in French, Castilian or Italian.

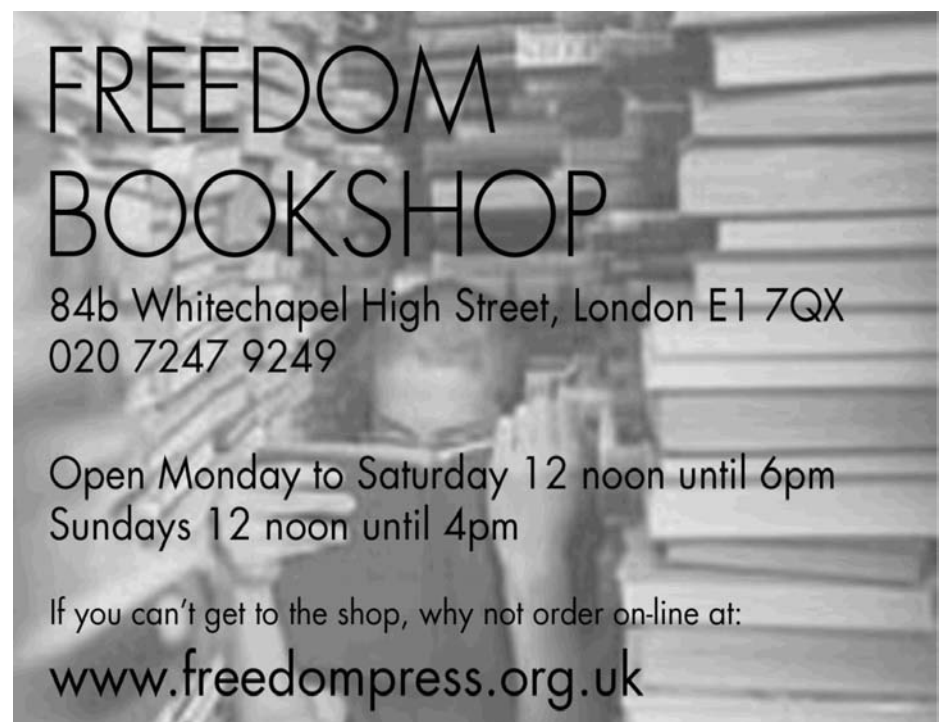
CIRA Marseille organises monthly talks, takes part in various anarchist book fairs and publishes a monthly newsletter as well as an annual bibliography.

Since it was created in 1965, CIRA Marseille has had to move offices several times. The lease on our current premises won't be renewed, which means that we must move out by the end of the year 2011.

In the meantime, we bought a new space, a 100 square metre shop right in the centre of Marseille, at a price of €100,000, thanks to a friendly, zero interest loan. In order to repay that loan and to be able to equip the premises with the bare necessities, CIRA Marseille needs to find another €15,000. There is a sense of urgency as we have to vacate the old premises very soon.

If you find that CIRA Marseille is not only worthy, but also essential to the anarchist movement, please make a donation or/and spread the message. Great oaks from little acorns grow!

You can make out a (French bank) cheque to 'Les Acrates' and send it at the address below. For international transfers or money orders, please get in touch with us. CIRA Marseille, 3 rue Saint-Dominique, 13001 Marseille, France, email [cira.marseille@free.fr](mailto:cira.marseille@free.fr) website <http://cira.marseille.free.fr>



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## GETTING ACTIVE

### A YOUNG ANARCHIST WRITES...

#### 'Finding the Anarchy'

Throughout my childhood there were always people watching – shop staff, teachers, parents, police, priests, all watching and waiting to come down on you. Then I saw my head teacher was dragged out of school in handcuffs, she'd been stealing school funds to go on sexy weekends away with the local priest... I was shocked, Authority and God were mangled and I supplemented a good catholic upbringing with a healthy dose of shoplifting, fare evasion and underage drinking.

At 16 I moved school and found the middle classes. When I first saw one of their houses I thought it was a joke – on top of their own rooms they had spare rooms. Spare fucking rooms, and they didn't even seem to know their lives were better. I hated them, I wanted their money and their harmonious lives.

But I was alone, my mates were drifting to the right, more angry about immigration than wealth distribution. I left London, happy to get away and looking to get a better idea of the world through Essex University.

I tried the socialists, communists, every type of Marxists, but it was all theory, 1917 was more important than today. For them it wasn't personal, and the more I spoke to them the more I found them to be the same middle class fucks I'd hated as a kid. No matter what meeting I went to I never found my own class, just a load of dicks. I even tried the anarchists but got put off at the start of the meeting because everyone stank of vodka and hummus.

I passed my degree just as the recession kicked off. These bankers... I figured I'd try radical politics again and went to the Anarchist Bookfair – on the way out I was handed a glossy poster, 'an invitation to Whitechapel'.

A few days later I was at the first public meeting of the Whitechapel Anarchist Group. My class, my hate, these people got it. Within a few weeks we had a paper – it was clunky, a bit hard to read, but full of spunk and class rage. All were handed out over the course of a few weekends on Brick Lane. Every handout led to fun conversations. I stopped being just a pissed-off teen crying about someone with a few more quid than me – I was talking politics daily, reading about anarchism in the LARC library, action after action. I was in love. I found where my class was and where my politics were and it was with the anarchists.

Gawain



● Two of the city's major radical political institutions have joined forces to bring this year's Manchester anarchist bookfair. The organisers have hooked up with the People's History Museum to hold its annual bookfair at the prestigious city centre venue on the Salford borders. As an acknowledgment of the change, and in recognition of the radical traditions of the area, it's changed its name to **Manchester and Salford Anarchist Bookfair**, to be held on 3rd December. Located in a Grade II listed, former hydraulic pumping station the museum holds the biggest collection of trade union banners, as well as archive material tracing the lives of ordinary working class people and the radical labour movement.

Groups interested in having a stall or booking a meeting can contact the organisers, email [manchester@bookfair.org.uk](mailto:manchester@bookfair.org.uk). For updated information check the website at <http://www.underthepavement.org/bookfair/>

● It's not often radicals go out of their political comfort zones of meetings and demonstrations, especially in terms of appealing to people culturally in the real world. **The Star And Shadow Cinema** in Battlefield, Newcastle Upon Tyne is an incredible exception to that. It's a proper full on 66-seat auditorium which screens mainstream, political and independent features as well hosting numerous gigs, lectures, workshops and comedy nights as well as maintaining a fully stocked bar. The idea grew out of a coalition of radical groups who all used to hold nights at Newcastle's independent Side Cinema, and decided to build their own cinema venue. It is a registered Community Interest Company, a non-for-profit, directly democratic and entirely volunteer-based organisation. November highlights include hosting part of the Newcastle Winter book

festival, including a talk by Viz creator Simon Donald. It is an incredible social space and political environment and shows what can be done with a degree of commitment and serious organising. For general enquiries email [info@starandshadow.org.uk](mailto:info@starandshadow.org.uk), check the website for full listings at <http://www.starandshadow.org.uk> Star And Shadow Cinema, Stepney Bank, Newcastle Upon Tyne, NE1 2NP, tel 0191 261 0066

● The recent campaign of university campus occupations in Scotland is in no small part due to the disparity between Scottish students having access to free education and students in the rest of the UK paying the maximum £9,000 a year for the same course. Another key feature has been an active anarchist involvement, including the **Edinburgh University Anarchist Society**. Last academic year, the Society organised several events, including lectures, film nights, reading groups, radical art groups, and skill share days. This year, it seemed that many students were attracted to the anarchist stall at the Fresher Fair. The Society has also started the new academic year with a handful of events and regular meeting – they hold weekly meetings in Room 11.01 David Hume Tower every Wednesday at 2pm. Socials are also held upstairs in the Meadows Bar every Thursday from 7.30pm. Contact [equalitylibertyrespect@gmail.com](mailto:equalitylibertyrespect@gmail.com), or see <http://euas.noflag.org.uk/>

● **From Bristol With Love** is a local radio show presented by Dick Gherkin and Durston Fletcher. It's a showcase for local music, local news and new forms of local thinking. If you have any Bristol news, gossip or slanderous material then send it on to us at [frombristolwithlove@riseup.net](mailto:frombristolwithlove@riseup.net). <http://frombristolwithlove.org/>

# Anti-fascism on the terraces

Tranmere Rovers has always been the neglected kid brother on Merseyside, hidden beneath the shadow of the eternal Liverpool/Everton football rivalry. With neither the big money nor the big gates to propel them into premiership star status, Rovers have never really competed with the glory hunters, but what they lack in big



names they make up for in a big personality and a lot of local passion. The fans are some of the most committed for a lower league club and The Kop can be a boisterous and intimidating place for away teams and their supporters.

Rovers also have some pretty impressive cultural associations. Cult indie band Half Man Half Biscuit famously turned down a live appearance on national television to see Tranmere play, and the book *Awaydays* by Kevin Sampson, which was recently made into a feature film, was based on Tranmere's hooligan firm of the early 1980s.

The fans set up a Supporters Trust, which has just reached its initial goal of raising £100,000 in its ambition to take the club into community ownership. Supporters Trusts are directly democratic, not-for-profit organisations where fans have a formal say in running the club, and ultimately take them over as fan owned and controlled.

But perhaps the most interesting of recent developments on the terraces of Prenton Park has been the formation of Tranmere Rovers Anti-fascists (TRAF). With their mighty 12ft high banner declaring working class unity, TRAF have been promoting anti-fascism in the local area as a response to the increased presence of the EDL at home games. They have already had a mass leafleting campaign outside the ground and been involved in joint actions with other anti-fascist groups, including joining anarchists in Liverpool to counter the BNP's protest against *Question Time* being recorded in the city.

TRAF politics are clear: "We are a cross-section of Tranmere fans, concerned at the rise of the extreme right wing. History tells us that when we stand together we can achieve anything as a community, as a society, as a class and as a people. History also teaches us that the rich and ruling class are the only beneficiaries of our class divided. We stand vehemently opposed to all forms of racism, fascism, sectarianism and discrimination" – which impressed Billy Bragg enough to sport one of their t-shirts during his set at this year's Tolpuddle festival.

To contact TRAF, email [tranmere-antifascists@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:tranmere-antifascists@hotmail.co.uk)

## Rugby's working class rebellion

◀ page 24

would be reconciled with Rugby Union formally going 'professional' in 1995.

We shouldn't over romanticise the working class fight against the traditions of a sporting aristocracy. A lot of what fuelled the break-away northern league clubs was economic expansion, with profitable gate receipts

generating a new kind of capitalism – the leisure industry, benefiting the club owners and industrialists who funded them. The schism in English rugby was an important time, though, when the working class recognised itself as a body acting collectively in its own interests, even if it was at play.

Rugby retains its class heritage mostly as a document of historical change. For those ordinary working class people, especially in the Lancashire and Yorkshire mining and mill towns, they can still say with a degree of nostalgia and a degree of pride – this was our sport.



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## REVIEWS

## WHAT'S ON

## OCTOBER

■ **27th** London group of The Anarchist Federation meeting at Freedom Bookshop 84b Whitechapel High Street, London E1 7QX, email london@afed.org.uk for details.

■ **28th** Ceilidh benefit night for anti-fascist prisoners to be held at The Victoria pub, 451 Queensbridge Road, London E8 3AS from 7.30pm until late, entry £3/£5.

## NOVEMBER

■ **Until 16th** 'News International, Wapping 25 years on', an exhibition which includes dramatic images and accounts of the Wapping dispute and the challenges faced by print and media workers, Accumulator Tower, located off the Engine Hall, People's History Museum, Left Bank, Spinningfields, Manchester M3 3ER, see <http://www.phm.org.uk/> for details.

■ **3rd, 10th, 17th and 24th** London group of The Anarchist Federation meets weekly on Thursday evenings at Freedom Bookshop 84b Whitechapel High Street, London E1 7QX. We always have a discussion as well as plan activities and the spreading of our activities. If you would like to attend please email london@afed.org.uk

■ **5th** Special bonfire night SchNEWS benefit gig, with Headjam (dub/ska/reggae), Spanner (Bristol's anarcho-ska-punkers), The Sporadics (punky-dub ska) plus DJ Pink Panther – stand well back, this might go off! Kick off at 8pm, damage is £5, at The Cowley Club, 12 London Road, Brighton, for more info phone (01273) 685913, email schnews@brighton.co.uk or see [www.schnews.org.uk](http://www.schnews.org.uk)

■ **5th** The Working Class Bookfair from 11.30am until 4.30pm at The Bridge Hotel, Castlegarth, Newcasttle, NE1 1RQ, see <http://workingclassbookfair.vpweb.com/> for details.

■ **5th** "The people should not be afraid of their Government, the Government should be afraid of its people" (*V for Vendetta*) – for a fifth of November never to be forgot, meet outside the Houses of Parliament – where else? – in London at 6pm, for more info see <http://www.whatis-theplan.org/>

■ **10th and 24th** Autonomous Nottingham meeting and social from 7.30pm at The Sumac Centre, 245 Gladstone Street, Forest Fields, Nottingham NG7 6HX, see <https://network23.org/autonomousnottingham/>

■ **18th** The Red & Black Club at LARC, 62 Fieldgate Street, London E1 1ES from 8pm, Dissident Island Radio will be broadcasting live as the local anarchists host a traditional east end knees-up.

## FILM

**Attack the Block**  
directed by Joe Cornish

This witty, engaging homage to cult alien invasion films – from half of Channel 4's *Adam & Joe Show* alternative comedy team – trades on parachuting malevolent extra-terrestrials into a South London council estate on Guy Fawkes Night. The "gorilla-wolf motherfuckers", however, bite off more than they can chew, confronting a posse of young teenagers armed with adapted fireworks and water-pistols as well as heavier weaponry. Mobilising intimate territorial smarts honed in running rings around parents, police and drug dealers, they win the day supported by peers and sundry outsiders straying into the parish, and *Attack the Block* works thanks to intensive local research and an impressive ensemble of street-cast youngsters – who adapt and enrich the dialogue and knockabout farce within the constraints of a somewhat strained, knowingly cheesy narrative which never, thankfully, drowns out their exuberance.

The pitch would now struggle for funding, with the demonisation of organised feral youth as national nemesis reflected in the opening mugging scene – but here they represent a primary line of defence, showing the ingenuity, determination, and collective coordination needed to protect the community. But against what? It transpires that the otherworldly adversaries only targeted this block after the murderous response to their random arrival there. Unknowingly, thanks to the unfortunate conditions leading to them to live as they do, the gang brought it on themselves – undermining perceptions of injustice about inevitable blame for all ills afflicting their



## QUIZ ANSWERS

1. According to a speech he made at the ICA, join an anti-capitalist organisation. The speech was animated and can be found at <http://comment.rsablogs.org.uk/2010/06/28/ras-animate-crisis-capitalism>
2. 80% are successful at the first hearing, with 75% of those rejected winning at appeal. Only 5%, one in twenty, get rejected. Clearly not enough for the government's chums.
3. Its own. The bank should have had a bill for £23m plus interest, but Revenue boss Dave Hartnett let them off the interest,

milieu, and legitimising paramilitary punishment by the authorities despite redemption as folk-heroes for successfully exorcising their demons. This conceptual straitjacket explains why the alien onslaught cannot be linked to real external forces impacting on poor areas – except to ridicule such possibilities, like Moses musing about being flooded with drugs, guns, police, and now aliens because "we're not killing each other quickly enough". Sympathy for the little devils only goes so far.

## Alienz 'n the 'Hood

Worse, although the ethnically diverse gang members inhabit varying multicultural experiences and circumstances, the monsters returning from the repressed are explicitly designated as extreme 'blackness' – motivated, moreover, purely by instinctual reproductive drives. This metaphorical manoeuvre revives ancient imperial hatreds lurking behind liberal commitment to 'humanising hoodies', rhetorically reinforced by empty signifiers of more-or-less respectable upper and lower middle-classes to encourage identification among cluelessly comfortable audiences simultaneously disavowed by deploying superior subcultural capital. But the otherwise superfluous mugging victim and toff stoner become pivotal to the plot, teaching the kids mutual dependence and the need for 'scientific' knowledge to anchor effective tactics. Amidst 'all in it together' patronisation, meaningful connections between contemporary class stratification and the predicaments which dominate impoverished urban existence are obliterated in Ali G-style comic relief, scoffing at stereotypically clichéd tentative self-criticisms which are never followed up. Strictly segregating which and whose understandings have import and practical significance rather than entertainment value, *Attack the Block* thus has far more in common with the safe conservatism of Spielbergian spectacle – with pretensions to the generic subversions of pulp science fiction and horror cinema little more than skin deep.

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

*Attack the Block* is available now on DVD.

- despite a rule saying no out of court settlement was permissible for less than 100% of back tax and interest due. Still, it would be unfair if only Vodafone got let off, wouldn't it?
4. Dozens of them were suffering from silicosis and all had been working in denim sandblasting factories in Istanbul. The illness is usually associated with construction and mining. At least 46 garment workers have died from silicosis in Turkey. The practice is now banned there.

# Adventures in anti-capitalism

A new novel that borrows its backdrop from the recent anti-globalisation movement smacks more of opportunism than sincerity, writes Dean Talent

This is going to be a review of confessions. Mostly mine. But firstly we need to dispel a myth or two. Myth one: *Peace, Love and Petrol Bombs* is a novel about the anti-globalisation movement. It's not. It is a novel about Wayne. More precisely it is a novel about the author DD, a delve into the mind-set and mannerisms of a university lecturer reminiscing about his gap year adventures. Like rummaging through somebody else's old snapshots of holidays in the sun, it only makes sense if you actually care for the grinning face smudged against the camera lens detailing every personal faultline, obscuring the breathless sunsets, beautiful architecture and impressive locations. The politics of the book generate little more than local colour, added spice to the demons and diary pages of DD's world. The summit protests are merely destinations, distractions, everything gets a passing mention, a fleeting glance. And it's all such a laugh.

Myth two: from working class stiff to lecturer in creative writing before you're thirty. Now that's the sort of fiction I'd like to read. So where does the lecturer take us?

Pretend you never went to school

The book careers between two worlds; the holiday romance of living on the edge with the politicians and rabblers, largely in European host cities where everything revolves around Wayne's world (although we never really get to find out how he funds his travels in hyper-reality), and the banalities of working in a fast food restaurant in Scotland, which takes up by far the biggest part of the book. Confession number one: I



worked in fast food restaurants. Two types of people work there – the dead-end kids with nowhere left to go, and the university undergraduates who couldn't get jobs working behind the bar at the student union. The fast food sections of the book are basically sentimental re-writes of *Trainspotting* with the drugs taken out. There's even a pastiche of the Renton interview scene, copied from the film almost word for word, *dinnae ken, ya wee radge*. Irvine Welsh for the hipster generation.

As a whole it reads like a collection of short stories pummelled together as a sort of literary challenge. Perhaps an exercise in elements of creative writing? It's not seamless but then it's not dangerously incoherent.

A dog lying in the corner

The actual politics? They come stumbling across the page in stage-managed clumps, not as bombast and mercifully punchline free. They're crayoned on and repeated in a weird childlike glaze, as though the general reader might not get it otherwise. And yet the book is not aimed at the general reader.

There's too much unexplained insider knowledge, too many knowing reference points dropped into the text that only politicos would recognise – “the FIT team followed”, “Reclaim the Streets got lots of hate mail”,

**'cos everybody hates a tourist  
(Common People, Pulp)**

“we have Turkish Tankies round here”, “Bonanno in the corner”, “this never happened at Conway Hall” – and listing the political oddities and fringe elements at the anarchist bookfair just seems like endless winks and nods for the bulletin board scene.

Class is explained as an intellectual conceit, a proposition, a place we occupy, not something that burns through you with a scorching resentment, that throws you out into the world disarmed, without a warning, and without a safety net. If class is expressed as a mathematical equation, expelled as air, then anarchism is dressed as a problem packaged in other people.

Oh, you're so funny

“When they showed him without his mask, I saw it was the English guy from the university, Simon. I wanted to help him, to do something. And that, of course, is exactly what the spectacle precludes.” These are the final sentences in one of the later chapters; it's the moment DD finds out UK anarchist Simon Chapman (pictured left) has been arrested by Greek police. It's the moment he begins to question his political commitment to “the struggle”. Weirdly enough in real life for us it was the moment our politics kicked in.

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## THE ARTS

## DALE FARM AND B



## Dale Farm and Basildon Council's legacy of bigotry towards travellers

The travellers of Dale Farm have fought for over a decade for the right to live on land that they legally own. Basildon Council's insistence on a forced eviction of the 400 people, including about 100 children, who

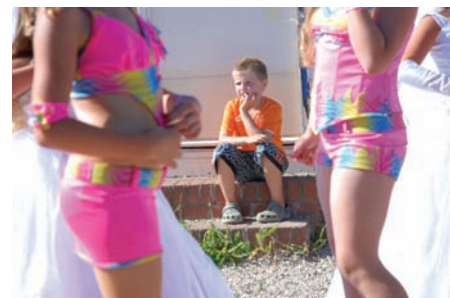


live at Dale Farm is testament to a legacy of bigotry towards travellers that persists in this country and beyond.

The context of the struggle for land at Dale Farm brings into play the long term effects of the Criminal Justice Act (CJA) (1994). This legislation was put in place to curb individual and collective freedoms such as the right to travel, the rights of free association (such as raves) and the rights to alternative lifestyles – things people had done for generations. There was popular resistance to the CJA (also known as the Criminal Justice Bill) with diverse groups campaigning nationwide. Many demonstrations were held leading to the gates of Downing Street being assaulted and pitched battles fought in Hyde Park by a broad coalition of environmental activists, ravers, anarchists and others under the banner of 'Kill The Bill'. The Caravan Act 1968 was essentially repealed by the CJA, meaning councils were no longer obliged to provide basic halting sites and police powers to

move on travellers were enhanced, thus making evictions more likely and easier to carry out. The effect of this was that the lives travellers once led were made impossible – forced off the road and with councils much less liable to provide sites, many families decided the answer was to buy their own land. The travellers of Dale Farm have been deemed to have broken planning laws by living on a former scrap yard which was still technically and farcically considered green-belt land.

Given the economic climate the fact that Basildon Council feel it is right to spend upwards of £18 million on a forced eviction, as opposed to spending far less on providing an alternative site for the travellers to live, is further proof of this enduring bigotry. The fact the UN offered to intervene to negotiate a non forced eviction settlement and were informed at the very highest level of UK governance that their offer of help would be rebuked is truly shameful (even for a scumbag Tory government). The Tory stance was reinforced by Eric Pickles, Minister for Communities and Local Government, who launched a broadside at the Dale Farm travellers, stating "The Dale Farm saga has now spent 10 years before the courts ... and it's now time to uphold British Law" – clearly only a fool would expect any semblance of compassion from a Tory minister. It's worth noting, however, how comfortable Pickles is with giving the green-light for evicting the many vulnerable children, sick and elderly who live at Dale Farm.



## Review

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Confession number two: I know Simon, a good friend, committed anarchist and one of the founders of the Wombles. When we discovered he'd been arrested during the EU summit in Greece in 2003 we worked our bollocks off as a prisoner support group. I guess you'd call it a solidarity campaign. I remember this was also the time DD was posting humorous parodies of political activists on the internet for the amusement of other anarchists. So when in this novel he calls the Thessaloniki hunger strikers "our comrades" you're left

with a hollow feeling of contempt at the crass opportunism of a university lecturer.

Still you'll never get it right

But we do need our own political voices. If anyone wants a true insight into the Euro-activists trail then Ramor Ryan's *Clandestines* (AK Press) does the job. Written by an Irish exile just before the wave of anti-capitalist protests took hold, it's a beautifully crafted piece of anarcho-travelogue that captures the mood of that time perfectly.

*Peace, Love and Petrol Bombs* will find its niche, though, and all the better for that. If you are a university graduate, middle-class, libertarian communist then this book is aimed at you and you'll definitely get something from it. For your average working class anarchist (and I know there must be more than four of us about), we'll have to keep hoping one day the grease stains will come out in the bath.

*Peace Love and Petrol Bombs* by D.D. Johnston, published by AK Press, £8.99.

# ASILDON COUNCIL

The residents of Dale Farm have put up a dogged and valiant resistance to the threat of eviction. Employing innovative legal arguments and a long term campaign spear-



headed by the women of the community (with welcome support from others). On going to press, the Dale Farm travellers have three applications for judicial review lodged with the High Court and an official complaint claiming council mismanagement of the site dating back 30 years has been lodged by a Dale Farm supporter. The aim of the council is to clear the site and restore it to green-belt now seems completely erroneous – it has transpired that the hard standing at the site was laid by the council 30 years ago! If the eviction goes ahead it will be a day mournful and overcast, representing a triumph for the legacy of bigotry that persists in the state's dealings with travellers.

The photographs included here come from the website [unmanageablevariables.net](http://www.unmanageablevariables.net) and show the community celebrating, campaigning and simply getting on with their lives whilst living under unbearable pressure. The images are drawn from a large body of work taken over several years, some of which were included in the 'What they want, What they get' exhibition, held at the Autonomy Club above Freedom Bookshop in November 2010.

Images by <http://www.unmanageablevariables.net/>  
Words by <http://www.historyblock.org>  
Dale Farm solidarity and further information, see <http://dalefarm.wordpress.com/>



## SPORT

# Rugby's working class rebellion

It was as big a clash off the field as it was on – the ordinary working class lads from the mining and mill towns of the newly industrialised north versus the gentleman players and middle class privilege of the south. They called it the great schism and by 1895 it split rugby completely in two almost exclusively along class lines.

In the nineteenth century Rugby Football Union (RFU) which became the official regulating body of the sport was firmly based in the public schools and privilege of the educated middle classes. Conceived as a game of “recreation – a relaxation for the

body and mind, played for honour and not for gain” it was designed, as much as any other formal sport of the day, by the wealthy and social elites to instill certain traits of individual self-betterment. Having feared they had already lost ‘association football’ to the mob, the administrators and executives wanted to keep rugby within their control. What they didn't reckon on was the huge popularity rugby was gaining amongst the northern working class, particularly across the rapidly industrialising towns of Lancashire and Yorkshire. Matches would see thousands of people come to cheer on their team, it became a point of local pride and working class players, from the very streets and factories the spectators themselves lived and worked in, began to dominate the game.

As the labouring classes, both as spectator and player, flocked to the sport it created massive class antagonisms on and off the field, as the middle class guardians and governing bodies attempted to stem the tide of working class influence, which they considered would somehow debase the original ethos of the game. This came to a head with the ‘broken time’ payments.

During the 1880s northern clubs began to make informal payments to manual workers as compensation for the loss of income for playing a match on Saturday. Without such

payments working class players would essentially be excluded from the sport. The RFU refused to acknowledge such payments as legitimate and began suspending players and clubs who engaged in the practice. This led to 21 clubs leaving RFU to form their own breakaway Rugby League. It would take a hundred years before the two sides

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## THE QUIZ

1. According to Marxist geographer and social theorist David Harvey, what should any sensible person do?
2. The government say that the current planning process is biased against development. What proportion of planning applications ultimately go on to be passed?
3. When the taxman settled with US bank Goldman Sachs over a scheme to avoid paying National Insurance on bonuses, whose rules did it break?
4. In 1994, a doctor examined young men in Eastern Turkey prior to military service. What unusual industrial disease did he discover?

Answers on page 20

