

# FREEDOM

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## G8: NOT HAVING IT

### Leadership of Global Capital to be fucked over – official

Here we go again! Experienced comrades will remember the G8 in Scotland in 2005 and the mass movement to shut it down. More experienced comrades will recall the inspiring and amazing Reclaim the Streets action in Birmingham in 1998, very experienced comrades will recall the protests in 1991 in London and if there are any comrades who know what happened in 1984 or 1977 would they please write an article for our History Page. Anyhow, enough is a cliché and it's got to be stopped. We're pleased to announce that we don't have a world exclusive that a planning process has been set up with the first organising meeting in Brighton on the 15th July, bring yer mates, but not the dodgy one with the van who's actually a cop.

Below is the call out for the Planning Meeting:

In 2013 the UK is once again host to the G8 Summit. That means that, for the first time since 2005, the leaders of the most powerful Western capitalist nations will meet in the UK.

This is a call for all of those who wish to mobilise for a mass mobilisation against the [page 3](#) ►►

### LENS CAP THE QUEEN'S JUBILLEGAL



The Queen's Jubillegal flotilla, a massive floating party on Regent's Canal in London on Saturday 2nd June. The lead boat, with on-board sound system featuring Don Letts, had a giant Queen's head at the front. The dress code was the Queen and her minions.

## LONDON BUS STRIKE SOLID

Britain's largest union, Unite, warned of further strike action as bus workers in over 70 garages across the capital went on strike on Friday 22nd June over a refusal by bus operators and Transport for London (TfL) to award an Olympic payment.

Strike action was solid across 17 London bus operators, as Unite members mounted picket lines across the capital bringing buses to a standstill and causing widespread disruption.

Unite warned that further strike action would be bigger as it vowed to appeal an 'anti-democratic' court injunction preventing bus workers in three companies taking part in the action.

Bus workers are furious at TfL's and the bus operators' continued refusal to bring them in line with every other London transport worker

and reward them for the massive increase in workload during the Olympics.

The strike continued until 3am on Saturday 23rd June.

Commenting on the day, Unite London regional secretary, Peter Kavanagh, said: "Support for today's strike action is solid and shows that bus workers are willing to stand shoulder to shoulder to get the recognition they deserve in keeping London moving during the Olympics.

"The strike should be a wake-up call to the bus companies and TfL. They now need to negotiate meaningfully about rewarding bus workers for the massive increase in workload they will face over the Olympics."

[http://www.unitetheunion.org/news\\_events/latest\\_news/london\\_bus\\_strike\\_solid\\_as\\_uni.aspx](http://www.unitetheunion.org/news_events/latest_news/london_bus_strike_solid_as_uni.aspx)

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## NEWS

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## LENS CAP PALESTINE PLACE



A new Radical Social Centre sprang up in an abandoned building at 24 Grays Inn Road in Holborn, London. Palestine Place was a squatted hub of activity offering workshops, training, action planning spaces and cultural events all around the theme of Palestinian solidarity. A 30ft long banner was hung from the roof of the building depicting the face of a Palestinian women, and key dates in the history of struggle and oppression for the Palestian people. The space had live link ups with groups such as Anarchists Against the wall, and with individuals involved in the recent hunger strikes against their detention in Israeli jails. Many other events included two days of training held by ISM, a talk with author and prominent accademic Ilan Pappé and a performance from comedian Jeremy Hardy. The space was active until the 17th June. See <http://palestineplace.org/> for more.

## The Bottled Wasp

*The Bottled Wasp Pocket Diary* is a new prisoner support fundraising project to be launched by Brighton Anarchist Black Cross and associates at the 2012 London Anarchist Bookfair. Our plan is to create a long-term stable income for prisoner support activities, whilst creating a publishing template that can be used by a hopefully independent self-sustaining collective to produce the diary in future years.

The 2013 edition of *The Bottled Wasp* will of course feature the theme of prisoner support and prison resistance. We plan to include articles on issues such as Writing to Prisoners, No Comment, Suing the Police, Defending the Right to Protest, The History of ABC. We also aim to include pieces on related organisations, e.g. LDMG, GBC,

Schnews, Haven, etc.

Clifford Harper is designing the cover, and the diary itself will include extensive listings of dates and illustrations of historical prison resistance, as well as other non-prison related anarchist and class struggle events, large-scale demos, significant resistance activities, and long-term prisoners' birthdays (part of the role of this issue of the diary is to increase the numbers of people actively supporting prisoners in addition to passively supporting them via purchase of the diary itself). The diary will also contain an extensive list of links in its end section and all the usual organiser-related inclusions that a practical pocket organiser/diary should.

See <http://www.brightonabc.org.uk/bottledwasp.html>



# Sparks fight on

## Construction bosses beaten by wildcat action

Earlier this year, a rank-and-file network of electricians known as the Sparks scored a major victory over employers in the construction industry. When a court injunction stopped the Unite union from taking action, the Sparks network defied the law and led a wave of unofficial walkouts, forcing Balfour Beatty and a number of other companies to abandon their plan to introduce new standard contracts that would have worsened pay and conditions across the industry.

Since then, things have been a bit quieter, but the dispute was reignited in late May when Jason Poulter, a health and safety rep who had been actively involved in organising against the new contracts, was suspended from his job at Ratcliffe-on-Soar power station. His employers, the construction company SPIE, accused him of bullying, but

other workers on the site saw it as an attack on an active workplace militant. His case was discussed at a national meeting of the Sparks, and on 29th May electricians at the site walked out in solidarity, supported by other rank-and-file electricians who had travelled across the country to support Poulter. According to reports from the Sparks, all workers employed by SPIE at the site stayed out, and were joined by workers from different trades, including ones employed by different contractors and organised in different unions. It's estimated that in total, 1,200 people stopped work. This kind of solidarity across trade and union divisions is a rare sight, but it's undeniably effective: within a few days of the walkout, Poulter had been reinstated and the incident had been wiped from his record. The end of May also saw a mass wildcat by 1,100 workers at Sellafield in Cumbria over fears of redundancy.

Following on from their success at Ratcliffe, the Sparks are now backing a national

campaign aimed at stopping construction companies from abusing temporary agency workers by making sure they get the same pay and conditions as directly employed workers on the same job. They also continue to fight against blacklisting of workplace militants.

At a time when the union movement in general is failing to respond effectively to attacks on workers – or even siding with the bosses, as with the Communication Workers' Union's support for workfare – the Sparks' success stands out as an example worth following. Although they're members of Unite, the Sparks have taken action independently of the union bureaucracy rather than waiting for it to be officially approved, and this has been a major source of their strength. It remains to be seen whether this kind of disruptive, grassroots-led wildcat action will spread to workers in other industries.

The Sparks continue to hold regular protests on

## G8: not having it

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G8 summit in the UK in 2013. The meeting will take place on the 15th July, from 11am to 6pm, at the Community Base Centre in Brighton.

The meeting will operate on a *non-hierarchical basis*, with a *respect for diversity of tactics*. As this is a planning meeting, it is *not* open to journalists or cops, who are politely requested not to attend.

We believe that there is an urgent need to oppose the G8, which acts as a facilitator of irresponsible greed, overwhelming inequality and ruthless exploitation of both human and mineral resources.

The priorities of the G8, as always, will be the protection of corporate interest, and the vast profits that are made from economic crisis as well as economic boom.

It is here, at the G8 summit, that the economic, political and military objectives for the year ahead will be discussed and agreed, setting a framework for trade liberalisation (privatisation) and fiscal responsibility (spending cuts).

It is here, at the G8 summit, that the policy of the US/UK and EU towards the oppression of peoples, and the militarisation of borders will be developed.

It is here, at the G8 summit, that Western leaders will act to protect their rights to mineral exploitation, no matter what the cost to people or environment.

The fight against austerity, inequality and exploitation must start here, at the top, where the big decisions are taken and the key allegiances are formed. They must not

be permitted to meet here unimpeded, and must be made to understand that wherever they meet, wherever they go, they will be opposed and resisted.

**WE ARE MANY, THEY ARE FEW.  
AND WE ARE EVERYWHERE.**



## THE BIG PICTURE



# Official Protester

*of the London 2012 Olympic Games*

In the summer of 2012 the eyes of the world will be on London as the best gather from around the globe. The Olympics, Paralympics and Cultural Olympiad have set the stage for a spectacular showcase. You don't want to miss your chance to say "I was part of the greatest show on earth". To find out more, see <http://www.protestlondon2012.com/>



## ANALYSIS

# The impact of cuts on the disabled



Disabled people depend upon good quality services to uphold our human rights and our dignity. Disabled people have never had equality – we have well-evidenced poorer life chances and disadvantages in all areas of life.

Disabled people face barriers to education, are among those with lowest incomes and least likely to be in paid employment, we are statistically more likely to experience abuse and to be the victims of crime but less likely to receive justice; we don't have the same chances to have families of our own, to take part in leisure activities and to enjoy meaningful lives.

Over the years things have improved, many disabled people have moved out of institutions and away from the worst abuses that went on in them to be part of the community. However our participation in the community is still dependent upon support commissioned for us and provided by the public sector.

With such savage, rapid and all-encompassing cutbacks taking place, disabled people's rights are being pushed back decades. In education, disabled children will be pushed towards segregated special schools as funding for inclusive education is cut and more Academies set up with their tendency to discriminate against disabled pupils, with the effect that disabled people will not have educational opportunities and will remain marginalised and disempowered.

And disabled people also face job losses through cuts to the public sector which employs thousands of disabled people across the country.

All over the country councils are cutting back on the eligibility criteria for care and support funding leaving disabled people imprisoned in their own homes. Ridiculous cases are emerging of someone who moved from Yorkshire where he had 54 hours support funding to Lancashire where with the same needs this was slashed to nine-and-

a-half hours. Often those left with any sort of an entitlement will have support provided by the lowest bidder as jobs in adult care continue to be privatised and farmed out to firms that offer the cheapest services.

Organisations which once defended the rights of disabled people have been reduced. Cuts to disabled people are being felt across local economies. Disabled people who lose funding to pay for support will have to cut the hours they pay their personal assistants and that means wider job cuts and losses to family income.

Councils say that new service offers "are based on the idea that the vast majority of people can use their own resources and skills to care for themselves."

But independent living is not about disabled people doing things for ourselves, it is about receiving the support we need in order to have the same life chances as other people and to take part in life equally and with dignity. What they are getting at by this

"use their own resources," what they really mean, what they want disabled people to do, is to use our emotional resources to come to accept what they want us to believe is our lot in life, to accept that although there is money for wars and weapons, there is money to make the rich even richer, there is money for chief executive and directors salaries, there is no money for us, no money for as many incontinence pads as we need in a day, no money for personal assistance for us to shower or go out, no money for support to stop us going into crisis.

We are meant to accept our lot in life that is to sit in our own piss and shit and dirt for hours and days on end, our lot to stay trapped indoors, isolated and alone, or our lot to lose our homes altogether. It is patronising, offensive and plain wrong to assume that if you take away our support services we will suddenly "make an effort" and find we could have been doing things for ourselves all along.

Let us be in no doubt that these cuts are anything but a deliberate ideological attack on the most oppressed and powerless in society and against those who believe in and would work towards fairness and justice. Under Thatcher public spending as a proportion of GDP was at times higher than under New Labour - we know that cutbacks in one area will inevitably lead to higher spending in other areas. For these so-called austerity measures to really save the taxpayer a significant amount of money, there are whole sections of society this government will have to get rid of altogether. Destroying the public services that we depend upon to keep us alive and well is certainly an effective starting point for achieving that aim.

This article was written by an activist for Disabled People Against Cuts



## Dealing with harassment in the movement

Below is a statement from the group Angry Women Of Liverpool (<http://angrywomen.wordpress.com/>) on how they have dealt with a recent case of harassment. Our best wishes go to them and the survivors.

"We, as survivors, opponents of sexual violence, feminists and/or feminist allies have taken the decision to publicly oppose and name a man within the activist and anarchist community who we know to have repeatedly sexually harassed several young women.\* This harassment is known to have taken place in person, via social media and/or text message. The individual concerned, Paul Cunliffe, of Merseyside, has sexually harassed young women within both the local and UK-wide anarchist and activist movement. This has caused varied impacts upon their lives, and the lives of other women who are aware of his actions. One woman for example, quit activism due to Cunliffe's aggression towards her when she rejected his unwanted sexual advances. Presently we are aware of six different women affected, of the four we have spoken to, two declined to make a public statement- a decision we completely support – with one too fearful for her safety to do so. However another one woman has offered a brief description of what happened to them:

"My communications with Paul Cunliffe occurred for several months when I was 17 years old. He first contacted me via the internet, where he began talking to me most days, and most of the time I replied amiably, out of a wish not to offend. After a while speaking online, some of his conversations became inappropriate. I told him at this time that I was not interested in pursuing a romantic or sexual relationship with him, but he persisted in making sexual jokes, which, as he was ten years older than me, made me feel uncomfortable. He became seemingly obsessed with me, made several comments about us having sex, sent text messages referencing sexual acts, and told me that he had masturbated over me. This was all done when he was in full knowledge that I was not interested in him. I didn't want to upset him if I would have to see him again, as I knew he was capable of violence, and so I didn't feel able to tell him outright to stop. He apologised several times for his behaviour, but it continued. Towards the end of our contact he was talking to me every day on social media, and sometimes became annoyed or upset if I ignored him. He was also verbally abusive towards a friend of mine. Our contact ended when he sent me a final message, in which he swore at me and insulted me. I would urge all women to be very careful about getting involved with him – I wish that I never had. Having had time to reflect on the events, if anything similar happened again, I believe I would feel forced to contact the police in concern for my welfare."

\* All references to women refer to any SI women.

# Understanding history

## Professional historians and the foot-soldiers

On 28th April at the Manchester People's Museum, after giving a talk on his recent book *The Spanish Holocaust*, Professor Paul Preston of the LSE was so incensed by a questioner's challenge to him about George Orwell and the Spanish anarchists that he elbowed him away from the microphone.

Interrupting the speaker, Professor Preston "without wishing to pull rank" then went on to remind everyone present of his own 40 years dedicated study of the Spanish Civil War and to repeat his earlier remarks about George Orwell: "I would rank *Homage to Catalonia* alongside Spike Milligan's *Adolf Hitler: My Part in His Downfall*, another interesting book by someone who was a foot-soldier playing a tiny part in a much wider conflict."

He clearly believes that a professional historian who researches the Spanish Civil War in libraries and universities somehow has a better understanding than eyewitness foot-soldiers like George Orwell (*Homage to Catalonia*) or even by implication perhaps Franz Borkenau (*The Spanish Cockpit*) or Arturo Barea (*The Clash*).

I would argue that the historian in his study has a different grasp to that of the eyewitness or participant on the spot. This is not necessarily a better understanding but simply an historian's account which will in the course of time be superseded by

yet other historical accounts. The contemporaneous observations of Orwell, Borkenau and Barea, by contrast, are primary sources and will continue to be of use.

Since the publication Professor Preston's book and the incident at the Manchester People's History Museum, which has been documented by anarchist magazine *Northern Voices*, there has been some fall-out.

One report suggests Professor Preston's book "toes the Popular Front party line" and to this the veteran anarchist Stuart Christie has written in Preston's defence, arguing: "He (Preston) is a man of integrity – who tells it as he sees it – and is an exceptionally meticulous and stimulating historian..."

Professor Preston's problem was explained by one of his former students, Dr Richard Baxell, after the Manchester talk.

He said that historians resent the fact that Orwell's *Homage to Catalonia* is the only book that most people read about the Spanish Civil War.

Well, even if he "toes the Popular Front party line" at least Paul Preston doesn't hide his preferences – and by "telling it like it is" he doesn't pretend to a sham objectivity that some liberal historians do.

In the past the CNT and the Spanish anarchists were often ignored or dismissed by some writers. At least by challenging them now Professor Preston is directing the floodlight of publicity upon them and this can only benefit the truth in the long run.

**Brian Bamford**

Editor, *Northern Voices*  
([northernvoicesmag.blogspot.com](http://northernvoicesmag.blogspot.com))



## INTERNATIONAL

## NEWS IN BRIEF

**ALGERIA:** Nine education workers from Algerian trade union SNAPAP have been on hunger strike since early May. They are protesting against constant human rights violations and trade union rights violations.

**GERMANY:** A neo-Nazi march of around 700 through the city of Hamburg was met by a mobilisation of over 10,000 antifascists. Throughout the day antifascists fought running battles with the fascists and police as they fought to stop them from reaching their destination.

**GREECE:** Greek steelworkers protesting against 40% pay cuts have now been on continuous strike since October, totalling over 200 days. They have received over 4,500 letters of support and solidarity from around the world, and many financial donations. The bosses have responded by dismissing 119 strike agitators and attempting to shift production to other plants around Greece.

**ITALY:** Italian police have raided dozens of houses across the country and arrested ten anarchists in connection with recent attacks on the boss of a nuclear power company, and the Italian tax collection agency. Those arrested are said to belong to the Informal Anarchic Federation and the International Revolutionary Front.

**RUSSIA:** Following a demonstration against electoral corruption in Moscow on 6th March, the paranoia and control freakery of the Russian state is there for all to see as they start to round up some of those involved and charged them with 'rioting'. Those arrested so far include two anarchists, who have been told they face 10 years in prison if convicted.

**TUNISIA:** Three offices owned by the UGTT, one of Tunisia's leading national trade unions, have been burned down by Salafists, under the slogan 'There is only God and the UGTT is the enemy of God'. A UGTT spokesperson said that, "Democracy is under attack in Tunisia today, and the Salafists have the union movement as a primary target. There are grave concerns for the safety of trade union leaders. What trade unions stand for at their best is the unity of working people across barriers of race, ethnicity and religion, and is precisely the sort of thing Islamic extremists despise the most."

**WORLDWIDE:** Anonymous have pressed ahead with their 'Operation Blitzkrieg' project that targets far-right groups, and has either closed down or caused huge disruption to the websites of the Ku Klux Klan, Stormfront.org, Aryan Unity, and the Westboro Baptist Church.

## LENS CAP FIGHT THE POWER



*Freedom newspaper would never condone violence, but we do support those using legitimate self-defence against the forces of bourgeois reaction.*

## Miner threat goes hardcore

At least 8,000 miners have been on strike across the northern regions of Spain for the last three weeks. They are protesting against government plans to cut industry subsidies from €300 million (£241m) to around €100m (£80m).

The miners claim that cuts in subsidies will result in over 4,000 job losses and the possible collapse of the industry. The government austerity agenda is now set to be cranked up even further as a condition of the recent EU bailout.

The miners have clashed with the police at a mine in Asturias in the worst violence seen in Spain for many years. As police attempted to remove road blocks and burning tyres they were met with a barrage of homemade rockets and ball bearings. The police responded with rubber bullets and tear gas. Several miners, police officers, and journalists

required treatment for their injuries.

There are currently several groups of miners conducting underground sit-ins, refusing to come up until the government cancels its subsidy reduction plan. After three weeks beneath the surface it is being reported that their health is starting to deteriorate.

One of the striking miners said: "There is a lot of tension and it is reaching the point where riot police are entering villages full of women and children, and they don't care. In the same way that they don't care, we won't care either. It's really sad because it is reaching the point that one day something bad will happen."

The Spanish state has always used a combative and aggressive strategy against miners that stretches back to the 1934 revolt by Asturian miners who were viciously crushed by Franco's forces.

## Notes from the US

A federal judge has struck down part of a controversial law that allows the government in the United States to indefinitely detain anyone it considers a terrorism suspect anywhere in the world without charge or trial, including US citizens.

The ruling came in a lawsuit challenging the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) which was filed by a group of journalists, scholars and political activists. Judge Katherine Forrest of the Southern District of New York struck down the indefinite detention provision, saying it is likely to violate the First and Fifth Amendments. Judge Forrest rejected the Obama

administration's argument that the NDAA merely reaffirmed an existing law recognising the military's right to perform certain routine duties. Although there is almost certain to be an appeal, this development nevertheless represents a positive turn.

Then a federal judge granted class-action status (a legal procedure where a single case is brought on behalf of multiple plaintiffs) to a lawsuit opposing the New York City Police Department's controversial 'stop-and-frisk' programme. This opens the way for legal recourse for hundreds of thousands of people targeted by police. The judge's ruling



# Fascists brutalising Greece

## Golden Dawn is stepping up its war on workers

It is a little over a month since the neo-Nazi Golden Dawn Party received 440,000 votes in the Greek elections giving them over 20 MPs. In the run-up to the new elections, which saw pro-austerity parties win a narrow victory, Golden Dawn have been busy laying the kind of groundwork they hope to build upon should they come to power.

Soon after the election, party leader Nikos Michaloliakos wheeled out the old fascist favourite of Holocaust denial. Whilst saying that Greeks should mourn the deaths of people who died in the Second World War, he also said that, “we should also acknowledge that there were no ovens and no gas chambers, it is a lie.”

Within days, several hundred Golden Dawn supporters travelled to the town of Patras, and stormed a derelict factory that houses many homeless immigrants, attacking them with rocks and crowbars.

Not wanting to rest on their laurels, Golden Dawn members then took part in a ‘joint operation’ with the Police, stopping and search members of the Greek Socialist Workers party, and then smashing down front doors and raiding the party offices.

Throughout this period attacks on immigrants has sky-rocketed in Greece, including several serious stabbings and at least one murder that has been attributed to a Golden Dawn supporter. Following one particularly nasty assault on a Pakistani man, two Golden Dawn MPs and the party leader’s daughter were arrested and questioned over the attack.

Not to be outdone by the “street wing” of the party, Golden Dawn spokesman, Ilias Kasidiaris, lost his temper on live television and assaulted two female communist MPs who were guests on the show (*pictured*



*above*). He was locked in a room by the television crew, before he broke out and went on the run for a week. Allegedly hiding out in party headquarters, it is fair to say that the police didn’t over-extend themselves whilst looking for him.

He has now shamefully lodged papers with the courts, attempting to sue his assault victims for deliberately goading him into committing a violent act.

As if Golden Dawn had not done enough election campaigning, an MP and seven other party members have been charged with causing Grievous Bodily Harm following a violent attack on a group of anarchists

who were dining in an Athens café.

Members of the party also launched a pre-planned attack on a group of houses that are the homes of many immigrant fishermen, seriously assaulting the occupants and destroying all of their property.

In the run-up to the election, a Golden Dawn spokesman has promised that if he was in charge he would order raids on hospitals and kindergartens and throw any immigrants onto the streets so that Greeks could have their places.

All this with a four week period shows just what Greeks can expect from the Golden Dawn in the not too distant future.

## Notes from the US

### ◀ page 8

mentioned New York city’s “deeply troubling apathy” toward the constitutional rights of those who live and work there. A recent study by the New York Civil Liberties Union found the NYPD program is racially skewed and largely ineffective, with blacks and Latinos making up 87% of people stopped in 2011.

### Environment

In May Vermont became the first US state to ban the natural gas drilling practice of hydraulic fracturing, or ‘fracking’. Around the same time a government whistleblower who was sacked after exposing the dangers of asbestos and dust on workers on the site

of the World Trade Centre in the days after 9/11 has been given her job back following a federal court decision. Cate Jenkins, a chemist who worked for the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), was the first EPA official to warn that dust in the air in that area could represent a serious health risk. The then-head of the EPA dismissed this warning. Jenkins accused the EPA of intentionally hiding the dangers and was sacked in 2010.

### Justice

A district judge in Montana has overturned a state law that banned public funding for birth control coverage for teenage girls. In

2009 Planned Parenthood challenged the decade-old law. Now Judge Jim Reynolds said the ban is unconstitutional for infringing the teens’ privacy rights.

In a final legal move, a federal appeals court has struck down the Defense of Marriage Act, which discriminates against same-sex couples. The unanimous decision found that the federal government does not have the legal power to deny benefits to same-sex couples in states such as Massachusetts, which has (otherwise) approved gay marriage. It seems inevitable that this ruling will be appealed – and head to the US Supreme Court.

Louis Further

## ECONOMICS

# The housing market in the UK

Over two million people in England have moved into privately rented accommodation since the global financial crisis began in 2007. The number of privately rented households has increased by 34% in the same period as mortgage lending has fallen and a new generation of young people are now unable to buy their own homes.

There are slightly over four million households where the oldest member is aged 16 to 34. Of these 46% are privately rented accommodation, 18% are social housing – provided by a local authority or housing association and 36% are owned by the occupier, either outright or with a mortgage.

Young people are disproportionately in privately rented accommodation and find it a lot harder to get into social housing than older generations. Previously governments have encouraged people to buy their own homes, this seems to have changed and the new generation is now overwhelmingly trapped renting.

Nationwide an estimated £48 billion was paid by Britons in rent to private landlords in 2011. This is forecasted to rise to £70bn as rents rise and more people have to move into rented property.

Landlords have done relatively well through the financial crisis because of this demographic shift, banks have increased the amount of mortgages available for ‘buy-to-let’, which lets landlords buy a property to rent out with a mortgage and the amount of money landlords can demand has increased.

With such large sums of money involved large financial institutions are also starting to show an interest. Earlier this year the government launched a consultation to review the barriers to institutional investment in privately rented homes.

An estimated £200bn is needed to meet demand for privately rented homes and only £50bn of this is expected to come from buy-



to-let mortgages. Leaving a massive shortfall that estate agents and the government are hoping institutional investors will fill.

By 2016 it is estimated that one in five households, over 5.9 million in England, will be renting in the private housing sector, if this is going to happen the investment is going to have to come from somewhere and the government aren't going to put up the money.

Persuading institutional investors like banks, pension funds, and hedge funds to invest in private rental properties might not be easy, but the promise of high returns from rents could be enough. Many institutional investors are likely to be wary however, after getting their fingers burnt at the start of the financial crisis after they invested heavily in subprime mortgages.

Subprime mortgages were offered to people who were less likely to pay them back and were forced to pay higher interest rates as a result.

The companies that provided the mortgages would then sell them to financial institutions, which would start to receive the interest being paid. Because the mortgages were risky the amount of interest was higher than other types of investment and Wall Street's investment banks were packing the mortgages together, then selling them to other institutions as ‘high-earning’ investments.

When the people who were struggling to pay them back realised they wouldn't be able to and stopped paying, the value of the

investments collapsed creating a massive black hole in the global financial system which is still causing capital problems.

Recent studies suggest the income for a landlord can be around the same level of return that institutional investors were originally getting on these packaged subprime mortgages – but without the risk of people being unable pay back loans.

If the government and estate agents get what they want (as they so often do) we're likely to see new homes being built and owned by large companies who will rent them out at extortionate levels. Housing associations have already started moving into the private sector with some setting up property management companies and others buying homes to rent.

While financial institutions might think there are less risks involved in privately rented housing than there were in subprime mortgages, there are still some big risks – like us.

One of the biggest problems anarchists have faced when trying to organise around housing is that individual private landlords are difficult to put economic pressure on if a rent strike can't be organised and they have no business interests.

With a return to large landlords owning masses of private properties the opportunities for collective struggles around housing will increase and it will become a bit easier to fight back against landlords if they have business interests around the country or the globe.



# Lessons from the Luddites

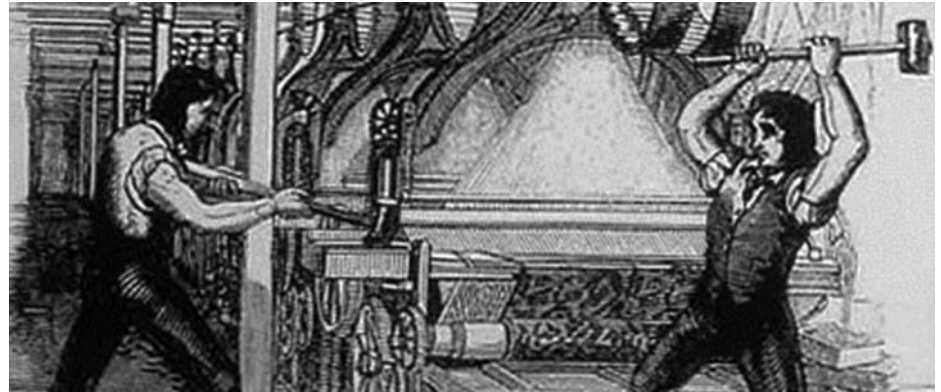
The Luddites are often misunderstood, yet they have a lot to teach us about political organising and technology politics today. Members of the Luddites200 campaign find inspiration in their direct action and explain why the 200-year anniversary of their uprisings is worth celebrating.

November 2011 – January 2013 is the 200th anniversary of the Luddite uprisings: a great opportunity to celebrate their struggle, redress the wrongs done to them and their name and to address technology politics issues today, such as surveillance and geengineering. These issues are rarely addressed properly, partly because anyone who raises criticism is denigrated as a ‘luddite’. History has been written by the victors and the Luddites are portrayed as opposed to all technology and progress. It is ironic that while the ideology of progress through technology has hardened into a rigid dogma, in fact the Luddites opposed only technology ‘hurtful to commonality’ i.e. the common good. They destroyed some machines whilst leaving others intact. Their uprisings were caused by the imposition of a new industrial regime, including new machines, which were chosen as targets because they symbolised the power of the new masters.

The Luddites were textile workers in Nottinghamshire, Yorkshire and Lancashire, skilled artisans whose trade and communities were threatened by a combination of machines and other practices that had been unilaterally imposed by the aggressive new class of manufacturers that drove the Industrial Revolution. In Nottinghamshire, the ‘framework-knitters’ or ‘stockingers’ who produced hosiery using stocking frames had a number of grievances, including wage-cutting, the use of unapprenticed youths for the same purpose, and the use of the new ‘wide frames’, which produced cheap, inferior quality goods.

In Yorkshire, the Luddites were led by the croppers, highly skilled finishers of woollen cloth who commanded much higher wages than other workers, and were highly organised. For years they had petitioned parliament to enforce obsolescent legislation enforcing apprenticeship, and against ‘gig mills’, machines invented in the 16th century which could do part of the croppers’ job. But the greatest threat to them was a more recent invention, the shearing frame, which eventually almost entirely displaced them over the next ten years. In 1809, under pressure from manufacturers, Parliament repealed all the old legislation, thus removing the artisans’ last hope of redress for their grievances by legal and democratic means.

The Lancashire cotton weavers and spinners were, like the stockingers, mainly outworkers, producing cloth on hand looms in their own homes and paid by the piece.



Their overall conditions and status as artisans had been eroding for several decades, partly as a result of a huge influx into the trade of unapprenticed workers, many of whom had been forced off the land by the Enclosures. The factory system, with its vast mills, steam-powered looms, long hours of dangerous work and cheaper cloth that undercut the cottage weavers, was exacerbating the decline in their conditions.

At the time the cloth trades were depressed due to the wars with France, and unemployment often meant destitution and starvation. There were food riots throughout the North of England, partly due to high food prices caused by poor harvests, with many petitions sent to parliament by weavers asking for help over starving communities. These were ignored by Tory Governments. The Luddites began to take direct action in the form of machine breaking.

The uprisings began in Nottingham in November 1811, and spread to Yorkshire and Lancashire in early 1812. The Luddites’ main tactic was first to warn mill owners to remove the frames: if they refused, the machines were smashed in nocturnal raids. Such methods had been employed many times in earlier disputes, but never in such an organised way. The Luddites were a secret society which administered oaths of silence, which were extremely effective in preventing capture: for nearly a year, despite flooding the North of England with spies, and more troops than were currently fighting Napoleon in Spain, the authorities made only a few arrests. It is widely agreed that the Luddites’ leader, in whose name their proclamations were issued, known as ‘General Ludd’ or ‘King Ludd’ did not actually exist.

Although there were already many laws on the statute books making the Luddites’ activities capital crimes, in February 1812 the Government passed the Frame Breaking Act, which specifically introduced the death penalty for frame breaking. In the West Riding of Yorkshire, attacks on shearing frames began in January 1812, and were highly successful in the smaller workshops.

However, resistance from some of the larger mill owners, supported by magistrates, was stronger. The most famous attack, by around a hundred men on William Cartwright’s Rawfolds Mill in April 1812 was unsuccessful, since Cartwright was aware of the Luddites’ plans and the troops he had installed killed two Luddites. After these deaths, and the outrage they caused among the Luddites’ supporters, the Luddites turned to assassination. They failed with Cartwright, but succeeded in killing William Horsfall, another large mill owner and anti-Luddite. After this their attacks on machines declined, and some Luddites turned to night-time raids on armouries, in the hope that a general armed insurrection could be mounted. But in October 1812, the authorities finally arrested George Mellor, a key leader of the Yorkshire Luddites. He and 13 others were hanged together in York in January 1813.

By the end of the uprisings, thousands of frames, a significant proportion of the total number in England, had been smashed. It is often argued that the Luddites failed, but in Nottinghamshire many of the master hosiery were sufficiently intimidated into not using the wide frames for some years, meaning wage levels were considerably restored. Because the Luddites exposed the best-kept secret of industrial capitalism, that science and technology are not ‘neutral’, they have been portrayed as idiotic opponents of progress, even by many radical historians.

This anniversary comes at a timely moment when disillusion with the myth of progress is spreading. In the current public sector cuts, we are again seeing technology being deployed to displace workers’ jobs. In the spirit of the Luddites, the Luddites200 campaign calls for real democratic control over science and technology today. We need to take direct action against the endless cycle of technological ‘fixes’ hurtful to the commonality.

For more information on the Luddites and upcoming technology politics events see the Luddites200 Organising Forum: [www.luddites200.org.uk](http://www.luddites200.org.uk), or email [luddites200@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:luddites200@yahoo.co.uk)

## FEATURE

# 'If I can't express my real opinion

## Alec Empire of Atari Teenage Riot talks about new band member Rowdy, how they diddle Sony and how bands should approach audiences

*On a discussion of your album Is this Hyperreal? you said that you see yourselves as anarchist libertarians and you have said elsewhere that you don't believe in hierarchies. How long have you identified yourself as an anarchist?*

For me that would go back to before Atari Teenage Riot, it's a long time! It has a lot to do with the history and the environment in Berlin, the political scene and stuff in the 1980s that I grew into as a punk rock kid.

We were really in the middle of West and East and we would get the propaganda stuff from both and I developed a big mistrust of governments, you know it seemed to me in the West the politicians were involved in all these corporations and defended decisions made by big business. In East Germany there was almost the opposite but you would see the corruption all under the banner of socialism.

Also as a musician, I started making music very early on, what I never quite understood was that people would treat certain musicians as a religious leader, this was the '80s when the contrast couldn't have been greater between stadium rock and punk rock and DIY stuff. Stuff happening in squats and then the Rolling Stones playing football stadiums! And that was when we first saw pop music being very manufactured.

*When I saw ATR in Colchester Art Centre one of the things I loved was how you dismantled the barrier between the band and the crowd...*

I think I can speak for the others in the group that you don't feel comfortable when people – they don't mean it in a bad way – who love the music look at you as an icon or whatever and don't see you as a normal person anymore. You appreciate that someone likes your music so much but to be put above others like that makes me uncomfortable. I feel at a concert we all come together rather than me performing "top down" to "the little people."

Also at some concerts and festivals we have played people are treated in a bad way, some promoters seem to look at the audience as cattle or something. Some people don't understand how every individual makes a difference... I don't understand how some musicians and people who work in the music industry always have a cynical approach.

*Do you think it is because some people buy into the capitalist view of people as a means to their ends?*

Yes, of course. Sometimes my jaw drops and you just go "are you serious?" Another thing I picked up in America was that the staff in Walmart are being told to imagine a \$50,000 bill on every customer's forehead because this is what they can bring in.

*On The Keiser Report recently they were talking about how ATR had got money from Sony and then given that money to help Anonymous fund their legal costs. Could you tell us a little bit more about that?*

Towards the end of February I got this request, Sony couldn't get another song licence and they were under time pressure because they had the TV slots booked and they were like "Hey maybe you guys have something?" I was like "hmm, maybe..." you have to understand the history with Sony.

In 1999 in Asia there was a camcorder ad and Sony took the intro of a song of ours, put it in the ad and thought nobody would ever find out. Nine Inch Nails were on tour over there and then we supported them in Europe and the team that was making a documentary about NIN's world tour came to us and said "Hey did you see this, there is your music in this ad, did you know about this?"

I thought it must be a mistake and maybe it was The Prodigy or something! But a friend of theirs videoed it from TV and sent it over and we realised it was actually our song, we couldn't believe this was happening!

It was an absolute nightmare to try and fight this because it was Sony Asia, you have to take it to court, they have all these lawyers. We kind of settled it, they said it was in the ad by mistake, so they only had to pay for damages for five broadcasts or something instead of the whole campaign.

It really pissed me off at that point. I did an interview with NME and those magazines in 1999 because I was so outraged. It was the mentality of bullying artists, just grabbing something that you have created. Some musician friends said "look Alec, whatever, it's in the ad" but to me it is a political song.

Us appearing in an ad with Sony immediately corrupts the message. I would never have agreed to this no matter for whatever amount of money.

So when they came back 20 years later, I thought "There is something in here." I talked to some Anonymous guys and said I can actually put this in and fuck these guys. It fitted perfectly, started airing and as soon as the money arrived in my account I transferred it over to the law firm that collects donations to defend Anonymous activists in court.

In the beginning I wanted to do it as an inside thing, through the back door, but it



blew up and *The Keiser Report* spoke about it at the same time as the reporting of the FBI arresting some Anonymous activists.

*Against a backdrop of a mainstream culture that is a by-product of market forces, cultural products as something new to sell, how have you managed to avoid being assimilated? Do you get a lot of pressure to bland out?*

The "rules" exist so they always hope that you as a musician adapt to that. It starts with "you shouldn't really have a political view come across in your song" because it can't be played on the radio show, so people like me say "okay, so you can't play it on your radio show."

But other musicians will go "oh, no, if we want to get on the show we need to make it more vague." There is a lot of self-censorship, where people go "oh no, I would get in trouble for saying that stuff,"

# on it's not worth it'



but if I can't express my real opinion then it is not worth doing.

People would argue that is why other artists got bigger than ATR or my own stuff because they were willing to make those compromises. But that is a handful of artists who profited from that, hundreds and hundreds of others shut up hoping they would be picked to be a star and it never happened, so to me I don't even want to make that trade. Why give up what you believe in in the hope that everybody will support you?

It's very interesting how ATR has influenced so many bands and musicians from all kinds of genres, for me that's much more important than "can we sell twice as many tickets," though you always want people to come to your shows and listen to your music.

It was amazing when we got over 400,000 views on Youtube for the Wikileaks edit of

'Black Flag'. Some people said "Yeah but if you compare that to other music videos they get two million," but I think for a viral video that just includes footage from protests its amazing that so many people would watch this stuff! From that angle it's a success, even though if you come from a Britney Spears/Lady Gaga angle then it is a small amount. I think in a different way I guess. In the long term compromising corrupts your own personality almost...

*When you were recording Is this Hyperreal? you had 21 tracks but only 10 made it on to this album, have you got any plans for those other 11 tracks?*

Yeah, we have added some new stuff and we want to put a record out as soon as possible, hopefully after the summer. I feel there is a lot more to say now and with Rowdy (ATR's new member), the guy has just grown into it.

It was amazing we played this festival in Coachella, he was right away in the crowd and "yeah, Coachella are you fuckin' ready?"

This red neck guy who didn't seem to like us punched him in the face and he was getting into a fight in the second song and I was thinking "where's Rowdy" and he gets up and he's "Fuck you Coachella!" Totally punk rock!

It's also great to have more ideas and I love it that he is from England, and that when we speak about the riots last summer I thank god that there is someone from England who is not part of that typical white established music scene who says "they are all dumb looters." With him he is coming from the right angle.

This is the second part of a two-part interview with Alec, the previous part was published in the June 2012 issue of *Freedom*.

## INTERVIEW

# Introducing... Collective Action



## The new organisation explain their philosophy of Regroupment

*Can you elaborate on the circumstances that gave rise to Collective Action?*

Over the last few years some Collective Action members had attempted to bring about political and organisational changes to the Anarchist Federation. These changes were not forthcoming and after a period of time they became increasingly frustrated at what was perceived to be a liberal cultural attitude and a reluctance to change.

We felt that it was necessary for the preservation of the anarchist communist tradition in modern Britain for like-minded people to refocus their activity – primarily on understanding current class composition and how that best informs how we insert our ideas and tactics within our class. We describe this process as ‘Regroupment’ and believed a separate association, independent from other organisations, was the best way to organise that process.

*How do you see Collective Action with regard to other national anarchist organisations?*  
The Solidarity Federation is an anarcho-syndicalist union and as such has very little to do with our perspective. Collective Action should be looked upon as a current within the anarchist communist movement seeking

Regroupment. Likewise, the Anarchist Federation is essentially a propaganda outlet that has a lackadaisical attitude towards organisation, which is in contrast to how we believe an anarchist communist group should operate. Also, as far as we can tell, AFed does not agree with our outlook that a process of Regroupment is necessary or even desirable. Liberty & Solidarity is a socialist-syndicalist group affiliated to the Anarkismo Statement, However we think our analyses and proposals for alternatives are ultimately at odds. This is both in terms of our principle focus on Regroupment as well as disagreements regarding our analysis of the conservative character of the trade unions and their ideological orientation towards a socialist-syndicalist position.

*Could you elaborate on what ‘Regroupment’ means?*

Regroupment essentially means sitting down together and working out what is going on and in that context, what we want to achieve and how we aim to achieve it. It’s as simple as that. More broadly, we see Regroupment as the reorientation of revolutionaries to re-engage with anarchist communist ideas and history as well as engaging with new ideas and theory that is being published. This is why we are looking at Specifism, the Platformist tradition, the ideas of the new autonomist Regroupment current Plan C and those of the Sic Communitisation Collective.

This collective education and engagement with contemporary ideas will help us develop

our analysis and better inform our activity. We understand that some will consider this to be ‘navel gazing’, but we think there is a misconception that what anarchists have to be doing is ‘action’, irrespective of what it means or how it fits into a general strategy for victory. The current activity of the movement cannot achieve victory and therefore a refocus on our movement and how we operate is necessary. Having said that, we continue to be militants in our localities, involved in struggles that we consider appropriate and therefore our thinking and discussions are informed by our past and ongoing experiences.

*As a self-identified ‘Specifist’ group do you perceive any points of distinction in respect to the UK anarchist movement?*

‘Specifism’ is a political current principally associated with the theory and organising practices of the Anarchist Federation of Rio de Janeiro (FARJ) and the Uruguayan Anarchist Federation (FAU).

In the English-speaking world it is often considered simply a variant of anarchist Platformism but the FARJ argue, and we agree, the ideas are much broader and richer. They locate their ideas in the spirit of the organisationalist theories of Malatesta, Bakunin and Kropotkin. We think this critical reappraisal of these original anarchist thinkers is valuable and allows us to bypass the more cultural articulations of anarchism that have become intermingled with anarchist practice in the latter half of the twentieth century.

However this process is not about reaffirming some form of ideological purity. We revisit these thinkers because of their role as organised revolutionaries whose ideas were earned through experience of social struggle. Our task is to identify the comparable contexts and lessons while also updating and modifying our approaches for the conditions and class composition under advanced capitalism.

*What is the current focus/activity of the group?*

Our focus is to collate our investigations, ideas and analysis into a series of articles. We are working on two series, one of which is entitled the ‘Class Composition Series’ and the other the ‘Regroupment Series’. We see this process as very much a practical one. We want to work out what activity is necessary and how best we implement that activity to achieve agreed objectives.

Within the process of Regroupment we are also aiming to participate in movement-wide public discussions with our sister Regroupment organisation Plan C.

This article is a condensed version of a longer interview conducted by the anarkismo.net editorial group. The full version is available at [anarkismo.net/article/23136](http://anarkismo.net/article/23136).

# Hard times for the PIC?

USA: The Southern States of America are continuing to experience waves of unrest as the economic pressure builds on the prison system worldwide (see main article). In the Adams County Correctional Facility in Mississippi, a 2,500-bed immigration detention prison owned by Corrections Corporation of America, inmates seized control of the prison for nine hours, taking more than 20 guards prisoner. According to one of those involved, the prisoners' rebellion was in retaliation to brutalisation by guards and in protest against the conditions: "They beat us; we're just [paying] them back. We just need better treatment and services. We need medical attention. We just want some respect. They call us wetbacks." When armed guards retook the prison they found one of the screws dead from "blunt force trauma" and 16 others injured. Three prisoners required medical attention. The prisoners were placed on indefinite lockdown whilst the FBI investigates.

Meanwhile, 45 prisoners at Red Onion State Prison, Virginia's only supermax facility, held a week-long hunger strike against inhumane conditions, a form of protest that is being used increasingly frequently against the use of indefinite solitary confinement and other punitive regimes operated in America's higher security prisons. Inevitably, as in the recent Pelican Bay/California SHU hunger strikes and the Georgia prisons work strikes, retaliation from the prison authorities has followed in the wake of the protests, with everything from banning of visits and communications to physical brutality – the favoured Red Onion guards' technique is the breaking of fingers.

RUSSIA: Whilst the mainstream media have been turning their attention towards those at the top of the political hierarchy currently feeling the iron heel of police repression in Russia following the street protests against Putin's recent election, little attention has predictably been paid to the two anarchists, Alexandra Dukhanina and Stepan Zimin, known to be amongst those arrested and charged following the rioting after the 'March of the Millions' on 6th May in Moscow. Alexandra has been officially charged with "participation to riots" and "use of violence against a government official" and is under house arrest. Stepan has been remanded until 8th August and possibly faces more serious charges, having been 'identified' by investigators as a 'terrorist' (a walkie-talkie, ski-mask, "molotov cocktail" [i.e. a bottle of acetone] and several passports were found in his flat) and been fingered as having assaulted an OMON riot police officer. Other arrests are expected in this latest wave of crackdowns on the anti-authoritarian opposition.

The term 'Prison-Industrial Complex' (PIC) was coined by the American Marxist Mike Davis in a piece entitled 'Hell Factories in the Field: a Prison-Industrial Complex' published in *The Nation* in February 1995. Initially, the term was used to refer to the burgeoning US prison population being housed in new, often privately built and run prisons in rural areas, that were effectively factories manned by a captive labour force. Angela Davis and Eric Schlosser later elaborated on the concept by drawing more explicit links with Eisenhower's notion of the Military-Industrial Complex (MIC) and showed how the increasingly powerful companies like Wackenhut and Corrections Corporation of America, that had begun to corner the market in new-build prisons, had created a fertile new and increasingly powerful money-making sector.

In the States this multi-billion dollar industry now has its own trade exhibitions, conventions, websites and mail-order catalogues. There are architecture, construction, plumbing and food supply companies whose only customer is the PIC. So lucrative had the sector become that it had its own trade papers such as the *Correctional Building News* and there was even a 'Corrections Yellow Pages' listing items for sale such as the Violent Prisoner Chair, the Body Orifice Security Scanner, and razor wire with trade names such as Maze, Supermaze, Detainer Hook Barb, and Silent Swordsman Barbed Tape.

As with the MIC, the PIC was built on classic capitalist principals – perpetual expansionism backed up by one of the most powerful lobbying machines the US has ever seen. Operating a dual strategy, the PIC used front organisations such as PR firms and supposedly independent think-tanks to prepare the ground for intensively lobbied

politicians in Washington, and at the individual State level to declare the 'War on Drugs' and to pass various instances of 'Three Strikes' legislation. At the same time poor, and largely Southern, rural communities where unemployment was rampant were bribed with the pipedream of potential future jobs if they allowed the building of a new private prison in their parish (filled of course with criminalised urban poor, and predominantly black, people); whilst State politicians were only too ready to agree to highly dubious terms in the contracts that they signed with PIC companies to house their prisoners if it meant safeguarding their jobs.

The many-headed hydra of capitalist expansionism has since propelled the PIC to spread far and wide, running prisons across the globe; and the same relentless logic has forced expansion into all facets of the security sector – everything from running immigration detention centres and escorting deportees to security at Wimbledon and your local job centre. Yet the very success of the PIC has to a great extent proved to be its own downfall.

Like Lamia forced by Hera to eat her own children, the worldwide economic downturn has forced governments and legislatures to row back on the mass incarceration project, hitting PIC shareholders where it hurts – in their pockets. However, in the USA private prisons' canny contract negotiators have to an extent saved the day because they had the forethought to have 90% minimum bed-occupancy clauses included, forcing States to close their own prisons down or sell them off cheap to the private sector, rather than cancel the very contracts that have been a significant contributory factor in creating their overstretched budgets. A win-win situation for the PIC.

BRA



## COMMENT

## ABOUT FREEDOM

## ANGEL ALLEY

Congratulations to our comrade from Advisory Service for Squatters (ASS) who beat an assault PC rap last week and good luck to the former ASS worker up for criminal damage in Australia this month.

At home work continues on the repair and renovation of the Autonomy Club (for those of you who haven't visited the building, that's our rather grand name for the meeting room on the second floor). Many thanks to the comrades who have given their time and skills to make this happen, especially in the electrical department where we need to get a safety certificate before the building is closed down!

We had a very successful launch for "an exhibition of contemporary portraits from the sublime to the sinister" by G O D (see our June issue), although it did have to be postponed for a week due to circumstances beyond our control as they say. Sorry to those who turned up on the 7th to find it not happening. We did our best to publicise the cancellation but only found out on the day itself.

We apologise to those who thought the picture on page 7 of the June issue was in poor taste. On a brighter note, the first month of the Anarchist Black Cross collecting tin saw the impressive total of £129, so well done to everyone who chipped in.

## SUBSCRIPTIONS

It's now even easier to work out when your subscription is up for renewal. The number above your name on the address label now tells you the year and month when your subscription runs out. There's a renewal form on page 19 of this issue if you need it, or you can subscribe online at [freedompress.org.uk/news/subscribe](http://freedompress.org.uk/news/subscribe). Don't forget that donations are always extremely welcome, or you may like to take out one of our supporter subscriptions.

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## NEXT ISSUE DEADLINE

The next issue will be dated August 2012 and the last day to get copy to us for that issue will be Thursday 12th July. 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

Episode One of the BBC's *The Secret History of our Streets* focused on somewhere I know fairly well, featuring former residents and a local councillor and discussed the "slum clearances" of the side streets off Deptford High Street in the 1960s. It painted a picture of London County Council planners deciding to "regenerate" South and East London, both overwhelmingly working class, while leaving better off areas in the north and west largely untouched. Their plans were to change major road layouts and demolish traditional housing, replacing it with new, purpose built estates. The new housing would have inside toilets, heating and more space. Old houses were compulsorily purchased and knocked down. While the programme concentrated on Deptford, this happened across south and east London. I can remember houses being left to rot everywhere I lived during my childhood, even though the houses that weren't demolished are still standing, which is more than can be said for some of the estates I lived on, many of which lasted less than thirty years.

One of the families that lived in Reginald Road, off Deptford High Street, ran market stalls. John Price still runs a shop there and was able to talk about his family's experience of and resistance to the plans. At one point there was one house left on the street, then the water was cut off. People relocated to other neighbouring areas, or out to the edge of London were interviewed. Their testimony was traumatic – talking of depression and isolation – the definition of alienation. Of course the programme had an agenda, and no one spoke who was happy to have been moved. But it is also true that all such bureaucracy ignores the needs of the little people; and it is rare indeed to hear working class voices expressing opinions on the telly.

Part of the agenda was to paint Lewisham council as complicit in the destruction of the community. In this case it undoubtedly was, though the chief driver came from the London County Council and then the GLC. But the one councillor it featured, Nick Taylor, was a man praised by Colin Ward for supporting co-ops and someone known for being opposed to tower blocks and the soul-less estates built in this period. He wasn't

even a councillor when the demolitions were passed; so the scene at the end, where he was presented with documentary proof that the houses demolished were fit for habitation, seemed a little unfair.

In the 1960s, London was changing. The government wanted better road transport and zoning and the planners viewed the city as a machine. There were to be new, spacious homes, built quickly to replace the slums, fitting in with the ideas held by most architects at the time such as "streets in the sky". The irony is that today Lewisham council want to gentrify Deptford, but the housing is the wrong sort for it – most people who live there do so because it's relatively cheap. Even the council housing has a high turnover of tenants. Had the original houses been left, Deptford would be like Battersea; somewhere that still has the old working class housing but without the working class.

The council is trying; it has pumped loads of money into supporting artists as the first wave of gentrification. Indeed, some of the indignant posts on the BBC's website were from such cultural agents claiming that the programme hadn't talked about how "vibrant" the area is. "Vibrancy" is of course code for black – and itself becomes a commodity to be sold to those who aspire to live somewhere multicultural.

Charles Booth, who founded the Salvation Army, complained about the number of pubs on Deptford High Street. That particular vibrancy has gone – most recently the Deptford Arms was turned into a bookies (*pictured below*). The vice of drink has given way to that of gambling; and there are modern-day campaigners against that too.

But I couldn't help thinking that the big, unspoken issue before the clearances was density. There were lots of people crammed into small homes. A few minutes in any direction from the High Street will bring you to homes built in the last two decades, either privately or by housing associations. Some are for the poor, some are for relatively wealthy commuters. All are tiny and increase density massively. John Price ended with the comment that "they wanted to condemn Deptford." They still do.





## Fatcat on the fiddle

Last month we were all compulsorily supposed to stand out in the rain and wave flags and cheer the German woman for spending 60 years on the big gold chair doing precisely nothing of value, and costing us all a lot of money.

Surely the best news for radicals in this country is that Fat Bastard and Fatcat Eddie Shah – slave-driver, sacker and union-buster-in-chief at Kent Messenger Newspapers, where he preceded Rupert ‘Dirty Digger’ Murdoch’s assault on workers’ rights through de-recognising the print unions by at least a year – has been arrested and charged with child-sex offences!

It is common knowledge that the British Ruling Class is riddled with paedophilia: the Thatcher government only saw off a scandal that would have put the Tories out of power for a century by closing down the entire ‘Approved School’ in 1988. Can we at least hope that Fat Bastard Shah takes a few of his perverted mates with him by plea-bargaining his miserable life and naming all the other members of the ‘Eddie Shah Paedophile Ring’?

Peter C. Cole

## The Hitchhiker

In anarchist writing some disseminations are academic, sourced and referenced; other out-flowings are by personal testimony and not reliant upon university classifications of merit but are still worthy. Hitchhiking is of the latter group.

Hitchhiking seems possessed by an underlying debate: it is an anti-social activity versus it is a legitimate form of activity and/or anarchist *modus operandi*, a way of moving from A–B without expending money. In this debate anarchists are of the latter opinion.

The idea that hitchhiking is an anti-social activity is definitely rooted in ideas that the state should control human behaviour, but is also empowered by films like *The Hitcher* starring Rutger Hauer or Sean Bean (a film with one version but two copies using different lead actors – how alienating is that?). The conceptual portrayal that the hitchhiker is something to fear supports the idea that hitchhiking is an anti-social activity.

In the Hebrew/English Berlitz dictionary the phrase “lekahat tremp” (hitchhiking) is an example of the idea that hitchhiking is a normal legitimate form of moving from A–B without expending money: anti-social activities do not reach pocket phrase books which sell at tourist points like airports.

Hitchhikers are not murderers/killers like films portray, an image which some states promote. However, residues of this anti-social taint still persist.

Longevity hitchhikers and/or persistent hitchhikers are perceived as a nuisance and are sometimes said to be perpetuating the anti-social stigma. Longevity hitchhikers – those doing hitchhiking for more than 25 years – have in many instances met personally more than half a million drivers generally upon a one-to-one basis. In some instances hitchhikers have met a full million or more drivers. Moreover drivers are connected to networks of people and communities. How much of a contribution is that to anarchism and non-statecraft practice?

Hitchhikers above the million drivers bracket have also been dubbed Anarchiste-Royal because they are amongst a small group of people who have met an equal number of people to that of a member of the royal family for instance.

Rather than hitchhikers being killers like in films it’s often hitchhikers themselves who become murder victims. I always recall the unsolved murder of Barbara Mayo in the 1970s, killed whilst hitchhiking, because her

body was dumped near my town by a driver when I was still a schoolboy. I also recall that the serial killer Fred West from the 1980s to 1990s killed hitchhikers.

Being a long-term and/or persistent hitchhiker is not exactly something to be proud of, but it is a rejectionist/anarchist achievement of sorts. I place it on a par with three years’ school truancy as an example of non-conformism.

Many hitchhikers are interesting people running away from life and there is nothing wrong in running away from life if the system in which we live is planet-threatening or dysfunctional.

Hitchhiking is strongly associated with the underclass and is to some extent a human reaction to transport either private car or national coach or train being of an economic bracket outside of the financial reach of the underclass.

The 1970s were a hitchhiking heyday and concepts like ‘Costa del Dole’ from when young people flocked to seaside towns looking for work were the end product of a hitchhiking growth. In that same decade hitchhikers flocked also to Peace Convoy festivals.

Hitchhikers are more than tramps. They often carry their own tent accommodation and are effectively holidaying from existences in urbanisation, and doing so by engaging in a direct relationship with the planet as well as a million other people. This is not apathy.

Motorways being the modern construct most supported by compulsory purchase are an imposed antagonistic part of the dysfunctional state that many anarchists most hate, but remember the hitchhiker hitches more than motorways and also uses up some of that 90% empty vehicle capacity which constitutes the passenger seats of motorway vehicles.

C.A.

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## GETTING ACTIVE

## WHAT'S ON

## JULY

■ **until 9th** Thirty days of non-violent direct action at Faslane to mark the 30th birthday of the camp, Faslane Peace Camp, Shandon, Helensburgh, G84 8NN, call 01436 820901, email Faslane30@riseup.net or see <http://www.facebook.com/pages/Faslane-Peace-Camp/10143429717> for further details.

■ **3rd and 17th** Practical Squatting Evening at LARC, 62 Fieldgate Street, London E1 1ES from 7pm to 8pm, for more see <http://www.squatter.org.uk/>

■ **3rd** The Decadence of the Shamans, lecture by Alan Cohen at the St Martin's Community Centre, 43 Carol Street, London NW1 0HT from 6.15pm until 9pm, see [radicalanthropologygroup.org](http://radicalanthropologygroup.org) for details.

■ **5th, 12th, 19th and 26th** London group of The Anarchist Federation meets weekly on Thursday evenings at Freedom Bookshop 84b Whitechapel High Street, London E1 7QX. If you would like to attend please email [london@afed.org.uk](mailto:london@afed.org.uk) beforehand.

■ **8th** London Radical History Walk around the working class and radical history of Hammersmith, delve into the rebellious past of one of West London's oldest neighbourhoods, meet at 4pm, outside Hammersmith Underground (Hammersmith & City line), Beadon Road, W6, see <http://past-tense.org.uk/>

■ **10th and 24th** Practical Squatting Evening at 56a Infoshop, 56a Crampton Street, London SE17 3AE from 7pm to 8pm, see <http://www.56a.org.uk/> for details.

■ **16th** News from Nowhere Club presents No Wealth But Life: Ruskin's Legacy, with Dr Stuart Eagles (author of *After Ruskin: The Social and Political Legacies of a Victorian Prophet*) at The Epicentre, West Street, Leytonstone E11 4LJ, buffet 7.30pm, talk starts 8pm, for details see <http://www.newsfromnowhereclub.org/>.

■ **20th** 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.

■ **21st** Zero Carbon Day, organise a fun event in your area for this nationwide day of action to promote the goal of a Zero Carbon Britain by 2030, for details see <http://www.campaigncc.org/ZCB2012>

■ **26th to 30th** Peace News Summer Camp 2012, bring your contribution to this hot-house of creativity and help build a radical movement for the future by building a living community today, for more details see <http://peacenewscamp.info/>



## Extreme energy: fracking the future

In recent years the vast flood of fossil fuels that is needed to sustain the present economic system has begun to falter. The huge spike in energy prices that preceded the global recession in 2008 had been widely predicted based on realistic analyses of remaining conventional fossil fuel reserves, though for corporations and governments, ideologically wedded to the concept of infinite growth, denial has been the order of the day. On the other side of the coin from resource depletion, the ability of our environment to absorb the huge quantities of waste produced by this system is also being pushed to breaking point, from ecosystems to the global climate.

Faced with this twin predicament almost all discourse has centred around wishful thinking that ranges from a grab bag of absurd technofixes to equally delusional dreams of a sudden and neat systemic collapse followed by a "survivalist's utopia". The exact nature of these fantasies are coloured by the politics of those involved. For those on the 'left' a green wind powered smart grid and hydrogen economy or the

magical vanishing of centralised corporate power that is implicit in the transition town model are the fantasies of choice, while for those on the right it is nuclear power, 'clean' coal and geoengineering or the sort of collapse that makes a bunker full of guns and survival rations a useful asset.

The path that humanity is actually on is now being brought into stark relief by rising energy prices and the economic crisis. An inexorable move towards increasingly extreme forms of energy extraction, be it tar sands, deepwater drilling or fracking for shale gas has been underway for the best part of a decade, but is now accelerating fast. Even more extreme methods like Underground Coal Gasification (setting coal seams on fire underground) are now being contemplated. All these methods require much more effort (and environmental destruction) to work. A less obvious but equally important property is that a greater proportion of the activity of society as a whole be devoted to energy extraction, with far fewer resources available for ordinary people, as we see happening already.

We face a future where an ever increasing fraction of human activity is given over to energy production to the exclusion of more beneficial activities. You only have to look to the Niger Delta to see a glimpse of that future: people living and dying in squalor, in the toxic shadow of a massive energy infrastructure that does not benefit them. The fundamental choice we face is between clinging to the increasing unworkable present system until it disintegrates or building a new more human-centred society. Anarchists would seem ideally placed to contribute to constructing such a decentralised, community based society. The pushing of new extreme energy methods into more populated areas is creating a popular backlash that opens the door to introducing ideas of environmental and social justice to a wider audience. A variety of grassroots community and activist groups are getting organised across the country to take on this challenge.

See <http://frack-off.org.uk> for more information.

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# Euro 2012

◀ page 24

Poznan Warsaw motorway came to a grinding halt because the Chinese company that won the contract repeatedly forgot to pay its subcontractors).

Quite predictably, most people in Poland and the Ukraine didn't and won't take to the streets to protest against what is nevertheless a misappropriation of public funds. There are exceptions.

In Poland, the large and well structured groups of ultra supporters launched a FUCK EURO 2012 campaign, as part of the wider and self explanatory AGAINST MODERN FOOTBALL movement.

Near Gdansk, the Irish prepared their game against Croatia on a pitch bordered by a FUCK EURO banner, deployed by the ultras of Arka Gdynia, a team playing in the second tier of the Polish football league. FUCK EURO 2012 T shirts are also visible in all host cities in Poland.

Activists from the Ukrainian feminist group FEMEN go one better than their neighbours: they do away with T-shirts and write FUCK EURO 2012 directly on their chests, thereby receiving enormous media exposure. Inevitable as it is, such public attention is two edged. On the plus side, millions of people across Europe and the 'televisioning' world will have read the message FUCK EURO 2012 at some stage in June. On a less fortunate note, virtually nobody knows or rather wants to know *why* those girls feel the way they do.

A member of FEMEN explains: "Politicians spent colossal amounts of money to build stadiums and not a kopyok to solve other problems, including those relating to prostitution".

Whatever one may think of the efficiency of those half naked but strong minded protestors, one must admit that the girls

from FEMEN largely made up off the pitch for the predictable lack of excitement on the turf.

The skill shown by the Spanish players is admirable, but admiration and excitement are very different things. In the steps of FC Barcelona, Spain has developed a style based on ball possession, reaching a degree of control over the opposite team that verges on the sadistic.

But Spain may be the iPad of modern football, all the skill of the world (especially when concentrated on one side), will never provide the type of excitement that comes with unpredictability, collective determination, flaring tempers, scuffles and the lot. Not much hope of that in the present tournament where, as is almost always the case in the gentrified world of modern football, measure and moderation will prevail.

Christophe Huette



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## REVIEWS

## FICTION

## The Discussion

Connie looked around the room, ten people – a good turnout. She was in the chair, being the only person willing to do it who the whole meeting could agree on.

“Okay, let’s get started,” she introduced herself and turned to Pete, who’d left the Hurstbourne Anarchist Group in some acrimony a while before.

“Yes, as well all know,” he said, “the EDL are coming to town on 14th July. We have to decide how to oppose them.”

“Or if...” piped up Patrick, the town’s resident pacifist.

“Before we go down that road,” Connie butted in, “can I have a show of hands of those who want to oppose them?”

Everyone bar Patrick put their hands up.

“Sorry Patrick, that’s a discussion for another time, we only have a few weeks to mobilise.” He nodded.

“As I was saying,” carried on Pete, “how we oppose them is important.

They’re largely made up of hooligan crews and will be handy, but if we have numbers we can turn them.”

“What are the UAF doing?” asked Kat.

“Static demo near the Clock Tower, hoping the police keep order,” replied Pete.

“Should we join them?” said Kat.

“It’s for individuals to make their own mind up,” said Connie.

“I’d be against it,” said Dom. “It’ll basically be calling on the state to stop the fascists. Every time the state has taken on new powers to counter street fascism, they’ve mainly been used against the left. Or voting Labour or some other dead end. I’m not convinced the EDL are proper fascists, though.”

“Regardless of our views on the EDL, we can’t ignore them because they are attacking the sort of activities we do. They hospitalised a pensioner in Lewisham recently. It’s not our choice, there’s loads of things I’d rather be doing, but they’ve decided to come here. They will attack us if we’re not ready, and they will attack anyone looking Asian or Muslim,” said Dave.

“Yeah, I agree with Dave,” said Pete, nodding.

Blimey, thought Connie, that’s a turn up.

A rough consensus was emerging. Connie introduced the speaker from Brighton who had been involved against the March For England there. After a further forty minutes discussion, they had a good idea of who was doing what, where and when. Most important, they had between them commitments from six other groups that they would come too. If the EDL were expecting just the usual lollipop wavers, they were in for a surprise.

Martin H.

To be continued...

## REMEMBER

## Rudolph Rocker’s autobiography recalls alternative events fit for commemoration in 2012, writes Iain McKay

While much attention will be directed towards London for the expensive Olympic farce, 2012 should be marked for far more important events – the 100th anniversary of the two great strikes by tailors and dock workers. At the centre of the epic struggle of the tailors was Rudolf Rocker whose excellent autobiography *The London Years* covers these events and much more.

Rocker had an eventful life and it is impossible to do it justice in a review. His autobiography covers the period when he, a non-Jew, became a leading member of the Jewish anarchist and labour movement in the East End of London (and from there, nationally and internationally). He did so by accident during a visit to Liverpool, learnt Yiddish in order to edit a newspaper (*Dos Fraye Vort*) there before accepting the editorship of *Der Arbeter Fraint* in 1898.

These were exciting times, with the labour movement “making great progress everywhere” and the “old ideas of the First International were in the air again.” The “crippling influence” of German Social Democracy was being replaced with a new movement “which was aimed not only against the economic monopoly of a privileged minority, but also against the danger of a state-bureaucracy arising in the future.” Rocker and his colleagues applied their libertarian ideas in Jewish communities across Britain. In London they were so successful that they opened the Arbeter Fraint Club and Institute in Jubilee Street, a hall that could hold 800 people.

Rocker recounts various episodes of these struggles: for example, during a bakers’ strike

the demand was raised for “a trade union label on the bread, so that the public could see if it came from a bakery that observed trade union conditions.” The resulting consumer boycott on non-union bread helped win the strike. However, the peak of the movement came in April 1912 when a strike started among West End tailors. The next month thousands of immigrant Jewish tailors in the East End came out in solidarity with them and challenged the whole sweatshop system. They won a resounding victory.

Dockers in London were also on strike for better conditions. The “common struggle brought Jewish and non-Jewish workers together. Joint strike meetings were held, and the same speakers spoke at huge joint demonstrations.” With the “death-blow to the sweatshop system” produced by victory in the tailors’ strike, the British workers “looked at the Jewish workers with quite different eyes after this victory.” Yet the London dock strike continued and many dockers’ families were suffering. The successful Jewish strikers started a campaign “to take some of the dockers’ children into their homes.” This practical support “did a great deal to strengthen the friendship between Jewish and non-Jewish workers.” This solidarity was repaid in October 1936, when the dockers were at the forefront in stopping Mosley’s fascist blackshirts marching through Jewish areas.

Rocker stresses the importance of such partial struggles in a memorable passage: “Like many others I have believed in my youth that as social conditions became worse, those who suffered so much would come to realise the deeper causes of their poverty and suffering. I have since been convinced that such a belief is a dangerous illusion ... There is a pitch of material and spiritual degradation from which a man can no longer rise. Those who have been born into misery and never knew a better state are rarely able to resist and revolt ... Certainly

## QUIZ ANSWERS

1. Groucho Marx.
2. Sindelar was the top Austrian footballer of the time. He played in Austria’s last game, against Germany, before it was annexed into the Third Reich under the Anschluss. In the match Austria missed several sitters then went on to win 2-0. Sindelar refused to play for the new unified German team. A poem about his death suggested he committed suicide because of the Anschluss, and some believed that the Nazis killed him. In a documentary in the ’90s, an old friend of his said a local official was bribed to pretend it was accidental so that he could have a proper funeral.
3. The European United Left, made up of the Spanish and Italian Communist Parties,

and Left Unity, consisting of French, Greek and Portuguese CPs.

4. Until reshuffled into a minor post at the end of May, she was overseeing library closures, specifically the joint library at Upper Norwood shared with Lambeth. She earned the name by suggesting that it would almost be cheaper to “give the visitor to the library a book token to go and purchase a paperback” than it would for them to borrow a single book from the branch library, a claim belied by Croydon’s own figures. She also happens to be an assistant to Croydon Central MP Gavin Barwell who is the new chair of the All-Party Parliamentary Committee on Literacy.

# ING LONDON 1912

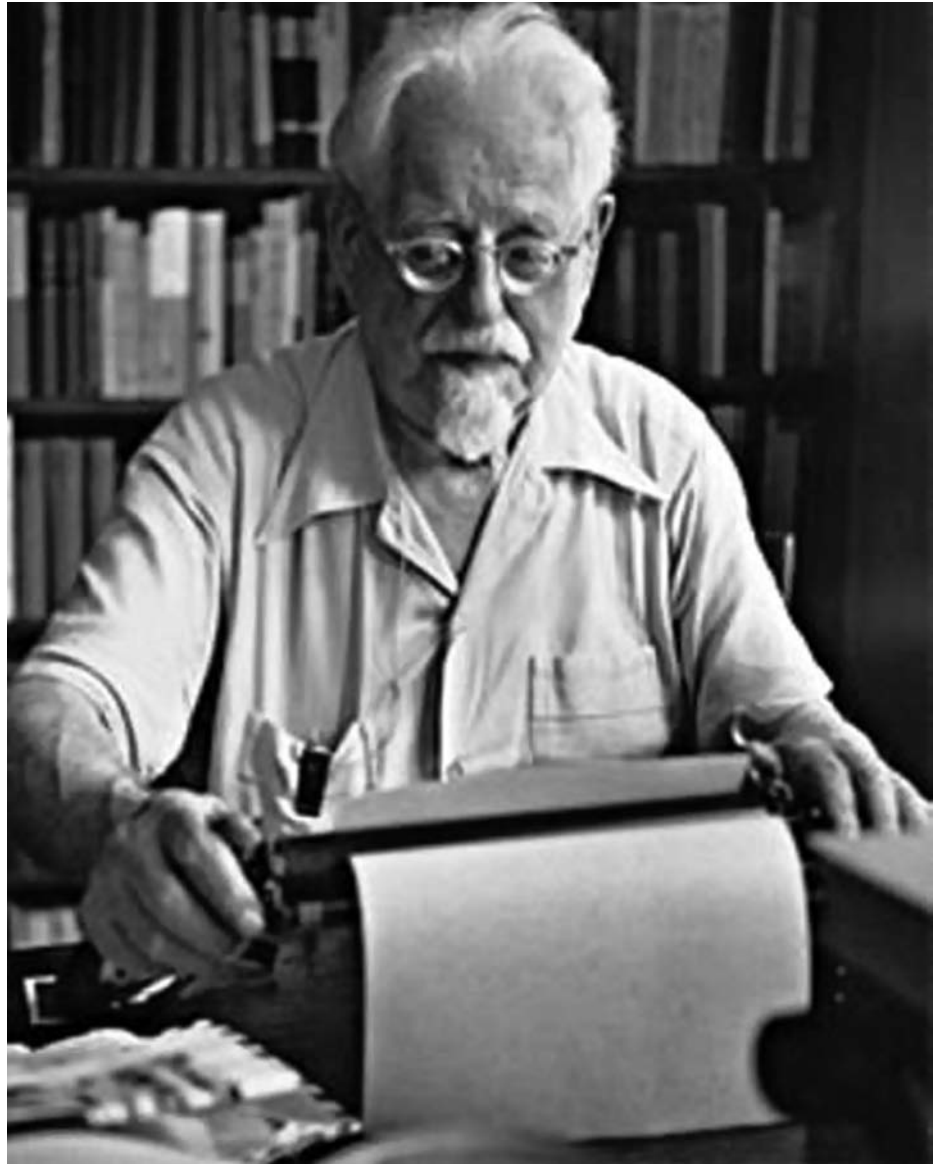
the old slogan, 'The worse the better', was based on an erroneous assumption. Like that other slogan, 'All or nothing', which made many radicals oppose any improvement in the lot of the workers, even when the workers demanded it, on the ground that it would distract the mind of the proletariat, and turn it away from the road which leads to social emancipation. It is contrary to all the experience of history and of psychology; people who are not prepared to fight for the betterment of their living conditions are not likely to fight for social emancipation. Slogans of this kind are like a cancer in the revolutionary movement."

Rocker also recounts his relationships with such famous libertarians as Louise Michel, Errico Malatesta and Peter Kropotkin as well as his speaking tours of America and attending the 1896 Congress of the Second International. The latter, he explains, was considered important to anarchists to attend. Had these "not concealed their true nature" as Social Democratic congresses then "the anarchists would have been the last to want to be represented" but as they proclaimed themselves socialist ones, anarchists considered it "wrong to deny them admission."

There he saw at first hand the intolerance of the Marxists against the anarchists. As Rocker dryly comments: "I often asked myself during this London Congress what would happen if people so intolerant and despotic as these German social democrats ever came to power in a country. I began to fear that socialism without liberty must lead to an even worse tyranny than the conditions against which we were fighting. What has since happened in Russia has proven my fears to have been more than justified."

A significant portion of the book relates to the First World War and Rocker's time in various British internment camps. He recounts the shock which most anarchists felt when Kropotkin announced his support for the Allies. Kropotkin's ideas had influenced his "whole development" and he was bound "by ties of close personal friendship and affection" but "this was a matter of conscience" and Rocker had "to take a firm stand." Kropotkin found few anarchists agreeing with his position. Rocker summarises Malatesta: "this war like every other war was being fought for the interests of the ruling classes, not for the nations" and "whichever side the workers fought on they were only cannon-fodder."

So he took up his pen and, like Malatesta, Berkman and other leading anarchists, critiqued Kropotkin, doing so in spite of his fear that his anti-war activities would bring the police after him – a fear which was confirmed when he was arrested by special order of the War Office. He was interned along with numerous other Germans, from patriots to the apolitical to anti-war internationalists.



Rocker paints the fears and isolation, the petty officialdom, the injustice of internment vividly. Needless to say, this was not how it was reported and he mentions how papers "like the *Daily Mail* and *John Bull*" started "a campaign that the 'enemy aliens' were living in luxury." This, like the ignorance and hatred directed towards the Jewish immigrants, will be sadly all too familiar to readers today.

One episode is particularly worthy of note. Wealthy Germans convinced the British officers to close off a part of the ship they were interned on and charge access to it. As Rocker notes, "these were the people who were always proclaiming their German patriotism ... Now they told the English that they regarded the great mass of their fellow-Germans on the boat with such contempt that they would pay for the privilege of not having to mix with them." This, in a microcosm, shows the poverty of nationalism.

Rocker was refused permission to be expelled to Russia after the February revolution in 1917. Interned for four years, he was finally sent to Germany as part of a prisoner exchange – trying to escape in Holland before he could taste the Kaiser's hospitality. Ironically, once he had arrived in Germany he was refused entry because he had been stripped of his nationality due to his anarchist activism. He gained his freedom by being expelled to Holland, and the book ends with him visiting his old anarchist comrade Domela Nieuwenhuis.

As the epilogue by his comrade Sam Dreen notes, it is a shame he did not produce another volume chronicling his activities in the German Revolution as a leading member of the syndicalist Free Workers Union as well as his work for the syndicalist International Workers Association formed in 1921. An introduction by the

## THE ARTS

## CARRIE REICHARDT: A

I consider myself to be a renegade potter and craftivist. I do many things. I studied fine art sculpture back in the late 1980', but then fell into mosaics, and went on to study ceramics for the past nine years at adult college.

To pay my bills I make things and sell them, but my passion is in community/public art. I have spent the last 10 years mosaicking the entire outside of my house. It is still a work in progress.

I guess I really became an anarchist after the state of Texas murdered my dear friend Luis Ramirez. He was on Texas death row and was my pen-pal and close friend for five years. I believe he was totally innocent of the crime he was executed for. Personally being involved in such a terrible and cruel miscarriage of justice really fundamentally changed the way I saw the world around me. The idea of justice, this so call concrete pillar of our society, came crashing down around my feet. In 2007 I then actually witnessed my friend John Joe Amador being executed by the State of Texas. I then also started to write to Herman Wallace and Albert Woodfox, political prisoners, Black Panthers and the men held longest in solitary confinement in the USA – collectively known as the Angola 3. I began to see that legality meant nothing, and that it is what is moral that matters.

I have been using my craft skills as a form of activism for many, many years. I did not actually come across the word craftivism and apply that term to myself until a few years back. I read about the work of Rayna Fahey on a street art blog, googled her and quickly discovered the wonderful online world of extreme craft and craftivism. Straight away I connected with the words of Betsy Greer



## Review

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late Colin Ward summarises Rocker's life and influence well.

Rocker also produced the definitive introduction to *Anarcho-syndicalism: Theory and Practice* in 1937. He analysed the Russian Revolution in articles like 'Anarchism and Sovietism' and defended the Spanish anarchists against the Stalinists in *The Tragedy of Spain. Pioneers of American Freedom*, his



and realised that I was, and had always been a craftivist.

Greer's definition of craftivism is "a way of looking at life where voicing opinions through creativity makes your voice stronger, your compassion deeper and your quest for justice more infinite" (long version at <http://craftivism.com/definition.html>).

I really do believe that craftivism works better as an alternative to signing petitions, etc. For those coming across it for the first time, it is often humorous and engaging in a non-threatening way. People are more responsive and open to 'art' than, say, politics. Compare a normal stall with political leaflets on it with a beautiful mosaic covered truck or large knitted banner. It's obvious which one will attract more people to it, and often the art of it allows conversations to open up and for more of an exchange of ideas to take place. I think it is also extremely beneficial

to those who participate as I think that all creative pursuits are deeply rewarding both emotionally and psychologically. I know from personal experience that prisoners on death row and in solitary keep their very sanity and humanity by remaining creative and expressing their feelings. I think for activists, and those who really do want a fairer world, that voicing their frustrations and feelings through creativity gives them a voice, and the very act of making also works as a kind of emotional comfort blanket. Craft involves skill, time, repetition, concentration etc and is very meditative in nature. For me anyway, the making part, calms me down, gives me hope and lets me vent in a non-destructive way.

I have been 'installing' my ceramic pieces, tiles and mosaics around the streets for many years. There are anarchic tiles and mosaic mushrooms in various places across

account of liberal and libertarian thinkers in North America, is an excellent introduction to individualist anarchism. His massive *Nationalism and Culture* is a searching analysis of human culture through the ages, with an analysis of both political thinkers and power politics.

Combine all these with numerous articles for the anarchist press and you are left to

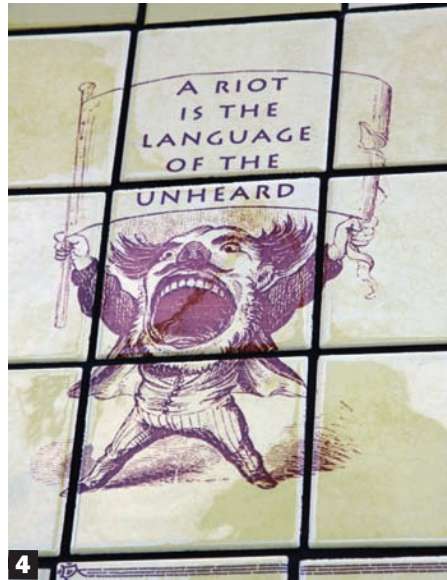
wonder why there has been no comprehensive anthology of Rocker's works yet in English. Suffice to say, *The London Years* will show its readers that Rocker's ideas and life should be of pressing interest to modern revolutionaries.

*The London Years* by Rudolf Rocker, published by Five Leaves Press/AK Press, £14.99.

# ANARCHO-CRAFTIVIST



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4



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the globe. I also am engaged with many community projects. Recently I was artist in residence with the SHP charity, running mosaic workshops there. I also just finished a huge community mosaic mural under the Westway in Ladbroke Grove as part of the Mutate Britain outsider art winter festival. I believe that it is crucial to engage with the public and the community and to help facilitate them in being creative on a large scale.

But do I think that any of the above will actually bring about real change? The answer is no. 'Power concedes nothing without a demand' and it will take a lot more than a few sit-ins, knit-ins or crochet protests to truly bring about real social change. Only mass direct action, on a huge scale, with thousands being prepared to be arrested will really work. I do believe it's possible though. Look at the Suffragette movement where

women were sexually abused and beaten by the police, jailed and force-fed. But now at least I can vote – shame there is no one to vote for!

The ruling classes have corrupted the very word anarchy; it has become synonymous with chaos and disorder. The state has a vested interest in saying that any radical movement is a threat to the fabric of society and vilifying those who promote it, but I think it's important to define what anarchy actually is. Personally I think the following quote best describes my view: "While the popular understanding of anarchism is of a violent, anti-state movement, anarchism is a much more subtle and nuanced tradition than a simple opposition to government power. Anarchists oppose the idea that power and domination are necessary for society and instead advocate more co-operative, anti-

hierarchical forms of social, political and economic organisation" (L. Susan Brown).

I organised an Alternative Street Party called 'Gibe at the Jubilee' in Chiswick where I live, to coincide with my exhibition 'Mad in England'. As to the Monarchy, I think it is a highly outdated concept. For me the Royal family represent inequality at birth. I do not take pride in the idea of the British Empire or our colonial past. My street party was a celebration for those who share an alternative view. I think the mainstream media are producing this endless stream of propaganda and that this party was a way for a group of people to come together to creatively express them.

Pictures 1, 4, 5 and 6 feature some of Carrie's craft work; pictures 3 and 7 show 'Gibe at the Jubilee', the party organised by Carrie Reichardt (picture 2).



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SPORT

# Euro 2012



## A near certain win for gentrified football

What is basically wrong with the UEFA EURO 2012? In both 'host' countries, Poland and the Ukraine, the vast majority of the

population disagrees with the huge amount of public funds (estimated at €20 billion per country) spent to organise the event. Most of it is borrowed money that will be repaid in due course and with appropriate interests by the taxpayer. Interestingly, given the name of the competition, the European Union didn't put its hand to its pocket on

that one. Sports and politics don't mix, they say.

The icing on the cake is this: most of the infrastructure funded by EURO euros is either useless (the Klagenfurt Wörthersee stadium built for the UEFA EURO 2008 in Austria and Switzerland is in the process of being partially demolished for lack of use) or unfinished (the construction of the

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## THE QUIZ

1. Who said "Politics is the art of looking for trouble, finding it everywhere, diagnosing it incorrectly and applying the wrong remedies"?
2. Austrian footballer Matthias Sindelar died in January 1939, officially from carbon monoxide poisoning. Why was this not believed?
3. In the European Parliament, the 'Communists and Allies' group split in 1989. What were the two factions called?
4. Croydon Tory councillor Sara Blashford has earned the nickname "book token" from Inside Croydon and *Private Eye*. Why?

Answers on page 20

