

FREEDOM

£2 www.freedompress.org.uk

Vol 72 • OCTOBER 2011

EVERYBODY OUT!

Public sector strike for 30th November

The announcement last month that public sector workers will be balloted for strike action on 30th November could see more than three million people, ranging from teachers, firefighters and refuse collectors to local government workers, hospital staff and environmental workers, walk out on what some are predicting will be the UK's biggest industrial action since the 1926 General Strike.

Perhaps guided by the recent wave of political and social protests the TUC announced at its annual conference that November 30th would be a "day of action" against public sector pension cuts. This could be taken in two ways; either the TUC is opening the door for more militant and generalised action, or it is unsure they will get the necessary strike support from union members and are giving them an option to participate without striking. Given that other union leaders have been calling for "civil disobedience" and "community direct action", it may well be that the TUC have been forced to adopt a more imaginative line in opposing the government's pension reforms. Beyond the proposed strikes "meetings, rallies and

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LENS CAP VIVA KING MOB



A scene from the August riots taken by photographer Max Reeves, who features in our new section on The Arts on pages 22 and 23. There will also be an exhibition of his work entitled 'London is a World Class City: from Mythical Jerusalem to Olympic Capital' in the Autonomy Club during October and November, for details and opening times see <http://www.freedompress.org.uk/news/events/>

Photograph © Max Reeves

RYANAIR RIP OFF

Building on the success of their Office Angels campaign Solidarity Federation have began working with the 'Ryanair Don't Care' campaign to highlight the ruthless employment practices of the profitable budget airline.

Liverpool Solfed has put their full backing behind the campaign headed by John Foley, who has been arrested six times for his direct action activism against the airline. His latest court appearance, for protesting on top of John Lennon airport, saw Liverpool Solfed members organise a solidarity demo outside the court.

Ryanair's current policy of recruitment-for-termination is part of the massive exploitation of people who apply to work for the company. As it stands potential cabin crew have to pay a fee of €3,000 through an agency to undergo training for Ryanair. As many as 60 people

are sacked at any one time after this initial training period, up to 200 people a month. Those who survive are put on a 12-month probationary period on a lower rate of pay than normal cabin crew and Ryanair pocket the difference, as much as £20m a year.

There is also the example of Ryanair side-stepping employment legislation in its French operations, paying employees only according to their own national laws – avoiding the additional social benefit payments that French workers should legally receive.

John Foley has mounted a three year campaign against Ryanair ever since his daughter was scammed by the company as a cabin crew member and he uncovered the systematic exploitation of all potential employees. His trial for the rooftop protest begins on 3rd November.

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ISSN 0016-0504



NEWS

NEWS IN BRIEF

Activists cleared of hitting coppers

Two anti-cuts protestors, Nicolas Christian and Jane Laporte, are celebrating as the case against them was dismissed. They had been accused of assaulting a police officer at a Haringey Civic Centre protest in February.

The protest had been called by Haringey Alliance for Public Services in opposition to the council's proposed £41m cuts to local services, including the closure of three residential homes and four day centres for older people, a 75% cut in the Youth Services budget, and a 50% cut to the Parks maintenance budget.

Judge Tempia, sitting at Enfield Magistrates' Court (in Tottenham), ruled that police officers from the Territorial Support Group were not acting within their duty and used unlawful force in removing the defendants, along with other anti-cuts protestors, out of the building.

The decision came after four days of prosecution evidence, including the appearance of 15 police officers, none of whom could point to any violence threatened or used by either protestor that would justify the riot police's use of force under their powers to prevent a breach of the peace. The heavy-handed and violent response by the riot police that night was totally disproportionate to any of the actions by the protestors. They also failed to appreciate the right of local residents to hold their local councillors to account as they voted through cuts that would tear apart services for young people and the elderly.

The judgment is an important decision not only for the two defendants, but also for the freedom to protest in the face of police intimidation tactics.

Another important aspect, given the harsh sentences being handed out to people involved in the student protests, 26th March and the August riots, is that both defendants refused to plead guilty and forced the police to justify their behaviour in court. Regardless of their actions and the accusations against them, the defendants had not acted unlawfully. They both gave no comment interviews and refused to plead guilty at their first court appearance despite the initial view from the solicitor that they would be found guilty and that they shouldn't expect to legally challenge the police's version of events. It was only their political experience, doggedness and support from friends that ensured they could walk away from court free.

For more information about the local campaign against public sector cuts, see www.hapsnews.net, the website of Haringey Alliance for Public Services.

If you need legal information and support for other protests, see Legal Defence and Monitoring Group (ldmg.org.uk) or Green and Black Cross (greenandblackcross.org).

LENS CAP STAYING PUT



Travellers at Dale Farm won a last minute reprieve on the day of the proposed eviction from their own land in Essex as a court injunction prevented Basildon Council from clearing the site pending a further High Court hearing. Speaking at the High Court, Mr Justice Edwards-Stuart granted the order because there were concerns that measures carried out by Basildon borough council "may go further" than the terms of the enforcement notices. Some fifty anarchists along with hundred or so family members have barricaded the site against the eviction at Europe's largest traveller site.

Edinburgh University occupied

Students across Scotland came together to occupy George Square Lecture Theatre at the University of Edinburgh campus as a protest against the rise in tuition fees and have vowed to remain until their demands are met.

Some 100 students from Glasgow, Edinburgh and St Andrews universities took the lecture theatre on Friday 16th September angered at the decision by management to charge the most expensive rate for students studying from the 'rest of UK' (RUK). Edinburgh University, along with St Andrews, recently

announced the increase in fees from £1,820 to £9,000 per year for RUK students as of next year. This means a four-year honours degree will now cost £36,000. According to Patrick O'Hare, President of St Andrews University Students' Association who was taking part in the occupation "The occupation is a courageous move in solidarity with future generations of RUK students who will be priced out of the market or saddled with tremendous debts".

The demands of the occupiers are however are politically far reaching. They include: no privatisation of education and no privately funded courses, no cuts to courses or compulsory redundancies in Scottish universities, and a living wage for all workers at Scottish universities including those subcontracted.

Students in Scotland seem to be leading the way in militant action against education cuts. The Free Hetherington in Glasgow, another occupied university space, lasted seven months and was the longest running student occupation in UK history, with students sleeping, studying and campaigning in the building along with putting on numerous social and political events. It continues to remain an inspiration for student action in Scotland.





The Westfield construction site in Stratford, east London; Balfour Beatty's Blackfriars Station construction site in London; electricians outside a Carillion site in Denton, Manchester – protests around the country against the assault on pay and conditions.

Sparks are flying

Electricians battle construction industry giants

Rank and file electricians are at the forefront of a massive campaign of wildcat strikes, protests and direct action to prevent the major building services contractors colluding to drive down wages and deskill the industry with the imposition of new, non-negotiated contracts.

The catalyst for the dispute came in August when the eight biggest construction companies withdrew altogether from the long-standing national work agreements and decided to impose new terms and conditions on electricians working in the construction industry. Crucially this new arrangement will introduce three new grades for electricians all set below the current rate of pay, effectively cutting their wages by 35%. It will also get rid of hard won pension and legal rights and the improvements to health and safety on construction sites.

The Joint Industry Board's (JIB) agreement between electricians and contractors have been in place since 1969 and part of the standard employment procedure for building work. JIB has been the recognised negotiating body for electricians and employers throughout the industry. It is these JIB agreements which protect workers' wages and rights that are now being swept away in a cynical move to undermine the collective negotiating power of workers in an increasingly fragmented workplace.

In response there has been two successive months of action with electricians protesting outside high profile construction sites throughout the UK. This has been a grass-roots campaign with little support from Unite union, who have been slow to react despite representing 90% of electricians.

At the beginning of September five of the eight companies gave notice to dismiss their entire workforce followed by a 90-day 'consultation period', as required by law, before re-employing them in December on the new inferior contracts. If workers refuse to sign up to the new contracts they will be sacked on the spot.

Electricians immediately responded by calling a day of 'civil disobedience' with co-ordinated unofficial industrial action across the country. Electricians and pipe-fitters working for Balfour Beatty Engineering Services (BBES) in Scotland walked off the job. In London, police were forced to intervene after 150 electricians blocked the main entrance to the Olympics site causing rush hour travel chaos, with further actions taking place at Balfour Beatty's Papermill site in Manchester, and ongoing protests in Newcastle. Future action is being planned for Hull, Cardiff and Liverpool.

Anarchists have been out in support of the electricians turning up at protests, and it's understood some anarchists are coordinating with workers in an attempt to have a more pro-active role in their support for the electricians. There is a growing awareness of the need to increase pressure as the 7th December deadline looms for the introduction of the new contracts.

BBES is the biggest mechanical and electrical firm in the UK with a massive turnover of £690 million a year.

Everybody out!

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joint events with community groups and service users" have been called for.

What is clear is that as many as twenty public sector unions will be balloting their members for action on 30th November, and the 'big three', Unison, GMB and Unite, as well as the Firefighters Union are already proceeding with balloted strike action. Even within the context of a reformist trade union approach this is an impressive feat.

But what of the anarchists? It's certainly no secret that a disproportionate amount of anarchists work in the public sector, and we will be looking to them for inspiration, guidance and effective organisation in mobilising support for the day.

Perhaps the most significant contribution so far is the N30 Strike initiative. Inspired by anarchists it is looking to engage all those people who fall beyond the shadow of the public sector unions and attempt to coordinate countrywide actions in solidarity with the striking workers. Already they have been advocating "early morning pickets, direct actions, occupations and demonstrations... to amplify the resistance to austerity".

N30 Strike has come about from those involved in organising the J30 Assembly, which was designed to solidify support and generalise momentum for the 30th June public sector strike. The J30 website proved so successful in the run up to strike day,

providing an invaluable online resource for workers and activists alike, that they are developing the process. As they say: "it is vitally important that we, rank and file union members, students, precarious workers and unemployed call for a mass show of solidarity for those taking strike action and to generalise the strike on Nov 30th".

Added to that there will be mobilising meetings across the country throughout October giving anarchists the opportunity to meet up locally, network and plan strategies on how best to utilise out time and energy.

To get involved, advertise your event or join up with a group in your area check out www.N30strike.org

THE BIG PICTURE

WE CAN DO IT!**LONDON ANARCHIST
BOOKFAIR 2011****Saturday 22nd October - 10am to 7pm**

**Queen Mary,
University of London,
Mile End Road,
London E1 4NS**

**Books, Pamphlets, Magazines,
Meetings, Films, Discussions,
Cabaret, Crèche & Older Kids Space,
Food, and so much more...**

www.anarchistbookfair.org.uk

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Contact us for deaf and disabled access

From the Bookfair organisers: Anarchists all over the UK are putting on successful events – bookfairs in Bristol, Manchester, Bradford, Norwich, Oxford, Sheffield and Durham, as well as Newcastle's Projectile festival. No-one can say that anarchists can't organise. These are great social events and a real opportunity to spread anarchist ideas as well as debating them. We know anarchist politics aren't only about organising a bookfair. All of us in the Bookfair collective would choose a big, effective, militant anarchist movement over a successful bookfair. Let's use these events to take things forward.

London Anarchist Bookfair 2011

The anarchist movement under one roof

Since the last London bookfair, the UK's biggest and one of the world's best known anarchist gatherings, no one could have really predicted events unfolding the way they have. From the belligerent student protests and occupations to the anti-cuts movement and European-style black bloc erupting across the streets on 26th March followed by the most intense period of inner city unrest the country has seen for 30 years.

It's within that context that this year's bookfair defines itself, and unsurprisingly there will be a lot of talk and discussion on anarchism's relationship to the current events. Certainly the expectation is that there will be many more people attending this year eager to discover more about anarchism. Always priding ourselves on being at the forefront of social struggles the atmosphere at this year's event is set to be electric.

Here are some of the highlights at this year's event.

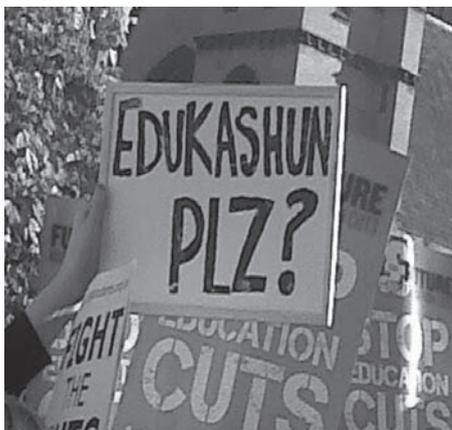
Current events

Four days that shook the world

The riots in August started after the murder of yet another black man killed by the police. Mark Duggan's death may have been the straw that broke the camel's back, but it wasn't the main cause for the riots and looting throughout the country for nearly a week. A discussion about why the riots took place, the aftermath and where we go from here.

UK Youth Rebellion

Anarchists have been commenting on the increase in the marginalisation of young people – being young is a crime in itself. Since then youth have been fighting back, demanding respect and to have a voice. But do Millbank, Black Bloc and the recent riots present different faces of youth rebellion? Anarchist Federation explores why and how young people are fighting back, and how anarchists figure within this



Class

Why do we call ourselves Class Struggle Anarchists?

In some anarchist circles the term 'class struggle' is seen as outdated and boring. Are they scared of the term, or do they just not understand what is meant by it? Is the reaction a class or cultural thing? Members of Anarchist Federation, IWW and ALARM will explain what we mean by 'class struggle', why it is still important in today's society.

History

Mistakes of the Spanish Revolution

Stuart Christie explains why the FAI-CNT committees of the CNT-FAI abandoned all pretence of being popular revolutionary organs, instead constituted a structure that served to apply the brakes to – and reverse – the spontaneous revolutionary activity of the *barrio* (ward/district) committees and repress the rank-and-file activists who were pressing for social revolution.

The Battle of Cable Street

The 75th anniversary of The Battle of Cable Street took place earlier this year, when at least 100,000 East Enders turned out to physically prevent the British Union of Fascists marching through Stepney. They built barricades, fought the police who had been sent to clear the way and the day became part of left-wing history and mythology.

Practical

All London Anarchist Revolutionary Movement (ALARM)

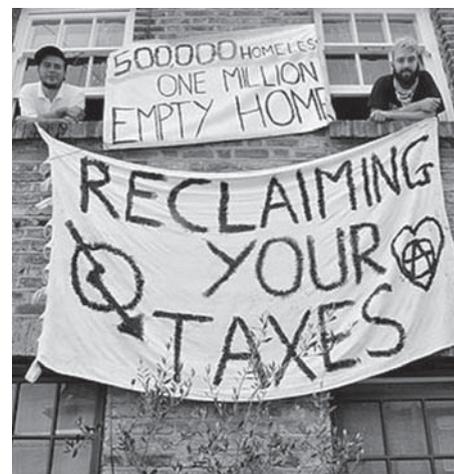
The purpose is to build an organisational structure to give London Anarchism a chance to grow and meet the opportunities coming up. ALARM provides local contacts to act as hubs for anarchist activity in each borough. In addition to area based groups, college, workplaces and campaigning groups are welcomed into the structure as are national anarchist organisations.

Organising in the Workplace

What does radical workplace organisation look like? This talk includes a condensed version of the SolFed's Organiser Training, focusing on the 'nuts and bolts' of workplace organising. SF members will then recap the Office Angels campaign in which nationwide pickets forced the world's largest employment agency redress a case of wage theft.

Debt and Resistance

As the economy nosedives, more people are turning to high street loan sharks and credit companies to survive, amassing unpayable deficits. Toxic debts still fester on nationalised banks books and could lead to mass homelessness, while in 2012 the new university fee regime kicks in. Debt is becoming an ever more important part of the way capital controls our lives. This session offers some ideas about how to fight back.



Resisting the criminalisation of squatting

Once more the government is threatening to destroy squatting, though all they could do would be to make it harder – there will still be thousands of empties and the need to squat.

Come and hear what campaigning is already running. Is campaigning enough or should we be preparing to ignore the law, and squat bigger and better (and what would that mean?)

Anti-fascism

From Casa Pound to Anders Behring Breivik

From black-bloc autonomist nationalists in Germany to 'third millennium fascist' squatters in Italy to suit-wearing Nazis in Sweden, the last twenty years has seen huge developments in the Neo-fascist scene. Paul Hull, veteran anti-fascist and trade unionist in Sweden, will discuss the evolution of Neo-Nazi theories and tactics in Northern Europe and how the modern militant anti-fascist movement can adapt to these changes.

International

Against Austerity: Anarcho-Syndicalism across Europe

This talk will see radicals from across Europe come to London to discuss how anarchists can effectively fight austerity. A great opportunity to learn from each other and build the bridges of solidarity we'll need to beat back the global wave of austerity! (Organised by: Solidarity Federation.)

Tenants' movement in Poland

Since 1990 the housing situation in Poland has deteriorated mainly due to the neo-liberal policies of the state and local authorities. As a response, grassroots tenants' organisations have emerged in a number of polish cities. They aim to stop these attacks and promote social alternatives. The anarchist movement is involved in many of these groups. (Organised by: *Syndicalist Courier*, Polish syndicalist paper in UK.)

Freedom Press will be having its usual stall, so come on over and say hello.

ANALYSIS

Staying in Afghanistan

Ross Eventon makes the argument against the continued US presence in the region

Reports that the US is determined to maintain a presence in Afghanistan will surprise no one except 99% of foreign policy analysts. Responding to the announcement that the US is in negotiations to maintain a presence until 2024, Mahdi Hassan, senior editor at the *New Statesman*, writes “the US-led invasions and occupations of both countries have been a dismal failure” because “the presence of western troops in Muslim lands has provoked more terrorism than it has prevented.”

Regardless, Obama escalated the conflict on coming to office. Citing research that outlines the primary goal of suicide terrorism is to end foreign military occupations, Hassan asks, “Why does an intelligent politician such as Barack Obama have such difficulty understanding this?”

The Afghan and Iraq invasions were launched on the expectation they would increase the terrorist threat to domestic populations, as they duly did. It is a remarkable example of extreme naivety or intellectual subservience that claims the US is concerned with reducing terror not be met with widespread ridicule.

As Julien Mercille, a lecturer at University College Dublin, points out in the journal *Critical Asian Studies*, the War on Drugs is equally vacuous.

The claim to be concerned with reducing the level of drug production is undermined, he writes, by “the Taliban’s relatively small role in drug trafficking; US/NATO support for proxy forces involved in the drug trade; the focus on poppy cultivation over drug money; the chemical precursor trade; money laundering; Western support for tobacco and alcohol industries; and the emphasis on overseas operations and enforcement and neglect of drug treatment and prevention.”

In Afghanistan, the War on Drugs serves as “a rhetorical device used by the US to facilitate overseas military intervention and the fight against insurgents opposed to US policies in Afghanistan.”

In Colombia, a victim of both the Wars on Drugs and Terror, whilst US support has failed in its publicly stated goal of eradicating drug production it has “succeeded in modernizing the Colombian Armed Forces.” Furthermore, “by targeting FARC areas almost exclusively” it has “helped paramilitaries vertically integrate their criminal enterprise and turn it into a political instrument,” writes scholar Forrest Hylton.

This should lead to some caution before we can claim the War on Drugs has “failed.”



Slightly more honestly than Hassan, the editor of the *Financial Times* acknowledged that the aim of the war in Afghanistan is “to establish a client state with a semblance of democracy in a hostile region with no tradition of strong independent institutions or basic human rights.”

In order to achieve this goal, the militarisation of the state is crucial. Afghanistan is set to receive \$2.7 billion dollars worth of military equipment over the course of this year. The *Washington Post* reports, “the US-led coalition will deliver 22,000 vehicles, including 514 new four-wheeled “mobile strike force” armored vehicles yet to be used in Afghanistan, 44 airplanes and helicopters, 40,000 weapons, and tens of thousands of radios and other pieces of communications gear.”

An adviser to Karzai was quoted as saying “in the next eight months, we are getting more equipment than we’ve gotten in the last eight years... and this time it’s not all discarded equipment, it’s brand new.”

This delivery is the culmination of what has been termed the “Golden Decade” for defence companies. The *Associated Press* reports, “Since the Sept. 11 attacks, the annual defense budget has more than doubled to \$700 billion and annual defense industry profits have nearly quadrupled, approaching \$25 billion last year.”

As an ancillary benefit, the ongoing construction of US-run prisons in the country will mean detainees can be held long into the future, possibly allowing for the eventual closure of Guantanamo as inmates are moved to less conspicuous sites in Central Asia.

The decision to maintain military bases and troops on the ground may have ended any prospect for peace and negotiations, but it will allow a US presence in one of the world’s most geo-strategically important regions and

help to keep Iran and China in check; the latter being bent on “foreign military adventurism” according to a 2001 Pentagon report.

For Afghans the situation is increasingly desperate.

The first half of this year was the deadliest period for civilians since the war began. The UNHCR noted in its Global Trends 2010 report that “three out of ten refugees in the world were from Afghanistan, with 96 per cent of them located in Pakistan and the Islamic Republic of Iran.” If Iraq is included, almost half of the world’s refugees are natives of US war zones.

Due to funding shortfalls, the World Food Programme recently announced they would be cutting programmes in nearly half of Afghanistan’s provinces. Refugees International reports that 250,000 people have been displaced in the last two years, with 70% of those driven to the cities living in “unplanned areas or in illegal settlements.” In Kabul “80 percent of the population live in unplanned settlements where poor sanitation and lack of access to safe drinking water are common.”

Last year, one analyst exemplified the approach of commentary in general: “I used to assume the Americans did certain things in Afghanistan (support corrupt governors, ally themselves with abusive commanders), because they didn’t know any better. If they only had the proper information, I thought, they would change such malign behaviour. The revelations in WikiLeaks indicate that they often have such information or at least serious allegations and indications, but then, apparently, carry on as normal.”

The inability to abandon commonly held pieties prevents discussion of the logical next step. Meanwhile, the US is cementing its client in Central Asia and securing a permanent presence in the region, a “victory” built on the corpses of Afghan civilians.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

Freedom is the longest running anarchist publication in the UK. It remains the only nationwide regular anarchist newspaper in production in the UK. We continue to provide an essential voice for the anarchist movement, promoting anarchist ideas and activities as well as reporting on the important issues of the day from a radical perspective. To go with the new format we are looking for new writers, fresh ideas, people to get involved in the production of the paper and to help increase distribution and sales.

Writing for the paper

Freedom is always looking for people to write for the paper. Not only is it an excellent opportunity to get your ideas, thoughts and opinions into print and out into the real world, it also offers a chance to develop and refine your writing skills, report on the activities you are involved in, or promote the group you are a member of. We accept any original articles as long as they are informative, interesting or entertaining and politically relevant. Word count is: news articles 250 or 450 words; reviews 250 or 500 words; analysis/history/theory/ articles 800 words; Features: 1,500 and 2,500 words. To find out more contact copy@freedompress.org.uk

Distribution

The best way to disseminate anarchist ideas is face-to-face distribution on the street, and street sales are always a positive way to engage people about radical politics. We need people/groups in different areas to promote, sell and distribute *Freedom*. This could be done in a variety of ways from suggesting places that would stock the paper, to actively selling the paper in your area, on demonstrations, at events or in your workplace.

If you or your group takes on selling a bundle we do an offer of 50% discount, so you can make a pound on every issue of the paper you sell.

If you know of any shop/community centre/art or social centre/venue/political space or university campus in your area that would stock the paper please get in touch. Contact: copy@freedompress.org.uk

Donations

Freedom never makes money from the paper and as such has to be financially supported by the book shop or generous donations from comrades and supporters. We are setting up a Freedom Fighting Fund to ensure the paper continues to provide the anarchist movement with a much needed voice and visible presence in the real world. To find out how you can make donations to keep the paper afloat contact sub@freedompress.org.uk

Cheques or postal orders made payable to 'Freedom Press' can be sent to us at Freedom, 84b Whitechapel High Street, London E1 7QX.

Fighting talk for the future

Welcome to the new bigger, bolder, brighter *Freedom* newspaper. We ourselves are still coming to terms with the changed format, different layout and new content (and the novelty of having staples and internal colour pages) so we ask you to bear with us until we settle into a workable routine. We will continue to ask for your feedback, ideas, suggestions and article submissions. We want to make this a paper for the whole anarchist movement, and your contributions will be a central part of that.

The UK anarchist movement, or rather those active in anarchist politics, is growing and developing at an astonishing rate, and with it we are being swept along on tidal wave of radical social change. The ruptures we have witnessed recently, from the banking collapse to the August riots, offer increasingly assured glimpses of the fragile nature of capitalism and the state. The political and social uncertainties we are facing are both daunting and a gifted opportunity.

It was a few months ago that we said in these very pages that there was no better time to be an anarchist, and it seems everybody else is coming to that same conclusion.

David Goodway, the respected political historian, writing recently in the *Guardian* newspaper said: "Britain almost certainly has a greater number of conscious anarchists nowadays than at any previous point in its history and, in addition, there are many more natural anarchists: that is people who, while not identifying themselves as anarchists, think and behave in significantly anarchist way."

And Chomsky who was asked during an interview should all students become anarchists replied emphatically "Yes," adding "students should challenge authorities and join a long anarchist tradition. As soon as one identifies, challenges and overcomes illegitimate power, he or she is an anarchist. Most people are anarchists. What they call themselves doesn't matter to me."

Even the Socialist Workers Party, the vanguard of leftist power-politics has acknowledged, albeit through gritted teeth, "the growing popularity of anarchism, as both movement and ideology" – so much so they have been forced to republish their critique of anarchism for a new audience.

The fact that different strands of political thought are all recognising the role anarchist methodology is playing in the current wave of social struggles should inspire in all of us the confidence to organise and act as a visible anarchist movement. This is our time.

Anarchism is now being represented not as a constructed ideology but as a body of people engaged in activities that openly question the dominance of capitalism and the role of the state as valid forms of social organisation. As a movement we stand at an important moment – we either take up the challenge or get left behind.

As a tool of propaganda, as a source of information and as part of the anarchist infrastructure *Freedom* remains committed to help building a movement worth defending, in a society worth fighting for. This is your paper.

Dean
editor



INTERNATIONAL

SYRIA IN TURMOIL

Mainstream media here in the west, especially television news, has been remarkably terse on the political uprising in Syria, given the fact that it has been far more violent and long-term than in Egypt. For instance, clashes between agitating masses and military forces have been going on for six months now, with around 3,000 dead – and counting (UN figures put the death toll at 2,200). Thousands have been imprisoned and thousands more are missing. There are also reports of activists being tortured in prison. However, activists continue to take to the streets, loudly and stubbornly.

Although five hundred of the army and the police have been killed, the most serious blow yet could be the defections of rank and file soldiers, most of whom are conscripted, some of them joining the protesters and others just disappearing. The government of Bashar al Assad is trying to downplay the significance of this even as it cracks down brutally on the defectors, actively hunting and killing them. The army is said to be targeting everything, from mosques to hospitals.

In a re-run of Libya, the same activists who were against foreign intervention are calling for it now, with human rights observers as a first step. However, there has been no UN resolution on the matter due to opposition from Russia and China. The meagre US sanctions, it is clear, has not done its job. Interestingly, though, it is the Arab League putting (dubious) pressure on Assad to give way to democratic elections in three years time. Former allies Iran (!) and Turkey are prompting Assad to stop the killings. Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and Bahrain have also distanced themselves from Assad.

While on the ground there seems to be chaos. Broadly speaking, there are four opposition groupings: mostly youth-led activist groups like Local Co-ordination Committees and the Syrian Revolution General Commission; exiles abroad who have tried to form national councils; “older, established opposition” (Al Jazeera); and the rest – people on the streets. These elements are not necessarily working together, and most protesters are dissatisfied with official channels of opposition.

Whereas according to activists present there are more serious problems amongst the crowd, such as religious bigotry and sectarianism with chants of ‘Allah ho Akbar’ and ‘Christians to Beirut and Alawis [a minority Arab sect] to the grave’ being recorded. Meanwhile the Al Jazeera report cites a complete lack of political culture among the people and individual egotism as the culprits, given that the Assad regime has been in power for 41 years.

LENS CAP FIRST PORT OF CALL



US longshoremen have been in a protracted and increasingly volatile dispute with EGT port owners over the use of non-unionised labour at the Port Longview, Washington. The escalation in hostilities has seen workers damaging property and fighting with police to prevent train loads of grain entering the port terminal. Workers smashed windows, pushed a security vehicle into a ditch, cut brake lines and dumped grain onto the ground.

Notes from the US

The silly season is over – in as much as it ever is in the United States. It emerged in late August, for instance, that Senator John McCain, former 2008 presidential candidate, promised to provide arms and military aid to Colonel Muammar Gaddafi during a meeting in August 2009. And there are a few small victories for common sense.

A federal court, for instance, has refused to dismiss a lawsuit against former US Secretary of Defence, Donald Rumsfeld, for his role in devising policies of torture in Iraq. The Court of Appeals ruled that two American citizens (Donald Vance and Nathan Ertel) who were tortured at a US military base in Iraq have adequate evidence to suggest that Rumsfeld was personally responsible for their treatment and not entitled to qualify for immunity.

Then a federal jury has also found four New Orleans police guilty of civil rights violations over the shooting deaths of two civilians and the subsequent cover-up after Hurricane Katrina in 2005. The charges were linked to shootings on the Danziger Bridge that also seriously wounded four others.

Unions

Some 45,000 unionised workers at telecom giant, Verizon, struck for several days after negotiations broke down between Verizon and two unions representing the workers (the Communications Workers of America and

the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers). Verizon tried to cut health and pension benefits for workers and make it simpler for the company to sack workers. The strike was the largest and most significant this year. Verizon, which is the nation's second largest phone company, earned US\$6.9 (£4.2) billion in net income for the first six months of the year – or about a £1,000 an hour.

Environment

Protests continue against the Alberta tar sands project which would build a pipeline 1,500 miles from north to south (the Keystone XL pipeline) to deliver tar sands oil from Canada to refineries in Texas. In summer more than 500 people protesting outside the White House were arrested on several separate occasions. Indeed, the protest is being widely described as one of the environmental movement's biggest and important campaigns for many years. Dr Sydney Parker of Maryland: “We are here because it's not just an environmental issue, it's also a very big health issue and that's why we've come out today and that's why we're so committed. So personally I've never been arrested before. I don't do this for fun. I'm here because I think it's such an important issue that it really demands that kind of action and it demands that level of commitment from myself.”

Louis Further

Chile's student fury in full force

Young lead the way as unrest intensifies in South America

Since May this year Chile has been witnessing mass social unrest not seen since the inception of liberal democracy in 1990. Right-wing President Sebastián Piñera's proposals to make neoliberal 'reforms' to the education system has been met with furious student protests ranging from kissing demonstrations and occupations to hunger strikes and rioting. Amid clashes with cops 16 year-old Manuel Gutierrez Reinoso and 18 year-old Mario Parraguez Pinto were shot and killed. Observers predict Chile is reaching the cusp of a major systemic upheaval.

The protests

Unlike in the UK, where action was centred around one-off marches and demonstrations, followed by periods of inaction, in Chile students have been on the streets more or less daily – in the capital Santiago and elsewhere. On 24th and 25th August 2011, Chile's main union, Workers United Centre, declared a two-day strike in solidarity with the students, and around 600,000 students and workers took to the streets across Chile, 200,000 of them in Santiago alone. Over 700 schools were occupied.

Police resorted to repression through water cannons and tear gas on peaceful marches which then turned confrontational with masked youths pelting police with stones, paint bombs, and molotovs, building barricades by setting tyres and luxury cars on fire, and blocking traffic. Other salient features of the unrest included looting of shops, supermarkets and gas stations, and general damaging of property.

Well over a thousand protesters have been arrested and 156 cops injured, although the cop who shot Reinoso is awaiting sentence for homicide, and some sort of disciplinary action has been taken against other cops involved in the killing, in order to placate the protesters.

What students want

Again, unlike in the UK, students have made very specific demands, the first and foremost being Piñera withdraw his proposal for education reforms that will open up the education system to further privatisation. Other demands include waiver of exam fees, free, round-the-year public transport passes to all students in all areas, paid work placements, shorter school hours, more state investment in health and education, and making education a free public service guaranteed by the state.

To illustrate the seriousness of the situation, one only need look at the six high school students who have been on a hunger strike for over 21 days with two of them having gone without food for over 54 days. Their



slogan is: "No more profit in education, and for public, free, high quality education."

Another salutary feature of student protests is that they are supported by 80% of the population, despite the 'violence'. People have come out on the streets with their traditional 'saucapan protest', banging pots and pans to show their support. This mass movement, spearheaded by the students, appears to be a socially inclusive one demanding sweeping changes like restructuring of the Constitution, higher wages, tax reforms, establishment of a social welfare system, and new labour laws.

Students have also declared solidarity with the indigenous Mapuche people, as well as articulating ecological concerns spurred by rapid industrialization. They also formed a significant part of the 9/11 (overthrow of the socialist Allende government and installation of Pinochet, not the US event!) memorial march.

Thus there is no doubt that this rebellion is targeted against the entire system, inclusive and representative of working class Chileans, and aimed at recreating the country's social and political framework.

Background

These past months are not the only time students have rebelled in Chile. They have been exploding from time to time since as far back as 2006, if not earlier. In May 2006 about 500,000 high school students went on strike, refusing to attend classes, and doing mass occupations of schools. In June 2006 there were more high school students striking and clashing with the police, leading to mass

arrests. This was dubbed the 'Penguins' Revolution' because of their uniforms. Protests erupted again in 2008. Burning material, looting of shops and businesses, occupations of schools and mass arrests have been regular features of these protests.

The youth of Chile have good reasons for being so angry. Chile has become the West's darling for being the most 'developed' region in the continent as it has continued to amass GDP growth figures through the years. This has a lot to do with the booming copper industry (Chile is the world's largest producer of copper), and the continuation by successive governments of vicious neoliberal reforms, introduced initially by Pinochet in the 1970s and 1980s with US prompting. This includes the previous Centre-Left government led by Michelle Bachelet; billionaire businessman President Piñera is just the icing on the cake.

As a result, Chile is a highly unequal country, with the most expensive education in the region. The education system reproduces this inequality, creating and maintaining deep class divisions. One professor calls it "educational apartheid". High student debt and interest rates have made higher education impossible for many. A Chile economist was quoted as saying that the income of the richest 5% is 220 times greater than the poorest 5%.

All of this is highly instructive to students here in UK because looking at Chile now is like looking at our own future in this country twenty years down the line. Chronic student indebtedness, school dropouts, worsening class antagonism, riots and street battles – sound ominous? Governments be warned.

ECONOMICS

Global economic overview: 2011



A round up of the effects of the financial crisis

Numbers are annoying. When one tells a story through statistics, one seems to dehumanise the picture. But when it comes to the economy, scale is everything, and numbers are the only way to paint a picture of the scale of what is happening at the moment. That picture is depressing indeed.

Generally, economies around the world have been slowing down – industrial production, trade, job creation, and consumers' ability to buy goods: all factors that indicate how much wealth a country is producing – are at undesirably low levels. This is true especially of Europe and the US, but also of India, China, eastern Europe, South Africa and Latin America. Ominously for productivity and job creation, manufacturing sector has declined in UK, Asia, Australia, Europe and the US. More economists now believe that a double-dip recession is likely. However, some consider the labour market is already in a double-dip. Latest figures support this viewpoint.

United Kingdom

Unemployment is at an all-time high, of around 2.5 million, or 8%. Youth unemployment (those aged between 16 and 24) is more than double that number at 20%, nearly a million youngsters. That is, one in five is unemployed. In just three months ending July, around 80,000 people have joined the dole queue. Nearly 500,000 public sector workers are scheduled to be sacked in the next five years.

According to figure from the Office for

National Statistics, the number of long-term unemployed – those without work for more than two years – is up 30%. For those over 50, the rise is 38% – suggesting that, as in previous downturns, many may simply never find work again. Thus, structural unemployment (permanently unemployed), not only in the UK but also in the US is expected to remain high for years to come.

House prices have fallen leading to a contraction in the construction industry, which has usually been the driving factor in previous booms. Service industry has also registered slow growth, not just here in the UK, but in other large nations like the US and China.

Inflation has been the fastest in twenty years, even as the Bank of England has artificially kept interest rates at a historic low. In the absence of consumer spending due to the austerity measures, this is one of the few ways of increasing cash flow in the economy. This helps the banks and reassures investors, but does little to help ordinary citizens.

United States

Economic doom-saying is incomplete without a look at the world's most 'developed' nation. The crash occurred in the US; the recession started here; and unsurprisingly, the shambles is worsening.

According to official statistics, around six million are currently unemployed – at around 9.1%. This rate is likely to endure for a while. Even if the economy picks up, structural unemployment is likely to be at around 7% or more, while previously it was 4–5%. As in the rest of Europe, youth unemployment is worse than the general figures – over 19%.

The Eurozone

All eyes are now on the unhappy trio of France, Germany and Greece. Amid fears that Greece may default by leaving the EU, and thus triggering an all-round economic collapse, Germany and France – Eurozone's biggest economies – have rushed in to reassure investors by increasing Greece's bailout fund. This probably means Greece will have to ramp up its austerity, thus leading to heightened public anger. It also means that the people of Germany and France have to bear more of the burdens of bailing out Greece.

The strains are already showing. Eurozone economy is facing very slow growth, including a standstill in the coming months. Germany, which appeared pretty strong only a few months ago is registering poor growth as well. Two of France's largest banks were downgraded recently, triggering some panic. BNP Paribas, France's biggest bank, is just about avoiding a downgrade. France is in a precarious position because many of its banks are exposed to Greek investments.

What about Spain? The country is still managing to sell bonds, although that only generates cash in the short-term. In the long term, it leads to higher government debt which the already suffering people will have to pay off. However, the most clear indication of the country's state is here: over four million are unemployed – around 20% of the workforce – the worst performance in labour terms in the whole of EU.



To wrap up

Rosy pictures of the private sector swooping in to rescue the economy by somehow creating hundreds of thousands of jobs, have fallen flat on the ground. The truth is that the system is so far broken, it's a complete Catch-22. Austerity has only managed to depress economies in which there was already an unprecedented transfer of wealth to finance industry, while increased spending to stimulate growth could only postpone problems until another, bigger crash occurs in the future. Perhaps it is time to acknowledge the failure of Keynesian economics, while realizing that Chicago School neoliberal economics is hell-bent on expanding an already fledgling plutocracy.

“Listen to the sound of marching feet”

Celebrating the 75th anniversary of Cable Street

For the left, The Battle of Cable Street is a unifying feature. This was a battle that we won. We saw off the fascists. Among the Jewish community or those whose families included London dockers, you can still hear people claiming their father or mother, or a grandparent was at Cable Street. This is hardly surprising as on 4th October 1936 hundreds of thousands of people – Jewish tailors and Irish dockers to the fore – turned out to block Sir Oswald Mosley's British Union of Fascists (BUF) marching through the Jewish East End.

At the time, the London anarchist movement was at a low ebb. It would revive as the Spanish Civil War developed but though individual anarchists were at Cable Street' the only group of significance, it appears, was the remnant of the pre-World War I Yiddish-speaking anarchist scene involved with the Workers' Circle/Arbeiter Ring.

The history of the Battle can be simply described. Initially the BUF had significant support from leading industrialists, and the Daily Mail, though that dwindled in the face of increasing anti-Semitism and BUF-initiated violence. There was increasing conflict with the Jewish community and Mosley planned to march his uniformed men and women through Stepney – then largely Jewish, then largely poor, then largely overcrowded.

The Jewish People's Council (JPC), which comprised the Jewish left and Jewish trade unions, collected 100,000 signatures calling for the march to be banned but the Home Secretary refused. When it was obvious the march would go ahead there was intense debate on how to respond. The formal leadership of the Jewish community, the Board of Deputies, called on people to stay at home. The then-powerful Communist Party was mobilising for a demonstration in support of the Spanish Republic in Trafalgar Square and ignored the call to oppose Mosley. It was only at the last minute, and after many appeals from local party organiser Joe Jacobs² did they print over their Trafalgar



Square leaflets with encouragement to go to the East End instead, falling in behind the JPC and what was the obvious community response, and which was supported from the beginning by the Independent Labour Party and the Labour League of Youth.

Such was the throng of people in the East End that the police saw only one way through, which led to barricades in Cable Street and street battles around Gardiners Corner. Over 7,000 police, many mounted, tried to force a passage for the BUF to march, and failed. There is no doubt that Communist Party organisation was crucial in resisting the invasion, with, for example, first aid posts being set up. Later Communist Party Cable Street veterans would travel to Spain, form the backbone of the Stepney tenants' movement and, though the Jewish population of Stepney was in steep decline, elect Phil Piratin to Parliament in 1945.

The Battle was vicious, with many injured and arrested. It might seem surprising to see people having so few qualms about fighting with the police but Bernard Kops, a child participant in the Battle, said “We in the East End had no doubt that the police were loaded against us... I grew up with a healthy hatred of the law.” His experience was not shared by community leaders who were primarily well-heeled and living in better parts of town. Though there were tensions between the Irish and Jews, much of this had been mitigated by Jewish support for the dock strike of a generation before, and the pre-World War I, anarchist led, Jewish strike against sweatshops and undercutting wages.

The BUF did not get to march. This was not the end of the story, but the BUF was seriously damaged, as it was when the Government banned political uniforms.

The day is something we can look back to with pride, though it would be hard to

replicate – social conditions, not least in population density, have changed.

The number of veterans of Cable Street are now few, but enough to celebrate the Battle as living history. To that end the small independent Nottingham publishers, Five Leaves, has brought out five books to commemorate the 75th anniversary of the battle of Cable Street and the people whose lives were affected by it.

- *Battle for the East End: Jewish responses to fascism in the 1930s* by David Rosenberg who does walking tours of the East End and is speaking about Cable Street at this year's London bookfair
- *The Battle of Cable Street 1936* by The Cable Street Group. A people's history told through the voices of those who took part, and examines the political, economic and social conditions of the time.
- *October Day* by Frank Griffin, a forgotten working-class novel written about the eventful day
- *Street of Tall People* by Alan Gibbons, a children's book about a friendship between a Jewish and Gentile child in the run-up to the Battle.
- *Everything Happens in Cable Street* by Roger Mills, which reveals the day to day lives of people living in the area at the time

All are available at Freedom bookshop.

Notes

- 1 Albert Meltzer describes attending Cable Street, at a period when the anarchist movement comprised elderly veterans
- 2 Joe Jacobs, East End anti-fascist, later a member of the libertarian group Solidarity, describes the debates he had with the Communist Party in *Out of the Ghetto* (Phoenix Press).

Details of this year's Cable Street celebrations are on www.battleofcablestreet.org.uk.

FEATURE

THE AUGUST RIOTS: CAUSES AND

Workers Solidarity Movement, the Irish anarchist organisation, have written an in-depth examination of the recent unrest in English cities

The police killing of Mark Duggan resulted in four nights of rioting across England. The immediate trigger was the killing itself, and the disrespect shown by the police to Mark's family and friends. But the riots rapidly broadened to expressions of a more general anger and alienation, an anger that was all too often unfocused and striking out at the nearest target of opportunity. This resulted in widespread destruction of resources in already deprived neighbourhoods and some anti-social attacks on bystanders. Despite this, the roots of the riots lie in the economic and political conditions of these districts, and not in 'poor parenting' or 'mindless criminality'. These conditions were created by the very politicians and business elite who now call for a return to normality and repression.

The riots happened at a particular moment, a moment when capitalism is in deep crisis. Indeed the riots occurred at the same time as yet another crash in global markets. The two competed with each other to be the lead story on the news. This is not a coincidence; the crash, and the cuts unleashed to impose its costs on ordinary people, mean not only rocketing unemployment but also the slashing of public services. And while the focus is on the estimated £200 million of destruction caused by the rioting, this pales into insignificance in comparison with the huge destruction of wealth taking place on the stock exchanges. Likewise, while the media focus has been on the hundreds of

workers and small business owners who will face unemployment because of the destruction of their workplaces, the system that bred the riot has refused work to millions – around one million people between the ages of 16 and 24 are unemployed in the UK today.

The killing of Mark Duggan

The immediate cause of the riots was the killing of Mark Duggan by armed police on Thursday 4th August, as he was travelling home in a minicab. The police initially tried to spin the story that they had killed Mark during a shoot-out but it has since emerged that the bullet that hit a police officer's radio was in fact fired by the officer who shot Duggan dead, and that there is no evidence that Mark Duggan opened fire at police officers. Over a week after the shooting the Independent Police Complaints Commission (IPCC) finally admitted that "It seems possible that we may have verbally led journalists to believe that shots were exchanged."

Demanding answers and the start of the riot

Semone Wilson and other family members went to Tottenham police station at 17.00 on Saturday 8th August, along with local community leaders, to seek answers to questions about the killing. The police failed to provide a senior officer to answer their questions and, some three and a half hours later, rioting started as the protest dispersed, apparently after riot police had beaten a 16-year-old woman in front of the crowd.

In the riots that followed that night, two police cars and a bus were set on fire and several shops were attacked. The rioting spread from Tottenham to Enfield and Brixton. Police reported they had arrested 55 people and claimed 26 officers were injured. At this point the Duggan family distanced themselves from the rioting.

The spread of the rioting

Rioting spread all across England over the following three nights, with significant disturbances being reported in Birmingham, Salford, Liverpool, Nottingham, Leicester, Manchester, Wolverhampton, West Bromwich, Gloucester, Chatham, Oxford, and Bristol. The police were quickly overwhelmed, and were lucky that for the most part the riots focused on looting and avoiding the police rather than direct confrontation and attacks on the police. This was not true everywhere. In Nottingham no less than five police stations were attacked at various points, but in most places the rioters dispersed when sizeable numbers of police appeared, to melt away and resume looting elsewhere.

The form of most of the riots made it very hard for the police to contain them. In a traditional riot that is directed at the police,



the riot typically sees large massed lines of static, heavily protected riot police in solid ranks facing off against the rioters who rain down projectiles from a distance. Both sides may advance, retreat and attempt to outflank each other, but this pattern means that the destruction and looting is relatively contained. But most of the riots that broke out after the first night were focused on looting and avoiding the police, rather than directly confronting them.

Choosing sides?

In *Homage to Catalonia*, George Orwell provided a useful general starting point for how anarchists view riots, writing "I have no particular love for the idealised 'worker' as he appears in the bourgeois Communist's mind, but when I see an actual flesh-and-blood worker in conflict with his natural enemy, the policeman, I do not have to ask myself which side I am on." What happened in London and spread elsewhere was not some idealised glorious proletarian uprising, but the very real explosion of anger that occurs when years of poverty, police repression, and racism finally reach bursting point.

Some terrible things have happened during the riots, but the politicians who weep crocodile tears for the burning of shops and the anti-social muggings and beatings are the



D CONSEQUENCES



very same people who bombed Iraq back into the stone age, and organised the war and occupation that killed hundreds of thousands. It is not necessary to see the rioters as some example of idealised workers revolting in order to see the hypocrisy and lies of the politicians and media organisations who rushed to portray the events as unusually horrific, rather than a consequence of a deeply divided society. This is not to suggest that the ‘answer’ to the riots is more pool tables in community halls to keep the youth off the street. That sort of sticking-plaster solution may well be applied in the aftermath to address the symptoms, but the cause is the deep inequality that is part and parcel of capitalism. This divide has terrible effects on the individuals who are trapped at the bottom of the wealth pyramid, often in conditions of inter-generational poverty, unemployment and exclusion.

The politics of riots

The politicians are keen to deny any political aspect of the riot, and indeed are trying to intimidate anyone who points out the obvious by accusing them of supporting arson and muggings. In this respect, this riot is quite different to the student riots of last winter and the anti-cuts riot in March. Then, the politicians were keen to suggest all the trouble was down to anarchists and

other ‘outside agitators’. This time they are keen to prevent any discussion of the reasons why there were four nights of severe rioting.

That said in many districts, the often random nature of what was attacked demonstrated a lack of collective politics beyond the desire to lash. It was not that people were disorganised. The riots did see considerable organising to loot those goods the rioters had been told to desire but often can’t afford, but otherwise there was a tendency to lash out at the very limited authority figures that are within easy reach. There are obvious parallels with the French *banlieue* riots of late 2005, when local schools and community centres were destroyed for similar reasons.

But, as we have seen, at least some had a clear political understanding of what they were up against, and there were also attacks on police vehicles and even police stations, the latter requiring collective organisation and co-ordination. Five police stations were attacked in Nottingham, with police vehicles being destroyed in Nottingham, Bristol, and Tottenham itself.

The politics of fear

The reports we have had of anarchist involvement in the rioting have tended to be of anarchists trying to stop the destruction

of local shops, but this seems to have been quite localised. But reports we have received are also at odds with the picture painted by the mainstream media, of a feral mob attacking everyone and everything in sight. Instead we have been told that bystanders and spectators are generally being ignored. There are clearly exceptions to this (there is YouTube footage of people being mugged), but given that tens of thousands have been involved in rioting and looting it seems these incidents are the exception rather than the rule, but an exception that is being used to spread fear and panic.

Alex, who we interviewed, had gone to witness the riot in his work clothes. Much of the sensationalist media coverage would have led you to believe he would inevitably be set upon and mugged but while acknowledging that things were not the same everywhere, Alex reported “The kids robbed the shops because that’s where the stuff is. They attacked the cops because they’d stop them. It was simultaneous, it was not two groups of people, one with a beef against the cops and another with light fingers – it was one group of mainly young people. They didn’t attack each other, rape people, mug people – I was able to walk freely amongst them in my shirt and slacks straight from work; lots of people who were obviously not rioting walked with the crowd in daylight – many have said the mood turned later on but actually I stayed with it with a friend, who was also not dressed to fit in, until after midnight.”

Consequences of ‘scum’

The ‘feral mob’ is a standard media story produced whenever there is large-scale breakdown of law and order. There is a need for responsibility in choosing to accept and repeat such stories, because the fear they provoke creates the atmosphere where the police can use extreme repression. The media, the spin doctors, and the talking heads have been busy advancing the idea that the people who rioted are merely thugs and criminals, in an attempt to dehumanise them. This is a dangerous phenomenon: once the rioters have been successfully made into sub-humans in the public consciousness, the opportunity for new levels of repression opens up.

The impact this process is having can be seen in the results of the YouGov poll carried out for the *Sun*. It found that 33% thought “police should be able to use firearms/live ammunition” and support for ‘less lethal’ options was far higher: “9 out of 10 respondents (90%) thought that the police should be able to use water cannon in the course of dealing with rioters. The potential use of other tactics also proved very popular with mounted police (84%), curfews (82%), tear gas (78%), tasers (72%)

FEATURE

The August Riots: causes and consequences

◀ page 6

and plastic bullets (65%) all attracting support from a large majority.”

This idiocy is all the more remarkable when we remember that the trigger for these riots was the police killing of Mark Duggan. Apparently the solution to murderous police violence is to be more murderous police violence. A ‘solution’ that, of course, will just result in further rounds of rioting, just as it did under Thatcher in the 1980s.

This dehumanisation has other consequences. With 1,500 arrested, it is now clear that huge numbers are going to be criminalised and jailed by a state desperate to reassert its authority. The first court cases that are being heard have made it clear that the judges are taking their central role of protecting capitalism and the state very seriously. Insanely harsh sentences are being imposed, like the 22 year old woman jailed for six months after she was caught with 10 packs of chewing gum.

Alongside this, the police are to get additional powers and, it can be expected, will step up attempts to control public space. There is talk of evicting anyone convicted (along with their family) from council accommodation and stopping any benefits they claim. The first eviction papers have already been served in Clapham, on a tenant whose son has been charged with participating in the riots. Even in right-wing terms this is sheer lunacy – how exactly would a homeless ex-prisoner with no income be expected to live? Just how alienated might such a person feel from the rest of society? What happens when, in a few months, hundreds of them are released with no home to return to, no benefits, and it being next to impossible to find work? The state expects to get away with this because so much of the population has joined in the dehumanisation of the rioters. The end result will inevitably be even deeper exclusion and resentment and, with this response, next time there will be an even more unfocused lashing out.

Riots are often contradictory

The reality is riots are often unfocused expressions of anger. People are smart enough to know that they have no stake in society as it currently is set up. What they have



witnessed is inter-generational poverty and lack of opportunities. As it happened to their forefathers, it is happening to them. Social mobility is a myth which no-one is buying, because it is the capitalist equivalent of a pot of gold at the end of the rainbow. The game is rigged and they always end up losing. The political system does not cater, care, or listen to the people who riot. No-one is listening to them, no-one is speaking for them, and certainly no-one is planning to invest in their future. When you can't see a future for yourself, and when you have not seen a future for your parents or your grandparents materialise, torching a building or looting a shop is a cry to be heard, a cry for survival.

In March 1968 Martin Luther King delivered that speech to a hostile audience at an American High School during which he talked of the violent riots that had shaken US cities during the preceding summers, riots that were to culminate in an orgy of destruction following his own assassination a short time later. He was a pacifist but he still proclaimed that “... it is not enough for me to stand before you tonight and condemn riots. It would be morally irresponsible for me to do that without, at the same time, condemning the contingent, intolerable conditions that exist in our society. These conditions are the things that cause

individuals to feel that they have no other alternative than to engage in violent rebellions to get attention. And I must say tonight that a riot is the language of the unheard.”

What will change?

The political masters are playing a dangerous game. They want to spin these riots as nothing but ‘mindless’ thuggery. But people have been watching the streets of various cities become the platform for change over the last six months, from Tunis to Cairo, from Damascus to Madrid. Our rulers certainly do not want to see these riots turn into that – a massive display of public defiance and civil unrest against the existing system, a system where inequality and injustice are rampant, and the desperate *need* for something else. Yet it is our duty as citizens of the world to turn these displays of anger into a directed political fight for change.

The riots have lain down a marker around which everyone is choosing a side. Do you want the ‘security’ of the all powerful Big Brother state that can keep the rich safe in their beds while the poor are literally thrown on the street or, if they resist, into prison? A state that can make sure that those who cannot afford the pretty baubles will be kept at a distance, restricted to staring through plate glass or serving those who have the readies to pay? Perhaps with enough water cannon, baton rounds, and CCTV the status quo can be preserved.

To return to MLK, if a riot is not the answer, then what is? With confidence, we say it is certainly not more of the same. If we want freedom then we must organise to fight for freedom and convince others to fight alongside us. Together we have the power. The question is, will we organise to use it?



A pamphlet including the full unedited WSM article, plus interviews with anarchists and radicals involved in the riots, will be available at this year's anarchist bookfair. Get your copy at the Freedom stall.

PRISON NEWS

Filling Time

Time all alone in a little white room, window barred

And a one way locked door

Two hours a day to make calls, have a shower,
Clean your cell, throw a mop over the floor

Reading a book, or answering mail, fuzzy TV
With nothing much on

Looking at photos of family and friends then
An hour of association

Visits from loved ones, three times a month bring
Emotions you try and hold down

Waking from dreaming, it dawns where you are
And that dozy smile turns to a frown

Spending an hour in the queue for the phone
Just to get someone's answer machine

Return to your cell with a feast fit for pigs
Smoke some roll ups and stare at the screen

Gangster crap blares from the fella next door
There's no peace in this place night or day

Try to make friends but it's hard here inside
'Cos these people give nothing away

Good and bad screws, some that help, some
that don't,

All that moan that they haven't the staff
What the fuck are they doing twenty-two
hours a day

While we're locked in the cell, what a laugh!

Dream of the day when the prison gate slams
I can leave these bad memories behind

Until then it's just simply a matter of time
And a captive but free state of mind

Sean Cregan

Sean is one of the six anti-fascists who are serving prison sentences for confronting neo-Nazis at Welling station, South London, before a Blood & Honour gig in 2009. Please send them letters of support at the addresses given below. They may each receive postage stamps and Postal Orders. Thomas has written a public statement from inside prison which can be read on the Freedom website (freedompress.org.uk) and Sean has written for Leeds ABC (leedsabc.org.uk) on the pitfalls of putting on solidarity benefits. We encourage everyone to support those who are currently inside because of their political actions and beliefs.

- Andy Baker A5768CE, HMP Highpoint, Stradishall, Newmarket, Suffolk CB8 9YG
- Thomas Blak A5728CE, HMP Wormwood Scrubs, PO Box 757, Du Cane Road, London W12 OAE
- Sean Cregan A5769CE, HMP Coldingley, Shaftesbury Road, Bisley, Woking, Surrey GU24 9EX
- Phil De Souza A5766CE, HMP Elmley, Church Road, Eastchurch, Sheerness, Kent ME12 4DZ
- Ravinder Gill A5770CE, HMP Wayland, Griston, Thetford, Norfolk IP25 6RL
- Austen Jackson A5729CE, HMP Wormwood Scrubs, PO Box 757, Du Cane Road, London W12 OAE

Attica Prison riot

It was inevitable that the 10th anniversary of 9-11 would be ubiquitous in September's media, just as inevitably there would be scant coverage of a different, though still significant, anniversary of a rather different atrocity perpetrated on American soil on almost the same day 30 years earlier – the brutal ending of the Attica Rebellion.

For four days in September 1971 more than 1,000 prisoners took control of the Attica Correctional Facility, a supermax penitentiary in New York State. They set up committees to negotiate their demands with the authorities, to organise food, bedding, sanitation, security and health care for the prisoners and for the 42 prison officers and civilian staff that they had taken hostage. Mass debates took place on aims and possible outcomes of the rebellion and on the wave of rebellion and resistance sweeping America, both inside and outside of its prison walls.

At the time, Attica was grossly overcrowded – designed to hold 1,200 prisoners, it held 2,225. Banged-up 14 to 16 hours a day, prisoners were allowed only one shower a week and one roll of toilet paper per person per month. Family visits were conducted through a mesh screen; medical care was minimal; parole inequitable; and racism all pervasive – the governor ran an overtly racist regime, where two-thirds of Attica's prisoners were Black and Puerto Rican and all 383 guards were white, and the best jobs went to the white prisoners.

Despite this, there was a growing sense of solidarity across racial lines following the issuing of an inmate manifesto in early 1971 setting forth a series of moderate demands that had been presented to the prison authorities, backed up by a peaceful 10-day prison work strike, together with a day-long hunger strike and protests involving 800 prisoners following the assassination of George Jackson two weeks before the uprising.

The spark that started the uprising itself was quite a small incident: the rescuing of an inmate from a prospective beating to be meted out by guards in retaliation for the throwing of a soup can at one of their number. Guards attempted a lockdown in retaliation

and half the prison population rebelled and seized control of the prison and hostages. Negotiations started based around five core demands, including amnesty from reprisals and the presence of a team of named observers to mediate negotiations, plus a series of 'practical proposals' based on the earlier manifesto (an immediate end to all racial discrimination, the right to a prison labour union, the removal of the warden, etc.), many of which the authorities were planning on introducing anyway.

Negotiations stalled and on the 13th, whilst National Guard helicopters sprayed tear gas into the prison yard, 450 National Guardsmen, prison guards and police assaulted the prison, indiscriminately firing up to 4,500 rounds of ammunition in the process. They killed 29 inmates and 10 hostages in the process (though they initially claimed that nine guards had had their throats cut by the prisoners). The surviving prisoners, many

We are men. We are not beasts, and we do not intend to be beaten or driven as such. (L.D. Barkely, a 21 year old prisoner serving time for breaching parole by driving without a licence. He died in the assault, shot 15 times at point-blank range.)

with untreated gunshot wounds, were forced to strip naked and lie face down in the mud of A Yard before being beaten. Those identified as ringleaders, marked with a white chalked cross on their backs, were singled-out for special treatment, i.e. torture. The remainder were beaten and forced to crawl across broken glass.

Thus ended the bloodiest prison riot in American history. Despite the massacre, only one state trooper was ever convicted (for reckless endangerment), whilst 64 inmates faced 1,300 separate charges. The state never accepted any blame for the deaths and the public remain barred from the riot files, which are exempt from state public access laws or sealed by court order.



COMMENT

ABOUT FREEDOM

ANGEL ALLEY

Freedom bookshop is proud to be a part of the new initiative Alliance of Radical Booksellers (ARB) instigated by Housmans.

Up until the mid 1980s there were scores of radical bookshops in Britain – every major town had one. Many of these booksellers worked together under the mutual banner of the ‘Federation of Radical Booksellers’. The Federation acted as a support network for its members, helping with a variety of practical aspects of bookselling, as well as providing a sense of community. Sadly, as the book trade hit hard times, the Federation collapsed.

The book trade has been in a slow decline for a long time now, particularly after the gradual collapse up of the Net Book Agreement throughout the early 1990s. The NBA regulated book prices, meaning that booksellers large or small could sell at the same price, and on the same margins.

Today we are left with a fraction of the bookshops that once flourished, with both small independents and corporate chains struggling to stay afloat. Radical booksellers have suffered the same fate as the mainstream shops, and many fine and wonderful shops have now closed their doors.

However all is not lost, and there are still some wonderful bookshops out there working hard to keep progressive books on our high streets. The Alliance of Radical Booksellers hopes to pick up where the Federation left off: as an organisation which allows its member booksellers to support each other, promote one another's work, and sell books together. Plans are already in motion for the Alliance members to take part in bookfairs together, and to launch an ARB literary prize.

If you would like to find out more, get in touch with Nik (nik@housmans.com).

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NEXT ISSUE

The next issue will be dated November 2011 and the last day to get copy to us for that issue will be Thursday 13th October. You can send your articles to us by email to copy@freedompress.org.uk or by post addressed to ‘The Editors’, Freedom, 84b Whitechapel High Street, London E1 7QX.

A sideways look

by SVARTFROSK

The ongoing attempt to privatise the National Health Service, or whatever euphemism is being used for the wasteful ‘internal market’ this week, is merely the latest installment in an ongoing programme that began in the 1970s. Capitalism was suffering one of its periodic crises and responded to it by doing the only thing it can do, expand. It expanded in two ways – by privatising and by increasing the area directly under the rule of private profit. I’m not suggesting that the enterprises previously run by the state weren’t capitalist at all, as capitalism is about more than profit, it is a set of social relationships. But privatisation introduced the profit motive into areas of the economy previously thought to be exempt from them. Neoliberal theory believes that the state should do very little, with some radical exponents of it approaching an anarchist view of the state. The US has probably gone furthest of the major economies towards this model – its prisons have long been run by for-profit corporations, who lobby for harsher laws and longer sentences, and now even the military is opened up to competition from firms like Blackwater and Raytheon.

As the last few years have shown, there is no steady-state form of capitalism – it will grow or it will die. And once demand has dampened down because of recession, along come the ideological reasons to remove functions from the state. As an anarchist I know the state is not the best provider of services, but it does even out the awful outcomes we’d suffer under pure capitalism. If you disagree, just look at American healthcare, or British railways.

The privatisation recommended by the West once the Soviet Union collapsed paved the way for a small number of oligarchs to massively enrich themselves, while the general population watched their living standards plummet. It’s not a far-fetched prediction that the same will happen in Libya now that a western-friendly regime is in power. Gaddafi

might have been a murderous dictator, but he was his own man. Libya could soon be heading the way of Nigeria, Angola or Equatorial Guinea.

Governments of all stripes have given NHS work to private companies, often signing ridiculous contracts meaning the companies got paid even if there was no work. There’s plenty of evidence that some of them cherry-pick the easy work, leaving the expensive operations to the NHS.

Aside from losing the goodwill of health workers by selling them out to the lowest bidder, the subsidies required in most private services once they are the *only* provision are enormous. Look how much care home costs have rocketed (and standards fallen) since the whole sector was taken over by private equity vultures.

The NHS is far from being a decent employer – there are regular employment tribunals that tell of bullying and a long hours culture. Whistle-blowers have been disgracefully hounded, something that gets little coverage outside of *Private Eye* – presumably the rest of the media rely on private health insurance, which is now standard in a surprising number of professions. The government’s reforms are aimed at fragmenting the service and making it less attractive to the middle classes, with the ultimate aim being to abolish it for all but those on benefits. Then it really will be hopeless, as the economies of scale inherent in it become lost in a maze of ever-increasing insurance premiums.

What can be done? A defence of the NHS without recognising its flaws is daft. But all the same, the principle of free healthcare needs to be defended. An alliance of health workers with, well, almost everybody, ought to do the trick. A vote for Labour isn’t going to help – they started it all. Instead, we will need to take direct action, such as occupying private health care companies and backing strikes against service closures.



Northern Anarchist Network

The Northern Anarchist Network plans to facilitate a booklet to mark the 200th anniversary of the Luddite uprisings in April 2012. We are looking for contributions, chiefly original articles and artwork, but any kind of work that fits into the printed format will be considered (i.e. poetry, creative writing). Articles of any reasonable length will be considered. We plan to have the booklet published by April 2012, and will be seeking expressions of interest until the end of October 2011. We request that a first draft is submitted by the end of November 2011 at the very latest.

2011 and 2012 sees the 200th anniversary of the Luddite uprisings in the midlands and north of England. After an initial sudden outburst in Spring 1811 amongst framework-knitters in Nottinghamshire, discontent gestated until November 1811, when the self-proclaimed 'Army of Redressers' emerged once again, this time proclaiming allegiance to the mythical avatar 'General Ludd'. Though the outbreaks were initially located in and around Nottinghamshire and were concerned chiefly with industrial disputes, they soon entered into parts of South Derbyshire and Leicestershire, before extended further north to Lancashire and Cheshire amongst weavers and most notably amongst the cloth-dressers of West Yorkshire in 1812, by which time the uprisings had taken on a wholly different character: opposed to the Napoleonic War, tyranny and the direction that a particularly militant version of *laissez-faire* capitalism had begun to take, using new technology to drive down wages and break the power of highly organised workers. Though the uprisings continued in a muted form all the way into 1816 in the Midlands, the back was broken in the north by early 1813, with show-trials, mass executions, deportations and the virtual occupation of the region by 12,000 troops, more than were currently engaged in conflict on the continent in the Napoleonic Wars.

The Northern Anarchist Network (NAN) is a regional body of both unaffiliated and organised anarchists. They publish the journal *Northern Voices* twice yearly. Contact NAN via email: northernvoices@hotmail.com <http://northernvoicesmag.blogspot.com/>

Kate Sharpley Library

The Story of the Iron Column: Militant Anarchism in the Spanish Civil War by Abel Paz has now been printed as a Kate Sharpley Library-AK Press co-publication. The Iron Column are either celebrated (or notorious) as among the most stubborn fighters not only against the fascist revolt but also in defence of the Spanish Revolution's gains. Those gains, the (partial) destruction of state power and the creation of free collectives, were under attack not just by the Nationalists, but also by forces on the Republican side. Using historical documents and the testimony of column members, Paz tells the story of one militia column, but puts it in context of the fight against both the fascist revolt and the Stalinist attack on the Spanish working class. The book contains the original text of the series of articles by an "uncontrollable" from the Iron Column later translated (with some poetic licence) as "A Day Mournful and Overcast". It also contains appendices on the Iron Column's newspaper, members, provisioning, and an index. Copies will be available in the UK from AK Press.

The Kate Sharpley Library exists to preserve and promote anarchist history. We preserve the output of the anarchist movement, mainly in the form of books, pamphlets, newspaper, leaflets and manuscripts, but also badges, recordings, photographs, etc. These appear in our quarterly bulletin or regularly published pamphlet.

<http://www.katesharpleylibrary.net/>

Helen Harris

On Saturday 24th September family, friends and comrades of Helen Harris gathered, on what would have been Helen's 40th birthday,

for an evening of chat, music and food in celebration of her life. On 13th May of this year, Derry had lost one of its finest daughters, following a lengthy battle with cystic fibrosis. Helen Harris was without a doubt an inspiration to many who knew her, a friend and comrade who had the privilege and opportunity to travel alongside of her during the 39 short but eventful years of her life. Helen was a radical, a feminist and anarchist.

Helen believed that fundamental change was necessary to build a more just and equal world and this commitment was evident in her work with the Pat Finucane Centre, Foyle Ethical Investment Committee and her activism on the issues of women political prisoners and the arms trade. Through her research, her publications and her interviews on the role of women in the prisoners' struggle, Helen made an important contribution and her research material remains invaluable, as many of the women whose stories were included are now dead. Most recently she was instrumental in the formation of Women Activists for Social Justice, a network of women in Derry and Donegal concerned about social justice and the future of feminism in Ireland.

<http://derryanarchists.blogspot.com/>

Belfast Anarchist History

Historian Mairtin O'Cathain's *Wee Black Booke* has now been added to Workers Solidarity Movement online archive for you to read or download. In it he pulls together reports of anarchism in and around Belfast in the years from 1867 to 1973. With no local movement for much of this period, the pamphlet looks at some individuals whose political activity merited mention in the media of the time. O'Cathain's work stops before the emergence in the late 1970s of the groups from which contemporary anarchist organisations Workers Solidarity Movement and Organise! can trace their roots.

<http://www.wsm.ie>

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GETTING ACTIVE

A YOUNG ANARCHIST WRITES...

I don't know when I first came across anarchism to be honest. Many sources spring to mind; the lyrics of Immortal Technique, the Zeitgeist films and my results on the political compass test which made me Google 'anarcho syndicalism'. I also remember writing 'fuck the system' on my hand and wearing a Che Guevara (Stalinist turned pop art icon) tee shirt that I still guiltily have to this day. But I, like everyone, had to start somewhere.

I will not pretend I have progressed far in my journey since, well, I don't know when. However, I am content with my current location in this long tunnel, which seems to have a light at the end. This light, emanating from red and black stars, that flickers at times, but shines very brightly at others.

My political life currently revolves around the forums at libcom.org and my A level politics class at school. As of yet, I have only been to one demonstration, the June 30th marches and protests. I have yet to read all the classics; Bakunin, Rocker, Kropotkin, the founder of this publication, and know all of the Marxist jargon. I like to think I have some understanding so far of the nature of capitalism and the nature of the alternative we propose to it, which is apparently enough to make me now consider calling someone a Trotskyite or a Leninist, a feared insult. The journey has had its ups and downs, both emotionally and intellectually.

Intellectually, anarchism can liberate you and change your whole world view. Anarchism has been a fascinating epiphany, a revelation. I hope others have experienced the same thing, because it feels really good.

Emotionally, it's a double-edged sword. Casual passing comments made by friends can become a depressing reminder of the effectiveness of the brainwashing coming from the state. The media, perhaps the state's favourite puppet, is everywhere, so it can be a constant and relentless source of torment. It becomes difficult to separate people from their politics, beliefs that they often don't know they even have. Having such a fundamental disagreement in principal with what is now the norm of the whole world can give the impression that I am always depressed and hate everything. But at the best of times, I can be so passionate about how good things could be I can't begin to explain it. So overall, my experiences coming from the outside in haven't been perfect, but what is?

Freedom welcomes articles from anarchists on how they got involved in the movement.



Much loved and much missed, The Common Place radical social centre in Leeds. New project Wharf Chambers (see below) is now operating from the building to reinvigorate the radical social scene of the city.

It's perhaps indicative of the general health of the anarchist movement when new autonomous groups begin emerging and become active in their area. We are always happy to see new initiatives develop and even happier to promote them in the paper. If you are involved in an anarchist organisation, initiative or event get in touch and let us know what you're up to.

- **North East Anarchists** are a group of class struggle anarchists organising with the modest intention of turning the world upside down. As they say: Everything is wrong and we want to put it right! They came together earlier this year in an attempt to create an anarchist presence in the north east of England and since then the group has been meeting regularly and taking part in political activity across the region, including Sunderland's carnival against the cuts, the Durham Miners Gala and holding a memorial service for those who lost their lives fighting fascism in Spain. They encourage all anarchists in the north east to get in touch, see <http://neanarchists.com>

- **Bedford bypass** is a new online agitational tour-de-force. Started as an attempt to hold their locally elected representatives to account it is now striking out as a blog that stems very much from an anarchist tradition, a belief in mutual support and that by sharing information and supporting each other we can make an impact. The group have so far got issues raised in the local paper and aim to increase their presence and influence in the area. Anyone in the Bedford/Cambridge area who wants to get active and get angry give them a shout. See <http://bedfordbypass.wordpress.com>

- **Three Counties Anti-Fascist Alliance** is a new initiative in the Gloucestershire, Herefordshire and Worcestershire area. They exist to confront fascist activity and

organisation wherever it may occur within the region, utilising a wide range of tactics including information gathering and leafleting through to pickets and direct action, whatever's best suited to oppose fascism at any given time. Unlike other 'anti-fascist' groups they are non-hierarchical and believe in grassroots organisation and will not work with any state-affiliated groups. They are not associated with Searchlight/Hope not Hate or Unite Against Fascism in any way.

If you have anything to say, contact them via email at 3cafa@riseup.net or visit their website at <http://3cafa.wordpress.com/about/>

- With rioters getting massively disproportionate custodial sentences, the state targeting of anti-fascist street activities and mass arrests of anti-cuts and environmental activists, prisoner support is once more becoming an essential activity and political necessity. Which makes the new **London Anarchist Black Cross** all the more vital. There's already been a benefit with folk legend David Rovics to raise money for the group to begin supporting prisoners in earnest. To get involved email london_abc@riseup.net

- From the ashes of the much loved and much missed Common Place radical social centre in Leeds comes **Wharf Chambers** to reinvigorate the radical social scene of the city. Occupying the same building space as the Common Place, the new project operates as a not-for-profit workers co-op. All licensable events will be managed by the members club (membership costs just £1) and members will have democratic control of the club, making a range of decisions from what kinds of events they want to see happen, through to which beers are stocked in the bar.

To get involved contact wharfchambers@gmail.com Wharf Chambers, 23 Wharf Street, Leeds, LS2 7EQ <http://www.wharfchambers.org/>

Defending a fine art

Anarchist groups in this country have traditionally had a strange attitude towards the martial arts. This is in part been due to the inherent hierarchies and replications of macho/homophobic behaviour that are assumed to exist in gyms.

In terms of anarchism there is a clash when rejecting hierarchy in political life and accepting the sometimes oppressive relationship



between coach and student. A relationship some are happy to accept when wrapped up as an 'exotic' non-western and non-gendered partnership such as in the traditional martial arts of bujikan and capoeira. Both are not only physically highly unrealistic for the average person to successfully practice but also operate under a strict gendered hierarchy.

The revolution against the more traditionalist (or impractical) martial arts kicked its way into the mainstream in the early 70s through the writings and practice of Bruce Lee, who advocated a free style of fighting based on what worked best rather than what was historically practiced. This new philosophy, free of the social constructed limitations on practice allowed more people to begin practicing martial arts. This trend was also beginning in Brazil where jujitsu was being developed outside of Japan by the Gracie family.

We see the current practice of MMA (Mixed Martial Arts) as part of this development in martial arts, a move away from the rigid hierarchies developed under feudalism to a more practical understanding of how the human body works. We see MMA as achieving this through different styles co-

operating (judo with boxing or wrestling with kick boxing).

In that last year we as a collective of like-minded people, not only from an anarchist background, decided to start a martial arts group. We have no head coach, but rather a collective of people with experience helping train others for free; mutual aid was the main idea. The collective has grown in many different ways, with people young and old, male and female, LGBT training together. The training is split into three. The first hour for people with who had never trained with us, the second hour people who have trained together for a period of time and feel comfortable with hitting each other a bit harder, and the last hour is a sparring class. This does not appeal all, but we found people with and without previous experience of martial arts are happy to try as our only motto is 'no winners, no egos, no fascists'.

Lucky for us we have a place like the London Action Resource Centre to train... feel free to come down and train. All welcome

For people interested in getting involved in the martial arts group contact *Freedom* at copy@freedompress.org.uk and we will pass on your details.

It's kicking off!

◀ page 24

'prawn sandwich' brigade gaining grassroots recognition for their stance against the corporate takeover of the beautiful game. Most vocal, literally, being FC United of Manchester who have christened their outlook 'punk football'. The other is fan ownership of clubs within the football league with supporters unions like Spirit of Shankly expressing overtly political agendas of how the game should be

organised for the benefit of the fans and not for profit.

Beyond the professional game, anarchists have always been involved in football. Bradford's 1-in-12 Club used to organise regular Mayday football tournaments, and today they still field the 1-in-12 AFC. There is also the Easton Cowboys and Cowgirls, a community based sports club based in Bristol who organised an alternative world

cup in 1998 and were the first European team to travel to Chiapas in Southern Mexico to play a series of tournaments against the Zapatistas.

As for the sports page, anyone can write articles and get involved. Whether you play, support or just watch, we know that sports fans are the most passionate and opinionated of people... so get opinionating.



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FREEDOM fortnightly ISSN 0016 0504

REVIEWS

WHAT'S ON

SEPTEMBER

■ **30th National Day of Action** against Atos Origin. Atos Origin are responsible for the harassment of sick and disabled claimants and they will have a stall at the BMJ Recruitment Fair to recruit medical staff to carry out their assessments of everyone receiving incapacity benefit. Meet at 12 noon at the Business Design Centre, 52 Upper Street, Islington N1 0QH, see <http://benefitclaimantsfightback.wordpress.com> for more information on this and other events across the UK.

OCTOBER

■ **2nd Westminster Peace procession**, meet 1.30pm outside Westminster Cathedral, Victoria Street, London SW1P 1QW, for details see <http://www.peacestrike.org.uk/> or call 07886662091.

■ **3rd Stop the next generation of nuclear power stations** with an all-day non-violent blockade at Hinkley Point nuclear power station in Somerset from 7am. In the days before the blockade, there will be local actions in Bridgwater, a camp and local accommodation for people over the weekend and non-violence training will be provided, for further details see <http://stopnewnuclear.org.uk/>

■ **6th, 13th, 20th and 27th** London group of The Anarchist Federation meets weekly on Thursday evenings at Freedom Bookshop 84b Whitechapel High Street, London E1 7QX. We always have a discussion as well as plan activities and the spreading of our activities. If you would like to attend please email london@afed.org.uk

■ **8th and 9th** The Land Is Ours autumn gathering 2011 at Monkton Wyld Court, near Axminster, Dorset – enjoy a feast of inspirational talks, open discussions, workshops and evening entertainment in the pleasantly eccentric setting of Monkton Wyld, you'll need to book in advance at book in advance, contact info@tlio.org.uk or 01297 561359, or for further details see <http://www.tlio.org.uk/>

■ **8th and 9th** Rebellious Media Conference in central London, speakers include Noam Chomsky, John Pilger, Laurie Penny, Michael Albert, Jessica Azulay and many more. The venue on Saturday 8th October will be The Institute of Education, 20 Bedford Way, London WC1H 0AL and on Sunday 9th October will be Friends House, 173 Euston Road, London NW1 2BJ, for more information and tickets call 020 7278 3344 or see <http://rebelliousmediaconference.org/>

■ **22nd London Anarchist Bookfair** with stalls, books, pamphlets, magazines, meetings, films, discussions, cabaret, food and much more at Bancroft Building, Queen Mary, University Of London, Mile End Road, London, E1 4NS (Mile End/Stepney Green tube) from 10am until 7pm, email mail@anarchistbookfair.org.uk or see www.anarchistbookfair.org.uk for details.

TELEVISION

Street Summer

Channel 4, August 12th–14th

A predictably lazy mashup of commercial pop and tabloid pap seasoned with occasional ghostly echoes of grit, *Street Summer* purported to faithfully depict the centrality of 'urban' culture to mainstream society today – its trailer featuring actor Idris Elba mugging the vernacular to hype 'how hip-hop changed the world', thus being 'the revolution that succeeded'. The dishearteningly superficial tone was cemented by wince-inducing *Street Dance* Pop Idol contests – their intergalactic distance from the communal working-class origins of street styles encapsulated by legendary New York B-boy Crazy Legs having to explain that routines might draw on passions borne of the aspirants' life experiences. The short film *One Man Walking* did borrow choreography from patterns of physical expression responding to urban alienation, even if now reconfigured for passively cerebral audiences as serious art, whereas the *Concrete Circus* portraits of professional parkour, skateboarding and BMX cycling never linked their performativity to any grass-roots milieu bar consumers and fans.

The visual arts strand also prioritised the vicissitudes of celebrity careers, following Banksy's *Exit Through the Gift Shop* (reviewed in *Freedom*, 8th May 2010) with his *Antics Roadshow*'s random amusing stunt interventions in public spaces. *Graffiti Wars* finally introduced negativity into otherwise self-congratulatory equations, chronicling the feud between renowned London tagger King Robbo and Banksy – the latter shown to consistently steal from and shit on rivals in cornering street art markets. Embarrassment then peaked with *How Hip-Hop Changed the World*, whose Top 50 'moments' merely jumbled events piquing the media shock-horror and novelty machine into a cretinous narrative of corporate absorptions of music, fashion and language producing a few Black moguls and politicians pretending to

be down with the yoof. If not for Akala's thoughtful *Life of Rhyme*, charting UK rap lyricism from reggae through grime, you'd hardly guess from *Street Summer* that hip-hop's global resonance as an artform of the powerless and dispossessed best explains its ubiquity.

Spectacular Coincidences

The series screened on the weekend after August's riots, giving a convenient opportunity to compare its caricatures with reality on the mean streets – since those who taunted the police with their burnin' and lootin' surely are the UK's 'hip-hop generation' in the same sense that their counterparts in 1992's LA Uprising were. This had already been hinted loud and proud in December's Education demonstrations, notably by the EMA contingents whose soundtracks helped inspire the most rebellious tendencies, and is evident in a host of YouTube efforts in our present riotous backlash as the feral rich's government and media lackeys resume racist norms. And if pre-insurrectionary apprenticeships should birth more consciously organised, less suicidally nihilistic carnivalesques, you can bet the neighbourly MCs and DJs will promptly furnish necessary street reportage, solidarity and embedded reflection – continuing proof, if needed, of the vitality and urgency of the vibrant living culture *Street Summer* was all but blind to, in its haste to privilege the individual pursuit of 15 minutes of fame and 30 pieces of silver.

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



QUIZ ANSWERS

1. Pierre-Joseph Proudhon who, in 1846's *System of Economic Contradictions*, stated that the utopian socialists wished fraternity only as long as they were "the big brother and you the little."
2. *Prevent*, a government booklet designed to "stop people becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism" wants to tackle those "groups and speakers who

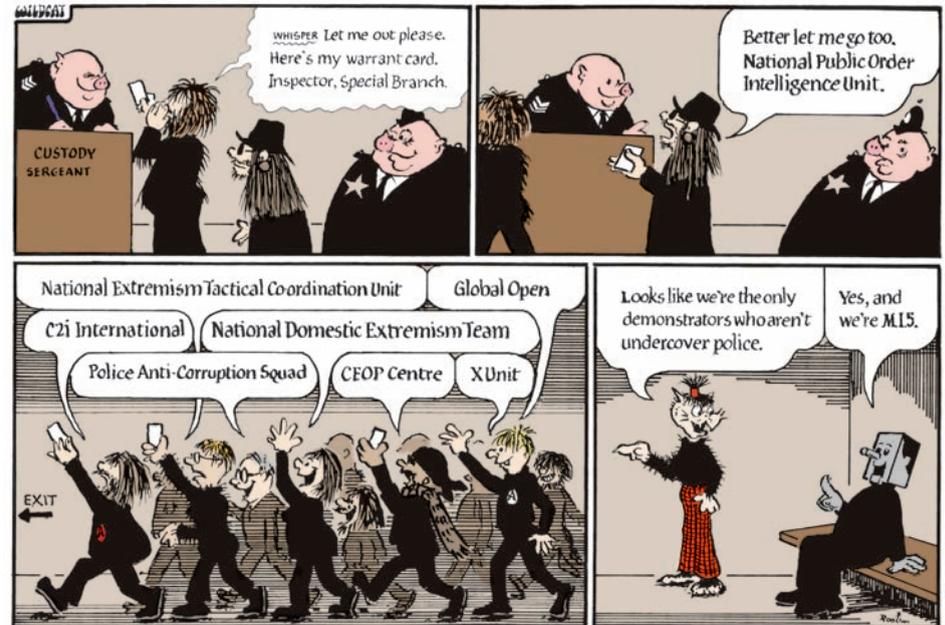
- deliberately and carefully stay within the law".
3. Suffragette Sylvia Pankhurst, she also said: "What is the use of demonstrating for freedom and going unarmed?" She was arrested shortly afterwards.
4. He got four weeks for "misuse of petrol coupons" that had been passed to him by a fan.

In praise of Wildcat

This is the seventh collection of Wildcat cartoons from Freedom Press. The first collection was published in 1985 (still available after three reprints), and of course there was a blurb in *Freedom* (blurb: word coined by Gelett Burgess, meaning laudatory matter on the dust jacket of a book). The anarchist writer Tony Gibson (aka the eminent psychologist H.B. Gibson) responded with the following review

Freedom has already announced and reviewed Donald Room's *Wildcat Anarchist Comics*, and it is stated that 'serious argument is more or less absent since our artist believes that "a cartoon is no place for intellectual respectability"'. But can we not have serious argument, devastatingly presented, without 'intellectual respectability'? The medium through which the message is conveyed is not intellectual, but the message is all the more powerful by being delivered as a blow in the belly. The serious argument is delivered in the guise of knockabout farce.

The generation of successful cartoons is a most difficult art, and Donald Room displays a rare talent. How his work will stand in the history of satirical cartoons alongside that of Rowlandson, Gillray, Low and others, cannot be assessed in the present age, but I suggest that it is outstanding and that Freedom Press enjoy a rare privilege in being allowed to publish it. His cartoons are deceptively simple and, to say the least, disturbing. True satire makes us both laugh and weep, and carry away a lingering sense of unease at the purity of our own motives



and that of the causes we espouse. Superficially these cartoons poke fun at the usual banal targets, but here is a deeper satire of anarchists and the anarchist movement. The Wildcat is anti-authoritarian, yet put in certain situations it becomes a nasty little tyrant – just like you and me. These cartoons could only have been devised by someone who has been through the mill of the anarchist movement; known all its splendours and miseries, its petty squabbles, its mis-directed enthusiasms, its ennobling moments. None of the 'political' movements – Trots, Commies, etc. – could have produced such cartoons, for such movements are designed to preserve the illusions they foster, and they attack only targets outside themselves.

Anarchism is quite different. Wildcat says, having thrown a bomb, 'Who said anything about anybody listening? All I said was I would attract attention'.

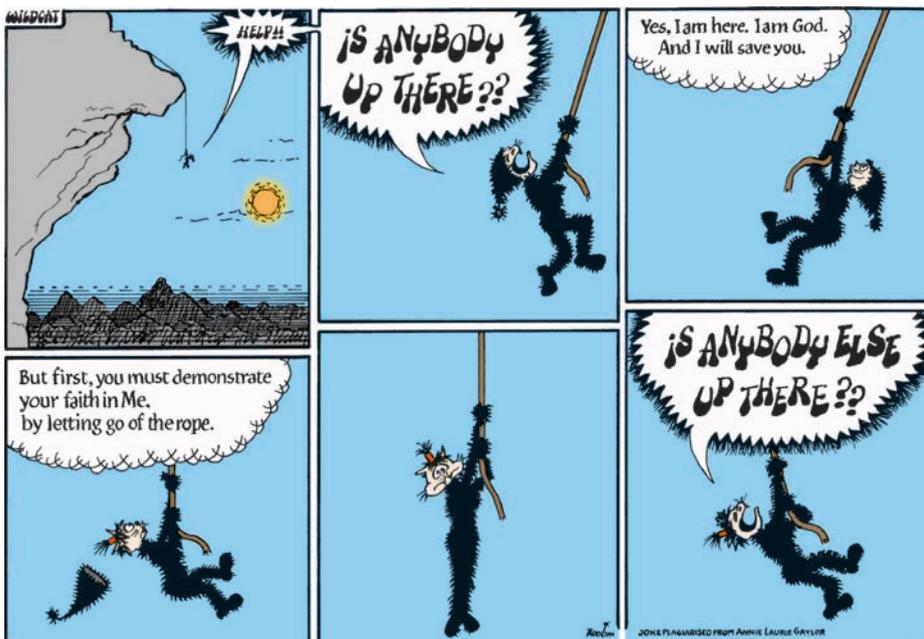
The Free Range Egghead is a marvellous character; he and the Wildcat have maintained the anarchist movement ever since it has been in existence, and I am sure that they were prominent in the Diggers movement and among the Levellers. The Pig who rides upon a Sheep will always be with us, and sometimes we wish the sheep would run faster when our *own* flats are being burgled and vandalised, don't we? These two animals are common to all lands in that relationship, yet with Room's animals there is evidently quite a cosy, British relationship.

I urge you to buy this book, but do not imagine that it will give you a nice, smug glow to see all your favourite Aunt Sallies mocked at. A hearty laugh at the first reading, but at the second or perhaps the third, you will appreciate that there is more being mocked than perhaps you bargained for. It will certainly be read in Britain and abroad far more widely than in the tiny anarchist movement, and will attain an international reputation.

Tony Gibson

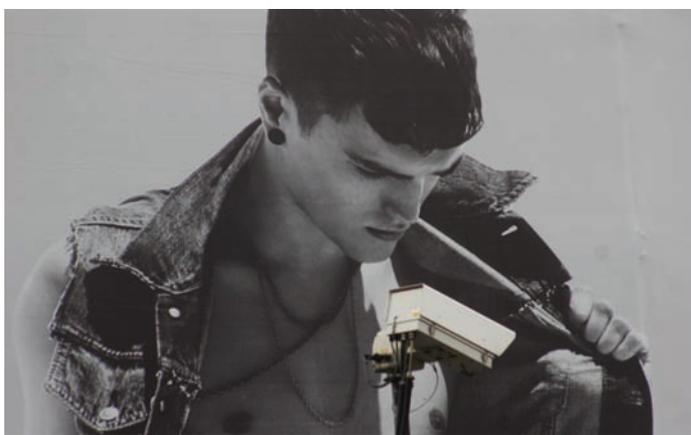
Some Wildcat characters

- The Pussycat: Angry, impulsive, rowdy anarchist (appears in most episodes, sometimes uncharacteristically peaceable).
- The Free Range Egghead. Thoughtful, analytical anarchist.
- The Mystery. Easy to draw. Appears when story calls for a third anarchist.
- The Butterfly. Hippo-shaped anarchist. Enthusiastic but not reliable.
- The Pinhead. Highly intellectual, verbose anarchist.



THE ARTS

LONDON IS A WOR



Review

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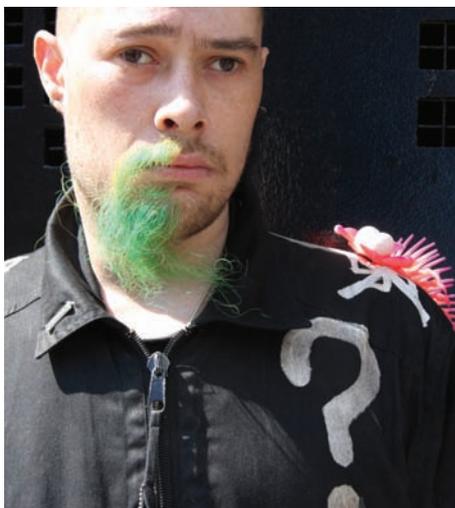
- The Immaculate Rodent. Conceited anarchist who belittles other anarchists.
- The Kewpie Doll. Little girl whose naïve remarks are sometimes insightful.
- Mr Block. Humble man who believes what he is told by the powerful. Invented by Ernest Riebe for Industrial Worker, Chicago 1912.
- The Rebus. Hog-faced policeman. A rebus is a visual pun, in this case on the name of Quintin Hogg, who was British law minister in 1980.
- The General. Soldier who wants wealth spent on weaponry and destroyed in warfare.
- Bomb. Spherical fuse bomb with legs, symbol of weaponry and war.
- The Reverend. Talks banal rubbish with air of authority.
- Sheep. Nods in wise agreement at banal rubbish.
- Man with hat. Argues with anarchists, but pays no attention to what they say.
- The Boss. Rich, ruthless, cunning employer or ruler.

Any ideas? Donald Room welcomes suggestions for Wildcat strips, and publicly acknowledges the authors of ideas which are used, on the drawings themselves. Send them to wildcat@freedompress.org.uk.

Wildcat Keeps Going, cartoons by Donald Room, coloured by Jayne Clementson, published by Freedom Press, £6 (available for the introductory price of £5 from Freedom Bookshop, by mail order from Freedom Press, 84b Whitechapel High Street, London E1 7QX or from our website at www.freedompress.org.uk).

WORLD CLASS CITY

Max Reeves' photographs use London as a setting to investigate the intersections and interstitials between life and myth, revealing the complexity of London's psycho-geographical terrain. A place of isolation where the individual is under constant invigilation, where the state tools are ever deployed against them. But where individuality is constantly in defiance and freedom ever resilient. The actuality of the city morphs into a documentation of personal and universal mythology populated with curious characters, palimpsests, crows, protestors, children apophenia and reportage. Control and authority versus the freedom of the individual and transcendence emerge as themes through layered and often ambiguous images. 'London is a World Class City' embraces a poetic critique of London superseding its geographic locality and political straightjacket.



Photographs © Max Reeves

SPORT

It's kicking off!

Anarchism and football tackling from behind

Welcome to one of the new *Freedom* feature pages. We will be reporting on non-commercial grassroots activities, the stuff anarchists are involved in and those sports with radical or politically motivated fans.

The marriage of anarchism and sport may sit uneasy with some people. Certainly the idea of professional competitive sports is an anathema to some anarchists – tightly regulated and controlled by a self-selected



elite, mass spectacles acting as a distraction for the masses and driven by corporate greed, the reinforcement of nationalistic tendencies, are all seemingly antagonistic to the ideas of free association, non-hierarchy and the spirit of internationalism.

Yet anarchism and sport somehow always find ways to connect. The most popular team sport worldwide, football, holds a special place historically amongst anarchists. There are a surprising number of professional league clubs founded by anarchists or with close anarchist associations. RNK Split of Croatia was originally called Anarch when it formed in 1912 in an attempt to spread anarchist ideas amongst the poor working class of the area. In Argentina Club Atlético Colegiales was formed in 1908 by a group of anarchists in Buenos Aires. Originally called Club Atlético Libertarios Unidos (Libertarians United) they were forced to change their name after the government banned them identifying with anarchist ideas, Argentinos Juniors was founded under the name 'Mártires de Chicago' (Martyrs of Chicago) as a homage to the Haymarket anarchists and Chacarita Juniors was actually set up by an anarchist library in 1906 which declared "In soccer you learn how to act in solidarity". The team continues to wear red and black today as a reminder of its radical roots.

Progreso of Uruguay, another club with close links with the anarchist movement, also wore red and black in the beginning to promote the players political identity.

Closer to home political support for football comes in two forms – break away clubs who have turned their backs on the

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THE QUIZ

1. Who proclaimed 100 years before George Orwell that state socialists aimed to be "big brother"?
2. Which recent government publication has a problem with people *not* breaking the law?
3. Who advised "Don't come to meetings without sticks in future, men and women alike ... We have got to fight"?
4. Why did composer Ivor Novello go to prison during the Second World War?

Answers on page 14

The Anarchist Quiz Book compiled by Martin Howard, with illustrations by Paul Petard, is available for £5 (post free) from our bookshop at 84b Whitechapel High Street, London E1 7QX or by mail order from our website at freedompress.org.uk

WILDCAT

