

# YOUNG, JOBLESS AND HOPELESS

## Youth unemployment hits the million mark

The recently published official unemployment figures reveal a bleak snapshot of what it means to be young, poor and working class in Britain today.

The number of people out of work has risen yet again, marking it out at a record 17 year high, with a sharp increase of the number of people under 25 without a job. The figures make grim reading for a generation who have grown up in the shadow of neo-liberalism with the expectation of a world based on easy access to credit.

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) data reveals that the total number of unemployed people increased by 118,000 over the past three months to 2.68 million. In real terms this means 13,000 people a day are being made redundant while the economy slips further into recession. Economists predict the jobless figures will continue to rise, reaching three million by 2013.

For young people the statistics are even bleaker. Youth unemployment has risen by 52,000 in the past three months to reach a record 1.04 million, the highest since records began in 1992.

For ordinary working class youngsters –  
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## LENS CAP MASKED UP!



As Dale Farm residents prepare once again to be moved on from the land they were forced to move onto by Basildon Council, a small victory in the courts for a protester who was arrested at the original site eviction for refusing to remove her mask. The courts dismissed the charges declaring no case to answer because the arresting officer didn't know the law!

Photograph © Alastair Johnstone

# POLICE WIN KETTLING APPEAL

The Met police have had a High Court ruling against them overturned, paving the way for more violent mass kettling of people during demonstrations. The ruling by the Court of Appeal reverses a prior ruling that said the police acted unlawfully against climate protesters who set up camp outside the European Climate Exchange in the City of London as part of the anti-G20 protests in 2009.

As reported in *Freedom* at the time, two climate camp activists who were detained and assaulted by police during the violent kettling sought a judicial review against the police in the High Court, which ruled the police acted unlawfully against the protest in the disproportionate use of force and containing them in the manner in which they did.

That decision has now been overturned in

the Court of Appeal, giving the green light for police to continue using the repressive tactic without the fear of legal repercussions. The Appeal Court judge when making his decision remarked that the police's action to contain people "was justifiable on the ground that containment was the least drastic way of preventing what the police officer responsible for the decision reasonably apprehended would otherwise be imminent and serious breaches of the peace."

The judges seem not to have commented on whether the excessive violence and force used by police against peaceful protesters was lawful. It was at the same protests newspaper vendor Ian Tomlinson was attacked and killed by police.

It is understood that the Supreme Court will be asked to examine the case.

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## NEWS

### PUBLIC SECTOR ACTIONS

Liverpool Solidarity Federation have put their name to a call out for a national week of action against privatisation following strike action in January by PCS members at HM Revenue & Customs (HMRC) took over the threat of privatisation.

The week of action is set for between 13th and 19th February as part of the escalation in the fight against public sector cuts.

HMRC are engaging in a 12-month pilot with two private contractors, Sitel and Teleperformance, to handle calls alongside existing staff at contact centres. The department claims that this is merely to look at ways they can address call backlogs during peak times. However this is a transparent attack on the jobs, terms and conditions of PCS members.

PCS has been arguing consistently for long-term investment in HMRC. With a £120bn tax gap that would erase the alleged need for public sector cuts, and significant backlogs and delays in call handling, cutting jobs and outsourcing work to private providers simply does not make sense. By preserving existing jobs and recruiting more staff to address the shortfalls in the department, HMRC can help ease unemployment and provide a better service to beleaguered taxpayers.

In order to fight for this alternative – and against the government's drive to cut jobs and privatise the public sector – PCS members in HMRC have been taking strike action. This has so far taken the form of short walkouts, which have been successful in causing significant disruption to HMRC with minimal cost to staff.

However, PCS Bootle Taxes Branch believes that the campaign needs to be escalated and the fight against privatisation broadened for the maximum possible impact. To that end, they are calling for a national week of action against privatisation on 13th to 19th February.

They call on other PCS branches, including those outside of HMRC, other trade unions, anti-cuts groups and all who oppose the privatisation of the public sector to take the following action:

- Organise pickets outside any Sitel or Teleperformance sites in your area.
- Hold lunchtime demonstrations against privatisation at HMRC offices in your area, in support of staff fighting privatisation.
- Contact Sitel and Teleperformance by telephone, email, fax and post to complain of their involvement in HMRC's privatisation trials.
- Contact HMRC by telephone, email and post to let them know of your opposition to privatisation.

The fight against privatisation is a fight that affects all of us. Solfed urge everyone to show their solidarity with workers in HMRC during this fight and to take part in the national week of action in February.

For more information see <http://www.solfed.org.uk/>

### RUSS McPHERSON CARTOON



Cartoon © Russ McPherson

## Labour clashes

There's been some shock and outrage expressed over Ed Miliband's decision to u-turn on opposition to the Tory cuts. This really shouldn't be a surprise to anyone. The Labour party have not been on the side of the working class for a long time, before Blair or even the 1970s and '80s seen by some as a golden age of the party.

The reality is that the Labour party has been beyond the control of its rank and file members and unions since it first gained MPs in the 1920s. The latest move is no more of a surprise today than Neil Kinnock's failure to support the miners in 1984 or to even attempt to effectively resist the de-industrialisation of Britain, the smashing of communities and the 'financialisation' of the economy that was Thatcherism.

Ed Miliband and the Labour party are

(re)abandoning the working class now at a time of open conflict. They've chosen the parliamentary system, the law of the rich and the bosses. Ed Milliband isn't even pretending to be on our side.

The fight now is who pays for the disaster of the 1980s de-industrialisation and the 'financialisation' of the economy. Do we as the working class pay for it through redundancy and pay cuts? Do the disabled and vulnerable pay for it through service and benefit cuts? If you think that's what should happen, you don't need to do anything. Vote Labour in 2015.

The Labour Party aren't going to help us. It's up to us, it's never been more clear that all we have is each other.

Article courtesy of Andy at Sabcat printing co-op <http://sabcat.com/>



Neil Kinnock congratulates Ed Miliband on his Labour leadership victory.





# The internet strikes back

## The largest online protest in history

The world wide web saw its first ever co-ordinated 'content strike' on 18th January in support of freedom of information and expression, as the US government seeks to introduce greater regulations to monitor and control online content.

An estimated 7,000 websites, including download sites, music providers and news information sites, many based in the UK, joined in the global online blackout after Wikipedia, the world's most popular reference website, decided to publicly oppose the changes in law that would have a pronounced effect on what can and cannot be shared over the internet. Other popular content sites such as Mozilla, Wordpress and even Google expressed their support.

Stop Online Piracy Act (SOPA) put to the House of Representatives and the Senate's Protect Intellectual Property Act (Pipa) would ostensibly give the US government the power

to shut down sites accused of copyright infringement. Aimed primarily at websites hosted overseas, many fear it could be used against radical groups or sites as a form of political censorship, as it would allow the US government to force websites to close on content alone. What began as proposed legislation against copyright piracy quickly turned into a fight over the freedom of speech online.

This comes on the back of the ongoing Leveson inquiry on press intrusion and privacy following the *News of the World* scandal over phone hacking. Again there are concerns the inquiry will give the state ammunition to curtail press freedoms, which will have a more damaging and far reaching impact on radical groups and media.

When the internet first became popularised in the late 1990s as a means of mass communication radicals were at the forefront of the revolutionising technology, recognising its potential as a propaganda tool and a way of communicating unrestricted across boundaries. Indymedia, the global activist news site, gained massive

coverage for its role during the anti-capitalist summit protests and paved the way for alternative and independent radical political content on the web. As a site it remains one of the few genuine places for accessible information on anarchist and radical activity.

However, over the years stagnation and cynicism online gave rise to the 'internet anarchists', an updated version of the armchair anarchist, who became voices of inertia. Thankfully their presence is diminishing as a new wave of political struggle creates a new generation of engaged anarchists.

The question of how we as anarchists deal with online censorship is perhaps prefigured by who is actually involved in generating content. As previously reported in *Freedom*, research suggests the internet is still the hands of the privileged middle classes – especially when it comes to creating the content, in terms of blogging, website creation or communication. The founder of Wikipedia is married to one of Tony Blair's old spin doctors.

## Young, jobless and hopeless

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those without a secure financial background, access to further education or a guaranteed means of subsistence, there are no opportunities, no options and no prospects of a better standard of living than that of their parents. This cycle of hopelessness, coupled with an economy on the verge of another downturn, is set increase social tensions and create a poverty-trapped underclass increasingly disenfranchised and dislocated from the rest of society.

This isn't lost on those in authority. The Geneva-based International Labour Organisation, connected to the UN, warned back in October that a jobs crisis in the current state of the global economy would create a wave

of widespread social unrest engulfing both rich and poor countries alike.

The August riots last year may have been many things to many people but perhaps for the young they were the warning signals of a generation unwilling to accept their exclusion from a credit-based consumer society. Those warnings are set to become louder and angrier.

### Other figures

The current figures published by the ONS show the number of people in public sector employment has fallen by 67,000 to just under six million, compared with private sector employment which stands at 23.12 million, up just 5,000 new jobs. The massive

disparity in job losses between the sectors shows the concerted effort made by the Tories to come good on their election promise to get rid of public sector workers, although the claim that the private sector would create thousands of jobs to 'mop up' the surfeit has clearly been exposed as a lie.

Other revealing labour market statistics show that in the past year 1.38 million working days were lost from 134 stoppages (i.e. strikes), with November accounting for 988,000 working days lost from eight stoppages alone, the highest figure since July 1989. This was of course largely due to the massive one day public sector strike on 30th November.



## THE BIG PICTURE



Laura Oldfield Ford is creator of the classic *Savage Messiah* fanzine and recently published book of the same name. See <http://lauraoldfieldford.blogspot.com/> for some of her other images. *Savage Messiah* (Verso Books) collects the entire set of Laura Oldfield Ford's fanzine to date. Part graphic novel, part artwork, the book is both an angry polemic against the marginalisation of the city's working class and an exploration of the cracks that open up in urban space.



# When houses stop being homes

**From 1st January 2012, a million tenants renting in the private sector reliant on welfare support have been hit by the Coalition's cuts to Housing Benefit, placing many at risk of eviction, displacement and homelessness. Stuart Hodgkinson from Leeds University sets out the policy changes.**

The right to a decent, secure, affordable home in Britain was enshrined in the 1945 settlement as a necessary response to the destruction of two world wars, the breakdown of the private rental market and the rise of social unrest. Post-war housing policy directed public subsidy at local authorities to build millions of council homes that became the affordable housing pillar of the welfare state, and by the late 1970s, the tenants' movement had also won vital controls on private rents, secure tenancies and protections for the homeless.

The advent of Thatcherism of course reversed this entire approach, and the current housing benefit (HB) system – created in 1988 through the 1986 Social Security Act – played a central role in the privatisation agenda. By re-directing public subsidy towards low-income 'housing consumers', rents in both social and private sectors were allowed to rise sharply, meaning that the state would now subsidise private landlords' profit margins instead of directly providing affordable public housing as a tenure of choice.

Over time, the decline in social rented housing, the huge rise in the cost of private market housing, and the stagnation of real wages have forced more and more people on to HB in order to access and afford a roof over their heads – in 1981, around 1.5 million households claimed compared to today's figure of nearly five million. While 70% of claimants are currently in social rented housing, recent and future growth will come from private renters due to rising rents and falling incomes, with government figures suggesting 600,000 working households in the private sector don't claim their entitlement.

Concern at these trends and evidence that private landlords were milking the system by inflating rents to LHA levels persuaded the previous Labour government to reform the HB system for tenants in the deregulated private sector with the introduction in 2008 of Local Housing Allowance (LHA). LHA no longer paid HB based on tenants' actual rents but instead in relation to broad local private rental market values for properties ranging from shared to five-bed accommodation with a ceiling set at the 50th percentile of private rents restricting claimants to properties in the bottom half of the market. The situation was even worse for single 16 to 24 year olds who only received a shared room rate, usually around half the one-bed rate, hugely restricting their choice of

accommodation and placing many in severe hardship.

Prior to the May 2010 General Election, the Labour government had planned a number of reforms to LHA, including capping rates at £1,100 per week and ending tenants' entitlement to keep up to £15 per week of any excess benefit over their contractual rent. The Conservatives, by contrast, had promised to reform 'welfare' but had said almost nothing about HB with future Prime Minister David Cameron assuring the country that he would "protect the poorest and most vulnerable in our society" from austerity. Just two months later, however, the Coalition's June 2010 emergency budget revealed the Tories secret plans, announcing dramatic cuts and changes to HB, with more paraded in the October Comprehensive Spending review, totalling an estimated £3bn by 2015.

The government's justification for these reforms shifts according to its intended audience, ranging from the need to reduce the 'deficit', bear down on private sector rents, restore 'fairness' to the benefits system in favour of 'hard working families', or force



unemployed claimants to either get a job or find somewhere else to live.

Whatever story Ministers tell cannot hide the grim reality of what they are doing – these are devastating cuts affecting at least 1.7 million tenants over the next few years, including all claimants in the private sector and around one in five households in the social rented sector. Official figures suggest that during 2012 the majority of private tenants will face a shortfall of up to £10 per week against their current rents, a lot of money for people officially living in poverty to consistently find in the context of mass unemployment and austerity.

But whereas these claimants at least have a chance of absorbing the losses or negotiating a lower rent, around 100,000 households will lose over £30 a week with many in London losing hundreds and some over £1,000. The cuts will inevitably mean increased cases of arrears, homelessness and greater overcrowding with people being forced to move home or even borough in search of cheaper lower quality accommodation. London will by far and away be worst hit with the likelihood of 'mass displacement' from the inner to outer boroughs.

The implications of home loss, homelessness



and forced relocation are serious and carry enormous potential social and economic consequences that have been downplayed by the government. Apart from the obvious increased costs and administrative burden placed on local authorities, social services and other public services, the impact on households and communities could be devastating. We are talking here about the breaking up of families and social networks, the disruption to a child's education or school, the possible breakdown in care and support received from social and children's services. The long-term sick are one of the largest groups affected and cuts to HB to disabled people have their own particular effects in that many properties will have been specially adapted for their needs or there will be a support package in place to help them stay.

The bad news is this is just the short-term picture – from April 2013, two fundamental changes will kick in that threaten to re-draw the population map of Britain. First, benefits to out-of-work households will be capped at £500 for couples and lone parents and £350 for singles, with HB the first to be cut once the cap is breached. Around 50,000 households will be affected by an average loss of £93 a week, with 15% losing more than £150 a week. Second, LHA rates will no longer be increased in line with actual market rents in a local area, but by the Consumer Price Index (CPI), which since 1991 has risen consistently less than rental costs. While both changes will have the most adverse affect on households living in London and the South East where housing costs are the highest, over time, the entire country will also be affected so that by 2030, 60% of local authorities in England will be very unaffordable to LHA claimants.

Overall and over time, HB cuts will create some of the worst patterns of social and spatial segregation Britain has ever known. Low income and poor households will find that the only housing they can afford to rent is that which falls below "basic common standards of decent housing".

This is the future – if we don't act now, the long-term consequences will be hideous.

(For the full article with references and further analysis of different aspects of housing, see *Housing Crisis?*, the latest magazine from Corporate Watch, [www.corporatewatch.org.uk](http://www.corporatewatch.org.uk)).

## ANALYSIS

# Haiti's troubled past

An insight by Polly Ogé into a country in turmoil

In a recent book, former Catholic priest and Haitian president, Jean-Bertrand Aristide, introduces the memoirs and letters of Toussaint L'Ouverture, a leader of Haiti's slave revolution, the only 'successful' slave revolution in history. ('Success' here indicates the formation of a modern state which recognised the individual liberty of every man universally regardless of colour over and above the right of individuals to hold property, e.g. slaves): "By apprehending the 1789 *Déclaration des Droits de l'homme et du Citoyen* as applicable to all, not only to free French men, and by uniting black slaves, maroons, whites and mulattos to fight against British, Spanish and French forces, Toussaint helped create the opening through which the first black republic in world history emerged and liberation movements elsewhere in Africa and the Caribbean would follow."<sup>1</sup>

However, whilst Toussaint's constitution of 1801 established this fundamental freedom alongside the de facto autonomy of Haiti from France, it did so in the framework of an authoritarian and patriarchal national state whose foundation was the recognition of the dubious 'freedoms' of wage labour, marriage, the family and property:<sup>2</sup>

*Article 13* – Property is sacred and inviolable ... Anyone who attempts to deny this right shall become guilty of crime towards society and responsible toward the person whose property is troubled.

*Article 14* – The colony being essentially agricultural cannot suffer the least disruption in the works of its cultivation.

*Article 15* – Each plantation shall constitute a manufacture that requires the gathering of cultivators and workers; it shall represent the quiet haven of an active and constant family, of which the owner of the land or his representative shall be the father. (The Haitian Constitution of 1801)

**The path of those Haitians who reject the regime is the path of righteousness and love.\***

Eight years after the bicentenary of its independence, Haiti is paradigmatic of the ravages of a cycle of capital accumulation on neoliberal terms – an 'explosion of extreme poverty coincides with an explosion of wealth'.<sup>3</sup> Haiti is still in transition from the 'neo-colonial protectorate' established by the UN after Jean-Bertrand Aristide was involuntarily exiled under the 'diplomatic protection' of US Marines in 2004.<sup>4</sup>

Exposed to 20 years of neo-liberalisation and nearly 500 years of imperialism, Haiti presents



both a concentrated vision of the ravages of capitalism upon a population and a paradigm of the desperate means available to those who would oppose it. When will Haiti see another 'opening' of these limited freedoms which today present themselves only as chains?

A short guide to radical texts, films, music and resources about Haiti

- *The Agronomist* (2003), a documentary film profiling Haitian radio journalist and peasant rights activist, Jean Dominique. It includes: historical footage of Haiti's vivid and tumultuous past; interviews with Dominique and his partner Michele Montas shot before Dominique's assassination on 3rd April 2000. [www.imdb.com/title/tt0377031/](http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0377031/)
- **Jean-Bertrand Aristide**, Liberation theologian, leader of Haiti's lavalas (the flood) movement is a former Catholic priest who served as Haiti's first democratically elected president. He won the 1990 Haitian general election with 67% of the vote and was briefly President of Haiti, until a military coup in 1991. Aristide was then President again from 1994 to 1996 and from 2001 to 2004. Aristide was ousted in a 29 February 2004 coup d'état, in which former soldiers participated.
- **Boukman Eksperyans**, a band from the city of Port-au-Prince, Haiti deriving its name from Dutty Boukman, a vodou priest who led a religious ceremony in 1791 that is widely considered the start of the Haitian Revolution. See [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Boukman\\_Eksperyans](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Boukman_Eksperyans) and <http://www.myspace.com/boukman>
- **Peter Hallward**, *Damming the Flood* (Verso, 2010). Comprehensive book on the politics of the Lavalas years, Jean-Bertrand Aristide's presidencies and after. Review at <http://www.metamute.org/editorial/articles/damming-flood>
- **Haiti Information Project (HIP)** provides news, analysis, information and background concerning politics and human rights Haiti. <http://www.haitiinformationproject.net/>
- **Haiti Kids Kino Project**. In 2010, less than a month after the earthquake, volunteers from Bristol's Cube Cinema went to Port Au Prince to project films on buildings and tents, while giving camera's to children to explore their own lives.

The project will travel again to Haiti in early 2012. See: <http://nanoplex.cubecinema.com/blog/>

- **C.L.R. James**, *The Black Jacobins* (Penguin, 2001). The incredible account of the Haitian Revolution by Trinidadian cricket journalist, left communist and late Brixton resident.
- *Open Gate: An Anthology of Haitian Creole Poetry* (Curbstone Press, 2001). Laraque and Hirschman organize most of the pieces in this anthology by literary groupings, within each of those groupings are poems that clearly articulate revolutionary positions.
- **Tanbou/Tambour**, a print and online trilingual literary political review in Creole, English and French. <http://www.tanbou.com/>
- **Raoul Peck**, Haitian born filmmaker, served as Minister of Culture in the Haitian government (1996–97), resigning in protest at what he saw as an anti-democratic takeover by former president Jean-Bertrand Aristide. His 1993 film, *L'Homme sur les quais* (The Man by the Shore), was the first Haitian film to be released in theatres in the United States.

\* This title is from a sermon given by Jean-Bertrand Aristide and broadcast on radio in Haiti quoted in Peter Hallward, 'Option Zero in Haiti', *New Left Review* 27, May-June 2004.

- 1 Toussaint L'Ouverture, *The Haitian Revolution*, edited by Nick Nesbitt (Verso, 2008).
- 2 "This world-historical constitution thus has the dubious distinction of having inaugurated the various totalitarian seizures of power and monopolisations of violence that would plague the decolonising world a century and a half later, from Duvalier to Mobutu." *Ibid.*, page 121.
- 3 *Ibid.*, Jean-Bertrand Aristide, 'Introduction', page xxiv. See also, Anthony Iles 'We are Ugly, but we are Here' *Mute* Vol 2 No 3, London 2006, page 33.
- 4 MINUSTAH (The United Nations Stabilization Mission In Haiti) is the occupying force administered by the UN mission led by members of the Brazilian, Canadian, French Libyan and Tunisian military. See <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/MINUSTAH> and <http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/missions/minustah/background.shtml>



## FREEDOM STOCKISTS

You can now purchase *Freedom* at the new radical bookshop in Bristol, Hydra Books. The store, which has free wi-fi and excellent coffee, is a welcome addition to the political scene in Bristol. We also have another new outlet, the Birmingham Bike Foundry, where you can pick up your copy of *Freedom* – see below for details.

## LONDON

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

## BRIGHTON

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

## BIRMINGHAM

- **Birmingham Bike Foundry**, 1539 Pershore Road, Stirchley, Birmingham B30 2JH, tel: 0121 459 7276, email: [info@birminghambikefoundry.org](mailto:info@birminghambikefoundry.org) <http://birminghambikefoundry.org>

## BRISTOL

- **Hydra Books**, 34 Old Market, Bristol BS2 0EZ tel: 0117 3297401 email [info@hydrabooks.org](mailto:info@hydrabooks.org) <http://www.hydrabooks.org/>
- **Kebele Social Centre**, 14 Robertson Road, Bristol BS5 6JY, tel 0117 9513086, email [kebelesocialcentre@riseup.net](mailto:kebelesocialcentre@riseup.net) <http://www.kebelecoop.org>

## NOTTINGHAM

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

## LIVERPOOL

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

## EDINBURGH

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

## SOUTHAMPTON

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

## Rita Milton 1924-2011

Rita Milton, who has died aged 87, is remembered in Glasgow and London as a delightful anarchist with a brilliant sense of humour. She is still celebrated for her 1952 performance in a debate with the Marriage Guidance Council. Now called Relate, this is a well-intentioned group whose advisors help with relationships of all sorts. But in the debate with Rita, it was represented by a pair of censorious bigots, unashamed in their hatred of sex (outside marriage), and of “these people” who advocated freedom. Rita defeated them with a hilarious display of apparent misunderstanding, responding to their abuse with phoney-innocent remarks like “I thought a tart was something ye ate”.

Rita was born in Kelvinside, a middle-class district of Glasgow, on 31st May 1924. She had three older brothers, one of whom fought against the fascists in the Spanish Civil War, when he was 18. She went to school at Brodick on the Isle of Arran, delivered messages in Brodick, on a boy's bike, at the age of 14, and was a shop assistant at 17, before being conscripted into the Women's Land Army. In 1945 she met the Glasgow anarchists, and acted for a time as chairman of Sunday evening meetings addressed by Frank Leech, Jimmy Raeside, and Eddie Shaw, with audiences of hundreds (there was no television in those days, and Glasgow pubs did not open on Sundays).

In 1946 she moved to London and met

Philip Sansom, an editor of *War Commentary for Anarchism*, which shortly afterwards reverted to its earlier name *Freedom*. At the time of her encounter with the Marriage Guidance people, she was Philip's companion, working with him at Express Printers, which was owned by Freedom Press. She was employed by two of Express Printers' commercial customers, as editor of *Sewing Machine Times* and production editor of *The Journal of Sex Education*.

In 1954 she was a founder member of the Malatesta Club, and it was there that she and Philip met Hew Warburg, an anarchist who had made a fortune supplying palettes for forklift trucks, made of otherwise useless scrap timber. The three shared a house for a short time, then Philip moved out to leave the field clear for Hew, a healthy and useful arrangement which would have appalled Rita's old antagonists. Rita and Hew married when their son John Warburg was fifteen years old, enabling Rita to enjoy all the perquisites and privileges of a legally married widow, after Hew died in 1983.

Later her health declined, but she remained a subscriber and donor to *Freedom*, in touch with her old friends, whom she entertained with frequent parties. Recently she suffered a stroke, which robbed her of the ability to read and made her tired of life. Resolute to the end, she hastened her death by refusing to eat. She died on 17th December 2011.



Rita Milton with clenched fist talking at Hyde Park in the 1950s, with Hew Warburg standing at the front.

## INTERNATIONAL

### COLOMBIA SOLIDARITY

The poet and journalist Angye Gaona has now been charged formally by the Colombian prosecutors with the crimes of drug trafficking and 'rebellion'. The trial began on 23rd January and is set to last two months at the special criminal court in Cartagena de Indias. If found guilty she could face a jail term of 20 years.

In press articles and interviews Angye has passionately defended the cause of indigenous people (many of whom are being killed by paramilitary gangs on the orders of land developers – Angye has called this "genocide"), trade unionists and the working class (who are constantly being repressed by government-backed industrialists). She has also called the current Colombian government "a terrorist government". For these reasons she is considered a nuisance by the ultra-conservative government.

Angye was arrested in January last year on her way back to Colombia from a trip to Venezuela. At that point she was imprisoned without charge, but was later released following international pressure. After her release she was formally charged with drug trafficking. Once that charge was underway she was then also charged with 'rebellion'; the prior charge of drug trafficking meant that she could not at that point apply to any foreign embassies for political asylum. Hence she had no choice but to face trial in Colombia. She is currently under house arrest in the single room she shares with her six-year-old daughter.

Her trial may have a very serious outcome if nothing is done. Colombia is known for its political trials. At the moment some 7,000 political prisoners are serving long sentences in terrible and overcrowded prisons. It is necessary therefore to make it clear to Colombia's judiciary that Angye's case is being closely followed worldwide.

To this end, Angye's friends and supporters are asking people to write to the examining judge in her case to request a fair trial. If you want to write such a letter, the address is as follows:

- Al Sr. Juez de Conocimiento, Centro de Servicios Juzgado Único Penal, del Circuito Especializado De Cartagena Adjunto, Centro Barrio San Diego, Calle De La Cruz No 9-42, Antiguo Colegio Panamericano 2° Piso, Cartagena de Indias, Colombia, South America.

To increase the pressure you may want to send a copy of the letter to the Colombian embassy or consulate in your own country. It will also be helpful to the campaign – and be a morale boost for Angye – if you would let them know that you have sent the letter.

Hasta la victoria, siempre!

Contact the campaign at [castello.cristina@gmail.com](mailto:castello.cristina@gmail.com)

### LENS CAP INDONESIA'S BLOODY GOLD



Human rights organisations in Indonesia have raised questions about the way police have implemented the country's security laws, known as Standard Procedures to Deal With Anarchism, to justify violence against protesters in Mesuji and Bima, where several protesters were killed by police without provocation. The Bima and Mesuji clashes occurred because of disputes between local communities and Australian gold mining exploration company who want to exploit the land.

## Workers killed in Kazakhstan

At least 16 workers were killed and many others injured in December 2011, when security forces opened fire on oil workers on strike in the city of Zhanaozen in the western Mangghystau province. The workers, employed by a subsidiary of the state-owned KazMunai Gaz, had been demanding pay increase; the workers were unarmed and their protests had been peaceful.

The state, headed by President Nazarbayev who has been in power since Kazakhstan's independence in 1991, has resorted to other repressive tactics like raiding the houses of the Communist Party union activists, jailing union lawyers under criminal law for "inciting social strife" and using threats and intimidation.

Labour unrest began around May last year, involving thousands of workers. The strikers had also demanded the reinstatement of around 2,000 sacked workers, many of whom

have been rehired as temporary workers in newly created subsidiaries. They are also demanding the release of their lawyer.

Paris-based intergovernmental cartel, the International Energy Agency, has slapped the Kazakh government on its backside in its new report and ordered it to "contain" the unrest and ensure "safe" environment for foreign investors. This is predictable. Kazakhstan produces more than a million barrels of oil per day, and along with Russia and Azerbaijan is strategic in the oil-rich Caspian region.

Apart from Chinese ones, many well-known western brands, such as Chevron, Eni and the UK's BG Group, operate in the area. These companies are involved in their own disputes with the Kazakh government for violating international environmental and labour standards.

## Notes from the US

### Economy

On 12th December last year more than 1,000 Occupy Wall Street protesters joined together to shut down several sea ports on the west coast. Demonstrators temporarily closed shipping terminals in Oakland (California), where members of the occupy movement had been particularly viciously treated earlier in the winter, Portland (Oregon) and Seattle, Washington. This was part of an effort to cut into the economic

profits of major corporations, particularly Goldman Sachs, which owns a large stake in the port operator SSA Marine.

At the same time a study from 'The New Bottom Line' predicted that the total salaries at seven of the biggest banks in the US were on track to reach a record breaking US\$156 (£100) billion in 2011. While just before Christmas The National Center on Family Homelessness reported that 1.6 million



# New oil troubles in Nigeria

## Mass unrest over lucrative industry resources

Beginning on 9th January, for several days Nigeria was rocked by countrywide industrial strikes and popular protests against the doubling of petrol prices as a result of the government withdrawing oil subsidies. The removal of subsidies forms part of wider neoliberal 'reforms' to the oil sector.

The strikes, organised by Nigeria's largest unions, Nigeria Labour Organization (NLC) and Trade Union of Nigeria (TUC), have been joined by the national bar and medical associations. Reportedly, tens of thousands took to the streets; pop icons and artists, including the famous *littérateur* Chinua Achebe, expressed their dissent online and on the streets as they addressed rallies. Nigerian residents in London staged their own demonstration in front of the Nigerian embassy.

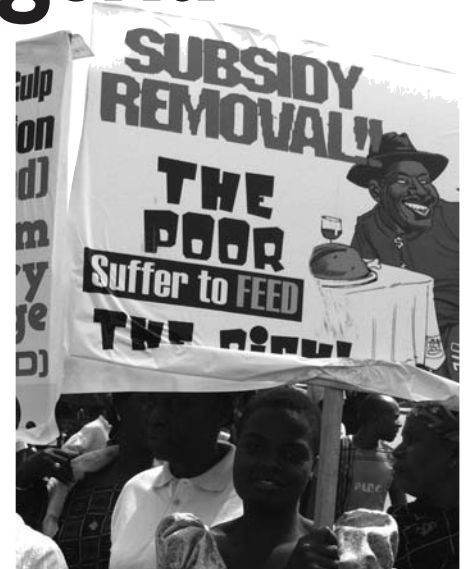
Along with the immediate concern about fuel prices, long-standing resentments

against a corrupt and entrenched ruling class have risen to the surface. Reports say that for the first time in Nigeria's post-colonial history Muslims and Christians are united in their struggle against the government.

However, the protests are occurring amidst a resurgence of communal violence between Muslims dominant in the north and Christians dominant in the south. Fundamentalists have killed at least twenty, while three people have died in clashes with the police during the protests.

Rattled by the scale of public opposition, the government has reduced petrol prices to the Nigerian equivalent of £1.78 from the hiked up £2.27, while the public demand is to return to the earlier price of £1.10. The Petroleum and Natural Gas Senior Staff Association of Nigeria (PENGASSAN) have threatened to shut down production across the nation, although they haven't yet acted on it.

However, the government is rattled for a good reason – according to official statistics, the strikes have caused a financial loss of nearly £780 million.



At the same time, Nigeria has been subjected to its worst oil spill in more than a decade. In late December last year around 40,000 barrels spilled off the coast of the Delta region in the south of the country, caused by a Royal Dutch Shell facility. The slick has caused great pollution and adversely affected local fishers. After lame denials the company finally accepted responsibility. Activists are demanding around £16billion in compensation.

This is a familiar situation: Shell has failed to pay compensation packages, after agreeing to do so, for previous oil spills. Nigerian landscape and coastal regions are so devastated by oil spillages that a recent UN report calculates that it will take at least 30 years to clean up.

In this country, still suffering from the consequences of its colonial history, oil is a major source of survival. According to one report, Nigeria is the tenth biggest oil producer, extracting over two million barrels of oil – and trading nearly £130 million of it – each day. It is Africa's biggest oil industry, and has spawned a low-magnitude war within for its precious 'black gold'.



## Notes from the US

### ◀ page 8

children in the country – or one in 45 – were actually homeless. Another recent statistic regarding the lives of young people is that 33% will be arrested before they reach the age of 23.

On a brighter note, Gar Alperovitz argued in a piece in the *New York Times* last month that there is strong evidence of a more democratic economy in the United States: no fewer than 130 million people are members of one sort of co-operative or another, while 13 million work in an employee-owned company.

A survey released in mid-January by the Pew Research Center has a potentially

equally encouraging finding: almost two-thirds of those questioned acknowledge that there is a strong, or very strong class conflict between the rich and poor. Conflict between the rich and poor is seen as more significant than that between immigrants and those born in the country, or between blacks and whites.

### Environment

A coalition of environmental groups filed a last-minute law suit to try and block the first auction of offshore oil drilling leases since the BP oil spill of April 2010, more than 20 million acres of the Texas coast. Oceana,

Defenders of Wildlife, the Natural Resources Defense Council and the Center for Biological Diversity argue that the federal government has failed to take sufficient steps to prevent a repeat of the BP disaster.

Environmental direct action is as strong at the end of the year as ever. Eleven anti-nuclear activists were arrested in Brattleboro (Vermont) in early December after attempting to make a citizens' arrest of the board and officers of Entergy, operator of the Vermont Yankee nuclear power plant. Inside its offices the 11 women did an Occupy-style 'mic check' to read their arrest warrant.

Louis Further

## ECONOMICS

# The UK's house of horrors



## A series of reports expose growing inequality

As the anarchist movement in the UK struggles to respond to the heaving world around it, those of the establishment are studying the changes and how to control them. The Swiss-based, international organisation World Economic Forum's 2012 annual 'Global Risks' report uses no less a word than 'dystopia' to describe the near future. It notes, "formerly wealthy countries [will] descend into lawlessness and unrest as they become unable to meet their social and fiscal obligations," becoming "critical fragile states". Translation: a crisis of power.

The omens are there. As the Euro crisis drags on, drawing more nations into its vortex, such as Hungary currently, a spate of studies released recently reveal a grim situation in this country. According to a report by the End Child Poverty Campaign 2.5 million children in the UK are currently living in poverty.

### Child and fuel poverty

Their 'poverty map' shows that in 19 parliamentary constituencies, four in ten children are poor. Unsurprisingly, Tower Hamlets in London is the poorest, with other big cities such as Manchester following close behind. The report makes direct connection between the government's policies and worsening child poverty.

The government's austerity scheme for a 'fairer Britain' is clearly not helping. A report commissioned by the Institute for Fiscal Studies says 500,000 more children will be reduced to poverty by 2015–16. The report explicitly states, "Tax and benefit changes to be introduced during this period are one factor driving these trends."

Another charity, Save the Children, commissioned a study late last year on fuel

poverty and its impact on low income families. The report notes that the government's new Warm Home Discount scheme, said to offer energy supply on discount rates to the poorest, will exclude around 775,000 of the worst-affected families in the UK.

But poverty and hardship engendered by neoliberal austerity measures is only half the story. As we know by now the financial crisis has merely revealed the dirt that had been brushed under the carpet – that we have always lived in a progressively unequal and unjust world, mainstream propaganda notwithstanding. The mainstream is now acknowledging that fact, even as governments try desperately to justify it by stoking fears of 'benefit scroungers' and immigrants usurping British jobs.

### Growing income gaps

A 2011 report by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) supplied facts and figures on growing income inequality in OECD countries over the last two decades before the crisis. It noted, "across OECD countries, the average income of the richest 10% of the population is about nine times that of the poorest 10%." The disparities are more pronounced in leading economies like the US, Japan, Israel and UK, but Scandinavian countries famed as the most egalitarian are also implicated.

This report, along with many others, marks the late 1970s and early 1980s as the watershed period when inequalities began to increase more rapidly. It attributes this trend to wage disparity between the top and bottom classes, as well as to the rise in part-time employment, especially among women.

Another contributing factor is the rise in capital income, as opposed to income from labour. Capital income refers to income derived from assets and investments – in short, making money from money. Wealth shift toward the top strata has meant that it is easier for those who already possess capital

to possess more of it, thus multiplying their income.

Most revealingly, "The rise of earnings and income inequality occurred in most countries during periods of sustained economic growth", which means that reverting to Keynesianism to escape the crisis will not make life better for a great many people, and that there is a continuous line of development between the pre-crisis and post-crisis eras. Keynesianism was being undermined anyway, by changing "tax-benefit systems" that until the mid-1990s had partially stabilized "market income inequality".

The OECD report throws significant light on the Occupy movement, its largely middle-class base, and its slogan of the 99%: "The highest 10% of earners have been leaving the middle earners behind more rapidly than the lowest earners have been drifting away from the middle." So, although the clubbing together of various classes as the 99% is certainly problematic, there are genuine fears of a new 'proletarianisation' of the middle classes in the face of an emergent oligarchy.

### Working rich

The independent High Pay Commission (HPC) established partly by the Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust to investigate high pay in both public and private sectors,



traces the growth of this new wealthy class over the last 30 years: "No longer the landed gentry nor the successful entrepreneur, the majority of this wealthy elite are now the working rich," namely bankers and business executives.

The Commission's report published November last year notes that "in 2010 alone executive pay rose by 49% on average in FTSE 100 companies" compared to the average employee pay rising by 2.7%, adding that "since the mid-70s the general workforce's share of GDP had shrunk by over 12% up to 2008."

The HPC goes as far as to say that if the present income inequalities continue, within the next thirty years we could be back in Victorian England-like conditions. No kidding, as Islington Council attempts to bring back child labour for less than minimum wages, and a Heathrow airport employee threatened with job loss after more than 20 years' service hangs himself, we are coming full circle.



# A short history of Freedom Press

## PART FOUR

A four part series (now with epilogue!) to celebrate 125 years of *Freedom*, Donald Room traces the turbulent history of the UK's longest running anarchist paper

Christie, Meltzer, the McLibel Two and Combat 18

Also in 1964, another eighteen-year-old associate of *Direct Action* accepted a commission to smuggle explosives into Spain for a group of anti-Franco Spanish exiles, in his naivety not suspecting the obvious, that such a group would certainly be infiltrated by Spanish government agents. Editors of both *Freedom* and *Direct Action* spoke at public meetings in his defence, and Freedom Press people were among those campaigning for his release until it happened in 1968. Wooden Shoe and Albert did not take part in these campaigns (on the reasonable ground that they would be an ineffective waste of energy), but Albert managed to persuade the naïve young man of the falsehood that *Freedom* was 'pacifist' and had stopped supporting him when it was shown that he was carrying explosives.

British law requires buildings to have registered owners, who may be either individuals or limited companies. In 1982, Vero transferred ownership of the Freedom Press building to Friends of Freedom Press Limited, a non-trading company whose registered directors are comrades long associated with Freedom Press. The existence of FFP was not made public until 1986, and Vero continued making all the business decisions. In the late 1980s he decided to pay stipends to two comrades, one (who had worked as a volunteer for years) to manage Freedom Press publishing, and the other (of whose background I know nothing) to manage Freedom Bookshop.

1986 was Freedom's centenary year. A bumper anniversary number was produced and also issued as a book, *Freedom a hundred years*. Besides describing the history of Freedom Press, it was agreed that I would solicit contributions from the whole anarchist movement of 1986. Of course I wrote to Albert Meltzer, but he did not reply. He responded later with a pamphlet: *Black Flag Supplement No. 3, Liars and Liberals, The Woodcock-Sansom school of falsification*, a classic of libellous abuse. Albert seemed surprised by an article in the centenary volume from the rabble-rousing *Class War*, but *Freedom*, although anti-war, was never 'pacifist' in the sense Albert intended, and rabble-rousing is a healthy and useful anarchist activity.

Between 1973 and 1983, *Freedom* was printed by a succession of small offset printers. Vero remained as treasurer and book publisher, but resigned as editor. It seems that when he was not the editor, he



did not even read the paper. The famous 'McLibel' trial was followed in every issue of *Freedom*, but after an article about it appeared in the *Sunday Telegraph*, mistakenly giving the name of Dave Morris as 'Dave Willis', Vero telephoned me to say that 'Dave Willis' deserved our support. *Freedom* was edited by a succession of editorial groups, not all of whom were very good. The paper was set on an ordinary typewriter, and the editor who finished the paste-up was responsible for sending the sheets to the printer. One editor took the opportunity to insert articles in praise of the Animal Liberation Front and the Irish Republican Army. She was asked to leave by the other editors.

In 1983, Vero financed the setting up of Aldgate Press, a workers' co-operative printing firm, which for a time had its machinery installed in the Freedom Press building. Type was now set on computers, but still assembled by hand, and one editor always handed the final paste-up to the printers.

For a time, *Freedom* and Albert's new paper *Black Flag* were published alternately, and there were joint meetings in Freedom Bookshop to dispatch subscription copies of either. Every edition of *Black Flag* included insulting remarks about *Freedom*. The *Freedom* editor who took the paste-up to the printers did not agree with the policy of no retaliation, and sneaked in a message to *Black Flag*: "We invite you into our house and you piss on the carpet". Albert pretended to take the metaphor literally, as accusing himself of urinating on the carpet in the bookshop (which had no carpet).

The editor who inserted the 'piss on the carpet' piece was fond of making enemies,

and had to leave hurriedly in November 1991, to avoid people he had offended in both the printers and the bookshop, but before he went, he had supplied the paste-up for the December issue, featuring on the front page a drawing of Death in a Santa Claus costume. Vero may not have read *Freedom* regularly, but he could not miss a front page illustration. Furious, he gave one year's notice that he would be returning as editor, and that the paper would revert to being fortnightly. Editing a fortnightly struck me as too much work, so I gave notice that I would resign. Vero published a 'number zero' in October, denouncing the existing editors as incompetent, and so inciting another resignation. Only the comrade hired to do the books remained to be Vero's fellow editor.

In 1993, the building was raided by a neo-Nazi group calling itself Combat 18. Several masked men entered, two of them stayed on the ground floor where Aldgate Press's printing machines were housed, and the others went to the first floor, to the shop and the Freedom Press office. They smashed up the typesetting equipment in the office with baseball bats and in the shop broke the glass of the photocopier, knocked over the free-standing bookcases and pushed over Arthur Moyse, then in his eighties, who was minding the shop. Then the spray-painted 'C18' on the wall, and left, leaving a bottle of petrol near the one of the printing presses. A few days later, the building was set on fire and the machine destroyed.

In March issue of *Freedom* Donald's brings us up to date with a fitting epilogue to a century of anarchist agitation and ideas with the defiant: we're still here!

## FEATURE

# Anarchism's historical role: a

Freedom bookshop was proud to host a talk by Lucien Van Dr Walk co-author of the groundbreaking *Black Flame* who spoke at length about all aspects of anarchist history and movements

## A flicker

Me and Michael Schmidt, who is the co-author and a friend and a comrade going back many years, we were trying to understand something about the history of anarchism and of syndicalism, to understand what that history meant in the past and what it meant for movements today. Perhaps because we were in South Africa where there had not really been a movement in the anarchist or syndicalist tradition since the early 1920s, there was no continuity and I suppose that also meant there were no preconceptions, we didn't have any assumptions.

## Beginnings

Volume one of *Black Flame* is meant to be looking at historical themes in the anarchist movement, issues like what were the big anarchist organisations? Who were the people who joined these movements? Where was it globally? We wanted to look at it at a world scale and not just look at the north Atlantic. Why did anarchist peasant movements take off in some countries? How did it spread into third world countries? and so on. The other thing we also wanted to look at was theoretical issues in the movement.

That's the first part – what is anarchism? The second thing in the book was to make the argument that it's important to have a global view of the anarchist and syndicalist movement. Very often the way we understand

the history of anarchism is constructed around the idea of 'Spanish exceptionalism' – that, for some reason, anarchism really took off in Spain. Fanelli was sent there by Bakunin – he had a huge impact and the legend goes he couldn't even speak Spanish, but through his articulate gestures everybody thought hey, this is great stuff, and decided to spend the next 70 years fighting for it in their millions.

## Spanish exceptionalism

There's a whole range of literature on this – 'why were the anarchists big in Spain'? There's a range of arguments. The good Marxist argument is Spain had a backward economy, anarchists reflect a backward society, put the two together and you have the CNT. You get the national character argument: well these Latin chaps are quite lively, anarchism's quite lively put them together and you get the CNT. The problem with the backwardness argument is that Spain wasn't all that much a backward economy. Where were the anarchists based? They were based in the huge industrialising cities, that was one of their big strongholds; they had a base in the countryside, and very often where in the countryside? In the huge commercial farms. Barcelona in the 1920s was one of the fastest growing cities in Europe so the backwardness thing just doesn't work. It's one of these Marxist arguments that as the working class matures it all becomes naturally Marxist.

The thing about Spanish character doesn't work either. Spain also produced General Franco. To say there's some natural Spanish inclination towards anarchism leaves out small things like the Spanish civil war which was between two different types of Spain, two different types of Spaniard, and two different ideologies in Spain.



Above, Mayday marchers remembering the Haymarket

## Case against

We would argue that in any case the notion that Spain was exceptional is incorrect. If we want to look at Spain of course it had a huge anarchist movement, a huge syndicalist union movement, and of course that movement went back to the 1870s, and of course that movement made a revolution in the late '30s. However if we want to look internationally we can actually find movements that were at least as big as Spain. If we use as a small index the size of anarchist trade unions relative to the overall labour movement, in other words, how much of the organised labour movement was under anarchist or syndicalist influence or control. We look at Spain and we find the anarchists actually only had half of the trade unions, the CNT of Spain represented roughly half of the industrial unions, in some areas more, but there was large social-democratic rival the UGT. So they had about 50%.

## Looking globally

If we look at countries like Peru, Mexico, Argentina, for a short time the Netherlands, if we look at France, if we look at Portugal, if we look at Chile, if we look at Uruguay, if we look for a time at Brazil, these were all movements where the anarchists were the predominant force in the trade unions. Cuba is the other one. And in the Cuban case for example, that from the 1880s anarchists and syndicalists led their trade union movement until the 1930s. And even in the '50s when Castro comes in, a lot of the trade unions





# global view



Haymarket martyrs; below left, a collectivised CNT tram in Spain.

are actually led by the anarchists and one of Che Guevara's actions is essentially to clear the anarchists out of the trade unions, and set up a good government trade union that makes sure workers do what the government want. Which is not quite an anarchist approach I think.

Why do people treat Spain as exceptional? They only treat Spain as exceptional by comparing Spain to other countries in the north Atlantic. What they say is – if you look at Spain it had a lot bigger anarchist movement than in the UK or than Sweden or Norway or Germany. And bigger than the US. Okay, that's fair enough but when we look internationally, when we look beyond the north Atlantic, there are a lot of movements that, even measured simply by how big were the anarchists in the trade unions, were bigger movements.

## Internationally speaking

So when we look globally and we look at this international level we find anarchist movements are very big. I only used the trade union thing as a quick way to do the comparison. If we want to look at things like running daily newspapers, having vast networks of schools, forming workers armies, if we want to look at revolutionary uprisings, if we want to look at the impact on the culture of the popular classes, if we want to look at a role in the countryside, if we want to look at a role in anti-colonial struggles, in all of these ways we can make the same argument – that anarchism and

syndicalism were very big in Spain, but Spain was not exceptional, and that we have to understand anarchism and syndicalism globally and as a global movement to understand its historical role.

## Poor cousin

And from that we can start to make the argument that anarchism and syndicalism were not, as people often assume, always the poor cousin of classical Marxism or of social democracy. For example classical Marxism had no real presence outside of west Europe. And its offshoots, with the interesting exception of Indonesia, had no real presence elsewhere. Classical Marxism before Lenin said 'look, no capitalism equals no socialism' and this meant for people who were keen on Marxism in say, Argentina, 'hold on don't do anything, wait a bit for a bit more capitalism'. It's not a line the working class always likes. You had these vast, poor working classes and the Argentine Socialist Party would say 'vote for more reforms' and the working class said 'well first we can't vote. This is a problem, most of us immigrants can't vote. Secondly we are not seeing any reforms, this thing is controlled by an oligarchy, third we've got all the capitalism that we want. So we don't really want to join'.

## Poor marxism

If we look right across South America, anarchists and syndicalists predominated on the left and the radical movement. If you

look in southern Africa in the 1910s, anarchism and syndicalism predominate. If we look in a case like Egypt, where there was an anarchist movement from the 1870s, anarchism had a key role there even into the early 1920s. In fact the Egyptian Communist Party when it was originally set up was known in Arabic as 'the party of the anarchists'. When they joined the Communist International one of the conditions was: kick the anarchists out of the Egyptian Communist Party. The first Communist parties set up in Mexico, Brazil, South Africa and elsewhere were actually set up by anarchists and they were essentially anarchist parties. So anarchism was not the poor cousin of the movement.

It is a very important thing for us to understand about anarchism it was a very important movement. Predominance of Marxism as a movement of the left and a movement in the labour circles in many countries is only something that's achieved in the 1940s; it's really in World War Two that Communist parties grow into mass parties in many countries. And it's not like the anarchist and syndicalist movements just die out in 1939 or 1945, in many countries it remains a very powerful influence despite these rivals.

## Trade unions

One thing in the anarchist movement's history that we can appreciate is its pioneering role in founding trade unions. One example is the Regional Workers Federation of Spain set up in 1870s, this was the one inspired by Bakunin's delegate Fanelli. The second is the General Congress of Mexican Workers, the second of the biggest syndicalist unions, 1876. The next big one was in the United States, the Central Labour Union in Chicago this is where the Haymarket Martyrs came from. This was the key trade union in Chicago; it was part of an anarchist movement that could pull a hundred thousand people onto the streets – at the funeral of the Haymarket martyrs 250,000 people. And of course Mayday commemorates that. It's one of anarchism's little gifts to the international working class. Workers Circle in Cuba was the next important one.

Second thing, in many cases the anarchists and syndicalists pioneered trade unions in what I'm calling colonial or post-colonial countries – either under direct colonialism or were in some way maybe less formally subject to great powers. Again when we look here we can see a pattern of an important early role and a long term presence by anarchists in the mass movements. Isabelo de los Reyes in the Philippines was a Filipino independence fighter – as the Spanish empire starts collapsing in the 1890s the United States moves in and starts to move in and take over – Puerto Rico, Cuba and the Philippines. He's locked up in Barcelona with Spanish anarchists, he

## FEATURE

## Anarchism's historical role: a global view

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reads a lot of this stuff, he thinks this is pretty good and he comes back and he sets up a trade union in Manila in about 1904, modelled on the Spanish anarchist trade unions.

## Other voices

Liu Shifu in China – his group, the Anarchist Communist Society, set up the first trade unions in China in the 1910s into the early 1920s, especially in areas of Yunnan, anarchists led the trade unions. Shifu unfortunately died young – he had TB – but his movement was very important and for a less glorious legacy of anarchism there a young librarian called Mao Tse-tung was in 1919-1920 an anarchist and identified with the anarchist movement. In the early 1920s you could get most of Kropotkin's key writings in China; there wasn't an official copy of the Communist Manifesto available.

T.W. Thibedi in South Africa. His father was a minister, he studied at a church school and he taught in a church school, 1915 he was in a meeting in Johannesburg of the International Socialist League which was a revolutionary syndicalist group, thought this is damn good stuff and he joined. And he was the first of a whole wide layer of African coloured and Indian cadre in South Africa of the anarchist movement and he was a key figure in a syndicalist union there called the Industrial Workers of Africa, which was the first trade union in British southern Africa for black African workers.

Shanghai 1927, Korean and Chinese anarchists, they're involved in a number of joint projects. Korea was under Japanese colonial rule and a hell of a lot of the Korean anarchist movement is actually outside of Korea. Very often they were in China or in Japan and this particular wing was involved in the National Labour University and subsequently in something called the Leader College. These were essentially universities under anarchist control although sponsored by a wing of the Guomindang, which trained people in classes like Esperanto and gardening



Nestor Makhno

and anarchist theory. They were also involved in training militias, there was a movement for village self-defence, they were involved in that.

## Anarchist revolutions

In terms of revolutions there are three that I think we could reasonably characterise as anarchist revolutions. First is the movement of the Makhnovists in the Ukraine in 1918 until 1921 when it gets suppressed. Next important one is Manchuria 1929-1932. This is one that's not well documented in English, key figure here Kim Jwa-jin, he was a general in the Korean Independence army. Why were Koreans in Manchuria? Well Japanese colonial rule in the Korean peninsula was extremely repressive, extremely thorough; in the 1910s for example they instructed all Koreans to change their names to Japanese names. So a lot of the resistance took place in the border lands of Manchuria. The Korean independence army had several strongholds. Kim Jwa-jin was very famous for winning a number of major victories against the Japanese. Himself an anarchist, he devised a plan along with the Korean



Liu Shifu

Anarchist Federation in Manchuria to set up the Korean Anarchist People's Movement. This was an area run along the same lines as the Makhnovist area with council systems, a degree of political pluralism, they had co-operatives and a militia defending it. Kim Jwa-jin was assassinated in 1931 by a Communist and soon after that Japanese forces came up from the south and crushed this. This was an important case, he's called the Korean Makhno, but I suppose you could just as well call Makhno the Ukrainian Kim Jwa-jin.

In Korea these are not small facts. All of these major figures are recognised, they'll tell you about them in school text books, but usually with the anarchism removed. Kim Jwa-jin's house is a national monument, there's a statue of him, they have sometimes Kim Jwa-jin days, a number of important anarchists have been labelled 'Independence activist of the month', even been on stamps but the anarchism is usually elided in that.

And of course Spain 1936.



Kim Jwa-jin

## Anti-colonial

Now the important thing is two of these revolutions happened in the context of anti-colonial struggles. Very often when we look at the Makhnovist movement we look mainly in the context of an aspect of the Russian revolution, but I think you also have to understand that Ukraine was one of the key Russian territories. It was the most commercialised farm land in Russia, it was one of the big export earners for the Russians, exported a hell of a lot of pasta, it's a huge wheat growing area which they exported in the form of pasta – the Ukrainian pasta proletariat was an important revolutionary force!

Nestor Makhno himself had, after he came out of jail, been involved in union activity there. This was a very developed area and this was an area where the independence movement was strong. If you look at who the Makhnovists were competing with, on the one hand they were competing with the Bolshevik forces, on the other they were competing with the nationalist of Symon Petliura and the Central Rada.

If you re-read, with this in mind, the history of the Makhnovist movement, part of what they are trying to do is find an anarchist road to independence – how to have independence for a country that does not simply transfer power from a foreign to a local power elite, how do you do this? What they were trying to do was find a different road to de-colonisation.

This is just part of the two-hour talk Lucien gave; he also spoke of anarchist theory and organisation featured in the book and gave potted histories of several key anarchist figures. These will feature in *Freedom* at a later date.

*Black Flame: The Revolutionary Class Politics of Anarchism and Syndicalism, CounterPower Vol.1*, by Michael Schmidt and Lucien van der Walt, published by AK Press at £18.



## INSIDE NEWS

We are pleased to report that two of the UK anti-fascists sent down last year as part of the mobilisation against Blood & Honour were released on 30th December on Home Detention Curfew. Both Sean Cregan and Andy Baker will finish the rest of their sentence on an electronic tag. Both are committed political activists and we hope their time inside won't deter them from continuing their activities. The anarchist movement needs more people who are willing to put their politics on the line even if it means coming into direct conflict with the institutions of the state. Three other comrades – Ravinder Gill, Phil De Souza and Austen Jackson, are still inside and need the support of our movement. To write to them check the Freedom website for their prison addresses.

## Anti-fascist Festival

Since its emergence as a distinct ideology at the beginning of the twentieth century, fascism has brought more misery to the world than any other political doctrine. Yet, even today, even after the titanic anti-fascist struggles of the past, and even the Nazi Holocaust, from Anders Breivik to Dale Farm, the threat of fascism still exists. In the past, our comrades had the courage to stand up and say No Pasaran! – They shall not pass! – from Leeds' own Holbeck Moor, where Oswald Mosley was routed, to the battlefields of Spain. The heroism of these brave antifascists, who often paid the ultimate price for their resistance, should not be forgotten.

Leeds Antifascist Film Festival will be showing films documenting the fight against fascism in Spain, Germany, England, France and Poland, to educate and inspire. We should never forget the reality of fascism nor shrink from confronting it ourselves. For evil to flourish it is only necessary that good people do nothing.

The festival will take place at The Space Project, an exciting new venture in Leeds, over the weekend of the 4th and 5th February, with films showing in the afternoon and evening. Stay for one film or for all of them, times will be advertised in advance.

As well as the films, there will be talks, refreshments (including vegan cake!) and the Leeds ABC bookstall will be there with (as well as books) pamphlets, T-shirts, badges, CDs, and more. Admission is free, but donations will be gratefully received on the door. The event is a benefit for antifascist prisoners.

Leeds Anti-fascist Film festival, 4th-5th February, The Space Project, 37-38 Mabgate Green, Leeds  
Leeds ABC <http://leedsabc.org/>  
email [leedsabc@riseup.net](mailto:leedsabc@riseup.net)

# Overcrowding and unrest

Despite the dire warnings of mass conflagration within English prisons emanating from the Prison Officers Association's PR department, nothing happened. Apparently, prison riots in England and Wales had been deemed inevitable during the holiday period because of a combination of overcrowding, due in no small part because of the mass incarceration (more than 1,000 people including an 8% increase in under 18 years olds) of anyone even tenuously connected to last summer's disturbances receiving draconian sentences, the majority on remand awaiting trial for even the most trivial of offences. This, in addition to the Coalition cuts in Prison Service funding – which were in turn adding to the stretching of an already thin blue line of screws trying heroically (if one is to believe the POA propaganda) to keep a lid on the growing insurrectionary atmosphere within the prison system (courtesy of New Labour's previous year-on-year round of Prison Service cuts), would bring about the end of civilisation as we know it.

They had tried the same scaremongering during the riots themselves, claiming that (then soon to be privatised) HMP Birmingham and other prisons holding arrested rioters were likely to come under attack. They didn't. Then they asserted that those juveniles arrested and sent to Young Offenders Institutions were likely to be 'bullied' by other inmates (strictly the purview of the screws themselves of course). They were (with a concurrent 200% increase in those on suicide watch in some YOIs). Both claims were ignored and the POA were reduced to calling for the reopening of HMP Latchmere, recently closed by the Coalition as part of their cost-cutting plans – though exactly what the reopening a 200-bed open prison would

do to alleviate a situation where the prison population had just passed the 88,000 mark, only 2,000 place short of the 'full' sign being put out, is anyone's guess.

Instead, the only prison in the UK that came anywhere near rioting was an almost routine disturbance at Addiewell in Scotland that some Scottish newspapers (and at least one Indymedia poster) tried to blow up out of all proportion. So, instead of the "up to 70 prisoners" rioting, as claimed, fewer than 10 inmates were involved in smashing up part of one wing in the Sodexho-run private prison. Or as one pet screw on the *Scottish Sun's* payroll observed: "A few cons went a bit mental. This wasn't Addiewell's worst night but it was scary for the other cons in there."

In other prison news, the latest figures for self-inflicted deaths in England and Wales shows that 57 prisoners died at their own hands during 2011. This is down just two on 2010 numbers and four prisoners have been found dead in their cells from apparently self-inflicted injuries since the beginning of January. However 22 other deaths remain unclassified and may yet be added to that number, significantly increasing the numbers beyond the relative lows of the previous three years (59 to 61 deaths).

Also, a recent High Court decision has found that the use of restraint techniques such as nose distraction (striking the nose with the heel of the hand) in G4S and Serco-run Secure Training Centres (prisons for the under 16s) was widespread and unlawful and that the Government is under a legal obligation to identify potential victims and notify them of their right to seek compensation (although the Court did not go as far as ordering the government to do so).



## COMMENT

## ABOUT FREEDOM

## ANGEL ALLEY

New years comes in quick at the Alley, and we are already busy with many new plans. Firstly, we are pleased to announce that, after some delicate negotiations in a West Norwood social club, Ian Bone's *Bash The Rich* joins the list of titles now available on 50% sale or return for any activist group wishing to do bookstalls.

As to Freedom Press's own publishing ventures, we are very grateful to John Quail for agreeing to do a new introduction to his valuable work on the history of British anarchism, *The Slow Burning Fuse*. In addition, Nick Heath will be doing some short biographies to accompany the text, which we are hoping to have out by October, in time for a launch the 2012 London Anarchist Bookfair.

Sales of *Breaking Free* and Harold Barclay's *Religious Movements* have both sold so incredibly well that we've had to get some more printed! However our vast stocks of many classics still remain in the storeroom – to which the only solution is for comrades to take them out and flog 'em.

On the social side we've had the great pleasure of the Advisory Service for Squatters holding their winter party on the 13th – thanks to them.

Now it's off to do an interview for Press TV on undercover cops – no prizes for guessing they're all tossers.

## SUBSCRIPTIONS

It's now even easier to work out when your subscription is up for renewal. The number above your name on the address label now tells you the year and month when your subscription runs out. There's a renewal form on page 16 of this issue if you need it, or you can subscribe online at [freedompress.org.uk/news/subscribe](http://freedompress.org.uk/news/subscribe). It's that time of year when many subscriptions are due – and don't forget that donations are always extremely welcome.

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## NEXT ISSUE DEADLINE

The next issue will be dated March 2012 and the last day to get copy to us for that issue will be Sunday 12th February. You can send your articles to us by email to [copy@freedompress.org.uk](mailto:copy@freedompress.org.uk) or by post to 'The Editors', Freedom, 84b Whitechapel High Street, London E1 7QX.

## A sideways look

by SVARTFROSK

The government has announced that it intends to look at information technology training in schools. I've worked in IT for some time, for a local authority and three private companies, but I'm of an age that I never had any – my school didn't get a computer until I left. It is still a welcome move, though there's no guarantee that the government will get it right. Employers complain that it teaches kids nothing of use in the industry; kids complain it's boring. Either way, it's clearly not working.

One of the problems in addressing IT teaching is what is required of it? Is it meant to be training in how to use Microsoft Office? Or in what goes on within the programmes. The former is, in my view, a waste of time. For a start, most kids these days are more computer literate than the adults, because they have grown up with and been immersed in the technology. Picking stuff up as they go along is second nature to anyone young who has had the use of a computer. (It's not fair on those kids who don't have access to computers, but there aren't many.) Teaching Microsoft Office is also a waste of time because by the time the kids being taught get to have a job, the software for a lot of these functions will have changed. And finally, it is a waste because it should be identified and done as on-the-job training when someone is recruited, by the employer.

Teaching underlying methods and principles in IT also begs a question: how much do students need to know to do the job, when IT jobs are effectively all specialisms? Do you need to know about software development to understand servers? Or networks to understand a PC operating system? I think the answer here is probably a smattering at least. It has certainly been an issue for me as someone

without formal training that there are gaps in my knowledge. You pick stuff up over the years, but I've never felt confident on the networking or hardware side. A lot of the skills needed, such as logic and analysis, problem solving, are applicable to a wide range of activities.

When the government's initiative was announced, there was a complaint from employers that a lot of university computer science courses are 'dumbed down' and they can't recruit staff with good enough skills. There may well be some courses that are a bit crap, but the main problem is that employers want highly skilled staff for low wages, but the IT market cuts both ways. If you want a web developer, you're not just competing with other companies in the UK, you're competing across the world. It took my employer six months to fill a SQL DBA role, because the pay on offer was not enough. In the end they recruited someone young, who is learning; but once they have some more experience they will move on to a better paid job.

If they really want to employ people on lower pay, the trade off might include some training, you know like an apprenticeship used to be. Unfortunately, IT firms are notorious for hardly ever training anyone, and certainly not in a transferable technical skill. They'll happily make you watch videos on using ladders or the company's ethos, but assume you will train yourself, in what spare time you have after work.

For all the anti-state rhetoric of employers, it seems they want their cake and eat it. Happy to avoid paying taxes as much as they can; but complaining that state education doesn't supply them with the right kinds of workers at a price they are willing to pay.





## FEEDBACK

## Bike Workshop

Birmingham Bike Foundry is a workers' co-operative. We offer maintenance and cycle training to members of the public, schools and businesses. We offer workshop repairs, wheel building, and a tool club where you can come along and use our workshop. We aim to make a healthy, fun, affordable and environmentally friendly means of transport and leisure available to as many people as we can, however possible!

We run three bike mechanics courses: Bike Basics, Home Mechanics and Wheel Building. We are also running a trailer building course in collaboration with Northfield Eco Centre in February, for booking details about that, please follow the link to their website.

Courses are run regularly for groups of up to four trainees, upstairs in our shop in Stirchley. We use Park professional mechanics' tools and stands and all our courses are taught by our experienced staff. The advanced modules are delivered by Cyctech 2 qualified staff. Most importantly, we have tea and coffee making facilities.

**Birmingham Bike Foundry**

1539 Pershore Road, Stirchley, B30 2JH

<http://birminghambikefoundry.org>

[info@birminghambikefoundry.org](mailto:info@birminghambikefoundry.org) 0121 459 7276

## New anarchist publisher

LBC Books is a new publishing instance of a group who have been involved in anarchist publishing for nearly 10 years. Now, we are ready to take this project to the next level, and we introduce LBC Books – our publishing arm. We will be publishing at least one new book a month and will be helping a variety of other publishing groups with their material. Our project is an anarchism of many voices and attitudes.

- *Occupy Everything: Anarchists in the Occupation Movement 2009-2011*. The

first LBC Books title will be a survey of anarchist involvement in the Occupation Movement. This is a book where anarchists, in their own words, express how and why they engaged in this struggle, what methods they used and evaluates the success of working in the mixed crowds that the Occupy Movement attracted.

- *Super Happy Anarcho Fun Pages*. The snarkiest, meanest, kindest little comic zine around.
- *Queer Ultraviolence: A Bash Back Anthology*. This anthology takes a peek at the radical Queer tendency and/or (non) organisation during the span from 2007 to 2011. It includes interviews, analysis, communiqués and other documents relating to Bash Back! and the tendency that it spawned.

We hereby invite you to join us in this adventure. The Accomplices of LBC Books is the easiest way to participate in this project and share in the awesome.

<http://lbcbooks.com/>

## Cunning anarchists

You know it's an important day for anarchism when Ian Bone brokers a deal to patch up the 25 year old feud between *Freedom* and Peter Good, the man behind *The Cunningham Amendment* (TCA) magazine. A feud so lost in the mists of time no one can quite remember what it was about. For those who haven't seen or read the TCA it is a beautifully put together mischievous celebration of anarchist ideas, with an artist's eye, a draftsman attention to detail and a printers sense of design layout. It is both unique and an utter joy to read and pleasure look at. Every surly anarchist should have a copy in their back pocket just to remind themselves we can occasionally raise our expectations.

**The Cunningham Amendment**

Room 6, Tangleford House, The Street,  
Bawdeswell, Norfolk NR20 4RT

## Parklands fight

We have been fighting a massive housing development on an ancient deer park between Loughborough and Shepshed.

Part of the irony for anarch's is that this is private estate owned by Squire de Lise and we are constantly challenging his right to 'own' this much loved recreational space (we have public bridle paths in parts of the estate). As you see from the leaflet [reproduced below], we are testing the Tories' right to bid legislation under the Localism Act 2011. Can I suggest lots of anarch's look in their locality for 'Community Assets'?

P.S. please don't dismiss this as legalism. I fight on the ground which I find myself.

**Mike Hamilton**

*Leaflet text:*

*The members of The Garendon Park and Countryside Protection Group intend to Register the whole Estate as a Community Asset under the New Legislation which will allow us to be consulted when the Park and Estate is put on the open market for sale and development. The ultimate aim is to Buy the Estate and place it under the control of local people through the formation of a Community Land Trust [CLT].*

*The Localism Act requires local authorities to maintain a list of assets of community value which have been nominated by the local community. When listed assets come up for sale or change of ownership, the Act then gives community groups the time to develop a bid and raise the money to bid to buy the assets when it comes on the open market. This will help local communities keep much loved sites in public use and part of local life.*

*We hope to convince Charnwood Borough Council that the whole of Garendon Park and Estate is indeed a valued Community Asset and one which represents a green space for free leisure pursuits, and reduces footfalls on other local visitor attractions. It also produces local food with very little 'food miles' and could offer further employment to farming apprentices.*

## DONATE YOUR OLD BOOKS

The ravaging wolves of capitalist depredation are constantly howling around Angel Alley seeking the destruction of our noble bookshop.

You can help keep these fey hounds at bay by donating books that you no longer want so that we may sell them on to knowledge-hungry proletarians for a pound a piece (more to rich arty types who only came in 'cos they got lost on the way to the Whitechapel Art Gallery).

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## GETTING ACTIVE

### WHAT'S ON

#### FEBRUARY

■ **2nd, 9th, 16th and 23rd** London group of The Anarchist Federation meets weekly on Thursday evenings at Freedom Bookshop 84b Whitechapel High Street, London E1 7QX. If you would like to attend please email [london@afed.org.uk](mailto:london@afed.org.uk) beforehand.

■ **4th and 5th** No Pasaran! – Leeds Anti-fascist Film Festival at The Space Project, 37-38 Mabgate Green, Leeds LS9 7DS, in support of anti-fascist prisoners, see [www.spaceproject.org.uk](http://www.spaceproject.org.uk) or <http://leedsabc.org/> for details.

■ **5th** Brighton Punx Picnic Benefit Roast, delicious vegan nut roast with all the trimmings and lots of gravy, £5, at the Cowley Club, 12 London Road, Brighton BN1 4JA, from 2pm to 6pm, all proceeds go to funding Brighton Punx Picnic 2012, email [brightonpunxp picnic@gmail.com](mailto:brightonpunxp picnic@gmail.com) or see <http://en-gb.facebook.com/punxp picnic> for details.

■ **7th and 21st** Practical Squatting Evening at Offmarket, 68 Dalston Lanes, London E8 3AH from 7pm to 8pm, contact [offmarket@riseup.net](mailto:offmarket@riseup.net) or call 07583870733 for details.

■ **12th** Bristol Radical Zine Festival. from 12 noon until 6pm at Kebele Community Co-op, 14 Robertson Road, Bristol BS5 6JY, email [bristolradicalzinefest@gmail.com](mailto:bristolradicalzinefest@gmail.com) or see <http://bristolradicalzinefest.wordpress.com/> for details.

■ **14th and 28th** Practical Squatting Evening at 56a Infoshop, 56a Crampton Street, London SE17 3AE from 7pm to 8pm, see <http://www.56a.org.uk/> for details.

■ **15th** McLibel: Human Rights Victory Anniversary, see <http://www.veggies.org.uk/event.php?ref=225> for more.

■ **11th** News from Nowhere Club presents 'Way down upon the Swanee River: the sentimental myth of plantation song and the defiant reality of slave song' with Chris Howes at The Epicentre, West Street, Leytonstone E11 4LJ, buffet 7.30pm, talk starts at 8pm, for details see <http://www.newsfromnowhereclub.org/>

■ **17th** The Red & Black Club at LARC, 62 Fieldgate Street, London E1 1ES from 8pm, Dissident Island Radio will be broadcasting live as the local anarchists host a traditional east end knees-up.

■ **12th to 26th** Earth First! Winter Moot, a weekend of discussion and networking for those taking direct action against ecological destruction, Lanark near Glasgow, see <http://earthfirstgathering.org.uk/> for details.

#### MARCH

■ **1st, 8th, 15th and 22nd** London group of The Anarchist Federation meets weekly on Thursday evenings at Freedom Bookshop 84b Whitechapel High Street, London E1 7QX. If you would like to attend please email [london@afed.org.uk](mailto:london@afed.org.uk) beforehand.



● **Wessex Solidarity** is the name of a new initiative in the South West and they want to hear from people in the region with an interest in anarchism, syndicalism or direct action, who share a goal of building a stateless, classless society around the principles of libertarian socialism.

Their first outing as a group was the public sector strike on 30th November, when members and their families met up in Bournemouth and formed part of the 2,000-plus march – an outstanding turnout for Bournemouth. They then joined UK Uncut activists and went on an impromptu tour of the tax avoiders in the town – Barclays, Vodaphone, Topshop, etc., picking up over a hundred fellow rabble-rousers and holding noisy demonstrations at each location.

Very much in the class struggle anarchism camp, their emphasis is on supporting workers' struggles locally and globally, fighting inequality, oppression and fascism. Members of all other anti-authoritarian, anti-capitalist groups are welcome and hope to work with all these groups in solidarity. To get in touch email them via their website <http://wessexsolidarity.wordpress.com>

● **Bristol Radical Zine Fest.** As we never tire of repeating in *Freedom*, despite the ubiquitous nature of the internet (and its latest marketing tool, ebooks) real publications on actual paper are still flourishing and in



demand none more so than the radical zine world.

Zines are essentially self-produced pamphlets, often personal in nature, always diverse and engaging, political or provocative, they represent an important and expanding role of independent publishing, creative arts and print media.

In February Bristol is holding its very first Radical Zine Festival, promising a day of zines and workshops. Stalls so far range from Other Asias, focusing on alternative underground Asian DIY culture, to Bearpit Zine, showcasing the work of Bristol artists. From the Swansea Feminist Network to zines on cooking and self-defence! Everyone who has an interest in the medium, or indeed anyone curious as to what exactly is on offer – we can guarantee you would go away disappointed.

The festival is on Sunday 12th February, from noon until 6pm at Kebele Community Co-op, 14 Robertson Road, Bristol BS5 6JY and entry is free. The event is followed by Kebele dinner, which costs £2.50, although no-one is refused for lack of funds. Email [bristolradicalzinefest@gmail.com](mailto:bristolradicalzinefest@gmail.com) or see <http://bristolradicalzinefest.wordpress.com/>

● Good news comes to us courtesy of the **Nottingham Defence Campaign**. The charges against the 'Atos Two' have been dropped by the Crown Prosecution Service. As reported in the last issue of *Freedom*, the Atos Two, a retired paediatric nurse and a wheelchair user, were due to face trial for aggravated trespass following their arrest last September after a peaceful protest at the local offices of Atos 'Healthcare'. Faced with an impressive solidarity campaign and having a pathetically weak case, the CPS and Atos were forced to back down.

The prosecution stated that they would "discontinue" the case, because the "complainant no longer supports the prosecution". It is unknown whether this change of mind was due to Atos's concerns of further bad publicity or whether coppers and/or CPS advised the 'complainant' to back off before their case would have been dismantled in court?

The case shows the importance of such practical acts of solidarity and the potential of mutual aid and support.

The 'Atos Two' have asked us to express their gratitude to everyone who has supported them over the last few months and let you know that you're all fantastic!

See campaign website for details of further actions against Atos, at <https://network23.org/nottsdefence/>



# Greening up football

The appropriately named Forest Green Rovers are looking to become the world's most eco-friendly football club with the implementation of a number of radical initiatives at the club. The Conference League side, based in Nailsworth, Gloucestershire, recently launched Britain's first ever meat-free and environmentally sustainable menu for fans at the stadium. The menu features locally sourced, predominantly vegetarian eco-food in accordance with Soil Association's gold standard catering mark.

Previously the club introduced a red meat-free diet as part of the players' fitness regime, which was extended across the stadium with club chairman and old eco-activist Dale Vince adamant "if red meat was not good enough to feed our players, then it wasn't good enough for our staff, fans and visitors too."

Despite taking meat off the menu, it seems the players and the fans have taken to the idea of a healthy match alternative.

But this is just the latest in a long line of environmental projects at Rovers for greater sustainability off as well as on the field. The club is in the process of installing solar panels on the roof of the stadium as part of a green energy scheme that will provide 10% of electricity used throughout the ground. There are also plans to install low energy floodlights, an electric lawn mower for the pitch and an electric minibus for the team.

They also want the pitch to be certified organic – the first time a football pitch has been given such an accolade – and are using local cow manure as fertiliser for the job.

The inspiration and motivating force behind the changes is club chairman Dale Vince. Sustainability in Sport, which was launched by Vince and ex-Manchester United mainstay Gary Neville last year, is a not-for-profit foundation which aims to help sporting clubs and organisations in the UK to lower their carbon footprints. Forest Green Rovers is seen as a testing ground for the future of eco-friendly football which

could be promoted throughout the leagues.

Vince comes from a radical environmental tradition. He was part of the peace convoy that occupied nuclear missile bases in the 1980s and the new age traveller eco-activist scene, present at the infamous Battle of the Beanfield at Stonehenge when the police rioted attacking travellers' convoys seriously injuring many.

He went on to found Ecotricity, an energy company specialising in generating and supplying wind power and renewable energy from wind turbines which now supplies 40,000 homes with cheap, green electricity.



## Italy's horse racing strikes

◀ page 24

head masks and blowing trumpets, protested outside the Italian parliament in Rome where they fought with police throwing eggs and firecrackers, while 150 protesters occupied the offices of UnireTV, the sports channel, removing equipment and cabling to prevent the broadcasting of foreign racing. In Naples

200 people protested against the cuts by racing 20 horses along the seafront.

Many Italian punters are now moving over to betting on English and Irish races fuelling further cash flow problems.

Italy – the third largest economy in the Eurozone after Germany and France – is still

reeling following the downgrading of its credit rating despite the fact the European Union have consistently claimed Italy is too big an economy to fail. The global credit agency Fitch pronounced ominously "the future of the euro will be decided at the gates of Rome".



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## REVIEWS

## FICTION

## Struggling On

Connie nodded to Steve and Dave as they approached the clock-tower for the Hurstbourne Anarchist Group's regular stall, carrying the pasting table. It was cold, grey and threatening rain. They were late and no one else had turned up, which wasn't a surprise given the acrimony of the last meeting.

"Dominic's not coming," said Dave. "He said we should concentrate on the internet."

"But what about all the people who don't spend their lives on-line?" asked Connie.

"I tried that argument," said Dave. "I think he just didn't want to come."

"He's probably huddled away on the web in a darkened room, missing such a fine day," said Steve. The others laughed.

They began giving out copies of *The Hag*, their newsletter, but their heart wasn't really in it. A couple of regulars came by and picked up copies of *Schnews* and *Freedom*, but no one stayed long. After an hour, it started to spit.

"I think it's time to continue our agitation in the Hurstbourne Arms," suggested Dave. They quickly packed up and retreated to the warmth of the pub. Steve got the beers in and they sat down at a corner table.

"Did you talk to Pete?" asked Connie.

"Well..." Steve answered. "I tried. But he wasn't having any of it. He actually suggested there might be a snitch in the group."

"What?" she replied. "But that's ridiculous. We've known each other for years, except for Alfie and Iona because they're so young."

"Did he say who he thought it might be?" asked Dave. Steve hesitated.

"He thinks it's me!" exclaimed Dave. "He does, doesn't he?"

"Well, he did mention your name," said Steve.

"The bastard. Did he have any justification?"

"Not really, just gossip. You do work for the government."

"I do housing advice for the council, it's not the same thing," answered Dave.

"But you did used to be a dole officer," replied Steve.

"And? You think anyone is defined solely by their job? Do you think I'm a tout?" said Dave.

"No," answered Steve.

"Working for the dole office pushed me towards anarchism. All the lefties were in Militant and their idea of socialism was like one big dole office. I knew I didn't want anything like that."

"I don't like this. I think Pete needs to answer a few questions," said Connie.

"Like what?" asked Steve.

"Why he's behaving like this. If he has any real suspicions or evidence he should make it know. This is just gossip."

"I see what you mean," said Steve. "Now, who wants another?"

Martin H.

To be continued...

## FILM

## Wuthering Heights

directed by Andrea Arnold

Never mind the prissy costume drama bollocks – this raw punk historicism is a landmark, in many senses, in British cinema. After *Red Road* (2004) and *Fish Tank* (2009),\* it confirms the director's uncompromising approach, portraying without piety or sentimentality the trials and tribulations of characters struggling in quagmires of conflictual class relations. Rejecting the voluminous bourgeois baggage associated with the source material, Arnold sidesteps the sense and sensibility of period drama and literature and focuses directly on the pitch of Emily Brontë's pioneering 1847 novel. But whereas the book's gothic Romanticism charted the tragic repercussions of a passionate but socially impossible relationship – according to the commentary of servants as purportedly neutral characters who, nevertheless, fully conform to local norms – the film goes straight for the imaginative jugular, with no narration and scant dialogue interrupting the majestic ambient soundscape and scenery of rugged moorland. Thus the explicit and implicit menace of social hierarchy dressed in coercive legitimisation, polite conversation, hypocrisy and self-deception gives way to a primal vision of unthinking childhood exuberance, fear, cruelty and enchantment ground down, tainted and twisted by supposedly civilised society.

The original story saw an abandoned child or runaway slave charitably rescued from urban destitution, so Arnold intelligibly casts Heathcliff as black and assumes his viewpoint on arrival in the alien austerity of a Yorkshire hill-farm 'safe haven'. His position decisively 'beyond the pale' parallels adoptive sister Cathy's outsider status courtesy of her uncontrollable conduct not fitting sex or station, with the young teenagers' rebellious partnership articulated in a naturalistic, expressionistic register of body language, physical sensation and emotional resonance matching the wild weather, landscape, flora and fauna they revel in. Robbie Ryan's magnificent cinematography and the first-time actors' uncontrived performances capture the essence of their visceral yearning, temporarily escaping the comparable brutality and caprice – and occasional tender empathy – of home and community which, conversely, promise only heartache. Cathy at least consoles herself by marrying money, but with no tolerable options Heathcliff's unlikely social mobility requires exile. For both, the rupture inflicts permanent scars worldly rewards cannot heal.

## QUIZ ANSWERS

1. Onyango Obama, grandfather of the US President, after his father Barack Senior married Ann Dunham, his mother.
2. Apple founder Steve Jobs, in the novel *A Regular Guy* by his sister Mona Simpson.



## Othering depths

However, the film's narrative unravels after Cathy's death in childbirth, commercial pressures partly overdetermining a somewhat banal closure with the prodigal, now wealthy, Heathcliff increasingly unhinged in vengeful hatred. The novel showed how their torture reverberated through subsequent generations in a microcosm of the history of oppression blighting human potential – the author's protofeminist intelligence glimpsing the logic of the social reproduction of suffering, but at the cost of the motivations of an utterly alien 'Other' remaining unfathomable. Arnold convincingly cuts through such mystifications, fleshing out said alien's perspective and thereby hinting at the intrinsic commonality of apparently diverse forms of domination. Class, race and gender, here, are not separate phenomena merely happening to 'intersect' – but are actively co-constituted on the basis of the objectification of nature, human nature and social practice sedimenting into unequal patterns of activity and exchange. Given that this intuitively appealing notion still eludes satisfactory philosophical and political elucidation, this is surely no mean feat.

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

\* Reviewed in *Variant* 29 ([www.variant.org](http://www.variant.org)) and *Freedom*, 21st November 2009, respectively.

*Wuthering Heights* is released on DVD on 26th March 2012.

3. Pizza. Yes, in the land of the free, frozen pizza with a syrup of tomato paste is a vegetable.
4. La Voz de la Mujer was founded in Buenos Aires, Argentina, in 1896.



# First things first...

## Joe Maguire on a welcome new overview of our age-old aspirations

Introductions to anarchism are always going to be hard work. Anarchism is a pretty heterogeneous entity, with a lot of scope for emphasis on organisational forms, strategies and tactics. That's why calls for recommending a beginners' text are always likely to go way beyond the bounds of aesthetic or literary appeal.

Even more so, the problem is compounded because the canon of often recommended texts like Berkman, Goldman, Kropotkin, Malatesta, Meltzer, etc., etc., can come across quite one-sided as they don't immediately address the practical circumstances confronted by people in the 21st century, however well they are written.

Cindy Milstein steps up and takes a valiant attempt to address the contemporary implications of anarchism in her primer *Anarchism and Its Aspirations*. She notes that the anchor of her vantage point is anti-globalisation struggles, mainly 'The Battle for Seattle' which she contrasts with the political fallout of 9/11 and Katrina. Although it has to be said the book covers most of the philosophical and historical bases of anarchism.

The framework of anarchism is conveyed in the book primarily through the construct of *ethics*. My initial baulk at this was rather unjust, because the term is used not as it has come to be understood within consumerist jargon about lifestyle choices, but in the old-fashion meaning; a set of values. As Cindy explains: "Anarchism contends that people would be much more humane under non-hierarchical social relations and social arrangements. Hence my concentration on the ethics – the values pertaining to how humans conduct themselves" (page 12).

She expands on this further, putting other concepts together as a 'unity of ethics' which inform anarchism. These include social responsibility, liberation, the concept of positive and negative freedom, egalitarianism, your classic notions of mutual aid, co-operation, free association, but also joy, spontaneity, pluralism and regard for due process.

Initial misreading aside, I still feel packaging this as ethics is not the best way to present the anarchist project. It's not explicitly stated, but it almost lends itself to a discussion of values pertaining to various people rather than a common framework for emancipation. Maybe this is just an issue of semantics on my part. But in the same vein, the old adage about anarchism being the best of liberalism and communism, repeated in the book, probably made more sense in



an age when people could remember liberals were anything other than regressive. But, alas, Rousseau is long behind all of us.

The book rattles through a good deal of history capturing well the influences and the processes which all fuelled classical anarchism – as good an overview as you're going to get considering the brevity. Cindy illustrates the splits within the early International Workingmen's Association and rightfully points to the early failings of the anti-authoritarians in addressing oppressions beyond those imposed by the state and capital, namely race and gender. I just don't think it's enough to challenge the false dichotomy of Marxism and Anarchism and say there are libertarian strains within Marxism though. Mark Leier I think covered this best in his biography *Bakunin* when he talked about there being a clear overlap between the best of both.

A chapter in the book is given over to developing the anarchist origins of anti-capitalism. So a line is traced from Godwin and Proudhon all the way through to it being 'rediscovered' in the '50s and it being reinvigorated by the New Left and the Situationist International. Along the way ecological and cultural influences are thrown in, along with input by Automon, squatters, anti-nuclear activists, the black bloc, Zapatistas which all culminate together in the watershed event of Seattle.

Milstein argues that the shot in the arm for the anarchist project was Marx's misunderstanding of 'statecraft' and then the pluralism that's become implicit in anti-globalisation struggles. I note that, although she acknowledges anarchism's keen ability to adapt, she doesn't pick up on the fact that without a mass base to attach itself to, its main reference points are never explicitly about the working class. This speaks to me that anarchism is still a skewed project reeling from the entrenched orthodoxy of the left and simply moving into a

comfortable niche left vacant. It's telling that in the book as a whole the organising of work and the possibilities of post-capitalist production are not discussed at any length. And this is further complicated by the examples of self-organising she gives being biased towards sub-cultural groups (a point which she concedes).

Alongside the ethical framework, the basis for a good deal of the book is given over to the prospects of building an alternative set of institutions through direct democracy. Direct democracy is important to social anarchists but it's clearly part of Milstein's 'reconstructive vision' strategy, and the place where the influences of her mentor, Bookchin resound the clearest. Milstein wants to see a move towards dual power, building popular assemblies which contest our collective strength against capital and the state, and pre-empts the limitations of the current movement.

"[D]irect action protests remain trapped. On the one hand, they reveal and confront domination and exploitation... [But w]ithout this ability to self-govern, street actions translate into nothing more than a countercultural version of interest group lobbying, albeit far more radical than most and generally unpaid" (pages 112–3).

The book is a great introduction to a healthy current that abounds through the anarchist movement. And with the Occupy movement in full-swing only a little time after its production, it seems as relevant as ever. It's upbeat, has a clear vision and is not trying to reinvent the wheel. My prevailing problem is that it lacks the bite and antagonism I feel the new world requires and it leaves a number of unanswered questions pertaining to the role of the working class as an agency for political change.

*Anarchism and Its Aspirations* by Cindy Milstein, published by AK Press, 2010, £9.00.

## THE ARTS

## HAITI GHETTO BI

## PART ONE

One month before the earthquake and two years later...

In December 2009, Tracey Moberly traveled to Haiti as a participating artist in the first Ghetto Biennale. Tracey returned as a participant in the second biennale December 2011. Her photographs were taken in downtown Port-au-Prince, an area that suffered immense damage from the devastating earthquake. The images were taken three weeks before the earthquake at the biennale and her return two years later.

In downtown Port-Au-Prince, Haiti, the 'Red Alert Zone' is home for three weeks to the world's first Ghetto Biennale, with 90-plus artists and scholars in attendance over both years from many countries, including Haiti, USA, UK, Jamaica, Trinidad, Chile, Hungary, Sweden, Colombia, Croatia and Germany. In the Grand Rue area of the ghetto, we navigated past food stalls, welders, pavement garages and people just hanging out (most with stunning, sculptured physiques and posture). People entering into the ghetto were greeted by a sculpture of Vodou ('voodoo') god Papa Legba – trickster, warrior, and messenger of destiny. Standing over eight metres high and sporting a formidable phallus, it was constructed from a car chassis, part of an old truck, bed-frames and scrap metal.

Sculptor Andre Eugene's studio is in the open air, and overflowing with Vodou art – he is one of the co-founders of the Ghetto Biennale, along with his UK partner Leah Gordon. They came up with the idea after some of the sculptors of the Grand Rue's work were selected for exhibition in Florida. The artists were denied visas to leave Haiti, and couldn't attend their own show. My



Photo © Tracey Moberly

eyes scanned the rows of sculptures of all shapes and sizes, and I was drawn to the use of human skulls in many of the artworks of Vodou spirits. I couldn't help but make stark comparison to Damien Hirst's 'For The Love Of God' – platinum cast of a human skull encrusted with diamonds, on sale for £50 million. Eugene's artwork in front of me suggests the struggle of a nation responsible for the Haitian Revolution that resulted in the permanent abolition of slavery.

On my first visit I was fascinated with the laws and rules of the local cemetery, many graves are rented for a six-month period; after this, decaying corpses are taken out and some coffins find their ways into the artists' work, others being cremated in a huge oven. A community lives here, sleeping in the tombs and graves at night, highlighting Haiti's huge wealth gap between the impoverished

Creole-speaking black majority and the French-speaking minority, whom own nearly half the country's wealth. Eugene comments on a sculpture with a human skull next to us, "This man in his lifetime couldn't get a visa to leave Haiti, now he travels the world."

Part of my own work was a 'mobilography' project called Power In The Blood, a type of photography that focuses on devices with built-in cameras not intended for professional image-making, such as mobile phones. Digicel, one of Haiti's mobile phone companies, sponsored me with a few camera-phones which I handed to local people who then photographed their surroundings producing a collaborative personal insight into everything from new-born babies to Vodou ceremonies within their community. I also started work with a vodou flag maker to produce vodou flags based on text message work I was



Photo © Tracey Moberly



Photo © Tracey Moberly



# ENNALE



Photo © Tracey Moberly

doing with mobile phones. On my return visit I am informed that a Vietnamese mobile phone company has taken over a large portion of the mobile phone industry. In the first biennale as more international artists arrived, project proposals were swiftly adapted to the limited resources of the Americas' poorest nation. Jesse Darling and Hugo Moro developed the Trash Church, involving many local people who construct the open building from discarded water

bottles, water bags and other rare waste materials. This became a focal meeting point.

Among many of the other interesting and invigorating projects, my friend and work colleague Scottish artist Bill Drummond performed his public music composition Surround with 100 Port-Au-Prince residents, along with a performance of The 17 with a local school. Carole Frances Lung as Frau Fiber appointed herself "special envoy to Haiti, apparel workers", and set out to explore the possibilities of using Pepe as a resource for creating a sustainable garment industry in Haiti. Upon her arrival she was introduced to Haitian tailor, painter and photographer Jonas La Base, and the Pepe label 'Made in Haiti' was established. The clothes produced were amazing. (On a downside, during the second biennale I became alarmed reading about Korean textile manufacturers – notorious for their sweatshop labor policies – hoping to become the largest private sector employer in Haiti.) Being a part of the first Ghetto Biennale in Haiti felt revolutionary, with our experiences strengthening my belief in the many artists with integrity enough to continue to stand outside of the mainstream.

When the earthquake struck on 12th January 2010 and the horrific TV footage spewed through the airwaves it came directly from Eugene's studio and yard – where a

film crew had been doing an interview with him in the Port-Au-Prince ghetto. People I'd been working and chatting with only weeks before were shown with appalling injuries, many still trapped in the debris and rubble of the fallen buildings. I immediately felt massively compelled to go back and help with the rescue operation, but with no skills equipped for the disaster – only a camera to capture the glory death shots that newspapers love to show in any tragedy which sickened me – with not even a first aid qualification, I knew I would be using up someone else's food, water and oxygen. As co-owner of The Foundry gallery/bar in East London, where we had been forging links with the artists' group in Haiti over the past few years the only thing I could minimally do immediately was to set up an appeal for the victims of the earthquake. The response from the Foundry community was great and much money was raised which is still being used in the Grand Rue people. Having kept in constant contact with the community, I was invited back to participate in the second Ghetto Biennale in December 2011.

*To be continued in our next issue.*

Tracey Moberly is the author of the recently published book *Text-Me-Up!* which details Haiti in several of its chapters, with over 2,500 photographs and images accompanying the text, see [www.text-me-up.com](http://www.text-me-up.com).



Photo © Tracey Moberly

Clockwise from above, boys with voodoo sculptures; a proud Andre Eugene at the Ghetto Biennale; scanning the exhibition; pointing out the work; and using 'mobilography'.

## SPORT

# Italy's horse racing strikes

## Crisis as sport nears bankruptcy

Since the beginning of the year Italian horse racing has been at a standstill and tracks closed by a series of ongoing strikes over cuts to funding and the mismanagement of the industry's finances. During January every racecourse on mainland Italy was affected by a wave of strike action as track workers, including race officials, judges and starters, walked out in protest at the cash crisis facing the sport and potentially massive job losses. At the same time jockeys, breeders and trainers staged a sit-in at the governing body's headquarters in Rome and held

protests outside the Prime Minister Mario Monti's office.

The action was triggered when racing's new governing body, ASSI, announced that in 2012 racecourses would receive a substantial cut in state funding. Last year the government promised Euro 150 million to revitalise the financially struggling sport but delivered on less than half of that with a further cut of Euro 40m expected this year. Although not as popular as in Britain horseracing in Italy is still a major business with over 40 race tracks supporting as many as 50,000 workers throughout the industry. As part of the government's austerity measures both the budget for prize money and overall funding to the racecourses will be slashed.

Last year horseracing's independent ruling body UNIRE was replaced by ASSI (Agency for the Development of the Horseracing Industry) set up by the government with a view to tightening up industry regulations and introducing an economic package to make racing financially sustainable. The overhaul came about after years of unrest in the Italian racing industry which has been dogged with slow and even non-payment of prize money, constant threats to job security and loss of revenue from television rights and the betting industry.

There was also an escalation in racetrack militancy last year with industrial action leading to the cancellation of several high profile races. It was this that prompted the government to appoint a new nationwide regulating body, but despite the assurances no guaranteed extra money or support has been forthcoming.

Along with the strikes there have been demonstrations from all sections of the industry. Around 600 people, wearing horse-

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## THE QUIZ

1. Who didn't want his family's "blood sullied by a white woman"?
2. Who was fictionalised as a "man too busy to flush toilets"?
3. In November, the US Congress acted against proposals to improve school lunches by deciding what counted as a vegetable?
4. Where and when was the first specifically anarchist-feminist publication and group?

Answers on page 20

The Anarchist Quiz Book compiled by Martin Howard, illustrated by Paul Petard, is available for £5 from [freedompress.org.uk](http://freedompress.org.uk) or from our bookshop at 84b Whitechapel High Street, London E1 7QX.

