

# FREEDOM

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## ROAD TO NOWHERE

### What does the TUC's 'Future That Works' march and rally tell us?

Saturday 20th October saw the second biggest demonstration so far against austerity, the belated follow-up to the 'March for the Alternative' last year. But what was the point? And where do we go from here?

The TUC's official line is tried and tested. "We are sending a very strong message that austerity is simply failing," according to outgoing General Secretary Brendan Barber.

For the left of the left, it is this but also a launch-pad to the kind of strike action that can add weight to this message. The Socialist Party, as ever the best example of this position, tells us that marchers "came determined to make sure that it was more than a 'parade'".

However, it is telling that they neglect to mention all of those who actually did make the day "more than a parade", namely the hundreds who took direct action with Boycott Workfare, shutting down shops and using the increased numbers to cause disruption to profits and the economy. Plus the militant protest by Disabled People against Cuts (DPAC). The omission is telling

page 3 ►►

### LENS CAP USA



New contracts signed by the US government have guaranteed private prison providers a 90% occupancy rate for the next twenty years.

## ATTEMPT TO EVICT ERIC PICKLES

On the first anniversary of the Dale Farm eviction, 250 traveller activists descended on the Department of Communities and Local Government offices in London, in an attempt to evict Eric Pickles.

Using huge caravan cardboard cut-outs to occupy the space in front of the offices, several activists managed to scale the buildings and occupy the roof. They dropped banners reading 'End all Evictions' and 'Dale Farm Fight Back' and a list of evictions that paid tribute to 50 years of traveller resistance to racist evictions in the UK was read out. Several arrests followed as the police used dogs to aggressively break up the protest, and end the rooftop occupation.

The travellers hold Mr Pickles' department responsible for attacks on traveller's rights, as they have ramped up powers of eviction and drastically reduced the regional targets for site

provision. The department also contributed £1.2 million to fund the Dale Farm eviction.

Oscar Farrell, who resisted the eviction at Dale Farm a year ago, said "What is happening at Dale Farm isn't just a local dispute, it is part of Eric Pickles' attack on traveller communities. Traveller families all over the country are being evicted and left with nowhere else to go because there aren't enough sites."

Several former Dale Farm residents spoke at the protest, including Mary Flynn who said that, "They ignore us in their laws, they ignore us in their consultations, they ignore our desperate situation at Dale Farm. My children are asking 'why can't we go home?' Eric Pickles needs to answer them."

As you would expect, Eric Pickles was not available to comment.

Matthew Black

### INSIDE ►►

**Save Lewisham Hospital** page 3

**Canadians target Shell** page 9

**The new squatting law** page 12

**Svartfrosk** page 16

**Reviews** page 21

**Arts** pages 22 and 23

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## NEWS

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### LENS CAP LONDON



Activists protest outside a branch of Pret a Manger recently in solidarity with a worker dismissed for trade union organising.

## Housing rents action in London

### Housing activists stage inspection of local letting agents

Members of Haringey Housing Action Group, Haringey Solidarity Group and Haringey Private Tenants Action Group held an inspection of local letting agents to draw attention to high rents, short-term tenancies, discrimination against housing benefit claimants and high administration fees.

On Saturday 6th October, a team of Community Housing Inspectors took a tour of local letting agents along Green Lanes to investigate their practices. About twenty people took part in the inspection, asking letting agency staff about their company



policies, including: whether they accept tenants claiming housing benefit; how many months deposit they require; what charges they make to tenants; and what is the longest tenancy period they offer. Of the agencies visited, four agreed to take part, while five denied access and refused to speak to the self-styled inspectors.

The inspection took place against a backdrop of housing benefit cuts, a lack of Haringey letting agents willing to accept tenants on housing benefit, rent inflation outstripping wage inflation, and a concern that landlord and letting agent practices are leading to a significant change in the local demographic.

Michelle Lawson from Haringey Housing Action Group said: “Renting out property is not a business like selling luxury cars: housing is a basic necessity. When letting agents put up fees and rents, this pushes tenants further into poverty. Haringey Housing Action Group will support any tenants facing eviction because they cannot pay their rent.”

Jasper Murphy of Haringey Private Tenants Action Group said: “It’s been so disheartening to watch London rents escalate year upon year as my wages go down – and I’ve felt powerless as to what to do about it. On Saturday a small step was taken towards making some of the people responsible for encouraging the escalation of rents accountable to the tenants they’re screwing over.”

Jane Laporte said: “Many of the passers-by we spoke to have their own bad stories to tell of local letting agents. Rent controls and longer tenancies are widely available in many counties, including France, Germany and Sweden. Tenants in this country need comparable rights and security, such as existed here until 1988.”

Contact: Jane Laporte of Haringey Housing Action Group on 07817483167 ([info@haringey.org.uk](mailto:info@haringey.org.uk)).



# The 'wrong' type of people?

## Community turns out en masse for Lewisham Hospital demo

The demonstration on Saturday 24th November against the closure of A&E and Maternity wards at Lewisham Hospital drew a huge turnout of between 10,000 and 15,000 people.

Seasoned older marchers agreed it was the biggest demonstration in the borough since the New Cross Fire of 1981 or Lewisham's 1977 mobilisation against the National Front.

The numbers, in pouring rain and on the same day as a demo against the ongoing atrocities in Gaza, showed massive popular feeling and determination to fight the closure.

The crowd was very local and very diverse, all the different populations of Lewisham from the local pensioners forum to small woolly-hatted girls holding placards saying

'I could have died by the time the ambulance reached Woolwich', walking alongside huge numbers of NHS workers.

If the closures go ahead it would mean just one A&E would be left serving a population of 750,000 people – a punishment for being the 'wrong' type of population.

Previous calculations about the distribution of NHS resources included the poverty of the area, as it is linked to health needs in so many ways – infant mortality, accidents, infectious diseases such as tuberculosis.

Now the government has removed this requirement from its analysis and so Lewisham is not seen to need so many services – or possibly contains too many of the wrong sort, who shouldn't be encouraged to breed or recover from accidents.

The demonstration showed how strongly the local community feels about this particularly brutal cut inflicted by the austerity programme. However our problem now is, how do we actually stop the closure?

The government knows the NHS is hugely

popular. They are getting rid of it anyway. They don't care if the people on the demo bleed to death in ambulances stuck in traffic on the way to Woolwich, so they probably aren't frightened of their opinions.

To stop the closure we will need a similarly huge direct action mobilisation, and years of atomisation mean this will be very difficult. This is the position so much of the working class is in now – there is some will to fight, but the attacks on us are coming so thick and fast, and we are not prepared or mobilised.

However the size of the demo shows that healthcare is probably one of the areas of austerity where people feel the strongest, and where there is a memory of resistance in the hospital occupations of the early '90s.

**Solidarity Federation**

See <http://www.savlewishamhospital.com/> for more details on the campaign. You can sign the petition at [http://www.ipetitions.com/petition/leisham-hospital/](http://www.ipetitions.com/petition/lewisham-hospital/)

## Road to nowhere

◀ page 1

because the whole point of the 'left of left' position is to play on discontent with the lack of action by the unions, whilst still fulfilling the role of channelling and policing class struggle. Thus 'capitulation' can be put down to the right of the movement rather than the structural interests of trade union leaderships.

This tells us a lot about where the workers' movement is in the UK compared to elsewhere. Because there is enough discontent for the TUC to pass a motion considering the 'practicalities' of a general strike – and reminding us of the same to generate headlines ahead of the march – but not enough for them to leave Ed Miliband off the speakers list.

The radical workers bloc on the south London feeder march was visible and lively.

Lively enough for a Labour Party contingent to drop back and be left behind rather than have to march alongside them. Once it hit the main march, it seemed to grow in size and the atmosphere was charged.

The Boycott Workfare action was also large of its own accord, and once they came together the two blocs of militants were greater than the sum of their parts. By all accounts, half of Oxford Street was shut down by the actions of these groups whilst only hot air came from Hyde Park.

Of course, the economic disruption inflicted on the day won't force an end to austerity or bring down the government. But it wasn't intended to. Rather, it was the continuation of a long running campaign of disruptive action that has been doggedly eroding the government's workfare project.

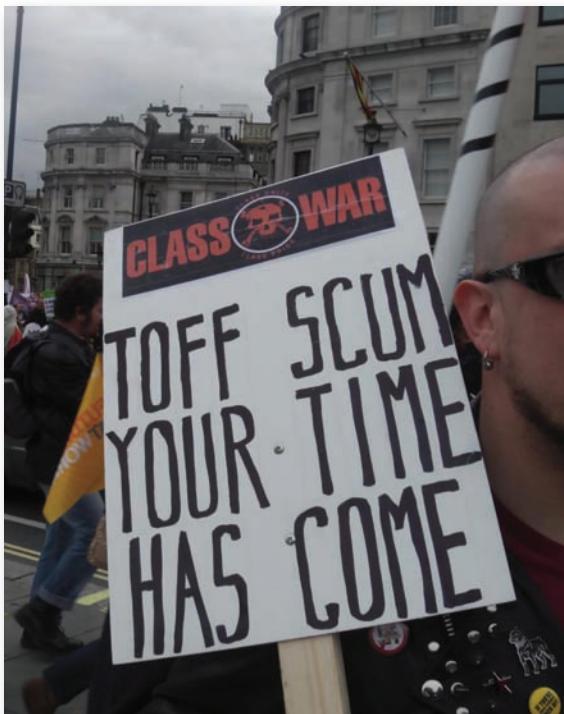
Whilst the TUC has consistently transformed walkouts by millions of workers into passive protest and snatched defeat from the jaws of victory in the key public sector disputes, action against workfare is yielding win after win.

The 20th October action offered a microcosm of that contradiction, an enormous mobilisation of workers, however lively, trudging towards nothing – and a minority amongst them actually making an impact.

Far from being a new phase or making our voices heard, 20th October has merely highlighted the mire that we're in. The appetite for militancy and direct action is growing in many quarters, but by no means fast enough.

**Phil Dickens**

## THE BIG PICTURE



The TUC day of action on the 20th October saw several marches and rallies in many cities up and down the country. Anarchists, as always, made their presence felt. Above is a small selection of pictures from the London march, the radical workers' bloc and also from the march in Glasgow.

# A year on the far right

Crivvens! Jings! and Help Ma Boab! What a year it's been for the far right, and with the usual splits, fights and disasters it's been almost entertaining.

The main story this year has been the rapid decline of the English Defence League (EDL). They have gone from getting a thousand punters at the Tower Hamlets fiasco in September 2011, to just about getting a pathetic eighty to stand shivering in Parliament Square in October 2012, outnumbered by plod and wondering where it all went wrong. Well, it all went wrong at the Blackburn demo in April, 2011, when Tommy head-butted a squaddie and the infighting exploded with a number of splinter factions claiming Tommy was either too racist or not racist enough! From then on the demos have dwindled exponentially because they are costly and have achieved nothing; they kept getting arrested and falling out with each other; the PR has been negative; and Tommy Robinson (*pictured right*) and Kevin Carroll have hogged the limelight whilst making a small fortune out of the merchandise. Oh dear. Their link up with BNP rejects British Freedom was not met with enthusiasm and Tommy failed to deliver the EDL to them so was booted out as he is a political liability.

Drunkenness, stupidity and boastfulness have meant that Facebook and internet forums are vital sources of intelligence on the far right, not only for anti-fascists but for the plod. Robinson has been remanded in jail again after he and a truck load of EDL were apprehended clad in hoodies and balaclavas up to no good, and the chat is that they were 'grassed' by an insider. Accusations of grassing are frequent on the far right, though little proof is ever offered. However, various members had been dropping asteroid-sized hints about the stunt all week on various websites which did them few favours.

Robinson was subsequently charged with entering USA on a false passport to attend a meeting of febrile racists. This, along with various other charges pending, means its

Halal Turkey Twizzlers inside at Christmas!

Kevin Carroll is desperately backing away from the EDL shuttle crash by standing as British Freedom's Police Commissioner Candidate in Bedfordshire. This has been a somewhat thin campaign with little more than Kevin handing out leaflets on his own in Luton for an hour. He was also arrested over the van fiasco and is banned from EDL demos, he has a criminal record for abusing Muslims at a parade in 2009 and he recently posted a comment calling Muslims "fucking [sic] backwards savages" which was widely posted over the internet (the place where most people interact with the EDL).

Carroll has been highly critical of the police, especially after drunk EDL members took a battering from them in Walsall and the Met kettled them in for ten hours at the disastrous Walthamstow demo, which is not going to help – if he ever lands the gig. The EDL now has no active leadership, no stable



membership, no money, no endgame and is seriously floundering. But at least they're doing better than the National Front.

In case you hadn't noticed (no, neither did we), 2012 was the Year of the Infidels. Since splitting from the EDL they have forged temporary alliances with the NF, cranks like Combined Ex-Forces and other crackpot racists which usually end in fist fights and



fallouts. They have mainly targeted Republican events in Liverpool and in February 2012 they managed to catch activists on the hop and disrupted a march. This galvanised North-West anti-fascists who have since outmanoeuvred the far right most notably on 3rd November when twenty fascists turned up to counter a march, were outnumbered three-to-one, and one of them was urged to mend his wanton ways. The Infidels are largely a Facebook organisation who have difficulty mobilising more than thirty at a time.

The BNP have been in terminal decline since the 2010 general election when they had two MEPs and assorted councillors, along with over 10,000 supporters, but they have just held a poorly attended national conference in Blackpool and their membership has dwindled severely following expulsions and disillusionments aplenty. At the conference they staged a protest outside a chippy in support of missing Charlene Downes, then went back to the pub.

Nick Griffin has said he is going to pass the leadership on to someone else before retiring to Croatia after a speckled and gaff-strewn career.

Expelled BNP members usually form their own tiny parties, herald a new dawn, then dissolve into recrimination and violence. The latest groupuscule to join the alphabetti spaghetti of the far right are the 'True Brits' led by Andrew Brons and Richard Edmonds, both of whom have a long history in fascist circles. The Brits have also been rocked by the revelation that their would-be chairman was gay. Cue panic! The attempt to present themselves differently to British Freedom, English Democrats or UKIP has been feeble and one far-right nut-job has described them as "malcontents, dysfunctional, crypto Jews, and self-hating Jews".

So all in all, a pretty shambolic year for the far right as they continue to squabble and reinvent themselves before imploding all over again thus proving that they are their own worst enemies. Anti-fascists should not be complacent though as the far-right never really go away. Be Seeing You.

Malatesta



## ANALYSIS

# US anarchists jailed for silence

North American anarchists have been notably visible and influential over the last year or so, as the Occupy movement in the US and the student strike in Québec have both made the revolutionary ideas and direct action tactics of anarchism accessible to new audiences. And, on both sides of the US/Canadian border, the state hasn't been slow to strike back: in Québec, the regional government brought in a ban against unauthorised protests which was later overturned, and the Canadian parliament has just approved a bill meaning that anyone convicted of wearing a mask during a riot or other unlawful assembly can be sentenced to up to 10 years in prison. In the US, meanwhile, the state has repeatedly taken aim at specific groups of anarchists: first the Federal Bureau of Investigation entrapped five people in Cleveland in a fake bomb plot on May Day, and then three protesters arrested at protests against a NATO summit in Chicago were prosecuted on terrorism charges. This summer, a series of home raids in Portland, Olympia and Seattle offered further proof that state harassment of anarchists is reaching a new level.

The house raids, conducted by the FBI and Joint Terrorism Task Force, were conducted with the explicit intention of finding items including "anarchist or anti-government literature", black clothing, anarchist flags or material that could be used to make flags. The raids were part of a larger crackdown on anarchists in the North-West United States that have also seen a number of people summoned to appear before a Grand Jury. Witnesses summoned to a Grand Jury do not have a constitutional right of silence, and can be jailed for contempt of court if they do not co-operate.

Officially, this Grand Jury is investigating acts of vandalism that occurred on May Day in Seattle, but information has come to light showing that it actually began on 2nd March this year, two months before the May Day demonstration took place, which could indicate

that it is part of a wider investigation into the anarchist movement. Two people, Matt Duran and Katherine 'Kteeo' Olejnik, are currently in jail for refusing to provide information on their friends and comrades to the jury, and a third, Leah-Lynn Plante, was taken into custody but then released in circumstances that are currently unclear. Matt and Kteeo may be held until March 2014.

A fourth individual, Matthew 'Maddy' Pfeiffer, was scheduled to appear before the jury on 7th November, but their lawyer managed to persuade the jury to postpone their appearance. Maddy is now due appear before the jury on 14th December. They do not intend to cooperate, and so it is likely that they will be jailed after their hearing. Speaking of their decision to resist the jury, Maddy Pfeiffer stated that "I only have one option: non-cooperation. Any other option is unthinkable... I will never betray the people I care about, the ideas which I hold dear, or the commitments I have made."

In a public statement released before his imprisonment, Matt Duran declared "I want to make it clear that I am in no way ever cooperating with the state now or ever... Whatever happens, I want you to know that you are not alone and are more than capable of handling whatever is thrown at you... Do not stop the struggle, keep organising and fighting or they will have won. When the Haymarket massacre took place all those years ago and the martyrs were hung for their desire for a better life, the State attempted to crush all radicals. Clearly, this did not work then and it won't work now... Keep the struggle in your hearts and minds and do not bend to their will. They will never be able to destroy us no matter how hard they try." Matt was originally held in solitary confinement, but was moved to the general population in early October.

His determination not to co-operate is shared by Katherine Olejnik, who, in a letter

from prison, declared that "Being in here; meeting, getting to know, and hearing the stories of the incredible women I am sharing this space with has only strengthened my resolve."

The repression against anarchists has attracted widespread condemnation and anger, with over 350 organisations signing a statement of solidarity with the Grand Jury resisters. Among others, prominent academic Noam Chomsky described the house raids as "unacceptable violations of elementary civil rights" and stated that refusal to co-operate with the jury was "quite justified". The case has attracted attention in media outlets from Salon and Vice magazine to Russia Today and Al-Jazeera, whose correspondent Jennifer Slattery asked "How can we cry out for Pussy Riot's freedom in Moscow – and ignore the injustice unfolding in Seattle? Why are we so quick to loathe Putin's demand to control freedom of speech, but we turn a blind eye to President Obama's same act of repression?"

Others have shown their solidarity with the resisters by attending demonstrations at their hearings, joining mass fax-ins and calls to the Seattle District Attorney's office, or by carrying on with the same militant tactics that the repression was designed to crush, such as a march through Portland on 11th October that smashed windows at several banks. Hackers calling themselves 'Anon-ops Telecommunications' also claimed to have shut down the Seattle District Attorney's phone lines. Solidarity actions are likely to continue as long as the jury goes on, and a call-out is asking for 12th to 19th November to be an international week of solidarity with the resisters.

**Cautiously Pessimistic**

See nopoliticalrepression.wordpress.com or supportresist.net for the latest updates on the situation.



## COMMENT

**CENTERPRISE IS EVICTED**

Centreprise had been paying a peppercorn rent of £500-odd a year since 1984, and Hackney Council had demanded this be upped to a market rent of around £37,000. Centreprise claimed that they had bought the building in 1983, which is disputed by the Council; they offered to pay £12,000 a year, but Hackney rejected this, took them to court and won possession. Centreprise were preparing an appeal, but were evicted overnight on Thursday 1st November.

Centreprise was originally set up around 1970, by a collective that included black and white socialists, anarchists and other community activists.

Over the decades it has served as a meeting place for all sorts of community groups, an outlet for all sorts of radical literature, a centre of working class writing and history, a drop-in space for thousands of local folk and a good cheap café...

In recent decades the bookshop has been orientated more to black politics and writing, and while some of us have had some issues with the place, especially since the collective management was replaced by the hierarchical domination of one person in the 1990s, that's as maybe... A community space of great local usefulness and significance has been totally done over.

Hackney has form for this kind of sleight-of-hand when dealing with tenants they want rid of. Hackney folk who recall the Broadway market evictions of Tony's Café and Spirit's shop a few years back will recognise the style. As with Broadway market, there's more to this story than some unpaid or disputed rent and rates.

The big plan for Dalston is gentrification, money money, money, and a nice big dollop of social and ethnic cleansing – politely and with flash developments if possible, but with force behind that.

The Shoreditch/Hoxton art-cash nexus is spreading north up the Kingsland Road like a posh, hip, tight-jeaned, bearded, floaty dress plague, powered by those white single-speed bikes with orange or purple wheels, and Dalston is due for class (meaning effectively race) re-adjustment.

There was no way Centreprise could pay such a huge rent hike – to achieve it, they would have had to change utterly. "More art galleries and jazz bars – less black politics, or politics of any sort, or variety of any sort." Nice new slogan for Hackney Council?

Several groups and businesses who used Centreprise are getting together to challenge the eviction in the courts, and as far as I know the main avenue for protest asked for right now is sending angry letters to Hackney Mayor Jules 'Shit' Pipe... But watch this space.

B. Heaven

**Alan Woodward: a tribute**

The Tottenham working class activist and campaigner Alan Woodward passed away on Saturday 20th October.

Alan had a stroke and fell on Tuesday 16th October and was admitted to the North Middlesex Hospital the following day. His close family<sup>1</sup> had rallied round during his hospital stay and were with him when he died peacefully.

Alan Woodward was a lifelong working-class revolutionary immersed in support for workplace struggles and other anti-capitalist movements. He started with the International Socialists (later the Socialist Workers Party). He was then very active in the Haringey Trades Union Council. In recent years he gravitated towards independent libertarian politics, including the Haringey Solidarity Group, believing it was necessary for workers to take direct control of all workplaces and through workers coordination councils, thereby create a new economy and society without capitalism or governments. In his writings he explained he was drawing on what he saw as the best traditions of revolutionary socialism and anarchism.

He actively supported and tried to attend every local workers picket line in Haringey, either as the organiser for the Trades Council or as part of local campaigns. In the last few years this included strikes by postal workers, local bakery workers, public sector pension disputes, rail workers picket lines and anti-cuts campaigning. When the Visteon Ford Car Parts factory in Enfield was due to be closed he joined in the workers week-long occupation of the site and later wrote a pamphlet on the experience.

At the same time he helped set up the Radical History Network of NE London<sup>2</sup> and as the RaHN Convenor he organised and wrote up summaries of dozens of local talks and meetings on a whole range of past disputes and struggles to ensure that the voices of those who took part in them would continue to reverberate and help us all in our struggles and movements today. He took RaHN stalls to many local and national events.



He produced a huge body of agitational campaigning and radical literature, leaflets, strike bulletins, newsletters, historical snapshots, pamphlets and recently an autobiography.<sup>3</sup> Yet he underplayed his own role as he preferred to promote the collective self-activity of those involved in industrial strikes, disputes and working class movements.

He is irreplaceable and will be sorely missed, but his influence will remain with us all as the struggle for a new society continues unabated.

Dave Morris  
Haringey Solidarity Group

1 The contact for the family is Peter Woodward, peter@petew.org.uk

2 Radical History of NE London.

3 Alan's autobiography *Poor Boy's Tale* (Vol 1, the first 60 years) is available from Housmans Bookshop, as are some of his pamphlets on Workers Councils, Shop Stewards movements, NHS history, Visteon Factory occupation and on other London working class activists like Joe Jacobs and Joe Thomas. All were self-published by Alan under the name of Gorter Press. Many can be found, summarised or reviewed on the RaHN site, see <http://past-tense.org.uk/>

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on  
**Saturday 22nd December**  
Freedom Bookshop will be hosting a festive social in Angel Alley, from 2pm onwards.

There will be nibbles, refreshments and, of course, an opportunity to buy those last-minute presents. All are welcome.

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## INTERNATIONAL

### NEWS IN BRIEF

**CHINA:** At Foxconn, a major supplier of components for Apple, there has been serious unrest at two of their plants. Workers had become angry the extra pressure and work required for the launch of the new iPhone 5, and subsequently rioted. Some 2,000 workers smashed up the factory, tore down fences, and overturned police cars. It took 5,000 police officers a full day to bring the situation under control. Forty workers reported injuries, but strangely no one was arrested. Apple would be pleased to know that only one day of production was lost.

**GREECE:** Scores of anti-austerity protesters broke into a conference centre and clashed with police, to demonstrate against the presence of a German government minister. The protesters – mainly local government workers – threw coffee over the minister, who has been appointed as special envoy to Greece. A spokesman for the protesters said “They have not come here to help us, but to announce our death sentence”. The minister claims that he was not bothered by the attack, and described it as a “misunderstanding”, and that he is still “pro-Greece”.

**ITALY:** More than 3,000 students and unemployed workers have demonstrated in Naples against the attendance of the minister for labour and education at a conference in the city. Anger towards the minister is about the 30% unemployment amongst the locals, the casualisation of the job market, and a recent remark by her in which she told people to not be so “choosy”, and to take the first available job. The protest quickly escalated, and clashes with police led to injuries, and arrests. Later in the day, some of the local university buildings were occupied by the protesters.

**JAPAN:** Bosses at the Jiyugaoka American Apparel Outlet in Tokyo have been sacking workers who have attempted to unionise their workplace. Management claim that the dismissals are nothing to do with union activities, but are as a result of workers violating rules and regulations. To prevent further organising amongst the workers, the bosses have issued notice that the store will close imminently.

**SOUTH AFRICA:** In Cape Town, farm workers are on strike for better pay. They are demanding that their wages are doubled to 170 Rand a day (£12). They have blockaded streets with burning tyres, looted shops, torched vehicles, and have fought running battles with the police. Reports are that one worker has been shot and killed by the police, and countless others injured and arrested. The workers are mainly employed in Vineyards that are part of the wine industry, which is said to be one of the most exploitative sectors in South Africa.

### LENS CAP CAIRO



Members of the Egyptian Libertarian Socialist Movement on a protest against the President Mohammed Morsi.

## Bangladeshi workers fight back

The last month has seen a series of violent clashes between Bangladeshi garment workers and the police, resulting in over 250 workers being injured.

Workers at the Hallmark Group in Hemayetpur are demanding that arrears in their salaries are paid with immediate effect, and that they receive their annual ‘Eid’ bonus, which is due later this week.

Following three days of a large and noisy protest outside the factory and offices, the bosses continued to refuse to bow to the worker’s demands. Subsequently 15,000 workers blockaded a key highway route for many hours.

Violence erupted as heavily armed riot police and members of the armed forces attempted to regain control of the highway, using tear gas and rubber bullets.

In the days following the violence, the bosses have dismissed over 120 workers who they claim are militants, and who are responsible for troubles at the factory.

It must have slipped the bosses minds that

it’s unpaid salaries that have sparked the dispute. A company director has been arrested within the last month on charges of embezzling \$35 billion from the Sonali bank, in what is the country’s largest ever case of fraud. Charges against several other board members are pending.

The workers at the Hemayetpur factory work on average 84 hours a week for a monthly pay cheque of £19. A living wage in Bangladesh is said to be around £39 a month. Amongst other customers, they produce clothing for Primark, Zara, and New Look.

Matthew Black



## Notes from the US

The US government has released data that indicates clearly that the country continues to experience extreme weather: this summer was officially the third hottest on record. According to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, the average temperature between June and August was more than 2° Fahrenheit above that of the twentieth century. July was the hottest month on record. At the end of August almost 63% of the country was in drought conditions and over three and a half million

acres of land was consumed by wildfires – twice the average.

In response to the proposed Keystone XL oil pipeline which would devastate the environment from Alberta to Texas, yet another group mounted a successful protest in September: a group of environmental activists in north-east Texas scaled 80-foot trees and vowed to remain there in order to block tree-clearing equipment. Eight protesters carried with them a banner

page 9 ►►

## INTERNATIONAL

# Canadian anarchists target Shell

## Activists in Vancouver blockade shell petrol station in anti-tar sands protest

On a sunny Saturday afternoon in East Vancouver, some thirty protesters gathered at a city park and then proceeded to blockade a Shell station located at Clark Drive and 12th Avenue.

Organised by BC Blackout, an anarchist project opposing industrial expansion and resource exploitation in the province, the rally targeted Shell for their participation in the Alberta Tar Sands and other environmental atrocities around the world.

The blockade lasted for approximately one hour, during which scores of leaflets were handed out to pedestrians and drivers, who were also exposed to banners reading 'Blockade Pipelines' and 'Get the (S)Hell Out of the Tar Sands – No Pipelines, No Tankers', (both referring to planned pipelines including Enbridge's Northern Gateway, the Pacific Trails Pipeline, and Kinder Morgan's Trans Mountain pipeline). Numerous motorists honked in approval as they drove by.



The same Shell station was blockaded on 23rd October by Rising Tides Vancouver-Coast Salish Territories. Unlike that picket, which saw no police presence at all, this direct action on 10th November saw as many cops deployed as there were protesters (approximately 30). This included motorcycle cops, bike cops, as well as members of the Public Safety Unit in 'soft hats' (as opposed to helmets and shields). The PSU were transported in two Sprinter vans.

Before the rally begun at China Creek Park on Broadway near Clark, commanders of the PSU approached the protesters gathering to "lay down the ground rules" for the protest. A Staff-Sergeant informed the anarchists that

this time "there won't be any fires in the street" (probably referring to the previous May Day rally on Commercial Drive).

Although police prevented a total shutdown of the station, the blockade succeeded in drastically reducing business for the Shell station.

Some protesters asserted that the large police presence, and their surrounding of the Shell station, probably helped deter some motorists from using it.

There were no arrests made and the protest dispersed without incident (at the time of posting).

For more see <http://bcblackout.wordpress.com/>

## Notes from the US

### ◀◀ page 8

reading, 'You Shall Not Pass'. Then at the start of October, film actress Daryl Hannah was arrested – also in Texas – along with 78-year-old great-grandmother Eleanor Fairchild. They put themselves in front of heavy logging machinery and refused to move.

In economic news, government data shows that financial inequality grew across the board last year.

The Census Bureau reported last month (a census was conducted in the US in 2010) that the richest increased their share of total wealth by 5% while the median income reached its lowest level in over a dozen years. An amazing 46 million people in the

country are now classified as living in poverty.

*Freedom* has reported previously on the struggle of students in Québec. Now the new government there has cancelled a proposed increase in tuition fees – it will remain at US\$2,000 (£1232).

Mitt Romney continues to create his own trail of tears. Speaking in late September, he said: "This is time for a president who will shape events in the Middle East, not just be merciful or be at the mercy of events in the Middle East. I will get America on track to have the kind of leadership we need so we can shape the future of this part of the world and keep America strong."

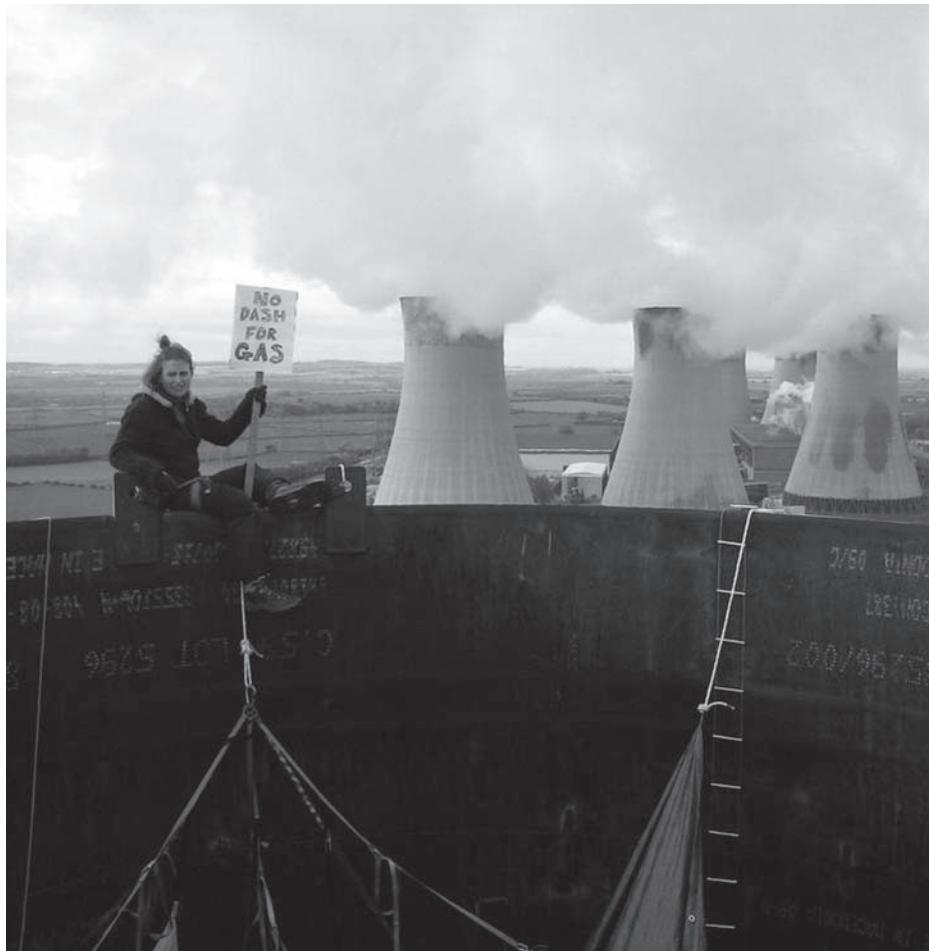
Meanwhile ten anti-Islam advertisements appeared in the New York subway, reading 'In any war between the civilized man and the savage, support the civilized man. Support Israel/Defeat Jihad'. They were sponsored by the pro-Israeli group American Freedom Defence Initiative.

Similarly, a video has emerged that shows supporters of Republican Senator from Massachusetts, Scott Brown, insulting Native Americans by making derogatory war 'whoops' and Tomahawk chops to mock Democratic senate nominee Elizabeth Warren. Brown has criticised Warren for claiming that she is part Native American.

Louis Further

## ECONOMICS

# A new dash for gas



Early on Monday 29th October, 16 climate change campaigners evaded security to shut down the UK's newest gas-fired power station. They climbed two smokestacks at EDF's West Burton plant in Nottinghamshire and abseiled down the insides of the chimneys, setting up camp in tents suspended from ropes inside the flues. As long as they held their position above the furnaces the plant was unable to operate.

The occupation has fired the starting gun on a huge nationwide battle over Britain's energy future, with activists determined to stop government plans for a new dash for gas. They are calling instead for a high-tech carbon-free electricity system.

The night-time incursion was launched at around 2am when the raiders got through the security fence. Under cover of darkness, the activists crossed the expanse to the chimneys, then split into two groups and began the 300ft climb to the top. They then built barricades to defend their positions, and had enough supplies with them to last at least a week, saying they're "in it for the long haul".

The plant was shut down shortly after the campaigners began their ascent. A further team remained on the ground to liaise with the plant's managers. Before launching the protest they engaged in extensive consultation

with an expert engineer and each underwent intensive safety training.

West Burton power station in Nottinghamshire is being targeted because it's one of the first in a new generation of highly polluting gas plants planned for the UK.

The Coalition Government recently announced it intends to give the green light to as many as 20 new gas plants – a move that would crash Britain's carbon targets, contribute to the climate crisis and push up bills.

Anneka Kelly, one of the activists occupying the chimney, said via a mobile phone: "Energy bills are going through the roof, people are getting flooded out of their homes, we're seeing droughts across the world but the energy companies are making a killing. We're here because we want an electricity system that doesn't cause our world to warm and our bills to rise ever higher. Gas is expensive and highly polluting, but if the Government gets its way we'll be reliant on it for decades. Instead we should be investing in clean high-tech renewables that slash pollution and in the long run will cost a lot less."

Contrary to claims by ministers and the industry, gas is a dirty fuel that poses an unacceptable threat to the environment. It's also expensive – official figures from Ofgem

show that the average UK energy bill rose £150 last year, with £100 of that due to rising wholesale gas prices. EDF recently raised their prices, following most of the other major companies and plunging even more people into fuel poverty. Meanwhile high-tech renewable systems are rapidly coming down in price, meaning that soon they will be cheaper, while communities across the country are turning their back on the Big Six energy companies in favour of cooperative community energy schemes.

Ewa Jasiewicz, from on top of one of the chimneys, said: "A new dash for gas will leave the UK utterly reliant on this dirty expensive fuel for decades to come. Our energy system is being run by a cartel of corporations that has this government in its pocket. As long as we have an economic system driven by profit, we will have an energy system that ignores the needs of those suffering most from climate change and rising energy bills. With a quarter of the UK's outdated energy infrastructure needing to be replaced, we have a once-in-a-generation opportunity to invest in renewables that could generate hundreds of thousands of jobs, radically cut emissions of carbon dioxide and stabilise energy bills. Clean green technology is already powering thousands of homes across the UK, and enjoys overwhelming public support."

Energy and Climate Change Secretary, Ed Davey, has called for 20GW of gas power stations to be built by 2030, approximately 20 new power stations.

- He has also guaranteed that gas power stations that already have planning consent can, if built, continue emitting CO<sub>2</sub> unabated until 2045, i.e. their full life-span, by exempting them from emissions regulations.
- Figures from Ofgem show that in 2011 the average UK energy bill rose by £150, with £100 of this due to the rising cost of gas.
- EDF has hiked their energy prices by 10.8%, the highest of any of the big six energy companies so far this winter.
- Recent polling by YouGov found that 55% of people want more wind farms, compared to just 17% who want more gas power stations.
- An ICM poll found that more than two-thirds of people would rather have a wind turbine than a shale gas well near their home.
- The Offshore Wind Valuation Group found that harnessing just 29% of the practical offshore renewable resource by 2050 would generate the electricity equivalent of one billion barrels of oil annually, matching North Sea oil and gas production and making Britain a net electricity exporter.

No Dash for Gas Campaign

For further information on the campaign see  
<http://www.nodashforgas.org.uk/press>

# Fighting the Second World War

In April 1945 four anarchists, Marie Louise Berneri, Vernon Richards, John Hewetson and Philip Sansom, were tried at the Old Bailey. They had been selling the anti-war paper *War Commentary* – which is what *Freedom* was called between 1939 and 1945.

Throughout *War Commentary* argued against the tide of official patriotic support. Radicals in Britain had been sceptical about war in the years before. But the Labour Party ministers in Churchill's wartime coalition government, and, from 1941 after Hitler invaded the Soviet Union, the Communist Party worked hard to win support for what they called 'the People's War' and a war against Fascism.

Berneri and her comrades pointed out that the British Empire was not fighting for freedom, but to dominate the colonies and the working classes at home.

In the factories Labour and Communist shop stewards were brought into Joint Production Committees to get workers to work harder and longer to 'beat Hitler'. Outside the factory gate the whole country was run along military lines with military discipline. Propaganda campaigns were run to get people to sacrifice what little they had to fight the war – even pots and pans were collected to make Spitfires (though in truth there was no aluminium shortage). Food was rationed – though not for the rich, who could eat at expensive restaurants off the ration.

Opponents of the war had a hard fight on their hands. Not only did Communist shop stewards help blacklist those who stuck up for workers on the grounds that they were 'sabotaging the war effort', but also the authorities prosecuted those who criticised the war. Not just the *War Commentary* Four, but also Peace Pledge Union supporters, Trotskyists, Independent Labour Party people, or just a sceptical woman in a chip shop were prosecuted. George Armstrong – a merchant seaman who spoke out against the war – was tried in secret, called a spy, and hung in Wandsworth Prison on 10th July 1941.

Champions of the war said that this time it was different. This was not like the 1914–18 war, which many understood was just a bosses war, which working people with no real quarrel were forced to fight. The Fascist government in Germany, they said, made things different. Hitler's regime was a totalitarian dictatorship, that crushed the workers and slaughtered Jews and Slavs in the East. The ban on the Communist Party newspaper, the *Daily Worker*, was lifted so that it could highlight the case that this was a good war, a people's war against Fascism, where the workers should fight alongside Churchill and the British establishment.

Small groups of anti-war activists, like those around *War Commentary*, pointed out



Cartoon by John Olday taken from *The March to Death*, published by Freedom Press

the hypocrisy of the 'Good War' idea. They pointed out that Bomber Command's openly stated plan for Germany was to target the German working class, hundreds of thousands of whom were killed in firestorms over Dresden and Hamburg. And while Hitler was making an Empire in Europe, Churchill made it clear that he was fighting to defend the Empire in North Africa, India and East Asia. The very leaders who were in 1941 saying that they wanted to fight fascism had been admirers of fascism until Germany's leaders threatened British and American commercial interests. There was even an unspoken agreement between the leaders that they would not fight open war against each other if they could avoid it, but instead fought most of the war over other people's countries, in North Africa and the Far East.

Only when the Nazi regime provoked so much opposition from its subject peoples that there was a real danger that the anti-Fascist resistance would take over in Italy and France did Britain and America finally agree to invade western Europe – and then, not to 'liberate' those countries, as they claimed, but to reinstate trustworthy capitalist governments and disarm the resistance.

At first the anti-war activists were few, and isolated. But as the war went on, opposition to the war effort picked up. In Britain and America there were strikes in the mines, and in the auto industry.

In North Africa the Greek Army in exile, part of the Allied forces, mutinied against its

Royalist officers, and Winston Churchill thousands of them put in concentration camps in Cairo, Alexandria and Eritrea. Egyptians, fed up with British rule and having been pushed into a war they did not want protested in the streets. A civics exercise among the British Eighth Army, the Forces Parliament, got out of control passing resolutions to socialise industry (later British troops would organise strikes in Egypt). British soldiers and Egyptians helped the Greek mutineers, smuggling food and water into the compounds and men out.

In India, where Churchill had ordered freedom protestors shot off the streets in 1941, protests began again demanding Britain get out. A strike of Indian naval ratings across the Empire would later force the pace of British withdrawal.

In 1943 both the German Empire in Europe and the British Empire were tottering under the strains of fighting the war. It was the German empire which collapsed first, as Italian workers organised a strike wave that pulled that country out of the war. The second invasion of Europe led by US Generals made sure power did not fall into the streets. The invasion quieted opposition to the Allied war effort too.

Today the official version of the history of the People's War is promoted in schools and on television. But there is an *Unpatriotic History of the Second World War*, of the resistance against the war to be learned.

James Heartfield's *Unpatriotic History of the Second World War* is published by Zero Books, £23.99.

## FEATURE

# Bad law and the death of squatting

The last few months have seen a mass migration within Britain's borders as a community is rousted out of their homes on the whim of bigots in Whitehall through the sudden denial of long-held rights.

Individuals have been victimised under the new regime which criminalises their lifestyles, adding to a history of scapegoating and fear mongering with little basis in reality.

The squatting community is struggling to cope in the aftermath of the passing of Section 144 LASPO, a Bill which specifically denies them the right to take possession of empty residential properties.

The law has been criticised not only by squatters themselves but also by the police, lawyers and housing experts as providing no extra protections for people who live in properties and simply extending the rights of people who would otherwise allow the empty buildings they own to deteriorate.

People are being forced out of relatively human-friendly areas, such as empty council and housing association buildings, into commercial premises which rarely offer many mod cons.

And the process is accelerating as the first prosecutions feed in to the system, most famously the first cases for "criminal squatting" which took place at the end of September against a group in Pimlico, London.

In the aftermath of the case, *Freedom* spoke to an activist with the Advisory Service for Squatters (ASS) about how the situation is affecting the thousands of squatters who currently call Britain's empty spaces home.

Talking about the Pimlico case, he said: "We don't know a lot more than anyone else but at a recent meeting we discussed it, we think one person who was living there said it was their bail address and got a fine of £100 but breached their licence, Alex got 12



weeks and we're trying to make contact with Michelle, who is inside for breaching bail conditions for something else.

"It was a housing association property that had been empty for some time and they didn't go to the police, who just showed up. I think the police were trying it out to see what they could do and the squatters didn't seem to be aware the law had changed."

"It probably wasn't a state thing as he's an apprentice bricklayer, not someone who's easily scapegoated, but this does help show how it's going to work now."

The ASS has been trying to keep track of what's going on so it can keep on top of what's needed, but the transitory nature of many squats makes this difficult. The representative explained:

"A lot of what we hear comes from police reports and we have heard of arrests in Brighton, Bristol, Street in Somerset and in London – particularly Imperial Wharf which could potentially have been political."

"There's also rumours that a landlord has already used it to try and get rid of a Roma family by saying they were 'squatting' property they'd been renting off him."

"In Romford, they tried to say a squatted pub was residential because of the upstairs rooms, but the government specifically said they weren't including pubs and if people are living in the pub section they shouldn't get done for it."

"Most of the time police just want to use threats to get rid of people rather than arrest and charge them, so we don't hear a lot about those cases."

"We do know though that many people have been moving out of residential properties to somewhere where they have an argument they can use."

In response, ASS is currently in the midst of trying to update its well-known *Squatters' Handbook*, a DIY guide to the practices and pitfalls of getting into squatting. However it's actually the relatively low number of instances of police enforcing the law which

is making this job difficult, as there's simply no way of knowing what the legal trends and case studies are going to be.

"It's going to be five or six months before we will be in a position to write it. The current ones are mostly still correct but the legal stuff is no longer accurate. We can't advise people before we've got more experience with it."

"Police seem to be using these laws as and when so it doesn't look like there's going to be a slew of cases. They don't seem to be going much out of their way. There's a risk police will use it politically, but they are also going to be able to use their usual tactics to force people out, like accusing people of criminal damage, burglary, etc."

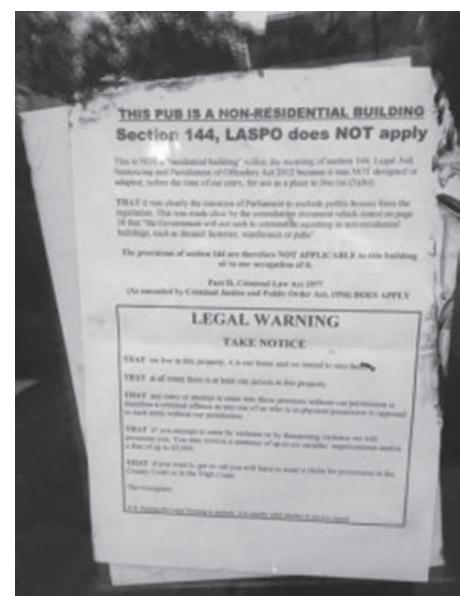
The squatting community is not waiting for the state to settle itself down into a familiar setup of demonising squatters and using the new laws to keep them out of unused housing.

"There have been demos and people do want to challenge it," the ASS rep explains. "It also seems that more people are actually going to fight evictions now through groups like the Eviction Resistance Network. There's already been a successful one in Cardiff and that might happen more often."

The Squatters Legal Network are also organising support and doing legal observing, so if councils are found to be calling police to do their dirty work we could start seeing demos at town halls.

"One issue is that people have been coming to London for many years not knowing the situation – what's gone around the world is that it's possible to squat – people are told 'go to Marble Arch', for example, and don't know the details. Even with the likes of the *Evening Standard* covering the first jail time, lots of people won't get it."

"So it's going to take a long time before people know the new rules and we need to



# Squatters' dreams



make people aware of the changes without saying squatting is illegal. The positive thing about the movement is that local groups are strengthening and there are attempts going on to link up with other housing campaigns, that's certainly on the increase."

According to the ASS up to 60% of squatted buildings have until now been residential, though commercial ones tend to be bigger. "Historically most people have always gone for residential because it's better for people, but they are now having to switch over. And this starts to pressure the government to criminalise commercial property squats as well."

The situation is also being complicated by a campaign of deliberate misrepresentation of squatters, ASS says.

"The right are trying to say 'you're just a bunch of students', but realistically the number of people who are doing it for a lifestyle is just minute. Most are simply weighing up what they can realistically afford and others are just unable to sort themselves out. I don't think though that people who squat shouldn't go for nice places – why not if they're not being used?"

"Squats do tend to be places where people tend to look after each other and people who have trouble fitting in can find a home."

"The psychological effects on some people will be severe. There's going to be increases in overcrowding, dependence on dodgy private landlords and people going into 'security' tenancies – where they're paying for an unsecure position."

"Crisis, hostels, Shelter and Citizens Advice will all feel more pressure, all of which are already suffering from the fallout of other cuts."

"With the anarchist involvement we have quite a lot of people in the scene and a lot of people are saying we will have to be more

confrontational. People from the anarchist movement are going to need to be involved in organising that. People have gotten very used to not fighting."

Rob Ray

## Five things to remember:

1. The law changes don't affect non-residential property.
2. It also doesn't affect people who have or have had a tenancy or licence (though this may be difficult to use with police if the licence has ended as they don't think it counts).
3. Tenancy without licence acts as 'reasonable suspicion' for police, however it only affects people resident in the property and police should not assume residency.
4. If you have a legal problem the Squatters Legal Network should be your first port of call, tel: 07925 769 858.
5. New legal warnings should include a note explaining that non-residential properties/pubs are not affected by the new Section 144 Laspo, and Part II of the Criminal Law Act 1977 therefore still applies. A stock legal warning is available at [squatter.org.uk](http://squatter.org.uk).

## Groups to contact

- Squash: 07895 107 544, [info@squashcampaign.org/](mailto:info@squashcampaign.org/), <http://www.squashcampaign.org.uk/>
- Squatters' Legal Network: 07925 769 858, [sln@aktivix.org](mailto:sln@aktivix.org), <https://network23.org/squatterslegalnetwork/>
- ASS: 020 3216 0099, [advice@squatter.org.uk](mailto:advice@squatter.org.uk), <http://www.squatter.org/>
- Eviction Resistance Network: 07591 415860, [evictionresistance@squat.net](mailto:evictionresistance@squat.net), <http://evictionresistance.blogspot.co.uk>



## COMMENT

# The problems of patriotism

It is true that wars are caused by the governments who declare wars and the capitalists who profit from them, but we should not forget that wars would be practically impossible, were it not for the humble people who do the actual killing and dying.

Ever hear old soldiers boasting 'We fought for our country'? The poor old dears are deluded. The country, which they fought for, was never their own. It is unlikely that any of them ever owned enough country to plant a geranium. They were patriots, subjects of rulers and bosses tricked into risking their lives, trying to kill the subjects of other bosses, for the benefit of their own bosses.

Many may have been oppressed conscripts, but once they were issued with weapons they behaved like volunteers, attacking fellow conscripts on behalf of their oppressors. In some Marxist tyrannies, conscripts were put through ceremonies in which they ritually declared that they would give their lives 'for the working class'. American soldiers invading Iraq were told by President George W. Bush that they were fighting for 'Free Moxy'. But because such abstract causes are identified with 'national interests', fighting for this is merely an alternative name for patriotism.

It cannot be denied that there are differences between the Taliban fighting for the imposition of Shariah law, and American doughboys fighting for Freedom and Democracy, but they have more in common with each other, than those of either side have with their commanders.

The historical archetype of modern war is that of 1914 to 1918, 'The Great War to End Wars', a war between rival imperialisms, in which young men on both sides were conned by patriotism into killing and being killed on behalf of their bosses' empires. In the words of Eddie Shaw, the magnificient anarchist orator, "A bayonet is a weapon with a mug at each end".

These days, it is theoretically possible for whole countries to be annihilated using ballistic missiles and hydrogen bombs, but a large area of uninhabitable



land would hardly be worth winning. Complete devastation may be perpetrated unintentionally or perhaps by disgruntled losers, but seems much less likely than wars of conquest. These may be, and are, conducted largely by technicians sitting before computer screens in air-conditioned offices, directing remote-controlled drones to kill people eight thousand miles away. But drones and precision missiles need the support of ground forces for battles to be won.

## Is thuggery too much fun?

It is sometimes contended that wars are inevitable, because (some) people enjoy the adrenalin rush, and the sense of camaraderie, which they get from fighting. In the English language, the term 'hooligan' has been used for such people for about a century. The comic magazine *Funny Folk*, which ceased publication in 1894, featured a cartoon quarrelsome Irishman called Hooligan, and in 1898, according to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, court reports in daily newspapers were using 'hooligan' to mean men convicted of assault and affray. Gangs or 'firms', who fight each other nominally in support of football teams, are referred to as football hooligans, and there are hooligan gangs who fight for the supposed honour of schools and neighbourhoods.

Some hooligans use political ideology as a pretext. Freedom Press publishes a book, *Beating the Fascists*, recalling the recent history of anti-fascist fighting gangs in Britain. On the pro-fascist side, the most famous hooligans were the Sturmabteilung (SA) 'punch-up department' of the Nazi party in Germany. They helped Hitler into power by dissuading anti-Nazi deputies from attending parliament, so securing a parliamentary majority vote for the appointment of Hitler as dictator. Useful as they had been for getting into power, however, the SA were fonder of punch-ups than of Nazi ideals, and celebrated Hitler's victory by going on drunken rampages which antagonised the public. A year later, when Hitler's political opponents were systematically murdered in the 'night of the long knives', the leaders of the SA were eliminated by the Schutzstaffel (SS) 'protection squad', who were not hooligans but ruthless, idealistic Nazis.

## Is patriotism the result of natural selection?

Individuals (or genes), which survive long enough to produce descendants, are the winners of evolutionary lotteries. Individuals of many species improve their chances of survival by co-operating with other individuals in social groups. Evolutionary psychologists, who study the behaviour of modern humans to see what it reveals of ancestral humans, take an interest in non-human mammals which live in family groups, and forage together in territories which they inhabit. It is supposed that extinct hominid species, and perhaps even early modern humans, lived in similar groups.

Compilations of ethological research, such as Kropotkin's *Mutual Aid* and Edward O. Wilson's *Socio-biology*, tend mostly to concentrate on relationships within the groups. But relationships between groups are also important, and they are mostly hostile.

Some social-territorial mammals, for instance meerkats and macaques, recognise the members of their groups as individuals. Others, for instance brown rats, recognise fellow members by having communal smells.

Every modern human is a member of several groups, such as family, neighbourhood, workmates, political, religious or hobby affiliations. Each of these groups may be in competition, friendly or hostile, with other groups of the same type. It is a common observation that in-group solidarity is enhanced by out-group hostility.

Humans also have the capacity to think of themselves as members of very large groups, far too big to be known individually, but whose fellow members may be recognised by the way they speak, the way they dress, their skin colour, or the slogans they shout. Patriotism is the feeling of belonging to a very large social group, whose hostility to other groups seems more important than the unfairness and exploitation which occur within the group.

Patriotism has been around for millennia, at least since the beginning of written history. But as we learn more and more about how human behaviour works, it is worthwhile considering how it may be overcome.

Donald Roon



## PRISON NEWS

## NEWS IN BRIEF

• Statistics from the prisoners' rights association Antigone show that Italian prisons are 22,000 prisoners over capacity, with 68,000 inmates in a system built for 45,743, a situation that has persisted for decades despite numerous pledges by the government to ease overcrowding.

A separate report by a second prisoners' rights group Ristretti Orizzonti (Restricted Horizons) shows that overcrowding is a significant factor in the 2,056 inmate deaths in Italian prisons since the beginning of 2000, 736 of which were self-inflicted, with at least a further 30 suspicious deaths.

• Austerity cuts have been wreaking havoc in the grossly overcrowded Greek prison system (built to hold 9,300, there are currently 12,313 inmates held in Greece's 33 prisons) with sanitation, food and medical services in disarray.

In response, Greek prisoners have organised a mass mobilisation that began on 13th September with inmates refusing prison food and taking other protest actions, including work strikes.

Additionally, on 23rd September, whilst a solidarity rally was taking place outside Koridallos men's prison, inmates rebelled, setting fire to their mattresses, refusing to return to their cells for hours and fighting pitched battles against prison riot squads.

• The perils and pitfalls of the art of brewing prison 'hooch', or 'pruno' as it is commonly known as in the States, were rather queasily illustrated by a recent report into an outbreak of botulism in the Salt Lake County state prison in Utah last year.

Eight of the thirteen maximum-security prisoners who drank the brew fell ill with botulism, a relatively rare but serious illness whose symptoms can range from muscle weakness, difficulty in swallowing, paralysis and death.

Brewed with fruit, water and sugar, this particular batch of pruno had the extra added ingredient of a cooked potato which had been stored in a plastic bag at room temperature for a couple of weeks and then peeled by the brewer using his fingernails.

The incident, which is believed to be the largest outbreak of botulism tied to prison hooch, ended up costing nearly \$500,000 in hospital charges.

# Grayling's prison plans

So the ritual season of Nuremberg-lite party political conferences, with their sycophantic reverence of platforms full of self-serving politicians masquerading under the guise of supposed selfless public servants, has been and gone. And it was of no massive shock to find the hang 'em flog 'em backlash coming on strong at the Tory rally where Chris Grayling (*pictured*) made a less than barnstorming debut as the new 'Justice' minister as he apparently kicked over the dying embers of Ken Clarke's so-called Rehabilitation Revolution.

Clarke's demise was a solid gold inevitability and many were left wondering why Cameron appointed him in the first place but he was always fated to be the sacrificial lamb, or more accurately stalking horse, put forward in order to get a prisons and justice policy that the Tory hierarchy knew was an anathema to the rank and file adopted. The Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Act 2012 (LAPSO), extending community punishments, the 50% sentence discount and all the other alleged Clarke-inspired outrages against Conservative decency supposedly enacted by the Rehabilitation Revolution were collectively agreed Coalition cabinet policy but he was needed by Cameron to get as many of them in place before his ritual sacrifice on the altar or Tory orthodoxy.

Hence the advent of Grayling and his new tougher line on crime and punishment – pure unadulterated hypocrisy and cant designed as a smokescreen disguising more of the same. Take his announcement that *he* is going to introduce a 'two-strike sentencing policy' for serious violent and sexual crimes: in fact it is already law (Clause 117 of LAPSO) and was due to become enacted in the near future anyway, irrespective of Grayling's appointment.

Interestingly, it was Jack Straw's 'innovation' back in 1997 with his Crime (Sentences) Act that first introduced 'two-strikes' legislation, except the judiciary preferred to use the Act's discretionary provision to circumvent Straw's incapacitative passion, something which the Criminal Justice Act 2003 tried to curtail with IPP (imprisonment for public protection) sentences, abolished under LAPSO (though thousands continue to languish in prison years over tariff on such sentences). It is almost as if he has not read the legislation. In fact many politicians are arguing that it is a serious mistake to have made a non-lawyer Minister of Justice and Lord Chancellor and that it could well come back to haunt Cameron in the near future (it doesn't help that Theresa May, the Home Secretary, has no legal experience either).

And much of the rest of what Grayling has had to say also amounts to mere fantasy as well, including the idea that he needs to clarify the law on the right to bash a burglar (as long as it's done 'in the heat of the moment'), introduce a victim's 'pick a punishment scheme' and make community punishments more punitive(!!).

Maybe this is all part and parcel of some clever attempt at adopting elements of Sharia law (the Talibanisation of the Tory Party?) to court the Muslim vote. Whatever it is, Grayling will surely need to keep trotting out these new and ever increasingly inane criminal justice 'innovations' in order to justify his replacing of someone who clearly knew what he was doing (however much one disagreed with his patrician one nation (sic) politics). One thing is inevitable though; anything that Grayling does will further increase the pressure on the MoJ to find new savings as the prison population continues to soar.



## COMMENT

### ABOUT FREEDOM

#### ANGEL ALLEY

Recovering from our post bookfair hangovers, life returns to near normal in the Alley. Thanks are due to everyone who helped out at the bookfair and those who came to the meeting about the future of the paper. As always there was not nearly enough time to talk to everyone but a great time was had by all, especially at the bookfair after-party.

The promised re-laying of the Alley surface has still not come to pass, but at least the electricity is back on and we have complied with the council's safety notice. Laura is now jointly running the bookshop with Andy as we boldly experiment with modern working practices like job sharing.

In another reflection of modernity the new editor of the paper, Matt, is based in Merseyside but is able to communicate with the Big Smoke by means of the amazing new fangled interwebnet.

However you *will* need to be physically present to join us in celebrating the achievements and reflecting on the difficulties of the last year at the Freedom Crimbo/Solstice/Seasonal party on Saturday 22nd December from 2pm in the shop. There will be refreshments and nibbles and, of course, the opportunity to buy those last minute presents. All are welcome... except of course the cops, fascists and anyone who's threatened to sue us.

### SUBSCRIPTIONS

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### NEXT ISSUE DEADLINE

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

# A sideways look

by SVARTFROSK

A while back the firm I work for was taken over by a bigger company. The bigger outfit has lots of procedures and within weeks we were all expected to pass various crap online courses about such things as fraud and diversity. The latter was fairly straightforward, basically saying "we must reflect the communities we serve" and don't be racist/sexy/biased, etc. In terms of what the company think, it makes good business sense when bidding for public service contracts, and reflects a success from the social movements of the seventies and eighties in getting the state and business to at least address their concerns.

It's good that my employer states that they are against racism and sexism and homophobia. As and when they fall below the standard I will enjoy telling them, though they are expert at doing just enough. That isn't what bothers me. I work in a diverse workplace anyway, so can count on there being voices speaking up against racism and sexism, though not homophobia. And in the latter case lies the problem. I'm against discrimination primarily because it is ethically wrong, though a strong secondary reason is its divisive effect. My colleagues can quite easily see what's wrong with discrimination when it affects them, but there is no one out in my workplace so challenges to anything homophobic are down to me. If I leave, I suspect no one would challenge it. Anyone gay would have to go to management as the only choice.

This is a problem and it covers all forms of discrimination. A friend of mine has recently got a job in a small engineering firm. The workers there all hate the manage-

ment. Unfortunately, a lot of what they hate the management for are things like asking them to take down semi-pornographic calendars.

There is no union there and no sense of solidarity or fellow-feeling. It's an all too familiar story, particularly in male-dominated workplaces. The only challenge to the sexism of the workers comes from their management, who are also responsible for most of the stress in their working lives. If, like me, you'd struggle to believe a manager telling you that the Earth was round, you can understand why the anti-sexist message from management is shrugged off.

Without a culture of resistance in any workplace, (or indeed school or college or anywhere else) anti-sexist or anti-racist or anti-homophobic messages become associated with management. It may be that the managers are only paying lip-service to it (certainly true at times) but it becomes tainted by association. It is the same with the "official" anti-racism promoted by schools and councils. It ties in with the councils' views, which is not one we would share, as there is little differentiation and no class analysis. So, for example, councils would make no distinction between the interests of working class or female members of an ethnic group and the interests of that ethnic group's "community leaders".

If someone says or does something dodgy, it is important that they are challenged by their peers, rather than just jumped on by the authorities. You are far more likely to respect your peers and their efforts may change your views. Who respects their management or the government?



## FEEDBACK

I don't imagine I can have been the only one to have read Luther Blissett's fawning 'analysis' of John Zerzan in last month's issue of *Freedom* with dismay. If we see primitivists as part of the anarchist movement, whether they define themselves as anarchists or not, then we are negating some of the essential anarchist characteristics: class analysis and working people's struggle. This is not to mention the radical humanism that also characterises Kropotkin, Goldman, Bakunin, Rocker, Malletesta and key anarchist writers' thoughts.

Zerzan states that "the technology that has spread into the modern world has... extended its poisonous influence into the fabric of a crumbling society". This childish tendency to assign agency to technology is at the root of the primitivist misapprehension. Capitalism is a system of human exploitation, where human relationships are mediated by objects. Primitivists don't seem to be able to look beyond the spectacle, or to act beyond mere lifestyle changes.

In the same issue which criticises the Bonnot Gang for their contempt for working people (and remorseless murder of them), it is strange that there should be no comment on Zerzan's attitude to the working class, or some sort of exploration of his ideas on their revolutionary role. I was also disturbed to see a quote attacking "bohemian schiz-fluxers, green yuppies, hobbyist anarcho journalists... who thought that their pretentious pastimes would go on unchallenged indefinitely" be presented out of context. The phrase immediately before it was originally: "Enter the Unabomber and a new line is being drawn". Does *Freedom* really want to publish a rousing statement from a man essentially urging us to get behind

a man (Theodore Kaczynski) with a kill list including Chomsky and ordinary workers?

Surely an analysis of this 'philosopher' would ask questions about his view of the necessity of the human population dropping to a tiny percentage of its current figure and how that might be achieved. It could also question how it was that primitive childbirth was "near painless".

Perhaps the correct approach could be to not waste time and ink on a thinker who wants to get rid of numbers, language and "symbolic thought". Denying him the label of anarchist in *Freedom* would be a start.

Bert Smith  
Birmingham

At London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE), students automatically subscribe to the Students' Union, which distributes funds to the various student societies. About one in five members of the Atheist, Secularist and Humanist society (LSE ASH) ex-Muslims, and at a meeting on 23rd October this year, the society decided to change its name to Atheist, Secularist, Humanist and Ex-Muslims Society (LSE ASHES), and routinely advised the Student Union of the name change (which was only that – no change to the society objectives).

The SU Committee rejected the name change! They would allow the addition of Ex-religious, but not Ex-Muslim. The proposed name change may well have increased the danger from religious fanatics, not only to ex-Muslims, but also, it could be argued, to the Students' Union itself. But we would normally expect LSE students to stand up for freedom of speech.

Donald Rourm

I am researching my maternal uncle George Foulser who wrote a well regarded book titled *Seaman's Voice* which was published in 1961.

The last time I saw uncle George, I was 8 years old (I'm now 72). George died in 1975.

George was a well known anarchist and was active until he died.

He was prominent in the 1966 seafarers strike and was, I believe, blackballed from the Merchant Navy as a consequence.

He also wrote and distributed *The East London Speak Freak*, which gave his anti-establishment views on all matters that interested him.

George was also prominent ion the squatting movement in the East End of London.

I have been informed that George sold *Freedom* at Speakers' Corner in the late 1960s and early 70s.

If perchance there is anyone who is old enough to remember George and would care to share their reminiscences of him, I would be more than delighted. Also, if they happen to have in their possession, or know of anyone who has, any of his writings that they might wish to copy to me that would indeed be the icing on the cake.

Also if the above is not possible then if anyone has any contact details of someone might be able help I would be pleased to have them. further in my search.

Rita Harman

*If you can help, please get in touch with Rita via subs@freedompress.org.uk or write to her c/o Freedom Press, 84b Whitechapel High Street, London SE10 8DR, and we will forward your responses to her.*

## DONATE YOUR OLD BOOKS

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

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## GETTING ACTIVE

### WHAT'S ON

#### NOVEMBER

■ 1st, 8th, 15th, 22nd and 29th 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 beforehand.

■ 6th Radical Anthropology talks, *Some current issues in human origins research* with Chris Stringer at St Martin's Community Centre, 43 Carol Street, London NW1 0HT from 6.15 to 9pm, £10 waged, £5 low waged, £3 unwaged, for further details see [www.radicalanthropologygroup.org](http://www.radicalanthropologygroup.org)

■ 6th and 20th Practical Squatting Evening at LARC, 62 Fieldgate Street, London E1 1ES from 7pm to 8pm, for more see <http://www.squatter.org.uk/>

■ 10th News from Nowhere Club presents 'Young Historians in Leyton Take to the Street!', with inspirational history teacher Martin Spafford, at The Epicentre, West Street, Leytonstone E11 4LJ, buffet 7.30pm, talk starts 8pm, for details see <http://www.newsfromnowhereclub.org/>

■ 13th Radical Anthropology talks, *Bayaka singing workshop: 'I want honey, not money, honey'* with Ingrid Lewis at St Martin's Community Centre, 43 Carol Street, London NW1 0HT from 6.15 to 9pm, £10 waged, £5 low waged, £3 unwaged, for details see [www.radicalanthropologygroup.org](http://www.radicalanthropologygroup.org)

■ 13th and 27th Practical Squatting Evening at 56a Infoshop, 56a Crampton Street, London SE17 3AE from 7pm to 8pm, see <http://www.56a.org.uk/> for details.

■ 16th 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.

■ 20th Radical Anthropology talks, *Why do hunter-gatherers sing so much?* with Jerome Lewis at St Martin's Community Centre, 43 Carol Street, London NW1 0HT from 6.15 to 9pm, £10 waged, £5 low waged, £3 unwaged, for details see [www.radicalanthropologygroup.org](http://www.radicalanthropologygroup.org)

■ 27th Radical Anthropology talks, *Woman's biggest husband is the moon* with Jerome Lewis at St Martin's Community Centre, 43 Carol Street, London NW1 0HT from 6.15 to 9pm, £10 waged, £5 low waged, £3 unwaged, for further details see [www.radicalanthropologygroup.org](http://www.radicalanthropologygroup.org)

#### DECEMBER

■ 1st Manchester & Salford Anarchist Bookfair from 10am until 4pm at People's History Museum, Left Bank in Spinningfields, Manchester city centre, M3 3ER, see <http://www.bookfair.org.uk> for details.

■ 4th Radical Anthropology talks, *Did the Neanderthals have art and language?* with Camilla Power at St Martin's Community Centre, 43 Carol Street, London NW1 0HT from 6.15 to 9pm, £10 waged, £5 low waged, £3 unwaged, for further details see [www.radicalanthropologygroup.org](http://www.radicalanthropologygroup.org)



● The Gremlins are squatting at Gremlin Alley on City Road, Cardiff, which was formerly known as the Spin Bowling Alley and the Gaiety Cinema and bingo hall. On 4th October they successfully resisted an eviction from bailiffs and harassment from the police, who attended for most of the day.

The bailiffs arrived around 10am and, seeing the support outside the 100 year old building, realised they had no hope getting through so called the cops for back up. The cops didn't stick around for long though. About an hour later cops and bailiffs came back, but decided against trying anything and left again shortly after. The resistance stayed strong and when cops came back later to try and talk to the resisters were politely told to "go and fuck themselves".

The state tries to make people homeless, anarchists have no sympathy for the state and it's lackeys.

After police finally left around 3:30pm, black flags and more banners were put up and the party continued on the roof.

All visitors are welcome, as well as people to join in and give continued support. See <http://welcometogremlinalley.wordpress.com/> Gremlin Alley, 195-197 City Road, Cardiff CF24 3JB

● The Solidarity Federation's Tech & Digital Workers' network will be having its first meeting in late October 2012, in London.

We are very keen to make contact with other workers in technological or digital industries who are interested in helping workers get organised. We currently have members working in systems engineering, web development, games development, electronics and research. If you are interested in getting involved with the network, then get in touch via the 'contact' section of the SF website. See <http://www.solfed.org.uk/>

● *The Bottled Wasp* pocket diary is a new Anarchist Black Cross fundraising project from Brighton Anarchist Black Cross. The diary, priced at £5, is a fund-raising project which features daily, weekly and monthly historical listings and milestones in the worlds of prison and anarchist and class struggle politics, together with long-term anarchist and class struggle prisoners' birthdays.

Additionally, this edition includes articles on a number of subjects including the history of ABC and practical advice on prisoners support, alongside contributions from the likes of Legal Defence & Monitoring Group on *No Comment* and suing the police, Haven Books to Prisoners, Kate Sharpley Library, Green & Black Cross, etc., plus extensive links to other groups active in these areas.

We aim to fund one-off prisoner support projects as well as setting up regular stipends to selected groups and individuals, i.e. long-term prisoners, as well as offering a number of diaries at cost price (plus postage and packing) to ABC groups so that they can fund-raise directly for themselves. There is also the possibility of a Bottled Wasp calendar, initially featuring prisoners' artworks, to tie in with the diary if it proves a popular idea, with the first edition potentially printed next year to tie in with the 2014 *Bottled Wasp Pocket Diary*'s theme: 'Anarchists and The Arts' – a much neglected area of our history.

The *Bottled Wasp Diary* is a joint project between Brighton Anarchist Black Cross, Active Distribution and associated activists. If you are in contact with any prisoners who wish to donate artwork (graphical only please) or high resolution images of the same, then we would be pleased to hear from them. All donated artworks will be auctioned at some point to raise funds for prisoner support activities.

For details see [www.brightonabc.org.uk](http://www.brightonabc.org.uk) or [www.brightonabc.org.uk/bottledwasp.html](http://www.brightonabc.org.uk/bottledwasp.html)

● The next meeting of the Northern Anarchist Network will be on the 8th December 2012 at the Central Methodist Hall, Grimshaw Street, off York Street, in Burnley Town Centre. The day starts at 12 noon and continues until 5pm, with John Simkin addressing 'Anarchist policy in today's world politics', there will be two speakers from the Manchester Occupy Movement, then a speaker from the *Northern Voices* Editorial Panel will address the current problems of Anarchism with regard to civil liberties and a free and independent press. For details see <http://northernvoicesmag.blogspot.co.uk/2012/11/northern-anarchist-network-agenda.html>

# Olympic gentrification in Brazil

The gentrification around the South African world cup of 2010, the 2012 London Olympics, and the slavery and human trafficking associated with preparations for the world cup in Qatar highlighted in last months *Freedom*, are proof if it was needed that the major global sporting events are little more than a cash cows that enable huge corporations and governments to exploit people and land.

This year has seen similar stories come to light in Brazil during preparations for the next world cup in 2014 and also the Olympics in 2016. In the last few months 19,000 families have been forcibly evicted from their homes by the police and armed forces. The housing minister claims that the families are not being forced out because of the world cup, but because the families chose to build their slum towns in inappropriate areas in the first place.

That fact that the towns have been in existence for decades and no issue of their location has ever been raised, coupled with

the fact that all cleared towns are now earmarked for the construction of new stadia, or World Cup and Olympic associated infrastructure upgrades, shows that the government's claims are just lies.

Six government ministers have been forced to resign in this year alone due to wholesale corruption around the handing out of government construction contracts related to the hosting of the World Cup and Olympic Games. Individual ministers are said to have personally amassed millions in bribes – some as much as \$50 million. There are currently 38 prominent politicians, bankers, and businessmen on trial in what is being called, 'Brazil's trial of the century', all related to government contracts.

Aside from the financial concerns, the human cost of Brazil hosting major sporting events are that close to 170,000 people have been forcibly evicted from their homes, and can never return.

The evictions have occurred in primarily high valued areas around cities, pushing

people into bigger slums on the outskirts that have even less access to clean water, education, and public services.

When Brazil won the right to host these events, the government vowed that they would be the most transparent in history, and that hardly a cent of taxpayers' money would be spent on them. Yet in actual fact they are proving to be the most corrupt in history, and like all similar events, the costs are spiralling rapidly out of control, with ordinary Brazilians carrying the burden.

Matthew Black



## T-shirts will not 'kick it out'

◀ page 24

I don't know if he is trying to put himself on a different pedestal from everyone.

Ferguson, the media, and associated hangers-on, claim that the 'Kick it Out Campaign' are not to blame for the issues that Roberts raised. Not directly maybe. However, a brief internet trawl shows that the campaign is supported and funded by – the Football Association (FA), the Premier League, and the players union – the Professional Footballers Association (PFA). So who exactly is responsible then? As it seems that all the key bodies in professional football (who are directly responsible) fund the Kick it Out Campaign as some kind of front group. The campaign is part of a

UEFA (European wide) network of similar groups. It seems to me that the campaign is just a token, tick box exercise to give the illusion that changes are being made, and action being taken.

For the campaign to remain credible, all the players have to fall in line and wear the shirts, whether they agree with a token gesture or not. Jason Roberts was being singled out as the *only* player who would not be wearing the campaign shirt (although Joleon Lescott has refused since 2007). However, imagine the anger at FA towers when over thirty players from eight teams refused to wear the Kick it Out Campaign shirt on the same day as Roberts.

Lord Ouseley, the chairman of the 'Kick it Out Campaign' said that he understood the player's grievances, but that, "Those grievances can only be addressed if we confront them, not by gestures of not wearing a T-shirt, but I understand why people don't do that."

So not wearing a T-shirt is basically a token gesture? So what does he think actually wearing a T-shirt is, in the fight against racism?

I for one fully support the players who refused to wear the shirt and doff their caps to the privileged handful of middle aged white men who run football, and I hope that more follow.

Matthew Black

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## REVIEWS

### FICTION

As Connie went into the pub, she saw Dave and Dominic were already there.

"So, what's up?" she asked.

"Trouble at mill," replied Dave, nodding at Dom. Connie raised her eyebrows. Dom was tall, lean and invariably wore black jeans and black t-shirts. Of all their circle, he had the best job, working in IT at the college, and the one who seemed to enjoy it the most.

"Yeah," said Dom, sighing. "Privatisation has come to town."

Again, Connie raised an eyebrow. Dom sometimes called himself a libertarian and was prone to taking a lot of the Ayn Rand fantasies at face value.

"I got a message that the new manager wanted to see me. When I got there he started having a go and coming out with all sorts of crap about commercial confidentiality."

"What was he saying you'd done?" asked Dave.

"Well, as far as I can see, nothing, but apparently talking to my ex-colleagues in the college is not allowed under this new regime."

The IT team had been outsourced to LobCo, a big company that took over public services and made lots of profit. The sort of company that donates to politicians and features in *Private Eye*. You know the sort.

"So is that covered in the employee handbook or anything?" asked Dave.

"No, all it says in there, and I've checked, is that processes must comply with externally-validated industry standards."

"What does that mean?" asked Connie.

"In our case, it means ITIL, which defines all IT work and how it is to be treated."

"ITIL?" said Connie.

"Yeah, I know. Information Technology Infrastructure Library. And guess what?"

"What?" asked Dave.

"We've had no training in this crap and none is planned."

"So, let me get this straight, they're asking you to work to processes that they've not trained you in?" asked Dave.

"That's the gist of it," replied Dom. Dave shook his head.

"It's hard not to see something sinister in that," said Dave.

"At best it's incompetence," added Connie.

"Incompetent management, who'd have thought?" said Dave. "So what did you do?"

"I stormed out and went for a fag," replied Dom. "Told him his procedures were crap." He sipped his drink.

"So, what's next?" asked Connie.

"I don't know," said Dom. "This is all new to me."

"Is there a union?" asked Dave.

"There is..." said Dom, leaning back.

"Let me guess, you're not in it?" said Dave.

"Er, no, I mean, I'm not," he replied.

"Rugged individualist that I am, I thought I didn't need one."

"Even rugged individualists get ganged up on by management," said Dave. "It's why we need to stick together."

Martin H.

To be continued...

# FIRE AND FLAME

*Fire and Flames: A History of the German Autonomist Movement* is an English language translation of a book long-considered a classic of autonomism which provides a good introductory history of the German scene from the tumultuous year of 1968 to the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989. But despite its strictly chronological style, it manages to feel weirdly disjointed and dispassionate, and so fails to provide much of a guide for those of us seeking to organise non-hierarchically in the twenty-first century.

As ever for books on the left, there is a blizzard of acronyms, and if you are a non-German reader then almost all will be entirely new. A glossary is provided however, and if you keep referring back to it, this isn't too much of a barrier.

Another common left problem encountered here is the slipperiness of label definitions. This even applies to the term 'autonomism' itself, with wildly different ideologies and

forms of activity all coming under the same umbrella term. For some this is a strength of 'autonomism', for others a weakness, but when trying to read a book on the subject, it sometimes feels like particular activities have been shoehorned into the 'autonomist' definition simply because they are in some way anti-mainstream politics, and not 'K-groups' (of which more later).

The author, Geronimo, adopts the eight part definition adopted in Italy during 1981: "we fight for ourselves", "we do not engage in dialogue with those in power", "we have not found each other at the workplace", "we all embrace a vague anarchism", "no power to no one", difference from the "alternative movement", "we are uncertain whether we want a revolt or a revolution", "we have no organisation per se".

So vagueness and lifestylist individualism appears to be all, and yet the 'autonomists' as identified by Geronimo did organise huge events, and they did experiment with work-



### QUIZ ANSWERS

1. A misheard line in a song or poem. It was named by Sylvia Wright, who heard the poem 'The Bonny Earl O'Moray' as "They hae slain the Earl O'Moray, And Lady Mondegreen". It actually reads "laid him on the green". Wright used this as a term for all misheard phrases.
2. Vietnam Street.
3. In 1883, exasperated with "revolutionary

phrase-mongering", Marx wrote to Jules Guesde and Paul Lafargue (his son in law), saying "If that is Marxism, then I am not a Marxist".

4. He was shackled, in his wheelchair. There is a petition, signed by among others, his GP and the former Chief Inspector of Prisons, that says sending him back to jail would be a death sentence.

# AMES

place organising. Focuses changed as history marched on and changes in economics drove changes in society. This mechanism lies almost entirely unexamined, accounting for much of the ‘this happened, then this happened’ style.

This difficulty is evident from the very beginning when Geronimo deals with the year when workers and students rose in Paris (*pictured left*), there was upheaval in Czechoslovakia, the Black Panthers battled cops in America, and ‘The Troubles’ began in the north of Ireland. All this took place as the post-war settlements around the world were breaking down at their first major recessionary test. Instead of looking at this, Geronimo tries to explain nearly everything in terms of US imperialism’s carnage in Vietnam. Beyond the immediate trigger for action, the deeper motivations are not considered, and so any thorough analysis of autonomism – or any movement – is impossible. Still, Geronimo notes that a sizeable layer of students broke from the liberalism of the social democratic centre-left.

The next section – and in my opinion by far the most impressive part of the whole book – is actually dedicated to a very decent study of Italian autonomism. It looks at the organic composition of Italian industry, before tracing the shift from Stalinism to operaismo (‘workerism’) which – in contrast to a left which now sought to integrate “the working class into capitalist development” – again sought “the complete negation of the existing system”. As employers fought back by shipping out of operaist strongholds, the focus shifted to the “social field” – i.e. riots, “proletarian shopping” (organised mass looting), and the creation of a ‘scene’.

And, aside from a few abortive attempts to organise factory workers, the “social



field” is the only one on which Geronimo describes the various and diverse German autonome as playing on, following their formation in reaction to their own Stalinist ‘Communist parties’ (those K-groups again).

We are therefore given brief sketches of the rise and fall of the ‘spontis’ (anti-organisational individuals emphasising the

‘spontaneous’), the insurrectionist Rote Armee Fraktion (Red Army Faction) and Revolutionäre Zellen (Revolutionary Cells) in the 1970s. And then through to anti-Reagan, anti-nuclear and mass squatting actions in the decade which was to catch the autonomen by surprise at its dramatic conclusion – the fall of the Berlin Wall.

When I put down the book for the final time, I was left with a sense that the sometimes massive numbers the autonomen pulled to their events, and the often ferocious intensity of their battles with state forces, very little had been achieved in the way of concrete gains. And this is the case whether you prefer – as I do – to talk in terms of gains or losses for contending social classes, or about individuals extending the reach of their own freedom (as do the autonomists in the 1981 Italian theses).

One prominent exception is the mass squatting of Hamburg’s Hafenstrasse (*pictured above*), which eventually led to the regional senate granting the squatters the right to stay in the buildings they had brought into use. These then became a prominent base for both a thriving counter-culture – including support of the world-famous FC St Pauli (*pictured left*) with its unique supporter comradeship – and the autonomen’s political struggles.



## THE ARTS

## LEA VALLEY: FENCE



This exhibition shows a selection from an extensive series of documentary photographs that chart change in the Lea Valley from 2008 to 2012. Captured on annual walks around the boundary of the Olympic site, these images track the line of the blue fence as it demarcated and closed the site to local usage. Not knowing what might change, or how, every inch of the boundary was recorded to create a rich archive of detail.

Many have watched and recorded the building of the Olympic park; this collection looks outwards to the neighbours overlooking the site. Our route begins at the Bow Flyover heading north along the Lea. We pass Old Ford and Fish Island, new arts spaces in White Post Lane, under the Eastway, past flourishing gardens at Lea Bank Square, to Homerton Road, past Hackney Marshes to the A12 junction at Ruckholt Road. A small and ordinary patch of ground, but one with significance for the photographer and other local people, and one that has seen radical change imposed upon it by the extraordinary scale of the Olympic developments.

During this period there were changes to the built environment. The Valley's sense of wilderness and its characteristic coat of street

art were lost in the clean up. New blocks of flats and new uses for the valley's industrial history can be seen. Streets and paths were resurfaced, new signage installed and access to some areas was re-designed.

There were also changes in the ways in which people could and did use the area. Much of the Valley was made inaccessible, but



## Review

◀ page 21

But apart from that – and the odd delay to this or that project of the capitalist class – it's difficult to point to much in the way of success. Of course, participants may well argue that I am being far too materialist, and the success was the emotional 'freedom' gained from taking part. Of course, that would be entirely their call. But perhaps that's almost the exact problem with the type of autonomism espoused within these one

hundred and eighty five pages – it can be reduced to 'Did the individual have a good time while the world continued to burn?'

So if Geronimo wanted to show the German brand of autonomism as being a way forward for oppressed groups in the wider world – and I think he did – then *Fire and Flames* utterly fails to convincingly make that case. That's certainly not to say it's without merit – and as a bit of a politics

people still walked their dogs, enjoyed the open spaces and cultivated community gardens. Increasing numbers of artists, journalists, study groups, tourists and other observers arrived. Some local people were able to take advantage of business opportunities, but other workplaces foundered and closed.

There is much to be critical of in the construction of these changes, but there are also some things that could be seen as improvements, and others that have escaped the rigours of central planning to continue in their own ways. Until 2012 the story was an ambivalent one incorporating growth and decline, commerce and community. All are recorded in this photographic essay. In an area once characterised by industrial grime and graffiti being reclaimed by the first growth of a wilder nature we now see a restrictive encroachment of barriers and regulation, opportunism and the increasingly visible face of 'regeneration' as it claims more and more of the Valley.

How many of the fences will remain in the longer term, and what the previous or incoming neighbours will make of the situation, is yet to play out.

Jane Sarre first studied photography at Nene College, Northampton, and has since continued her photographic practice in parallel with a career in museums. Since shifting to digital

geek I loved the many demonstration photos and posters included – but perhaps there is an even better book on the history of German autonomists just waiting to be written.

Adam Ford

*Fire and Flames: A History of the German Autonomist Movement* by Geronimo, translated by Gabriel Kuhn, published by PM Press, £14.99.

# ES | NEIGHBOURS



her work has focussed increasingly on the urban environment, the found details, the textures and juxtapositions.

In 2008, whilst managing Hackney Museum and its 'Mapping the Change' programme, she became aware of the number of artists recording and responding to change within

the Olympic site and was inspired to turn her lens outwards and create a significant archive of images that record every building and every space along the boundary from Bow to the Hackney Marshes. A selection of these images is shown in *Lea Valley: Fences / Neighbours*.

The photographic exhibition *Lea Valley: Fences / Neighbours* by Jane Sarre is currently on display at the Freedom Press Autonomy Club until Thursday 31st January 2013, open during shop hours, for details see <http://www.janesarre.co.uk/photography.html> or <http://www.facebook.com/events/421020124625915/>.



## SPORT

# T-shirts will not 'kick it out'



In the run up to this weekend's premier league fixtures the sports pages were filled with stories regarding the black footballer Jason Roberts, and his decision to not wear a 'Kick it Out Campaign' shirt, prior to his teams match. Roberts said that: "I find it hard to wear a T-shirt after what has

happened in the last year. I won't wear one. I'm totally committed to kicking racism out of football but when there's a movement I feel represents the issue in the way that speaks for me and my colleagues, then I will happily support it. I think people feel let down by what used to be called 'Let's Kick

Racism out of Football'. People don't feel like they have been strong enough."

He came in for lots of criticism, in particular from Alex Ferguson, who had this to say: "I have to disagree with Jason Roberts. I think he is making the wrong point. Everyone should be united, with all the players in the country wearing the Kick It Out warm-up tops. I don't know what point he is trying to make.

page 19 ►

## THE QUIZ

1. What is a mondegreen?
2. What did Iraqi militia the Mahdi Army tell the Americans was the main street in their home slum Sadr City?
3. Who prompted Marx to say "I am not a Marxist"?
4. Daniel Roque Hall is a prisoner dying of a rare degenerative disease, Friedrich's ataxia, that means he cannot use his legs and arms. How was he taken to hospital from Wormwood Scrubs jail earlier this year?

**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)

