

## CRISIS AT CHRISTMAS

### No let up for the recession during the festive season

At this time of year the financial burden of ordinary people becomes all too obvious – struggling to maintain basic living standards over the Christmas period on dwindling personal incomes and savings, while the state of the economy is thrown into sharp relief by the Alistair Darling's recent pre-budget report.

Households throughout the UK are taking no comfort from the Chancellor's proposals to the House of Commons, coming at a time when the public sector as a whole is taking a battering from the failings of New Labour's neo-liberalism policy. The looming clouds of recession still hang over the country despite the financial juggling and manipulation of figures by government ministers to downplay the continuing severity of the current economic crisis.

As it stands the total government debt will double to 79% of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) by 2013 – the highest level since the Second World War, the annual budget deficit will rise to £175bn for the next two years, while continuing to pay for the banking bail-outs and wars in the Middle East. According to the pre-budget report the government is to

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### LENS CAP READERS, A MERRY CRIMBO WE WISH YOU



However to enjoy a happy and prosperous New Year, dump the bosses off your back you must....

## ANGRY BRIGADE POET DIES

Anna Mendelson, also known as Mendelssohn, one of the Stoke Newington Eight, has died aged 84 after a long battle with cancer.

Mendelson, along with seven others, was tried in 1972 for a number of fire bombings, as part of the Angry Brigade, in what became the longest political trial of the twentieth century. She was convicted with Brian Greenfield, Hilary Creek and John Barker of conspiracy to cause explosions and served half of a ten year prison sentence.

Mendelson, then a young student at Essex University became involved in the Angry Brigade – an urban guerrilla group notorious for issuing communiqués explaining the reasons behind targeting the property of the rich and political elite. She represented herself in court and, despite the four convictions for

conspiracy, no-one was ever convicted for the actual bombings themselves. After being released she made a career as a successful poet under the name Grace Lake.

She had been unwell for a number of months after it was found she had an inoperable brain tumour on her cerebellum and spent her last months in and out of hospital care. She passed away on 15th November and her funeral took place on 20th November 2009 where she was cremated at Cambridge Crematorium

She is survived by three children and her two daughters who lived in Australia flew in to be at her bedside close to the end.

Mendelson's death comes just two months after the death of another member of the Angry Brigade, Jake Prescott (see *Freedom*, 12th September 2009).

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## NEWS

## IN BRIEF

**PEACE PRIZE:** Tom Lehrer famously retired, saying that satire was dead, when Henry Kissinger got the Nobel Peace Prize. Poor Old Tom (now 81) has been forced to retire again as Barack the Barbarian collects the inventor of dynamites top gong a week after packing an extra 30,000 kids off to war in Afghanistan.

**AFGHANISTAN:** British military deaths have reached 100 in a year for the first time since 1982.

Unlike the Falklands, when at least the penguins and sheep could be said to be liberated from the yoke of Argentine tyranny, this war appears to have brought no gain to the Imperial power, still less the people of Afghanistan.

Afghan deaths are not counted as meticulously as coalition troops, but they are far higher and will get worse with the surge in the new year. Let's look at the results of a more profitable war.

**OIL:** Iraq's oil capacity could reach 12 million barrels per day (bpd) in six years, the country's oil minister says.

Hussein al-Shahristani told reporters in Baghdad that oil producers would not necessarily operate at full capacity, but would take into account demand.

At a news conference, Mr Shahristani called the result of Iraq's second international oil auction since 2003 a major success. "It is a big achievement for Iraq to win such contracts at the current prices," he said.

The minister said the contracts awarded over the past two days, coupled with those from the last auction in June and government efforts, would allow Iraq to boost daily production from 2.5 million barrels to 12 million. And what's the result of this fossil fuel burning mallarky?

**ARCTIC SEA ICE:** November 2009 had the third-lowest average extent for the month since the beginning of satellite records in 1979.

The linear rate of decline for the month is now 4.5% per decade. Not much you may think, but the tipping point for summer sea ice is close and slow growth this winter is likely to mean a new record low next September. For more details see the National Snow and Ice Data Centre's website. What's the result of these changes, you ask...

**WARMING:** The global average temperature could reach a record high in 2010, according to the UK's Met Office.

Forecasters predict that the annual figure for 2010 will be 14.58°C (58.24°F), 0.58°C (1.04°F) above the long-term average of 14°C (57.2°F).

They say the combination of climate change and a moderate warming of the tropical Pacific Ocean are set to drive up temperatures next year. The current record record is 14.52°C (58.14°F), which was set in 1998.

## LENS CAP A PEACEFUL DESTROYER



More good news from the Navy Lark. The Sea Viper missile system that constitutes a whopping £400 million of the £1 billion cost of each Type 45 destroyer has failed to work in recent trials on HMS Dauntless. It can now be safely used to protect the planned aircraftless aircraft carrier the Prince of Wales (see *Freedom*, 7th November).

## Return of terrace politics

As Gordon Brown declares class war on David Cameron from the hallowed turf of the House of Commons members bar via his middle-class PR machine, football stadiums are becoming the new battleground for expressing genuine class anger and dissent.

Workers from the giant Corus steelworks factory on Teesside, threatened with mass redundancies, demonstrated inside Middlesbrough's Riverside stadium on Sunday 13th December before the league clash with Cardiff City. Players from the club also showed their support by warming up on the pitch with 'Save our Steel' t-shirts.

The demonstration by the steelworkers and their families, who marched around the pitch before kick-off, comes after last week's announcement by Tata Corus, who own the plant, to mothball Teesside Cast Products (TCP), costing the region over 1,700 jobs.

This is the second such demonstration by the steelworkers at the Riverside. A similar protest was staged at Boro's game with



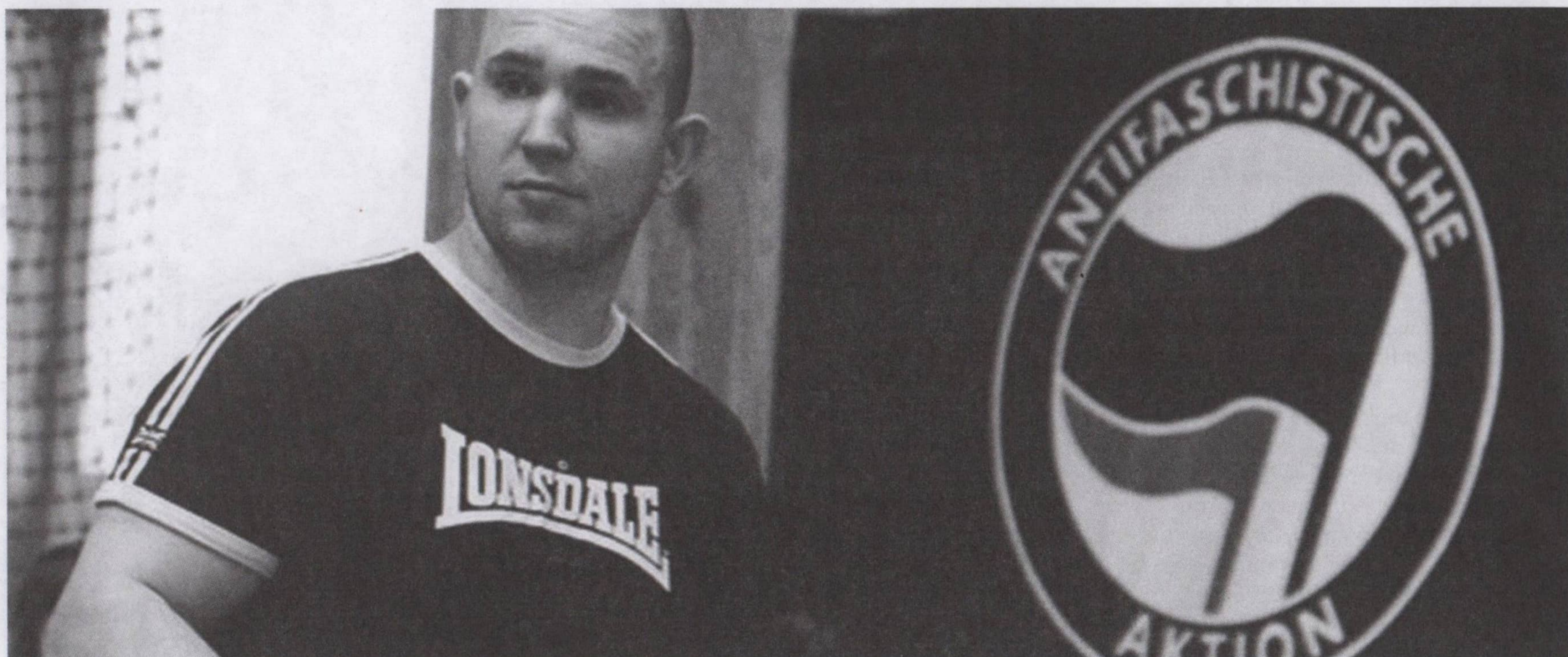
Ipswich in September, which had the full support of the club and fans, who gave the protestors a standing ovation.

Geoff Waterfield, chairman of Corus's multi-union committee stated: "It is long recognised that the steel industry is the heart of our community. The foundations of Middlesbrough and Redcar are forged and built on the steel families of this region," adding that "generations of Teesside families have worked in the local steel works and many have followed with the same passion to see Middlesbrough Football Club play when and wherever the club takes them, with undying loyalty".

Middlesbrough FC have one of the highest proportions of locally-born season ticket holders at 80% in the country, and one of the highest proportions of female fans at 20%. It also has the largest community-based football scheme in the UK with its Middlesbrough Football Club in the Community (MFCIC).

Tata is the world's fifth largest steel producer after British Steel merged with a Dutch steel company to form the Corus Group that was eventually bought out by Tata Steel, of which Corus remains a subsidiary. Last year Tata's turnover increased by 38% to \$18.91 billion and profits rose by 114 per cent to \$2.47 billion.

On a similar note, the Scottish Trades Union Council staged a protest at Celtic Park when Celtic played the Israeli club, Hapoel Tel Aviv, on 2nd December as part of UEFA's Europa League. They called upon Celtic fans to show solidarity with the people of Palestine by waving Palestinian flags to mark the one year anniversary of the Israeli invasion of Gaza. Celtic fans have a long tradition of anti-fascism, anti-loyalism and anti-racism.



# Anti-fascist round-up

## Freedom reports on activities in London

Anarchist anti-fascists converged on a pub in north London on Sunday 28th November to confront the extreme nationalist political party Jobbik who are attempting to make inroads into the Hungarian community in London.

The meeting, in the Gloucester Arms pub in Kentish Town, was to be the foundation of a British chapter of the notorious racist party, who promote openly anti-Semitic and anti-Roma policies and recently won three seats in the European Parliament.

The bonds between the British National Party (BNP) and Jobbik are growing since both have been elected to the EU. Gabor Vona, the Jobbik party chairman, announced in October the founding of the 'Alliance of European Nationalist Movements' in a

declaration of common goals drafted by BNP leader, Nick Griffin. Five parties have initially signed the nine-point declaration: Jobbik, France's Front National, Italy's Fiamma Tricolore, Sweden's National Democrats and Belgium's Front Nationalists.

The demonstration outside the pub was made up of autonomous anti-fascists, mostly from the Camden Anarchist and Whitechapel Anarchist groups as well as the local Unite Against Fascism group. After an uneasy stand-off the meeting went ahead as planned. It was unclear if any BNP were in attendance.

Anarchist anti-fascists were also in attendance as part of an international callout by RASH (Red and Anarchist skinheads) and Antifa Russia to honour the memory of Ivan Khutorskoy, who was murdered by fascists on Monday 16th November. London-based antifascists, RASH's and SHARP Skins, gathered at the International Brigade memorial on the South Bank of the River Thames, on evening of

4th December, to pay their respects to memory of Ivan Khutorskoy, who was shot and killed at the entrance to his apartment building.

Ivan was a towering figure of the Moscow anti-fascist scene, informal leader of the youth antifascist movement, founder member of Moscow RASH, this was the fourth attempt on his life. He had been slashed with a razor in 2005, attacked with baseball bats and stabbed with a screwdriver, and nearly died after being stabbed in the stomach during a street fight.

He had recently been working as security for concerts put on by anti-fascist groups, and had also worked as security during the press conferences of the prominent human rights lawyer and defenders of anti-fascists Stanislav Markelov, who was shot dead last January by neo-Nazis.

Comrades at the South Bank handed out leaflets and unfurled a red and black flag against the memorial as a mark of respect.

## Crisis at Christmas

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lessen some of its debt burden by selling off the nation's assets to the private sector including the student loans portfolio, the Channel tunnel rail link and the Tote. More significantly there will be a cap of 1% on the 3.9m public sector workers pay settlements for two years from 2011, in an attempt to claw back £15bn on 'inefficiency savings'.

The cornerstone of neo-liberalism as economic policy is based on freeing financial markets from state regulation but also transferring control of state enterprises to the private sector, and with it relinquishing the once universal guarantee of social rights. Under New Labour education, health and social services have become simple commodi-

ties to be competed over and at the mercy of market forces.

What we are left with are ordinary people forced to bear the brunt of the failings of the financial markets and its institutions and a bankrupt government agenda, through cuts in services, jobs, public spending and increase in taxes, leading to an escalation in personal borrowing and debt, from the very institutions that caused the recession.

According to the Office of National Statistics, 19.3 million households – nearly 80% of the total – have incurred an average of £7,200 each on credit cards, loans and other non-mortgage related debts and Barclays, the UK's biggest credit card lender with 11.7 million

UK customers, reported a significant increase in UK credit card delinquencies, defaulting on repayments.

Conversely top executives at Goldman Sachs, the world's most powerful investment bank, are to receive the biggest bonus payouts in the firm's 140-year history. In the same week The Bank of England's deputy governor admitted at a Treasury select committee that both the Royal Bank of Scotland and HBOS came within minutes of closing cashpoints and normal business operations at the height of the financial crisis last year just before extending £61.6bn in emergency funds to the banks.

## ANALYSIS

# A London conference?

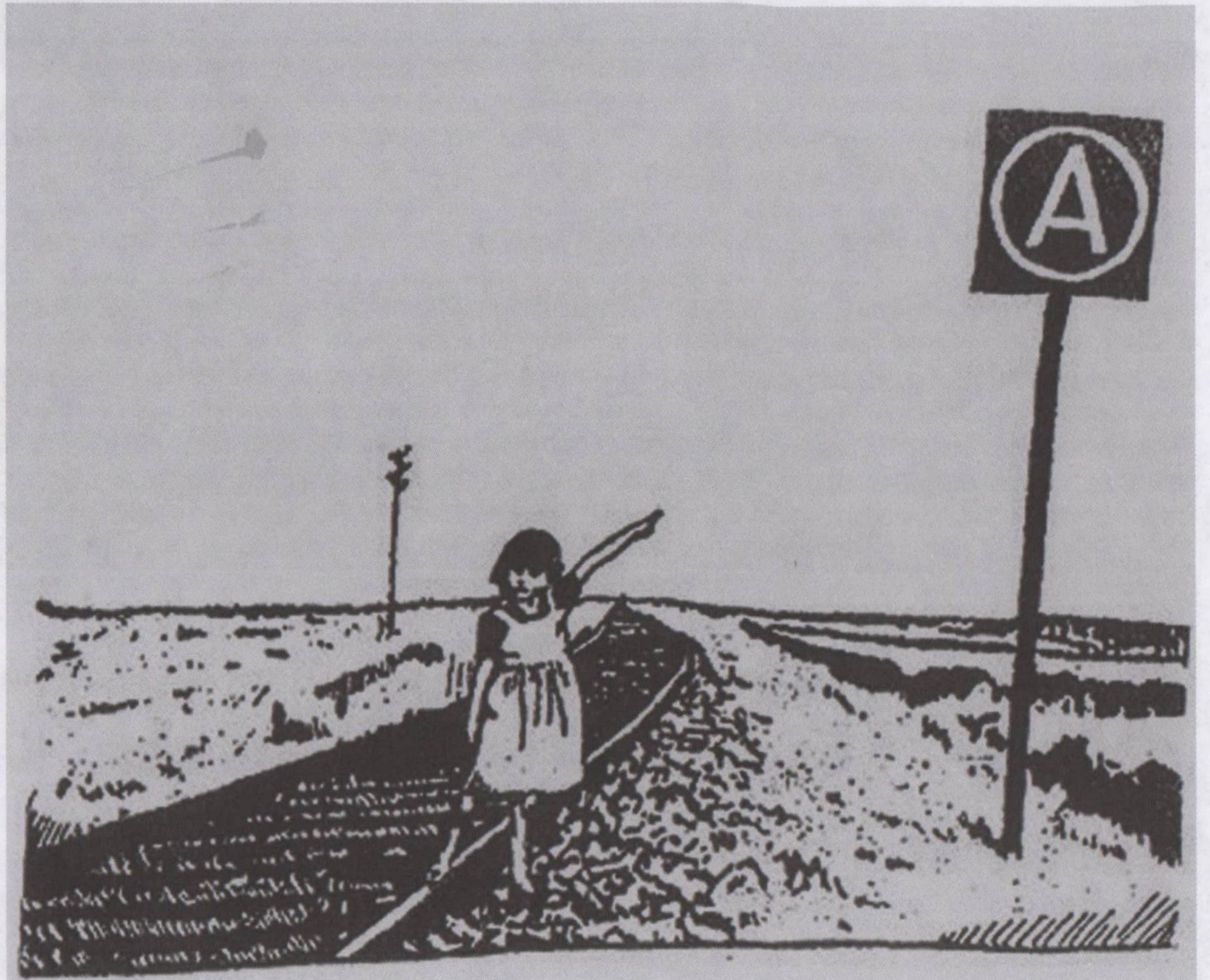
If we are going to have another anarchist movement conference in 2010, then we need to start thinking about it and planning it fairly soon.

With this in mind a couple of us in London, who were involved in the planning of the 2009 conference, have been discussing the options.

At the same time we have been looking at the state of the anarchist and libertarian movement in the capital in 2009. What we would like, and it is the views of only two people, is that we organise an event like the 2009 Anarchist Movement conference in 2010 but for London only, as we need to get our house in order and make anarchism a threat in the capital again. But, we don't want to lose what we started with the national conference, so our suggestion is that this event is a bi-yearly event that moves around the country, and planning for it starts at the 2010 London Anarchist Bookfair.

*Who said you could make all the decisions!*  
We are not saying this is how it has to be. If there is energy from others to organise a national conference again in 2010, and preferably outside London (this was the feeling of the 2009 conference), then of course comrades should definitely organise it. All we are saying (as two individuals) is we want to put our efforts this year anyway into looking specifically at London being Londoners as we are.

*What's the thinking behind this then?*  
Presently, there is an initiative to bring together class struggle anarchist groups in London on a delegate basis. While we support this initiative, we also want to bring together the wider anarchist and libertarian disjointed movement in London which would include people not in specific groups; people who would call themselves anarchists and libertarians, but not specifically 'class struggle'; and single issue campaigns that have a anarchist agenda.



We also feel there is a need to look at co-ordination of our activities on a London-wide basis and see where we are doing well and also doing badly. London Coalition Against Poverty is obviously a good example of a London wide strategy as is Radical London (which aims to get local groups established in every London borough). Freedom bookshop is fast becoming a hub for anarchist and libertarian activity in London as well. On the down-side, we have no effective legal support network (LDMG limps along as best it can), nor prisoner or workers' support networks in place. We are also predominantly (although not exclusively) a white, able-bodied, male (and at times middle class) movement, which outside our

own movement and friends very few people know even exist.

In London, we all know the problems. The clever bit is knowing what to do about it, and this is where we generally fall down, scratch our collective heads or ignore it and just go down the pub. While the two of us are by no means saying we have any of the answers, we at least think we need to start trying to look at the question. And our small contribution to get the ball rolling is to suggest a London-wide conference in 2010 similar to the recent Anarchist Movement conference where we come together to start the process of making anarchism (or whatever you want to call it) a dominant ideology again in the capital.

As a first step we will book a meeting in January to discuss the idea of holding said conference sometime later in 2010. The meeting will ask any anarchists, libertarians, Council Communists, Libertarian Marxists, Communists (well, the ones who don't believe in the dictatorship of the proletariat anyway), and fellow travellers to come along. We also ask you to spread the word far and wide around London, as we accept *Freedom* hasn't yet got the mass circulation it will one day have if we get our way.

You might think the idea is great. You might think it's crap. Either way, it would be good for you to be at the meeting so we can let each other know how we feel. Obviously the format, length, venue, content of any conference will be decided by those who take a part in organising it. At the moment *nothing* has been put in place except this initial meeting.



## YOUR YEAR AHEAD

**ARIES** 21 March–20 April

Over the coming year you'll be troubled by capitalist exploitation and state oppression. Why not join a revolutionary organisation to end these things.

**TAURUS** 21 April–21 May

The planets dictate that you will be in a series of interminable meetings. These will make you increasingly cynical, bitter and disillusioned as the year goes on. Take a break or you will burn out.

**GEMINI** 22 May–21 June

Mars, planet of war, will continue to orbit the Sun, as it has for billions of years. This presages wars on Earth will continue, and there may be some new ones.

**CANCER** 22 June–22 July

The stars foretell that your destiny will be determined by the flashing of blue lights accompanied by an eerie banshee's wail. Regular exercise and the purchasing of good running shoes will avert any misfortune.

**LEO** 23 July–21 August

The motions of the cosmos reveal that you'll not get the full value of your labour. Agitation in your workplace will mitigate the adverse effects, an Industrial Workers of the World union may also help.

**VIRGO** 22 August–23 September

You will become increasingly aware of gender politics as the anarcha-feminist movement grows in power.

**LIBRA** 24 September–23 October

As the Sun moves from your sign into the cusp of Scorpio, you will find yourself in a large Bookfair in East London where you will purchase everything with the letter 'F' printed on the spine.

**SCORPIO** 24 October–22 November

Beware of the period of the full moon if you don't wish to turn your blossoming squat-cracking career into a burglary conviction.

**SAGITTARIUS** 23 November–22

December

The planet Neptune – invisible to the naked eye and therefore ignored by astrologers – will exert no influence on your life whatsoever. Exactly the same as all other extraterrestrial bodies.

**CAPRICORN** 23 December–20 January

You will become increasingly annoyed by newspaper columns providing mystical prognostication and turn to a materialist philosophy during the coming year.

**AQUARIUS** 21 January–19 February

You will find yourself subscribing to an anarchist fortnightly at the higher supporters rate. This will give you a warm feeling of inner contentment.

**PISCES** 20 February–20 March

You will find yourself on a overheating planet being made uninhabitable by the environmental devastation wrought by its ruling class. Consider using fewer plastic bags.

# Action is the life blood

Over a year ago a handful of us disillusioned with the inward looking sectarianism of anarchist politics in London decided to start something new and launched a local anarchist group in the area we gravitated and lived, Whitechapel.

After handing out a thousand free sheets on Brick Lane and the Anarchist Bookfair inviting people to attend, the founding meeting was held on the 23rd October 2008, with roughly forty people present. From this, a core of 15 people came together, from various anarchic, ex-Trot, unaligned and non-political backgrounds with ages ranging 14 to 57, and an interest to produce a local newspaper.

United in our belief for action as opposed to the endless hot air of most political meetings we had all experienced before, it was in the production of the WAG free sheet that pulled together our individual interests into a collective expression. Two thousand copies of WAG Issue 1 (Dec/Jan 09) were handed out in the local area, and we never looked back.

Producing a paper gave us a sense of momentum and focus, but also organising socials – from a regular Sunday cinema club, radical history pub crawls to open public meetings – pulled our propaganda together into tangible events offering clear openings for others to get involved.

Having raised our heads above the political parapet, things began to hot up from the kick off – aligning ourselves with the illegal market traders brought us into direct conflict with the inspectors, whose corrupt attitudes are systematic with gentrification, and the local constabulary who had been getting heavy-handed with animal rights activists against a yuppie fur shop. But it was our WAG Issue 2, 'Bash-A-Banker' (Feb/Mar 09) and our Emergency Edition 'Storm The Banks' (March 09) for the G20 that would capture the imagination of the time.

The intense media attention that focused on our group caught us all off guard, but

with the aid of a well-managed blog and youtube channel, and a lot of late night graffiti, we somehow managed to play the media machine creating a spectre that haunted the liberal middle class imagination. Daily during the G20 the WAG name was mentioned in almost every newspaper with good and bad effect – highlights being a bankers forum cancelling a cycle through the City because we're supposedly 'prepared for serious mob violence', lowlights being the esteem steeped on most anarchist groups who achieve a modicum of success, i.e. slagged off, vilified and attacked on the internet by anarcho-leftie-armchair revolutionaries.

The 'Bizarre group of misfits' moniker labelled by a fabricated *Daily Mail* infiltration story was to stick as it summed up perfectly our motley crew. Having been going for six months we decided now would be the perfect time to have our first ever proper WAG meeting. From this developed the AMG, Active Members Group, and Curry Monday, a regular weekly meeting in preparation for our Spitalfields Fair. With 5,000 copies of WAG Issue 4 (Jun/Jul 09) distributed, Sunday 26th July was to be the date for our traditional east end fair and with games, music, fancy dress and entertainment it proved to be a successful family day for the anarchists and locals of Whitechapel.

After a much needed August break the groups activity continued: supporting the Tower Hamlet College strikers, protesting against the DSEi arms fair, establishing the Radical London network, creating another media storm in a teacup at the Climate Camp, while finally hosting our own meeting at the Anarchist Bookfair 2009. The Whitechapel Anarchist Group, you either love them or hate them, but either way there's no denying that they've been a busy bunch and will continue into the new year giving 'our movement' some much needed oomph, whether it wants it or not.

Greg Hall



## INTERNATIONAL

## IN BRIEF

**INDIA:** The man alleged to be the sole surviving gunman in last year's Mumbai attacks, Mohammad Qasab, has retracted a confession that he took part.

Giving evidence in his defence, Mr Qasab, a Pakistani national, said he had been forced by police to confess after being repeatedly beaten up. He said he was not the man seen in pictures wielding an assault rifle during the attacks.

Mr Qasab faces 86 charges, including waging war on India and murder. The November 2008 attacks left 174 people dead, including nine gunmen, and strained ties between India and Pakistan.

Mr Qasab looked calm in court as he repeatedly denied having anything to do with the attacks, insisting he had been framed by the police.

A special court in Mumbai (Bombay) is prosecuting him and a verdict in the case is expected early next year.

**WORLDWIDE:** In a unanimous statement issued on Friday 18th December the governments of the world gave the go-ahead to runaway climate change.

That's about it from Copenhagen. There was no target for reducing carbon dioxide emissions, no limit to the level of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere, nothing more than a pious wish that average global temperature should not rise more than two degrees above pre-global warming levels.

This really was the last chance. Short of global revolution in the next couple of years there is no chance of stopping at two degrees.

This figure is crucial to the impact of climate change. It is a scientific best guess at the tipping point to runaway climate change.

Beyond the tipping point there is no certainty where rising temperatures stop. It is not possible to set greenhouse gas levels to get three or four degrees of warming because once we pass the tipping point natural releases of carbon dioxide, and particularly methane, will far outweigh human emissions.

Hopefully a new equilibrium will be reached that allows human life on Earth to continue, but there are no guarantees. The world's rulers are playing Russian roulette with the planet. The Copenhagen summit has spun the chamber and we await our fate.

This isn't a failure of individuals or even of competing nations, but a failure caused by the very nature of the capitalist system that runs our world. Decision-making based on how to maximise profit cannot provide solutions to long term global problems. Even if we survive this disaster, capitalism will spin the chamber again. We've already been lucky once with CFCs and the ozone layer, we cannot be lucky always. Achieving anarchism is no longer just about humanity freeing itself from oppression and exploitation, it's about our very survival.

## Copenhagen crackdown



Protest groups have expressed shock at police tactics in Denmark which saw thousands of people 'pre-emptively' arrested for the crime of joining protests to pressure world leaders on climate change on 12th December.

The Climate Justice Action group has issued a condemnation of the unprovoked police actions while other groups are planning on launching an official complaint regarding the inhuman treatment of prisoners.

Nearly a thousand people were arrested on one day alone at a giant march in Copenhagen, with protesters being picked off by police, corralled and then held without access to toilet facilities or clean water.

Around 100,000 people marched in Copenhagen, while 90,000 turned out for a walk against warming in Australia.

Of those arrested, all but 13 were released, however on the following day, another 200 were arrested, with police using the 'illegal' nature of the march as an excuse to round up anyone they felt might be a troublemaker.

Police have wide powers to declare large gatherings of people illegal, which in turn gives them the ability to arrest people who try to exercise their right to protest.

Protesters at the event are attempting to pressure national leaders to make commitments to keep CO2 emissions to below 350 parts per million – the maximum level which climate change scientists say the planet can get away with.

However there are major differences between what rich and poor nations are asking for.

## Notes from the United States

New figures published at the start of this month by TomDispatch using government data show just how much money is being spent by the US on death and destruction as opposed to health and education.

The state of California, for example – the world's seventh largest economic unit – has a budget deficit of \$21 billion (£12.6 billion). This is being used as an excuse to raise already high tuition fees within the public higher education system, and slash provision

across University of California campuses.

Similarly, what the state of New York has been deprived of in all years of the present decade, effectively to pay for weaponry and terrorism in Afghanistan and Iraq, could have provided every one of its citizens with health care.

Nor are California and New York alone: the combined total budget deficit of the 48 individual states for 2009 is \$689 billion

# Many thousands march in Italy

## Far right drive to privatise galvanises public sector

Hundreds of thousands of workers across Italy went on strike and marched on 11th December against reforms designed to set up huge swathes of the public sector for cuts and sell-offs.

Despite opposition against demonstrations from several major unions, protests were held in Rome, Milan and Naples in a nationwide series of marches which organisers said attracted up to 180,000 school staff, students and parents.

Police declined to give a number for the overall attendance at the marches, which were held despite attempts to ban the unofficial events and amid a barrage of criticism from press sources loyal to President Silvio Berlusconi. Union officials said that around 60% of public sector workers stayed out on strike during the day, though the government disputed this figure.

Anger has been building at proposed cuts and pay freezes from the government which workers say tears up promises made by the state that creeping casualisation in the sector would end, instead using the financial crisis as an excuse to push through further attacks on working conditions.

The dispute follows widespread concern over the government's recent Brunetta decree, which has been touted in the press as a set of reforms aimed at improving performance in education, but is seen by many as a process designed to make it more appetising for a future privatisation.



The decree calls for the imposition of private sector values on education, and proposes a similar system to the league tables and testing which has led to privatisation of 'failing' schools in the UK, allowing for the suing of schools considered to be below standard.

Hidden in language about parents' rights is also talk of 'streamlining' education, hinting at a major swathe of cuts and decommissioning of secular schools across the country. Union sources have warned of "a regressive and classist plan to privatise education". A member of the CGIL union, which helped organise the strike, told the left wing *Il Manifesto* newspaper: "When you commodify knowledge you can include only a part – you determine a society without mobility, for the few, where the education of those most vulnerable will always be worse."

As the debate hots up in the wake of major scandals surrounding the ruling coalition, student groups are calling for schools to be opened to community control, effectively to become self-managed.

Student groups marching in the demonstrations marched behind banners calling for 'the end of indiscriminate cuts and reforms'.

The government has already come under fire in the last month for its attempts to finalise the sell-off of Italy's water utilities to the private sector in a new law approved by the House on 20th November.

Anarchist newspaper *Umanita Nova* has warned that the bill will effectively give the state carte blanche to sell off public utilities of all stripes, fitting in with EU law promoting the promotion of private firms in all spheres of public service.

## Notes from the Unites States

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(£414 billion). The US's military budget for next year alone is \$704 billion (£425 billion).

The Department of 'Defense' projects that – wars aside – the most basic of budgets will increase by 2.5% each year for the next 10 years, or at least \$133 billion (£80 billion). Using such metrics, it's been calculated that every gallon of petrol used in Afghanistan by the US costs \$400 (£240).

Before Obama's latest threat of aggression was made on prime-time television at the start of December, 'Defense' Secretary Robert Gates and Congress both firmly forbade the further release of any photographs depicting abuse or torture of foreign prisoners by US personnel – this despite the fact that federal courts have repeatedly rejected the government's arguments to block the release of the photographs. Wartime president indeed.

At the same time as pretending to continue the intervention in the name of 'protecting' Muslim women against a brutal dictatorship, the United States continues to back the police

state of Morocco in its suppression of those working (often non-violently) for the liberation of the Western Sahara, which it has occupied since 1975.

Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, for example, recently praised Morocco's human rights record unconditionally.

Meanwhile, Western Saharan activist, Aminatou Haidar, is fasting (to the death, if necessary) inside Lanzarote airport in the Canary Islands to where she was kidnapped after travelling to New York to receive the 2009 Civil Courage prize for her non-violent resistance to the Moroccan occupation of Sahrawi land.

On returning home, she was arrested by Moroccan officials; they seized her Moroccan passport and expelled her against her will to the airport because she refused to sign documents saying she was a Moroccan citizen, and declared Western Sahara as her country of origin on the immigration entry form.

Louis Further

## IWA support campaign to stifle Serbian dissent

International anarchist union the IWA has vowed to throw funds behind a campaign to clear the names of six Serbian members who are facing decades in prison on charges of international terrorism.

The decision came just days after an open letter from Serbian intellectuals was published denouncing the court case as a politically motivated attempt to stifle dissent from the left.

The IWA pledge came at the association's 24th annual congress in Brazil in December, which itself had been put on hold following the jailing of IWA general secretary Ratibor Trivunac and his fellow ASI-MUR comrades Tadej Kurepa, Ivan Vulović, Sanja Dojkić, Nikola Mitrovic and Ivan Savic in September.

The arrests were allegedly related to a direct action which took place on 25th August where minor damage was caused to the Greek embassy in Belgrade.

The six could face prison terms of up to 15 years.

# From the editors: looking back, looking forward

## How we got to here

A front page article in *Freedom* a few months back stated that we are living through a unique set of social conditions. Add to that strange and turbulent times and it gives a fair indication of the last six months as editors of *Freedom* newspaper. Both of us were literally thrown into the role, unexpectedly and certainly unprepared, and, given that neither of us have a journalistic background and have limited writings skills, it has been a steep learning curve – and one that's still on an upward trajectory. What we *do* have is over 30 years experience between us as active participants in the anarchist movement, and it's this that we draw on in writing, editing and developing *Freedom* as a paper.

The accusation by one of our more senior and charismatic anarchist comrades that *Freedom* was 'an irrelevancy' is a little unfair and perhaps a little true as well. For years the paper has been simply treading water. What Rob Ray, the last proper editor, brought was a desire to move beyond inward-looking personal viewpoints and brought a certain journalistic standard, one that we hope to maintain, and one I am personally grateful for. The paper will not become an insular private club or a mouthpiece for airing our personal grievances and petty disagreements – if it does we know we would have failed.

As part of the Freedom Collective we are looking at this as a bigger long-term proposition. The need for the anarchist movement to be more visible, more accessible, more involved and more relevant is at the forefront of our thinking. As such we hope the paper, the bookshop and publishing become a necessary and vital part of the movement's infrastructure and a means by which we can usefully express and communicate anarchist ideas to a greater number of people.

## Freedom Bookshop

Previously the bookshop was hidden in a small damp and dusty room on the first floor of the building. When Andy began managing the shop some two years ago it was with the intention to create both a self-sustaining commercial enterprise and a proper environment for anarchists to feel at home in (essentially drag the place into the 21st century). To this end the shop has exceeded all expectations. Already it has become an active social space and hub for London anarchists to meet, where the federations hold their meetings and all manner of groups and campaigns put on events. Along with LARC across the road, it forms a pivotal role in creating a visible anarchist presence in London. The shop itself is now bright, airy and accessible – we serve coffee and there are chairs and a table for people to sit and read. Come the summer we will be having chairs and tables outside and we are in the process of extending the building to include a downstairs kitchen and toilet.

The role of the shop has become: 1) a welcoming place for people curious about anarchism to come and find out more, and hopefully get involved; 2) a radical social and political centre; 3) the first port of call for anarchists outside the capital, and from across Europe and the world to find out what's happening here.

## Freedom newspaper

The ultimate ambition for the paper is for it to become an anarchist movement paper. Given the anarchist mindset and the troubles besetting *Black Flag* this may well be beyond our reach. It does however give us a clear aim and a desire to build a genuine anarchist movement that *Freedom* can be a part of, represent and promote. The politics



Engrossed in *Freedom* at the Climate Camp in Trafalgar Square earlier this month; below, Angel Alley and Freedom Bookshop.

of the paper I think reflects our political and social backgrounds. From a personal perspective I want a paper that ordinary working class people – my family, the people I grew up with, the people I work with, to feel comfortable reading, and for anarchists to feel it goes some way to promote a credible anarchist identity. The sentiment 'grown up politics for pissed off people' is something to aspire to. The paper also now has a functioning internet presence where limited news articles will be posted up, but we remain committed to producing the hard copy every two weeks.

## Freedom publishing

We continue to print anarchist classics that would otherwise get lost amongst the fuzzi and distortion of the internet age. We are in the process of reprinting the classic Tintin comic book *Breaking Free*. A worthy addition to next year's Christmas list!

## Goodbye noughties

Time for us to take a retrospective look at the decade. In December 1999 things were looking up for libertarian politics. The upsurge

was an inquiry. So it comes as no surprise that after the G20 there have been all manner of inquiries. Unfortunately there is one big difference. All the previous inquiries were about why the cops got a kicking, whereas this time it's the protestors whinging about police violence.

Rioting is the icing on the cake of working class power. For those of us in the marzipan of the politically active proletariat, the noughties are an object lesson in how neglect of the stodgy cake of industrial and community organisation has led to the icing flaking off and the inspiration of the almond paste drying up.

## Climate confusion

Anarchists have been harping on about the environment since the days of Kropotkin. This decade has seen unprecedented interest in green issues and global warming in particular. Sadly, rather than reinforcing the need to get rid of capitalism and replace it with something nicer, we now have a growing authoritarian trend which is calling for state repression of the working class to avert climate change. We badly need to reforge the alliance between libertarian politics and class consciousness if the planet is to be truly saved. What we need is the unity shown in *Doctor Who: the Green Death* where ex-miners and a hippy commune combine to defeat the dangerous pollution of global chemicals.

## Green shoots, or Red and Black ones.

No prizes for guessing *Freedom's* prescription for the next decade: the need to build a solid base of industrial and community organisation; showing that class struggle is the solution to climate change not an alternative; taking a professional approach to street action; ensuring effective opposition to fascist and police violence – and having an exciting paper to spread the word. All so simple, but the simplest thing can be the most difficult.

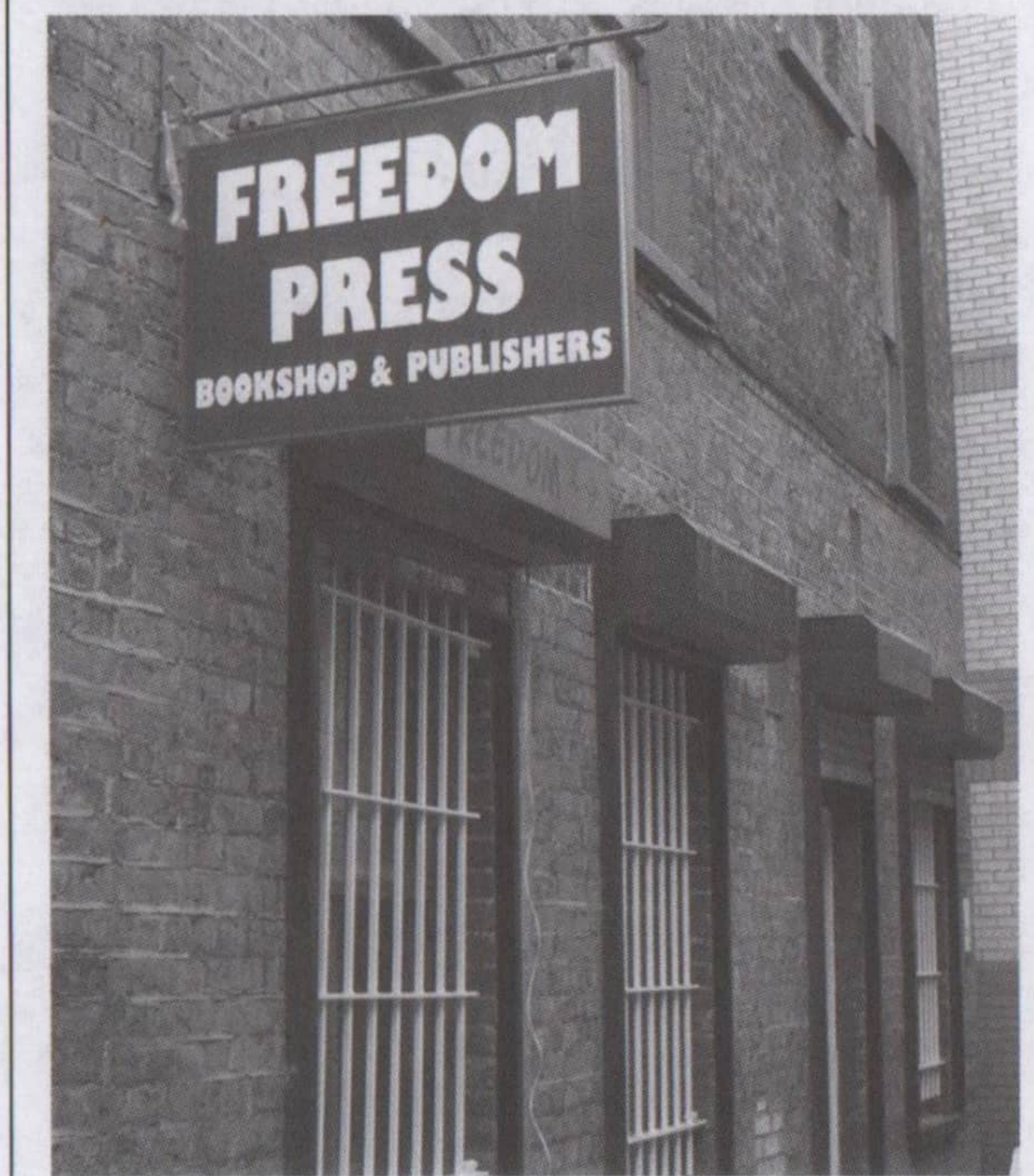
reality of class exploitation leading to a shopping list of oppressions competing for activists.

## The war against terror

No apologies for using the proper acronym because 9/11's after effects dominated the decade and twatted the revolutionary project good and proper. It is a coincidence that the last appearance of the WOMBLES as a padded block was at the DSEi arms fair on 11th September 2001, but very symbolic. The unwillingness of the movement to adopt collective self-defence on demos ensured the success of kettling as a tactic and allowed the surveillance tactics of the Forward Intelligence Teams to first marginalise and then render powerless those willing to resist police

## Defeat on the street

After the J18 Carnival against Capitalism in 1999 there was an inquiry into the policing of the event. Older readers will remember that after the Poll Tax riot of 1990 there was an inquiry, and even older readers will remember that after the Brixton Riots there





## COMMENT

## ABOUT FREEDOM

## ANGEL ALLEY

It's been a busy run up to the holiday season. We've moved lots of stuff around in the shop and brought a table downstairs for people to sit at while they drink coffee from the posh new pecolator we got from Argos for a tenner. Meantime the all-singing all-dancing website is gathering steam and we trust you've all been buying books and renewing your subscriptions on it like mad. After the successful party to launch the 'Living Legends' CD, we've been pleased to host the joint Solfed/Anarchist Federation end of year social on the 13th and, by the time you get this, we'll have had the Freedom Crimbo booze up too. If there's anyone who missed out an issue because of the large envelope debacle please let us know and we'll send it with the first issue of the new year.

It remains only to thank all our readers, contributors and distributors for supporting the paper through the year and wish you all the best for 2010.

## SUBSCRIPTIONS

This is the time of year when a lot of your subscriptions are due for renewal. To work out if yours is one of these, look at the number above your name on the address label. This issue is vol 70, no 24, so if your subscription runs out with this issue you'll have 7024 above your name. If the number is 7024 or less, then your subscription is now due for renewal. You can renew your subscription on our website, or see page 16 for the current rates and a renewal form or, if you don't want to worry in the future about remembering to renew your subscription to *Freedom*, just ask us to send you a standing order form by emailing [subs@freedompress.org.uk](mailto:subs@freedompress.org.uk) or you can write to us at 'Subscriptions', Freedom, 84b Whitechapel High Street, London E1 7QX.

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## NEXT ISSUE

The next issue will be dated 16th January 2010 and the last day to get copy to us for that issue will be Thursday 7th January. You can send your articles to us by email to [copy@freedompress.org.uk](mailto:copy@freedompress.org.uk) or by post addressed to 'The Editors', Freedom, 84b Whitechapel High Street, London E1 7QX.

## A sideways look

by SVARTFROSK

The inclusion of a few words about policies dreamed up 'on the playing fields of Eton' in a speech by Gordon Brown lead the media to talk of a renewed class war. I know it's nearly Christmas, but aren't there some celebrities to write about?

To start, I'd like to say that Cameron's inheritance tax cuts really, really get my goat. The same media that tells everyone that the class war is between Cameron's Eton-educated toffs and Labour's lesser public school gits is the same one that never explains how hardly anyone, even people who bought their council house in Camden, end up paying inheritance tax. It might have something to do with the owners and leader-writers of the media being part of the tiny proportion who will have to pay, of course. But this country is rubbish at understanding class and I can't see that improving much any time soon.

Ask most people about class and they assume it is a social thing – how you speak, your job, your cultural habits. I noticed when I was a lot younger how children of teachers from the north thought they were working class and those from the south though they were middle class. It's also why people like Sir Alan Sugar are not recognised for their class position, simply because he sounds like he is working class, which of course he once was. It can be important as part of people's identity, though this often ends up being divisive in a different way. I'm not really that interested in the cultural definition, to be honest, though there are plenty of times when middle class people, confident to the point of arrogance in their privileges, have got my back up.

In straight economic terms, most of us have to sell our labour in order to survive; most of us who don't work are still in a similar relationship, either because we depend on someone else who is working, or the state is paying us to spend money and keep the economy ticking over. We rarely shine any sort of spotlight on our rulers, though. Much of the economic power behind the government consist of the sort of people who always tick the 'No Publicity' box on the pools coupon. The public profile of the ruling classes, though, consisting of politicians and the heavy-weight media, seem to come from only a few educational backgrounds, with studying Philosophy, Politics and Economics at Oxford University a very common factor. Wikipedia has a partial list that reads like a Who's Who of the political world. It includes Tony Benn, William Hague, Mandelson, Ted Heath, Bill Clinton, and a host of other world leaders and probably every one of the *Guardian's* star columnists. If we widen it to other subjects studied at Oxford, we can add in Blair and Thatcher. So much for meritocracy!

I can see why some people don't like the idea that class cuts across all our relationships, but I often think that's because people think in terms of cultural class – flat caps and whippets, top hat 'n' tails stuff. But the boards of big companies, media groups, the government, are stuffed full of a very narrow selection of people, far narrower than you'd find in almost any other grouping. If that's not a reflection of class society, I'm not sure what is.



## EDITORIAL

**Economic madness**

*Freedom* really has lost its way (Economic commentary, 21st November). Why are we being given information on banking? Is this an anarchist strategy? Next the paper will be pink and we will be given hints on investments. John Griffin appears to be concerned with propping up capitalism.

Obsessing over economics serves no purpose. A parallel is that knowing about the working of government tells us nothing useful. Both have little bearing on anarchism. We are concerned with how anarchism might be brought about. Perhaps the editors are saying there is no real difference between capitalism and anarchism? Both are concerned with the individual, self interest and freedom from government interference. The editors have a similar obsession with trade unionism. This supports capitalism and has nothing to do with anarchism. The employed (workers have gone) have no wish to do away with capitalism. They want the bankers' jobs.

Fiscal politics, banking economics and so on are an expression of human behaviour: how to diddle people. To pretend there is some way we could comprehend the system and control or alter it is counter productive. It suggests some kind of understanding where there is none. Economics is not a logical system. All that economics does is to describe how money is moved about. It does not obey rules and has no mathematical formula. It is about making money. It is about gambling. It is to do with capitalising on people's greed and gullibility. The banks, for example, have to stay ahead of the game. Economics is like forecasting winning lottery numbers. The numbers tell us nothing. The people who create the means of exploitation, economists and bankers, need to be scrutinised, not the numbers.

The idea that economics is subject to analysis is daft, and to discuss it shows a lack of understanding of anarchism. The parallel with politics is appropriate. Both can only be understood by reference to people. There is no internal logic.

Peter Gibson

*Reply from the editors: We can do no better than offer two quotes from our predecessor Rob Ray's reply to Peter's letter in the 20th December 2008 issue. "I find it utterly incomprehensible" and "If it weren't for the sheer eccentricity of such a viewpoint". We wish future editors all the best in replying to Peter's ramblings.*

**Becoming effective**

The Anarchist Movement Conference has come and gone. So has another year's bookfair. I get the impression that our movement is growing fairly rapidly, but our effectiveness still hovers real low. What's going on? Never in this country since working class people got the vote has there been such a total disillusionment with all party politics. Labour Party? Bad Joke. Tories? Bad dream. BNP, Greens, Libdems?

Except for *perhaps* the BNP, none of the smaller parties have much going for them in terms of the potential to grab people's hopes and dreams. As for an economic ideology, well, again there's a vacuum. Neoliberalism is dead. Social Democracy is dead... All that remains is attacks on our class with no ideology to readily justify it. Capitalism has lousy press right now, and everyone knows Communism didn't work. In other words, *this is our time*. If we can't get organised and get our message across in a massive way, we deserve to die and be forgotten as a movement.

In *Black Flag* issue 227 (mid 2008), Paul Stott and Kat gave a very good analysis of the rise to success of the BNP, showing how a small fringe group became a major political party with a national profile. As much as many may not like the analogy, we are currently more like the British People's Party (BPP) than the BNP – we have around nil profile and most of our rhetoric has no chance of becoming widely popular. We might think 'anarcho-communism' makes sense, because we know the history of the term and all the stuff about the USSR being state capitalist, not communist in the original sense, but for fuck's sake this kind of language will get us *nowhere*. Our movement is poisoned with pointy-head, purist intellectualism, history geeks and Spain '36 re-enactors, tree huggers and vegans, subcultural students who read too many books... Maybe it would be a better idea, instead of another conference, for the 'anarchist movement' to have an organising and action based conference for building an independent working class alternative 2010.

Cut down the jargon and focus on what's going to bring *us*, not politicians but the whole working class, freedom – economic democracy and community self-government. If you agree with us, contact us at [classwarcambridgeshire@worker.com](mailto:classwarcambridgeshire@worker.com) or c/o Cambridge Anarchists, Box A, 12 Mill Road, Cambridge, CB1 2AD.

Daniel Owen  
Class War Cambridgeshire

**Spending a penny**

One evening when frequenting the East End watering hole The White Hart, located close to your bookshop and often referred to as 'The Office', I discovered the most fascinating political graffiti in the gentlemen's lavatory.

Scrawled on the back of the door was the 'L&S' logo with 'Liberty & Solidarity: Our Time Is Now' etched for all to see.

A bit further down was an 'AF' (Anarchist Federation) logo with 'Time Is Relative' scribbled as a response.

Then even further down in bold black marker pen emblazoned the Whitechapel Anarchist Group logo with the accompanying text 'WAG: Time For Another Pint'.

I thought to myself when will this sectarianism end? When will the anarchist movement in the UK put aside such petty quibbles and become the much needed militant class force we all love and want? Especially as capitalism is riding us all roughly from behind with no vaseline. £3.05 for a pint of London Pride?! That is a crime.

Eric Blair

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## GETTING ACTIVE

### PRISON NEWS

#### A little local accounting difficulty

It looks like the Tories' new prison policy, which they have been buffing up for implementation after the next election, has hit the buffers before it has even had a chance to leave the station.

The party that likes to see itself as the true custodians of the 'law and order' ticket, and not those Johnny-come-latelies New Labour, had come up with what they thought was a sure-fire way to fund a new round of prison building and do away with Labour's automatic early release scheme if, and probably when, they seized the reins of power next year.

The big plan, which was announced last year, was to sell off 30 inner city Victorian prisons, all of which were on prime development sites, to raise £250 million to finance the building of 5,000 new prison places. These would be in addition to Labour's current plans to increase the prison estate by 12,500 places, which would bring it up to 96,000 by 2014.

Possibly David Cameron's advisers had recently stayed in the Malmasion Hotel, previous known as HMP Oxford, which the Osbourne Group had paid only £1 for but had had to invest around £35 million in its refurbishment.

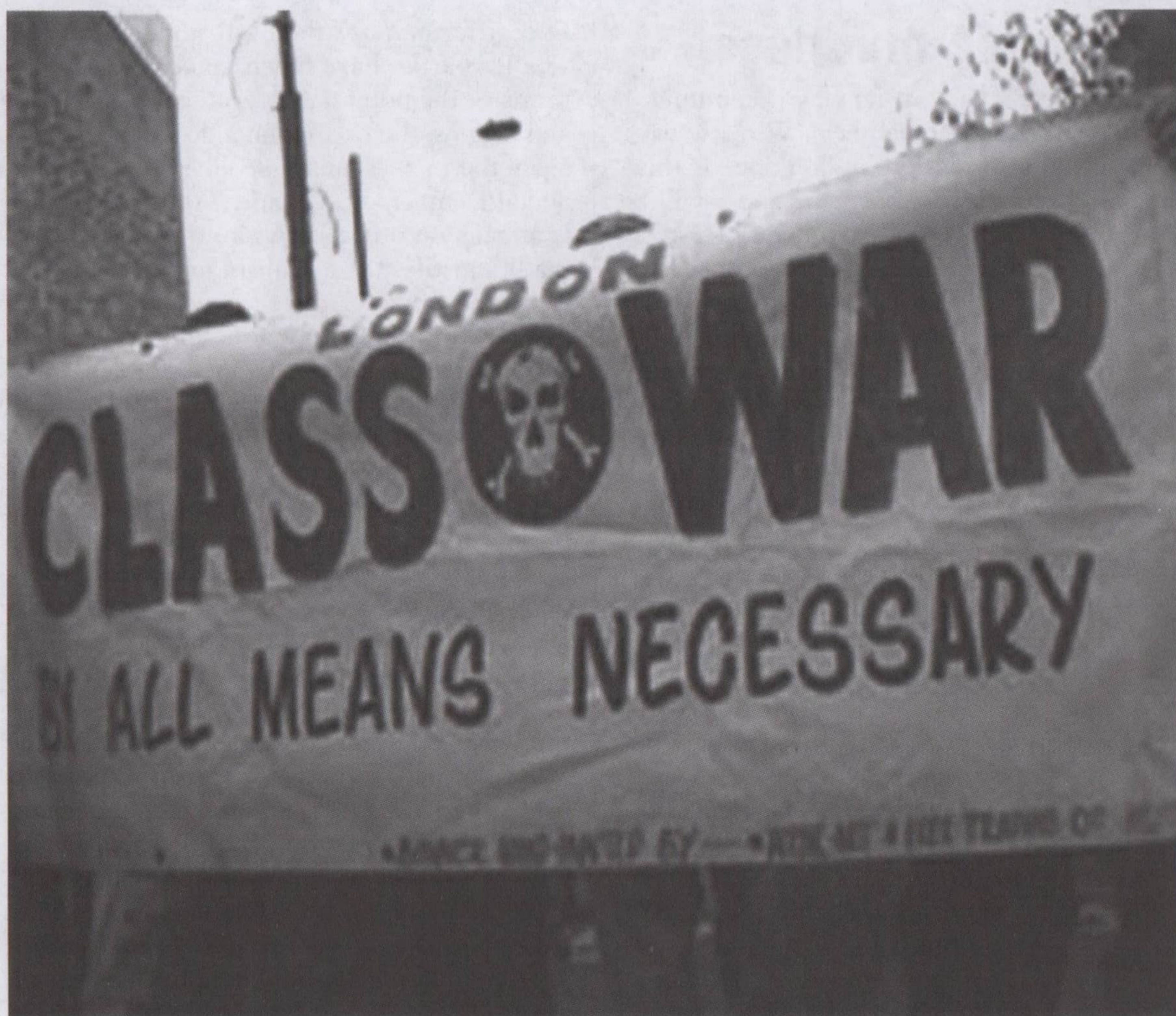
This was always a rather optimistic estimate for how much they could raise from this fire sale and their figures never held up, especially given that most are also listed buildings.

Another problem is that closing these 30 Victorian prisons could lose somewhere around 18,000 to 19,000 existing places, depending on exactly which jails were sold – they vary widely in size from as small as 200 up to 1,500.

Yet, using the current average capital building cost of £142,000 per prison place, the £250 million would create only 1,760 places, and this assumes that the government already owns the land the new prisons would be built on. Therefore we have a net loss of more than 16,000 places.

Clearly something is very wrong somewhere. Maybe they are using that old government trick of double counting places that have previously been announced (by Labour) to make it look as if they are doing more than they actually are?

So, quietly backtracking, the Tories are now apparently planning to build only 'several thousand' new places and will instead be converting more ex-military buildings, like the recently opened HMP Bure (ex-RAF Cottishall), and fencing and re-categorising open Category D prisons, under a new 'rehabilitation, not incarceration' policy reflecting the increasing influence of Iain Duncan Smith's Centre for Social Justice and paving the way for his idea of doubling of the involvement of private companies exploiting prison labour in prison estate workshops.



The Getting Active page will be changing in the New Year to encourage politically engaged groups to contribute news on their activities. It will be divided in four separate sections – the federations, locals groups, student groups and social centres, with each taking on the page, reporting on their news, activities, events, ideas, thoughts and theories, on a rotation basis. This will hopefully keep people updated and informed on just what anarchists in the UK are up to, encourage anarchists to openly promote their groups, and also act as a place where people can come to find out about anarchist activities in those particular areas of interest. There will also be a listings section in each issue with contact details of all groups so anyone new to anarchism knows just where to go to get involved.

Over the last three issues of *Freedom* we have devoted one page each to student anarchist groups, local anarchist and activist/community groups and social centres. This issue we take a look at the anarchist federations.

- **London Class War** continues to produce the newspaper and maintain the website. As a federation, there is renewed interest with groups being established in Bristol and Yorkshire. It remains unclear what form their future trajectory will take although the group, the identity and the firebrand politicking is still much in evidence amongst today's young anarchists. <http://www.londonclasswar.org/>

- **Anarchist Federation** now has 24 functioning groups throughout England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. They produce a monthly bulletin, *Resistance*, and a twice-yearly magazine, *Organise*. Local

groups also produce their own newsletters, i.e. Sheffield members publish *The Fargate Speaker*. They publish pamphlets on anarchism under the title Anarchist Communism Editions as well as a new publishing project, Stormy Petrel.

The AF is a member organisation of the Anarchist International of Anarchist Federations (IAF-IFA). <http://afed.org.uk/>

- **Solidarity Federation** has 15 locals based around the UK incorporating either cities, geographical areas or regions. They produce a quarterly freesheet *Catalyst*, which has recently turned into a proper newspaper, and a magazine *Direct Action*. They are also involved in the Selfed Education Collective, a 24 unit correspondence course covering the history of anarcho-syndicalism. SolFed members who work in the same sector have also formed networks, these include Education Workers Network, who produce their own freesheet, and the Public Service Workers' Network.

SolFed is the British section of the International Workers Association, an international anarcho-syndicalist federation. <http://solfed.org.uk/>

- **Liberty and Solidarity**, a newly formed network of activists across the UK who came together in 2008 from such diverse political backgrounds as IWW, IWCA, LCAP and anti-fascist activities. Their aim to take a more pragmatic approach – rather than reinforcing a political ideology, they seek to involve themselves in campaigns, workplace and community organising in and through existing groups to build a more confident and militant working class. <http://www.libertyandsolidarity.org/>

## CROSSWORD

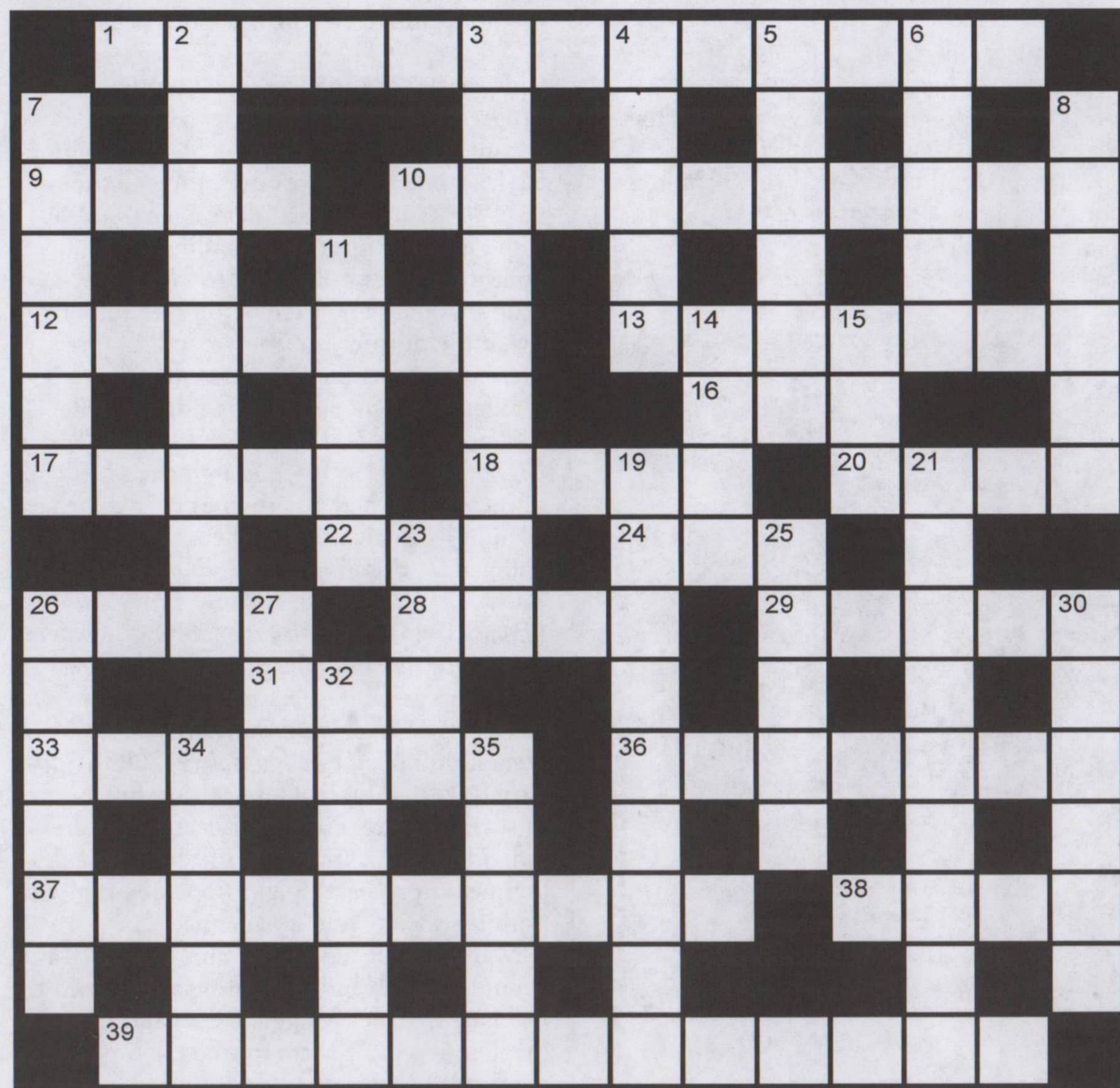
# Prize crossword by Bjarni Halfnelson

## Across

- 1 Part of movie about fellow-worker (about to swing, then getting the point) with ragged raincoat put on for eco-gathering at G20 protest (7,6,4)  
 9 See 1 across  
 10 True Leveller gains the field, capturing Brown (10)  
 12 Let Tory mess up – the *Telegraph* called it a tax on stupidity! (7)  
 13 Amphetamine returning with alien, being well sunk (4-3)  
 16 In favour of one who gets paid, apparently (3)  
 17 Give way to agricultural production? (5)  
 18 Run slowly, pole dancing! (4)  
 20 Old politician meeting debauched end (4)  
 22 The woman is found in rakish erotic surroundings (3)  
 24 Salt water – all at it in streetwise argument (3)  
 26 Hawk's leather strap not quite finishing off Mr James the outlaw (4)  
 28 Notice part of clandestine spy-ring (4)  
 29 Ferenc, inventor of symphonic poems, is often found following Brahms at closing time! (5)  
 31 Alternative-sounding crazy bomber pilot (continually being shot down) in Joseph Heller's classic anti-war classic novel *Catch-22* (3)  
 33 Home's name for Situationist Green Anarchist – recycle waste, right!? (7)  
 36 50 year old radical pacifist named for this officer of WRI – so human to go wrong! (7)  
 37 Judgmental political outfit in which I will acquire a curly tail (10)  
 38 Goody! She's (famously) dead! (4)  
 39 Check rural art out with SF writer of *Childhood's End* (6,1,6)

## Down

- 2 Without binding, slim – it lessens the contents partially (9)  
 3 Eco-friendly transport lyrics etc rendered incorrectly (9)  
 4 Inspected a joint enclosed in a box? (5)



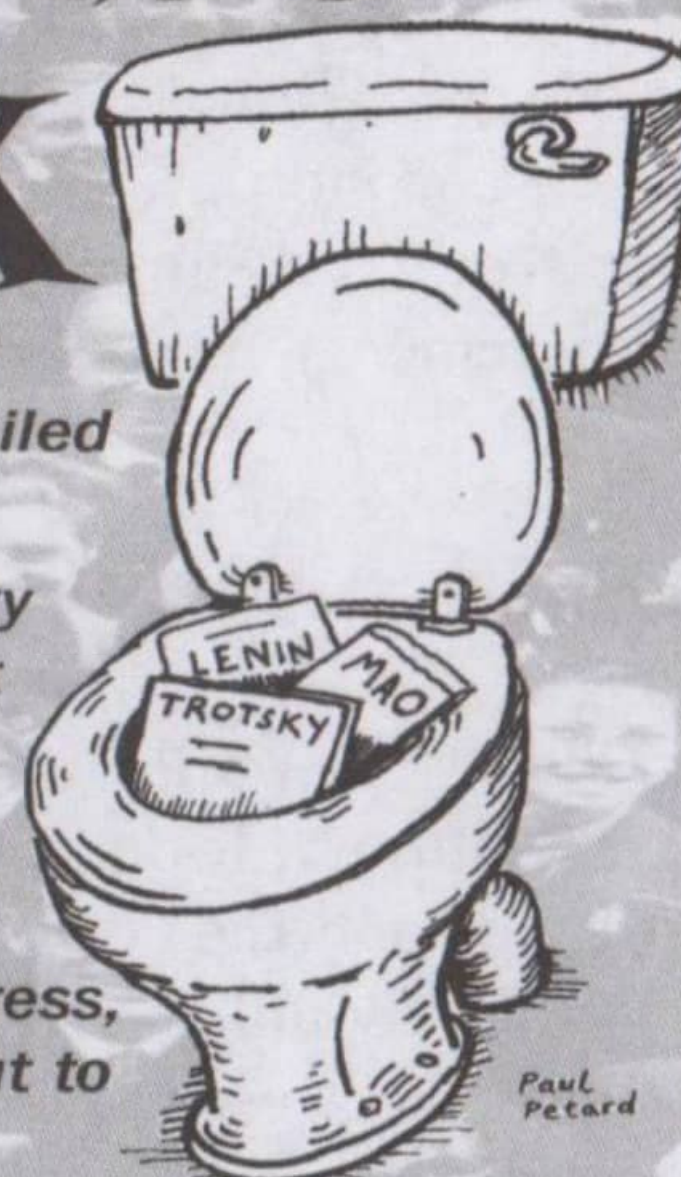
- 5 A sabre rattling for one who lowers value (6)  
 6 I get in crossed legs for a political cartoonist (definitely not a contributor to *Freedom!*) (5)  
 7 Leading *X Files* character to decimate population infiltrating leaders of 'Situationist Youth' (6)  
 8 Benthamite Whig who wrote of the 'great unwashed' turning only around abstentionism (6)  
 11 Actions that might involve anarchist propaganda! (5)  
 14 Fencing sword wielded by life peer (4)  
 15 Author of *The Pit and the Pendulum* (given proper if invented second funeral on 12th October 2009) – doesn't quite make poetry, lost attempt (3)  
 19 A bit unhinged, Hitchcock thriller has something to get one twitching! (9)  
 21 Go ashore with arms and be transported, held by computer's memory device (9)  
 23 Give her the right to German title (4)  
 25 Permitted, reportedly, not to keep silence (5)  
 26 Conrad's name – linked with Secret Agent who wants to bomb Greenwich to discredit Soho Anarchists – get sorted through Joe's acid measurement! (6)  
 27 Plant a pig? (3)  
 30 Silent, ghastly, Christmassy stuff! (6)  
 32 Like a Hogarthian dissolute, has half a kilo in reckless situation (6)  
 34 Losing head from Robespierre's so-called reign – a mistake! (5)  
 35 Kentish blacksmith, elected leader of 1381 Peasants' Revolt (in which John Ball was rescued from prison), sounds like a common bathroom worker! (5)

## The Anarchist Quiz Book

Who said "I shit on all the revolutionary vanguards of this planet"? Find out in the new *Anarchist Quiz Book* from Freedom Press, compiled by Martin Howard and illustrated by Paul Petard.

Some say that it should not be the highest priority of a revolutionary movement to ask itself obscure questions, but it's good fun and if it encourages an enquiring mind to find out more, than all the better. So agitate, educate and organise, all in this very handy question and answer format!

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To win one of our special prizes, send your completed crossword to 'Freedom Crossword', Freedom Press, 84b Whitechapel High Street, London E1 7QX to reach us by 7th January 2009. The winner will be the first correct entry drawn out of the hat.

## REVIEWS

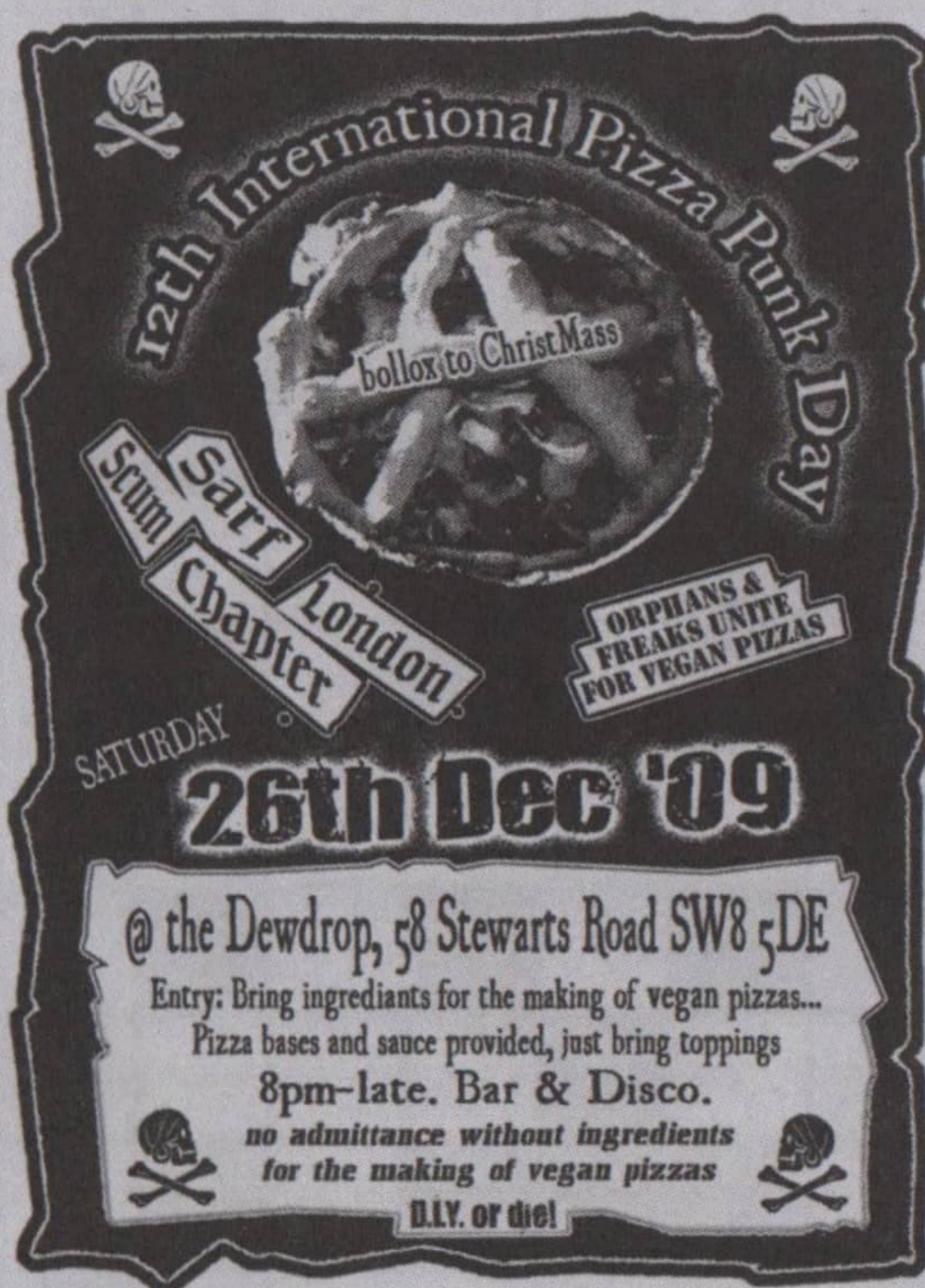
## WHAT'S ON

## DECEMBER

19th Freedom Bookshop end of the year party from 6pm at 84b Whitechapel High Street, London E1 7QX.

20th Winter Solstice Party at LARC, 62 Fieldgate Street, London E1 1ES from 7pm onwards, see londonarc.org

26th International Pizza Punk Day at the Dewdrop, 58 Stewarts Road, London, SW8 5DE, from 8pm until late, bring toppings for the making of vegan pizzas ... pizza bases and sauce will be provided, see eroding.org.uk/pizzapunx.htm



## JANUARY

11th The illegal prison camp at Guantánamo Bay opened eight years ago on 11th January 2002, so join us as we demonstrate to mark the eighth anniversary from 12.30 until 2pm outside the US Embassy, Grosvenor Square, London W1A 1AE, call 07809 757 176, email london.gtmo@gmail.com or see Guantanamo.org.uk for details.

14th As part of a series of public meetings convened by the Anarchist Federation, 'The Rise of Nationalism and Fascism' – the fight against war cannot be waged without taking a stand against nationalism and fascist ideas. We look at why their growth is being aggravated by the economic crisis. Meeting starts at 7pm, the Calthorpe Arms (upstairs room), Grays Inn Road, London WC1, see afed.org.uk or email london@afed.org.uk

15th to 17th Peace News Winter Gathering at the Sumac Centre, 245 Gladstone Street, Nottingham NG7 6HX, call 020 7278 3344, email promos@peacenews.info or see peacenews.info for details.

18th Remember Gaza / Smash EDO demo – for three weeks in January 2009, Israeli bombs rained down on Gaza leaving over 1,400 Palestinians dead, including 314 children. EDO/ITT make parts used by the Israeli war machine, meet at 1pm, wear black, see smashedo.org.uk/remember-gaza.htm for location.

## BOOK

**The Cinema of John Sayles: Lone Star**

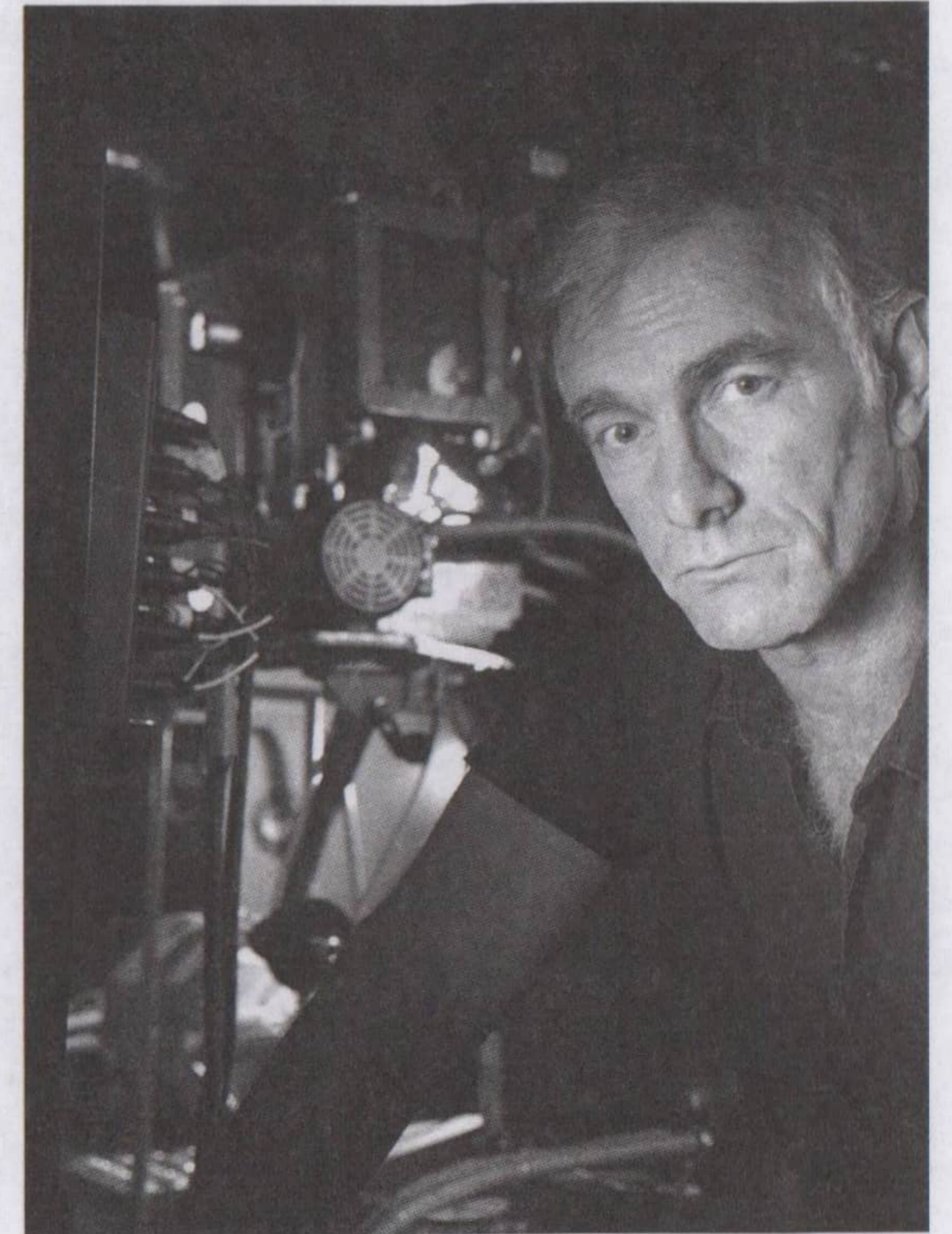
by Mark Bould, Wallflower Press, £16.99

This survey of the most consistently progressive figure in American cinema rectifies a glaring gap in the literature. John Sayles' sixteen features over three decades span *Return of the Secaucus Seven's* (1980) frank exploration of the midlife residue of youthful sixties radicalism to *Honeydripper's* (2007) empathetic excavation of Southern Black life during Jim Crow conditioning present circumstances. Intervening work oscillates among epic historical ensembles – *Matewan* (1987), *Eight Men Out* (1988), *City of Hope* (1991) – and intimate portrayals of the ravages and possibilities of lives hedged around by intricately interwoven class, race and gender domination – *Lianna* (1983), *Baby It's You* (1983), *Brother From Another Planet* (1985), *Passion Fish* (1992) – resolving into more thorough integrations of super-structural and interpersonal concerns – *Lone Star* (1996), *Men With Guns* (1997), *Sunshine State* (2002), *Casa de los Babys* (2003), *Silver City* (2004). Always emphasising full spectra of social conflict and the collective texture of individual frustration and fulfilment, Sayles' unique output harshly but hopefully critiques both US society and its cinema.

Mark Bould shows how this doggedly and genuinely independent film-maker, helped by producer/partner Maggie Renzi and the loyal goodwill of accomplished actors and crew, funds projects by screenwriting and script-doctoring for big-budget Hollywood fare – starting with exploitation maestro Roger Corman in the 1970s – and, while published novels and short stories make the libertarian-socialist affiliations more explicit, his journeyman writing gives routine theatrical fodder far more bite than usual (literally so in *Piranha* and *Alligator!*) plus wit and intelligence aplenty. Whether commemorating labour struggle or exploring vicissitudes of identity, Sayles' promiscuous genre-bending concentrates on convincing detail to illuminate the wriggle-room wrested from otherwise rigidly overdetermined fixities afforded by oppressive systems. Thus the author quite sensibly approaches the material through the prism of the pitfalls of naturalism and melodrama familiar from both European social-realism and American literature. Though following a rather clunkily linear chronology, he succeeds in showing the depth and range of the writer/director's achievements, and readers will be encouraged

## QUIZ ANSWERS

1. Pierre-Joseph Proudhon.
2. Oklahoma. It dates back to the Palmer Raids and red scare of 1917–20. It would probably fail if challenged constitutionally.
3. Pen names used by Nicolas Walter, anarchist, secularist and prolific letter writer, in some



to contrast their artfully impassioned sophistication with the mystifying sentimentality of Tinseltown's hypnotic spectacles.

**Appreciating the Anarchists' Convention**  
This excellent book also serves as a useful primer on twentieth century Marxist cultural theory, with somewhat forced digressions to maintain the theoretical primacy of classical dialectical analysis. Its subject, however, transcends such simplistic reductivism, foregrounding the complexity and persistence of power relations and cultural patterns despite as well as because of prevailing logics of capital – with the conflictual results, furthermore, often representing vital resources sustaining and prefiguring resistance. To be fair, Bould grudgingly accepts greater eclecticism, deploying various interpretive perspectives when vulgar materialism founders – like anthropologist James C. Scott's concept of hidden transcripts as subaltern strategies, or Bruno Latour's provocative poststructuralist philosophy of history as inherently cyclical, underpinning the central human resonance of myth and fantasy. What the author cannot admit (or even mention), though, are the wider political implications of the necessity for richer world-views – expressed elegantly enough by Sayles himself in naming his production company The Anarchists' Convention.

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

- of his numerous missives to the press.
4. Noam Chomsky, who has had the honour of having a gnome made in his likeness (called 'Gnome Chomsky' of course). See <http://www.justsaygnome.net/noam-chomsky-introduction.html>

# The stock of the new

## Malfunction offers some timely suggestions about how to put your book-tokens to good use

Well the London Bookfair has long been and gone by now, but there's plenty of new books due soon (if they haven't already arrived). Here's a brief run-down on what we can expect to see from various publishers.

Two titles that should already be available are from Five Leaves Publications: Gillian Darley's *Villages of Vision* (new enlarged edition, paperback, 340 pages, £14.99) and William J. Fishman *The Insurrectionists* (paperback, 216 pages, £9.99). Black Rose have also just published the final volume of Robert Graham's trilogy *Anarchism: A Documentary History of Libertarian Ideas* (480 pages, £16.99 pbk / £34 hbk).

Another title that may be available by the time this text finds its way into print is Michael Schmidt and Lucien van der Walt's *Global Fire: 150 Years of International Anarchism and Syndicalism – Counter Power Vol 2*. Published by AK Press, this 500-page paperback at £18 should prove to be as informative and as stimulating a read as the first volume.

One title that was issued in time for the Bookfair is E. Douglas Fawcett's *Hartmann The Anarchist*. Edited and published by Ian Bone, this a novel of some 204 pages, first published in 1892. Complete with new illustrations from Stanley Donwood, this can be yours for just a fiver.

An intriguing title out at the end of October is James C. Scott's *The Art of Not Being Governed: An Anarchist History of Upland Southeast Asia*. This comes at the very reasonable RRP (if Amazon has it correct) of £20 for the hardback edition of this 464-page book.

Those interested in Italian anarchism will probably find Nunzio Pernicone's *Italian Anarchism, 1864–1892* (AK Press, paperback, 356 pages, £18 – due out in November 2009) worth reading.

Hopefully out in December is Cindy Milstein's *Anarchism and its Aspirations*, a brief 96-page history from AK Press in paperback for just £7. Another recommended recent publication is Staughton Lynd and Andrej Grubacic's *Wobblies and Zapatistas: Conversations on Anarchism, Marxism and Radical History* from PM Press (paperback, 300 pages, £13.99). The season of goodwill is complemented by a history of co-operation in the US of A, John Curl's *For All the People* (PM Press, paperback, 510 pages, £21.99).

A possibly welcome relief from all the books discussing anarchist theory and



history will be Margaret Killjoy's *Mythmakers and Lawbreakers. Anarchist writers on Fiction*. Expect to see some familiar and not so familiar people writing and being discussed in this 140-page paperback from AK Press at £9.

For those of a philosophical bent, Chaim Gans has his *Philosophical Anarchism and Political Disobedience*, issued from Cambridge University Press, costs £14.99 for a 192-page paperback.

The new year sees a new edition of Peter Marshall's *Demanding the Impossible*, an 800-page paperback from PM Press. For those of a historical bent, the month also should see Mark Leier's acclaimed biography *Bakunin* issued by Seven Stories Press (paperback, 320 pages, £12.99).

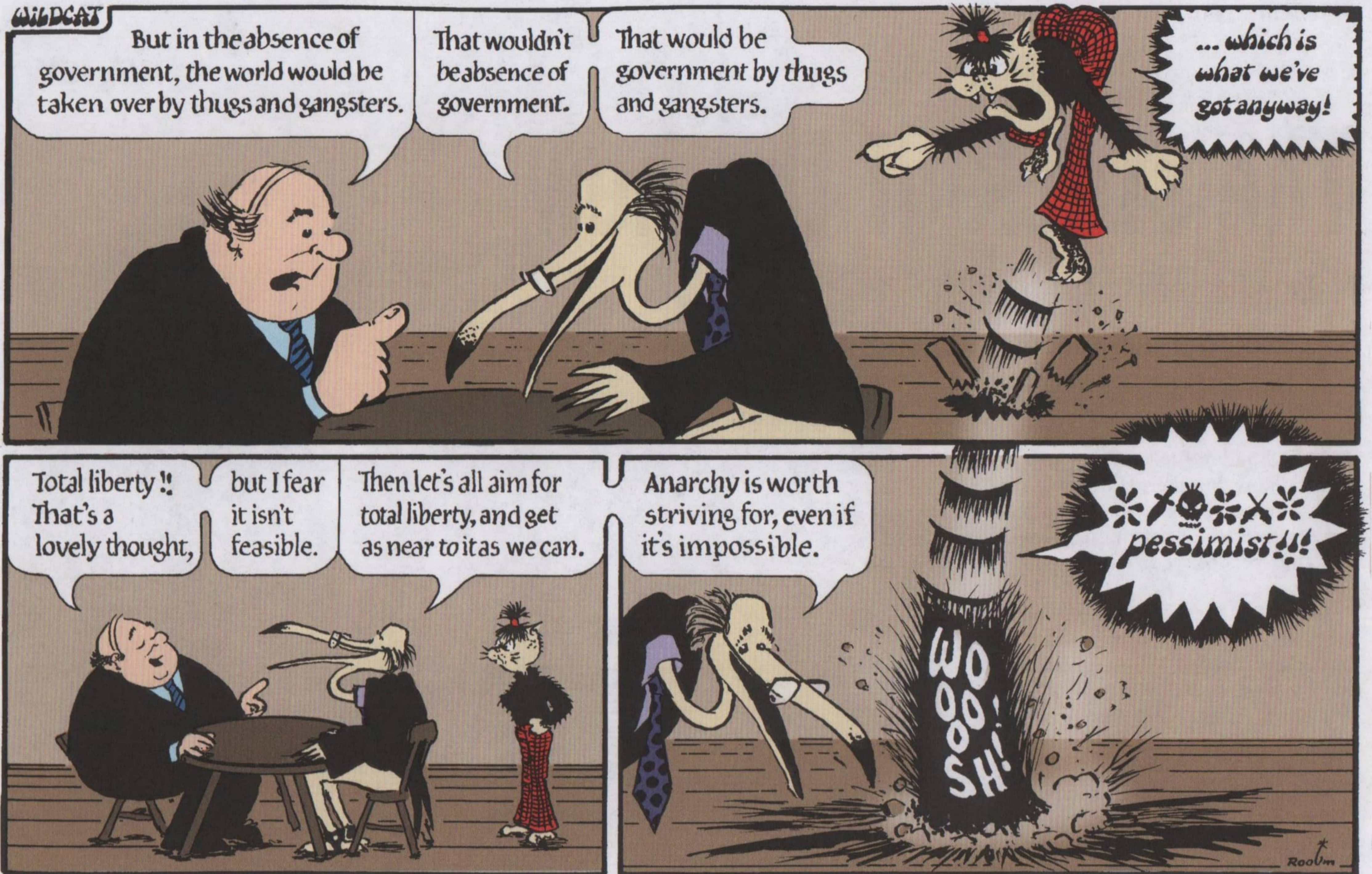
One writer who has been out of fashion for a while, and therefore perhaps due a reappraisal, is Paul Goodman. A collection of nine of his essays entitled *Drawing the Line Once Again* is due early in the new year as a 128-page paperback at a mere £10.99 from PM Press. To be followed later by his *New Reformation: Notes of a Neolithic Conservative*, also from PM Press at £13.99 for a 226-page paperback.

February sees a title apiece, from AK Press

Juan Suriano's *Paradoxes of Utopia: Anarchist Culture and Politics in Buenos Aires, 1890–1910* (paperback, 356 pages, £14) and from PM Press a revised edition of Gordon Carr's *The Angry Brigade: a History of Britain's First Urban Guerilla Group* (paperback, 288 pages, £17.99).

Further into 2010, in April we can not only look forward to a welcome reprint of the classic *The Floodgates of Anarchy* by Stuart Christie and Albert Meltzer, this time issued by PM Press (paperback, 160 pages, £11.99) but also (again by PM Press) the formidable collection of writings by Gustav Landauer, *Revolution and Other Writings* (edited by Gabriel Kuhn, paperback, 528 pages, £23.99). AK Press also have a formidable text due with Nunzio Pernicone's *Carlo Tresca: Portrait of a Rebel* (paperback, 380 pages, £15). Chris Ealham also has a title due from AK Press this month, his *Anarchism and the City: Revolution and Counter-Revolution in Barcelona, 1898–1937* will be a 304-page paperback with a RRP of £11.99.

Finally some academic titles for those who work or study at institutions with limitless budgets.



## Review

◀ page 15

Lawrence Davis and Ruth Kinna have their collection of papers on the theme of *Anarchism and Utopianism* due out from Manchester UP at the end of November. The 304-page hardback will set prospective purchasers back a mere £60. Another expensive tome out in November is Jeff Shantz's *Living Anarchy: Theory and Practice in Anarchist Movements*. At £45.95 for a 230-page paperback, this is way beyond most anarchists' budgets.

At the beginning of the year Alexandre Christoyannopoulos's *Christian Anarchism: A Political Commentary on the Gospel* is issued by Imprint Academic in hardback. Yours for £40 for a 350-page text.

Saul Newman has his *The Politics of Post-anarchism* out at the end of March from Edinburgh University Press. At 192 pages and a RRP of £60, most of us will be waiting for the paperback which should emerge a year further down the line.

Bibliographers should find Ernesto A. Longa's *Anarchist Periodicals in English Published in the United States (1833-1955): An Annotated Guide*, published by Scarecrow Press at the beginning of March 2010, of interest. Running to 352 pages in hardback, it is currently listed on Amazon at £49.95.

Something of an unknown quantity is Nathan Jun's *New Perspectives on Anarchism*, published by Lexington Books. At £59.95 for a 456-page hardback, this is not an impulse buy, but you may be tempted by the £26.95 paperback edition.

## THE QUIZ

1. Which defender of traditional marriage proclaimed "When the Pope becomes a social democrat I will allow him to bless my marriage?"
2. In which US state is it illegal to display "any red flag or other emblem or banner, indicating disloyalty to the Government of the United States or a belief in anarchy or other political doctrines or beliefs"?
3. Who were Jean Raison, Arthur Freeman and Mary Lewis?
4. Which anarchist thinker can you have in your garden?

Answers on page 14

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