

## CUTS, CUTS, CUTS

**The coalition government's first budget means all-out war on the poor and vulnerable**

While the World Cup and the weather provide suitable distractions for the mainstream media and the Cameron clique offers the world stage a chance to witness the new emperor's soundbite skills amidst the backdrop of burning barricades at the Toronto G20 summit, the rest of us are coming to terms with the government's first budget, dubbed the 'Austerity Budget', the most devastating and far reaching in living memory. What is planned for ordinary people, especially the poor and those in vulnerable circumstances, is only now becoming apparent. Already campaign and welfare groups are sifting through the debris of the Chancellor's fiscal cuts in an attempt to make sense of the draconian measures aimed directly at the working class.

There has been no care in taking a hatchet to the public service sector and the welfare state in order to service the debt accumulated over years and years of mismanagement of the economy. Under the guise of the global financial crisis and drip-feeding us the need

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### LENS CAP THE BEAUTY OF ECO-ACTIVISM



On 17th June, the tenth day of Operation Blue Rage, divers from the Steve Irwin, the flagship of the Sea Shepherd (the marine conservation organisation part of the radical environmental movement) took direct action and freed 800 bluefin tuna that were illegally caught by poachers off the coast of Libya.

## COMMUNITY GARDEN EVICTED

The Lewes Road Community Garden, Brighton, has finally been evicted. At court proceedings on 21st June the judge ruled that the garden and people associated with it, must withdraw from the land, or they would incur £6,800 legal costs.

Once a bland outpost of the carbon economy – an Esso garage – then a derelict site for over five years, it was transformed during two days in May 2009 by a random bunch of locals who dared 'imagine a garden' on the Lewes Road, Brighton. Hundreds of plants were donated. Huge pots painted and planted. A circular lawn laid. Planters made from old tyres and scrap timber. A fresh new sign put up. A beautiful wooden bench was specially made and given along with loads of other furniture. The garden was formally

opened on Sunday 24th May 2009, and remained open daily from 9am until 9pm.

It became an essential meeting space for local people to relax, discuss activities and issues and exchange news and ideas and generally get to know their fellow Lewes Roaders.

In August 2009, without being discussed at any Council planning committee and without the knowledge of most local residents, permission was granted for the construction of flats and retail units on the site, including a Tesco superstore.

Over 3,000 people signed a petition to keep the garden open last year along with a Say No to Tesco on the Lewes Road campaign set up to resist this bit of corporate power being unleashed on the Lewes Road.

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## NEWS

## IN BRIEF

**ARCTIC:** As of 23rd June the extent of Arctic sea ice had fallen to 7,728,000 square kilometers, 1,595,000 below the long term average from 1979 to 2008.

In the 13 days since our last issue, 1,449,000 square kilometers have become ice-free – an area 70 times the size of Wales.

For followers of this column the difference between the current and average conditions is now 76.8 Wales's compared to 56.3 in the last issue.

As days grow shorter after the solstice the rate of melting slows until a low point of ice cover is reached around the equinox in September. However as open sea absorbs more energy from sunlight than ice that reflects it back to space there is a positive feedback which is likely to lead to melting being greater than usual just because so much more ice has melted so far.

**AFGHANISTAN:** June has become the worst ever month for allied fatalities in Afghanistan. Up to the 24th June, 79 soldiers had died, beating the 77 in August 2009. In total this year the coalition has lost 299 dead of which 62 were British (18 this month).

With President Obama sacking his top general in the country he may remind himself of Napoleon's dictum that his generals should not only be talented but lucky.

**HURRICANES:** Tropical storm Alex has become the first of the season in the Atlantic and appears, as we write, to be heading towards the area of BP's oil spill.

Meanwhile in the Eastern Pacific we have already seen two hurricanes, Celia and Derby, of which Celia was briefly a category five, the most powerful hurricane rating, with sustained winds of over 155 mph.

This is only the second ever recorded category five hurricane in June.

**KITCHEN SINK:** So to the World Cup, or at least South Africa. If you think England were robbed, then try this.

South Africa's police are investigating after thieves stripped a police station of all its contents, down to the kitchen sink. The office was under renovations and ready for re-occupation when the thieves hit, reports South Africa's *Times* newspaper. The robbers helped themselves to everything of value – including doors, cupboards, basins, cutlery, tiles, furniture, electrical equipment and mortuary fridges.

... **AND FINALLY:** Capitalism never stops, even for football.

Manufacturers of ball-tracking systems say England's disallowed World Cup goal underlines the need for installing goal-line technology (GLT).

Hawk-Eye and Cairos, who make rival GLT systems, say FIFA needs to rethink its current position and give them loads of money.

## LENS CAP WORRIES FOR WHALES



This Minke Whale is jumping for joy, but probably doesn't yet know the news that the International Whaling Commission has failed to come to any agreement to protect whales and, after two years of negotiations, are now having a cooling off period. Patrick Ramage, head of the International Fund for Animal Welfare's (IFAW) whales programme, said: "There may be a cooling-off period in the IWC, but meanwhile the whalers will be in hot pursuit of their prey."

## Al Qaeda recruiting in UK prisons?

It now appears that Anne Owers, the Chief Inspector of Prisons, has come to the conclusion that HM Prison Service is in danger of becoming the number one recruiting agent for al Qaeda. In her recently released report *Muslim Prisoners' Experiences*, she highlights the fact that prison officers tend to treat the estimated 10,300 Muslim prisoners in England and Wales (roughly 12% of the prison population) all as terrorist, despite less than 1% of them actually having been convicted of any terrorism-related crimes.

The report claims that the HMPS "blanket security-led approach to Muslim prisoners in general" runs "a real risk of [becoming] a self-fulfilling prophecy: that the prison experience will create or entrench alienation and disaffection, so that prisons release into the community young men who are more likely to offend, or even embrace extremism." This is a direct result of what the report terms the "pervasive theme" of staff ignorance, where "staff tended to think of [Muslims] as a group, rather than as individuals, and too often through the lens of extremism and terrorism", leading to Muslim prisoners reporting "more negatively on their prison experience, and particularly their safety and their relationship with staff, than other prisoners."

As a direct result, "[t]hree-quarters of Muslims had felt unsafe in these prisons, and this perception was strongly linked to mistrust of staff". Race and ethnicity were also seen as "important factors in Muslim prisoners' negative experiences and perceptions," reflecting additional racially-based nuances in the discriminatory behaviour of staff. For example, Asian Muslims are seen as 'proper' Muslims and are therefore treated with more 'respect'

than black Muslims, whereas white converts are generally not taken seriously as Muslims by screws.

Needless to say, the press had a field day with the findings, selectively reporting, twisting and, in parts, fabricating evidence to fit their editorial prejudices. The *Daily Mail's* coverage led with: "Prisoners are converting to Islam to win benefits and gain the protection of powerful Muslim gangs inside jails, the Chief Inspector of Prisons has warned." This, of course, bears little relation to her conclusions. The report found that prisoners converted because of "the discipline, structure and comfort provided by observing Islam", "the opportunity to obtain support and protection in a group with a powerful identity" and the "perceptions of material advantages of identifying as Muslim" i.e. better food at Ramadan and more time out of cell; and in that order of importance.

The idea that, as the *Daily Express* put it, "Muslim prisoners are cashing in on their religion to claim hundreds of thousands of pounds in additional benefits," is also far from the truth. As is the existence of "powerful Muslim gangs," which the *Mail* claims (quoting the report) "[s]taff at one high security prison said non-Muslims were pressured into converting and adopting a 'strict' form of Islam" by. Yet, the previous line in the report clearly states: "Concerns about intimidation of non-Muslims, the emergence of gangs and conversions to Islam were often linked, but were backed by little evidence" and "none of the wing history sheets [in the prisons where anecdotal concerns were raised] revealed staff concerns about forced conversions."

Bra Bros



# Kicking against the rich

## South African grassroots anti-poverty network organises real world cup tournament

Coinciding with the 13th June kick-off of the FIFA World Cup in South Africa, the Western Cape Anti-Eviction Campaign (AEC) has brought together local Cape Town communities for the first Poor People's World Cup. The message behind the tournament is clear: "While the poor people in Cape Town and in South Africa as a whole are suffering, the rich are enjoying themselves in the expensive stadiums at the expenses of the poor." The Poor People's Tournament "is not only for soccer teams, but also for the whole community and for the people who struggle everyday against water and electricity cut-offs and against evictions from their homes and working places.

"All the traders and communities – that were negatively affected by FIFA related urban renewal projects and by the implemented

by-laws – were invited to this tournament: a tournament that is *free* and open to everybody." Everybody, that is, except the international corporations who collaborated with FIFA to regenerate Cape Town. The organisers have invited journalists, professional football teams and tourists to see first-hand that sports can avoid nationalist ends and exploitative means. This is a contra-World Cup "for the poor communities by the poor communities that is not exploiting people or marginalising people, but involving people and creating new spaces of exposure and participation".

On 23rd June, 1,500 residents from Blikkiesdorp and surrounding areas marched to Dan Plato (Mayor of Cape Town) inviting him and FIFA to the Poor People's World Cup finals on 4th July. The march highlighted the disastrous effect of the World Cup on Cape Town's poorer residents. "The displaced communities are now living in Blikkiesdorp as a result of World Cup regeneration projects. Many of these residents were promised proper houses before moving to this 'concentration camp' with tin can structures – far away from

the city centre and from job opportunities, good education, their social networks, etc." In solidarity with those living in the relocation area soccer teams, coaches, and spectators participating in the Poor People's World Cup joined the march.

The invitation to the tournament and finals has been extended to tourists in Cape Town for the World Cup: "don't stay only in the controlled spaces bounded by FIFA rules and regulations, but move beyond these areas to experience the true spirit of what the game of soccer is all about!"

The AEC was formed on November 2000 with the aim of fighting evictions, water cut-offs and poor health services, obtaining free electricity, securing decent housing, and opposing police brutality, and currently acts as an umbrella body for over 15 community organisations, crisis committees, and concerned residents movements who have come together to organise and demand their rights to basic services.

For more information, visit <http://antieviction.org.za> or follow on Twitter <http://twitter.com/antieviction>

## Cuts, cuts, cuts

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for 'austerity measures', the coalition government sought to soften the blow and minimise the impact of these cost cutting measures. In reality the proposals speak for themselves:

- Two-year pay freeze for public sector workers earning more than £21,000, the 1.7 million lowest paid will get a flat £250 pay rise each year.
- A review of public sector pensions looking to increase workers' contributions.
- Child tax credits withdrawn for families earning more than £40,000 a year, rather than £50,000, while child benefit will be frozen for the next three years.
- The Sure Start one-off payment to help towards the costs of a new baby will be abolished.

- Housing benefit is to be cut by £1.8bn by the end of this parliament. The measures include benefit being limited to a maximum of £400 per week for a four-bedroom or larger house.
  - A medical assessment for new and existing claimants will be introduced to ensure tighter controls on the administration of incapacity benefits, forcing more people with sickness or disability off benefits.
- And this is on top of pre-existing increase in unemployment, massive price hikes and a general downturn in trade.

The anarchist response to the crisis has been at best muted, unsure and without focus. With the Left in disarray and the presence of any formal radical political movement this

should be the ideal opportunity for serious anarchists to come together and begin organising themselves into a visible and viable framework against the cuts.

There is already a semblance of an embryonic anti-cuts campaign developing as planning meetings are being organised across the UK, in Leicester, Newcastle, Bristol and some parts of London, under the old anti-poll tax banner 'can't pay, won't pay'. Whether this gets monopolised and suffocates under the weight the Left party building machine remains to be seen.

*Freedom* will naturally keep readers informed and update on any future activities. Now is the time when we begin to understand and acknowledge what our politics are for.

## ANALYSIS

# Part-time cops

## Met re-organises policy to force volunteerism onto new recruits

Amidst the post-election chaos of early May, the Metropolitan Police Authority finalised a report proposing that future police recruits in London work as unpaid 'interns' for a year before applying for employment as paid Met officers.

The scheme radically changes the infrastructure of police recruitment and training, with an eye towards saving £12 million a year on police salary and selling off Hendon Police College to developers for 'significant capital'.

Currently, those who aspire to make a living bearing down on their neighbours undergo 25 weeks of training at Hendon before putting on a uniform. Under the new proposals, recruits would receive 23 days of basic training before working 12 months as volunteer Special Constables. If then accepted to the ranks of salaried police officers, they would undergo 15 weeks additional training in specialist areas before receiving a salary.

This shift in police recruitment not a victory for anarchists, even as the financial resources available to the Met dwindle in the recession.

If the new proposals are accepted, police would undergo their training 'on the job' complete with baton, CS spray, handcuffs, and police powers whilst untrained, unpaid and with no guarantee of future employment. The Special Constable scheme would be transformed into a long, armed job interview – citizen policing in a neoliberal framework.

The figures are immense: 14,000 Special Constables currently police in the UK, and



the Met plans to recruit 10,000 more for the 2012 Olympics.

If this scheme is implemented, added to that pool would be 2,000-plus recruits on the waiting list to join the London Met. That equals over 26,000 armed, precarious police by 2012, with the knowledge that only the most 'distinguished' of their lot will receive a job.

Of course, the police are not like other workers due to their violent collaboration with the state. However, this model of labour exploitation will have the same consequences as it does in other sectors: if the only route to employment is through unpaid internships, then only those wealthy

enough to work for free will get the jobs. In the context of policing, only those who are both middle class and believe in the rhetoric of force to maintain the state's interests will join the Met.

Deputy Mayor of London Kit Malthouse doesn't believe that these conditions are problematic. "If you want to become a police officer, this shows your commitment".

Peter Smith, chairman of the Metropolitan Police Federation concurs. "I can see the benefits... it makes financial sense and money is tight".

It makes complete sense to the state, simultaneously saving money and dividing the unemployed.

## Police pay-out to hostage fans

Police have been forced to pay out a total of £184,850 to 80 Stoke City fans who were held hostage in a pub for almost four hours before a Manchester United game in November 2008.

Greater Manchester Police admitted they misused the controversial section 27 of the Violent Crime Reduction Act, which was designed to stop alcohol-related violence, when they unlawfully detained the football supporters.

A spokesman for the group said: "The police imprisoned these fans in a pub and refused to allow them to use the toilets. They then illegally served them with notices, hired some coaches and just deposited them in the middle of Stoke."

Despite causing no trouble and receiving no complaints from the landlord, the fans were held prisoner at the pub by police who

refused to let them continue their journey to the match. Ironically the police claim they acted on 'intelligence' provided by the notoriously unreliable Forward Intelligence Teams (FIT), which even senior police officers privately admit are becoming a liability.

This decision may have positive repercussions for the anti-war activists who were held hostage by the police in 2003 and escorted under guard from the Fairford airbase in Gloucester back to London.

The Fairford case is still ongoing against the police, when 120 anti-war protesters were forced back to London in three coaches after police 'intelligence' identified them en route. In a test case at the High Court, the judges agreed the police misused the law in denying the activists the right to protest.

## Critical Mass attacked

On Friday 25th June Edinburgh Critical Mass bike ride was attacked by police. After a peaceful journey round the city, which is a regular monthly event, a police targeted the rider with the sound-system and demanded his details. Having committed no offence he refused, by which time three more police cars and three police vans converged on the mass and violently arrested the rider. He was later charged with four minor offences including obstruction of the highway with a bicycle and trailer.

Previously London critical Mass won a court case against the police who tried to criminalise the regular event for cyclists. It seems Scottish police are applying the same tactic that failed.

Next Edinburgh Critical Mass will be on Friday 30th July, meet at 5:30pm at the bottom of the Mound.

## IN BRIEF

**DON'T JUMP!** The Nanny State is alive and well. With temperatures remaining high this weekend, British Waterways is urging people not to cool off by jumping into canals and rivers. The organisation has a campaign called SAFE (Stay Away From the Edge), warning of the dangers. Many waterways are relatively shallow, and anyone jumping or diving into them runs a risk of serious injury from hidden objects under the water.

**PAY OUT:** Police have paid £184,850 compensation to about 80 Stoke City fans for holding them for more than two hours in a pub in Irlam, Salford, to stop them attending a game against Manchester United at Old Trafford in November 2008.

Greater Manchester Police admitted "erroneously" using Section 27 of the Violent Crime Reduction Act 2006, which was designed to stop violence related to alcohol.

The fans argued that it was not meant to be used against football supporters. Their action was backed by Liberty, the civil rights group, and the Football Supporters' Federation. Malcolm Clarke, the federation chairman, said: "It was an expensive mistake by the police. The fans can laugh at it now. GMP have paid for their season tickets for the next six years."

**VOLCANO:** Just to let you know we are still keeping an eye on our favourite volcano in Iceland. Since the last report, there has been very little activity at Eyjafjallajökull. Small ash clouds are seen occasionally, but they disappear again after some minutes. Water accumulation in the crater is slow as the surrounding ice is no longer in contact with hot material.

**POINTLESS WASTE:** Scientists working on the Large Hadron Collider (LHC) say they have moved a step closer to their aim of unlocking the mysteries of the Universe.

The world's highest-energy particle accelerator has produced a record-breaking particle collision rate – about double the previous rate. The collider is now generating around 10,000 particle collisions per second.

The LHC is housed in a 27km circular tunnel under the French-Swiss border.

**DAFT:** The length of a man's fingers can reveal how physically aggressive he is, Canadian scientists have said. The shorter the index finger is compared to the ring finger, the more boisterous he will be, University of Alberta researchers said. But the same was not true for verbal aggression or hostile behaviours, they told the journal *Biological Psychology*.

In the current study, Dr Peter Hurd and his student, Allison Bailey, measured the fingers of 300 undergraduates at their university.

Dr Hurd is now looking at male hockey players to see whether there is any correlation between finger lengths and each player's penalty record for contact and fouling during matches.

# Dressed to kill

So it's summertime again and it's hot in the city, but what do I wear for the weather? As a woman it isn't all about colours, accessories and styles – sometimes it's basic safety I'm thinking about. Will I have to walk home later in that skirt? Will my armpit hair attract unwelcome attention if I wear a vest-top? Can I run in flip-flops if I need to?

Maybe it's paranoia, because it isn't modesty – frankly, I don't care who sees what – but some men seem to regard my summer attire as a display just for them. Obviously a female body is packaged up with them in mind, just hoping to please their senses in passing. As if I wore that just to titillate or revile someone I don't know (who just happened to be somewhere I didn't know I was going).

Uninvited commentary on women's bodies is considered innocuous by some men, especially if they perceive it to be complimentary. The thought that it could be unwelcome, offensive or even intimidating, and add to the hassle of getting around, simply hasn't occurred to them. Running a gauntlet of judgements on your physical traits is not pleasant: I didn't join a beauty pageant; I was just popping out to the shops.

And if your body doesn't conform to the plasticised, sanitised, homogenised standards of the make-believe image of modern womanhood, then what? There are people, of all genders, willing to tell you that you're letting the side down, failing to meet their expectations or, worse, not even prepared to try! You didn't shave, you didn't wash and set your hair, you didn't think about that outfit, you wore something unflattering, you

showed the wrong bulge... direct and overheard criticisms abound.

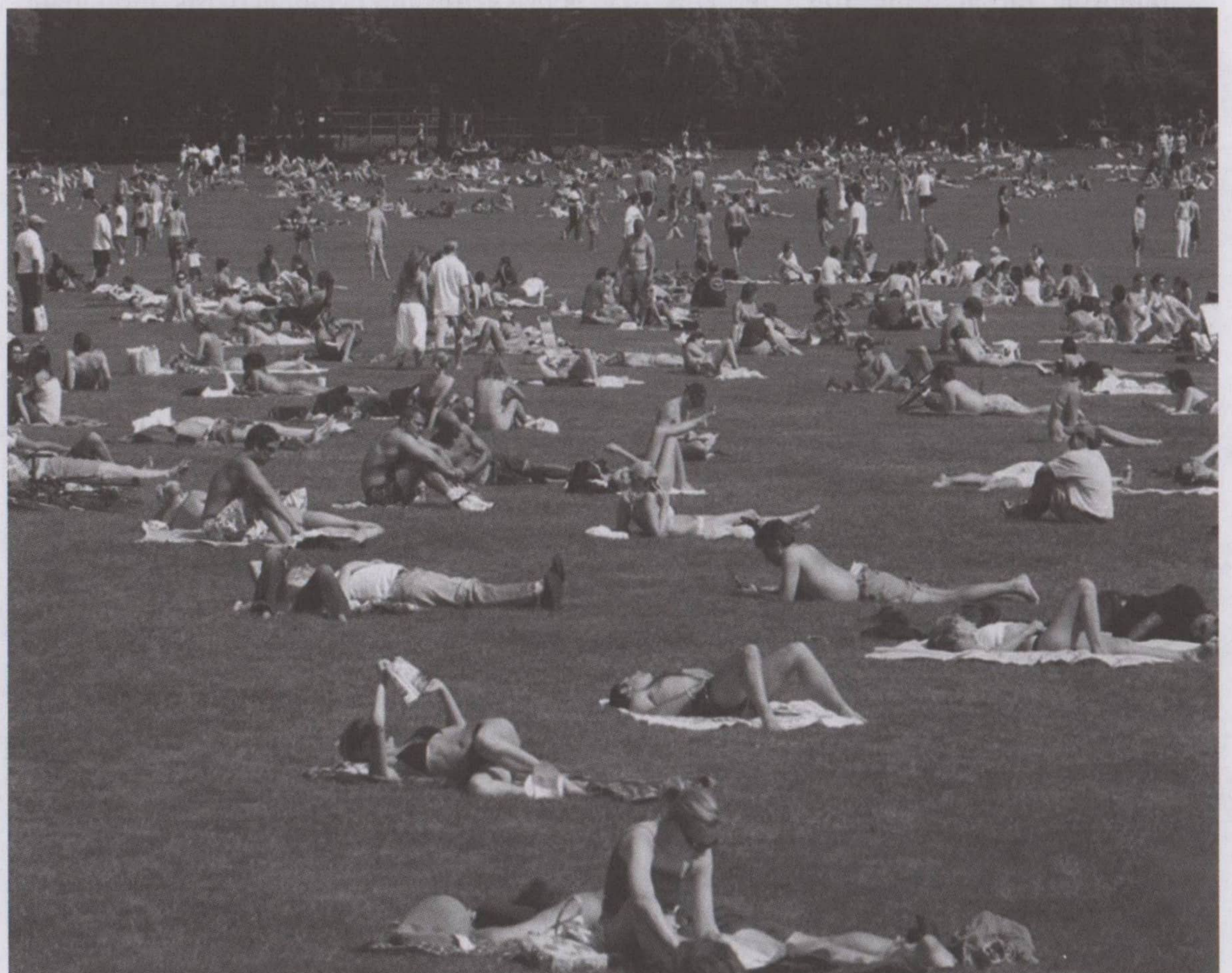
Meanwhile we have men wandering around in nothing but a pair of shorts; arms, legs and torsos of whatever shape, size and consistency bared to the sun soaking up rays. Can I do that? Not if I want to get home without incident; it's a male privilege. So I cover my breasts and hide my thighs to feel safer (and hotter), but why should I have to dress defensively because your attitude is offensive?

My body isn't public property. I don't package it for anyone else's excitement. I also don't want to sweat under layers of clothing when the temperature's up. So that little skirt and strappy top aren't there to amuse you; they happen to be practical right now, just like your shorts. Objectifying and judging women is dehumanising, which is the first step towards violence and violation, let's recognise and address it for what it is.

Addressing it is exactly what we need other men to do. Oppressive behaviour can only continue when it is tolerated or ignored by a peer group. Show some solidarity with the women in your life (be they friends, comrades, lovers, sisters, daughters, mothers or whatever) by not participating in this culture of commenting. Challenge other guys if you hear them doing it – even if it seems low-level, rather than actually menacing – instead of letting it slide. And if women complain about the comments they get, don't belittle their experience or talk jokingly (e.g. about how you think you'd like it if the positions were reversed and strangers constantly 'complimented' you as you walked down the street).

London anarcha feminist kollektiv

<http://lafk.wordpress.com/>



## INTERNATIONAL

### IN BRIEF

**CUBA:** Dockworkers at the port of Havana struck and blockaded the port late last month, refusing to load a shipment of rice bound for Haiti, pointing to a chronic national shortage.

Rice has been unavailable for a month now. It can't even be found in the elitist convertible stores. The shortage has been a cause of great public outcry.

**IRELAND:** The Irish Congress of Trade Unions (ICTU)'s public service committee voted last week to formally agree a four-year strike ban, wholesale rationalisations in public services, unknown thousands of 'voluntary' job losses and a continued pay freeze.

The so-called Croke Park agreement is the worst so far agreed by any union federation in Europe in response to the economic crisis.

**GREECE:** Motor workers have taken several days of action recently over plans to sack 286 staff amid sweeping changes to labour relations in the Greek austerity budget.

There are also rumours of a new general strike to be launched by the Greek Communist Party-led union PAME.

**SERBIA:** Charges against the six Serbian anarcho-syndicalists falsely accused of 'international terrorism' following some minor property damage have finally been dropped following an international campaign.

Ratibor, one of the six, said: "The presiding judge explained that the ruling is 'based on law, and not politics'."

**SOUTH AFRICA:** Two major strike actions have taken place at the World Cup.

The first involved stewards covering stadiums in Durban, Cape Town and Port Elizabeth, complaining about tiny wages left unpaid and inadequate working conditions. In response the government drafted in thousands of police officers to take over the role and brutally put down protests, with one woman allegedly dying as a result of a rubber bullet shot.

The second saw the French football team temporarily walk out on their coach after he and the French Football Federation sent teammate Nicholas Anelka home.

**SPAIN:** Madrid Metro workers with the Solidaridad Obrera group were set to take action as *Freedom* went to press in defence of their right to collective bargaining. The union places itself politically as a 'halfway house' between the anarchist CNT union and the syndicalist CGT.

**THAILAND:** Leaders of the Red Shirt rebels in Thailand have been put in the dock as 83 are brought to trial – along with alleged British anarchist rioter Jeff Savage. Jeff was arrested and faces the death penalty after he was caught on video threatening to burn down a shopping centre.

### LENS CAP MOLOTOVS IN TORONTO



Photograph: Commodore Gandalf Cunningham

Police walk around a burning cop car as their lines move forward in an attempt to corral protesters during the G20 protests in Canada. Along with black blocs, peaceful protesters and journalists fell victim to billy clubs tear gas and rubber bullets. The Movement Defence Committee are looking for support: see [movementdefence.org/contact](http://movementdefence.org/contact).

## G20: Austerity and brutality

Brutality reigned inside and out at the G20 talks in Toronto at the end of last month, with police indiscriminately attacking demonstrators and world elites agreeing a financial stitch-up to austerity measures worldwide while letting off the banking sector.

Over 500 people were arrested at protests in the Canadian city, which saw thousands of police kettle and detain activists, intimidate journalists and provoke fights by firing tear gas and plastic bullets into the crowd.

Reports also emerged of alleged *agent provocateurs* operating within anarchist ranks, though evidence of this remains circumstantial and may be a reaction to the torching of several police cars and attacks on shops during the summit.

At the G20 itself, now the main financial

decision-making body for the globe as the G8 loses prominence, a raft of measures to 'placate the markets' were agreed which have dismayed progressive groups worldwide.

Under the cover of promoting stability in the financial system big banks were let off the hook over paying back the gigantic piles of cash given to them during the economic crisis to stave off collapse.

Instead, they were told to hoard a larger pot of money to 'protect' against future crises.

Despite warnings from the US that it might put financial recovery in jeopardy, European countries led the way in promoting 'austerity economics', effectively promoting the neo-liberal mantra of cut early, cut hard and privatise as their response to the economic crisis.

## Notes from the US

US relations across the Middle East are under the spotlight this issue.

Figures recently made public confirm that the US continues to fund the construction of segregated roads for Israeli settlers in the illegally occupied West Bank.

A newspaper in the United Arab Emirates reports the US Agency for International Development (USAID) has paid for nearly 150 miles of West Bank roads and is preparing to fund another 75 miles in 2010. Palestinians are essentially barred from using the roads.

Protesting such actions however is a risky business.

In June the management of the University of California, Irvine, banned the Muslim Student Union for one year after some of its members disrupted a speech by Israeli ambassador Michael Oren in February. The union was also placed on disciplinary probation for an additional year.

Victor Sanchez, president of the University of California Student Association, said he was outraged by the ban: "It's almost

# Austerity: No restoration for Aquila

Italy's earthquake city set to remain a ghost town as cuts bite

Over 20,000 people who used to live in Aquila were on its streets recently, pleading with the government to make good its promises of restoring the town in central Italy.

The flattening of their town in April of last year left 65,000 homeless, while 308 died as their homes collapsed around them. Temporarily, it became the object of world-wide fascination and a site for political photo ops and rhetoric.

But a year on from Prime Minister Berlusconi's declaration that Italians were "a proud people who need no aid," and his promise that the town would be rebuilt "in six months" it has emerged that there is no money for restoration.

Shops are still closed, buildings are still unsafe, the historic town centre is a pile of rubble. Weeds are beginning to choke the ruins and crawl up shops which still display the merchandise of 6th April 2009.

And to add insult to injury, Aquila's former citizens are now being told to pay tax arrears as part of the premier's hated new austerity budget – Berlusconi is demanding money with menaces from displaced people living on the floors of rural houses or out of cheap hotel bedrooms.

Instead of public aid funding restoration works that people can use and live in, critics say Aquila has been the victim of an "Italian shock doctrine," after author Naomi Klein's



book on the methods of neo-liberalism in exploiting natural disasters.

Journalists for left wing papers such as *Il Manifesto* rail against the "speculation, corruption, opacity in commissioning contracts masked by the mechanism of 'emergency,' all with a good dose of authoritarianism and repression of civil rights.

"There has been a militarisation of the territory, even the prohibition of public assemblies."

An orgy of corrupt rebuilding contracts were signed in the wake of the disaster, but reports from the region suggest that whatever work has been going on is not for the benefit of local people.

The stores are still closed. The university, formerly a local economic driver with 27,000

students, is shattered. Millions of euros promised for the restoration of sports facilities never materialised.

And the government has refused to consider a national tax for restoration – the only way campaigners for the town can see to get Berlusconi to nail himself to a rebuilding plan.

The town is likely to see worse times in the future as an austerity budget announced by Berlusconi adds to a tsunami of cutbacks and attacks on welfare systems taking place across Europe.

Government funding is being slashed across the board, including at local government level, with local authorities staring down the barrel of 14-22% cutbacks on top of a freeze in public sector salaries.

## Notes from the US

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impossible not to interpret this as a means of the university to silence dissent."

But then, if protests against Israeli violence are allowed to start where might it end?

The number of troops from the US in Afghanistan for example is now greater than the number in Iraq. The Pentagon admitted in June that 94,000 troops are deployed in the occupation.

The number has more than tripled since January 2009, when Obama took office. Nor does it look as though the invaders will be in a hurry to leave either: the US has discovered \$1 trillion (£675 billion) in mineral deposits in the country including large amounts of copper, cobalt, gold and lithium. Officials say the find could turn Afghanistan into one of the most important mining centres in the world.

Outside the two main theatres, the US has apparently authorised a major expansion of covert military operations outside the

country. It includes an exercise to gather intelligence for a possible attack on Iran.

Special Operations forces are now deployed in 70 countries – up 25% from the start of 2010. Aside from Iran, these are thought to include Georgia, Ukraine, Bolivia, Paraguay, Ecuador, Peru, Yemen, Pakistan, Philippines, Turkey, Belgium, France, Spain, Colombia and Mexico.

- Violence is never far from the surface in the US itself though: recently in Detroit a seven-year-old girl was shot dead by police in her home.

Aiyana Jones was asleep when police launched a raid just after midnight despite warnings that children lived in the home.

A video of the incident shows police opening fire after throwing a flash grenade through the home's front window before entering it. A bullet from the gun pierced Aiyana's head and neck.

Louis Further

## France strikes against pensions attack

Led by the train drivers, workers in key industries across France took part in a 24-hour strike from 23rd June against plans to raise the country's retirement age from 60 to 62 – a full three years less than Britain.

Nearly 200 rallies took place in cities and towns against the measures proposed by president Sarkozy's ruling UMP party, which include a phased increase in the number of years people will have to work to receive full pension payments.

The Cabinet is to discuss the proposals in July, and they are expected to go before parliament next autumn, with 29th September being mooted as a potential date for a wave of general strikes to hit Europe against austerity measures being imposed across the EU zone.

Trains, air travel, schools, utility workers, postal workers, dock workers and health staff participated in the walkout.

# World Cup 2010... whose party?

**A South African comrade reflects on the impact of the industry of the World Cup on ordinary South Africans.**

Whether 2010 is the “best World Cup ever” (according to FIFA President, Sepp Blatter) remains to be seen. However, it will certainly go down as one of the most interesting, which may have less to do with drama on the pitch and more to do with the political and social reactions off it. While most left wing analyses of the event, including many of my own, have focused on the negative impacts that 2010 will have on ordinary South Africans, the wildcard in all this has precisely been the way in which ordinary people have reacted to the biggest tournament in the world.

For the last few months, both the state and corporate advertising have almost been legislating for a Bacchanalian frenzy during the event. Yet, many ordinary South Africans have claimed the carnivalistic element of the tournament for themselves in ways that are humorous, spectacular, bizarre and touching. The central paradox of 2010 may turn out to be that this mega-event designed to serve the pecuniary interests of transnational capital and the South African state elite may in fact unleash popular energies and expectations that the authorities are unprepared to deal with longstanding problems of SA police brutality, (e.g. the torture in 2004 of Landless Peoples Movement activists, and police general Bheki Cele's 2008 ‘shoot to kill’ order in KwaZulu-Natal).

Before turning towards some of my own personal experiences of what the World Cup has meant so far, a few words are necessary on the relationship between the South African government and FIFA. The Swiss-based cabal has in effect privatised the popular game of

soccer as a commodity which it sells to its corporate backers for lucrative advertising space. Before a single ball was kicked, the organisation had already made over \$3 billion in broadcasting rights: as a result anyone who watches a game will find the national logos of the players dwarfed by the signs of Adidas and Coca-Cola.

While FIFA strives to present itself as a philanthropic body concerned only with the future of the beautiful game, in reality it is more of a parasite leeching off the body of state funding. South Africa has haemorrhaged over R44 billion into stadiums and other infrastructure. As part of its legal requirements as a host (a word which works on two levels in this context), it has to meet every whim of FIFA: from deploying special police to protect against unaffiliated advertising near stadiums (the horror!) to providing entertainment and five star accommodation for all FIFA delegates and their families.

However, this is not just the textbook neo-colonial relationship of an African country being hammered by the demands of ‘the West’. Instead, the South African government actively pandered to this from actually seeking the bid to continually meeting FIFA's most petty demands. The state is hoping that this event will serve a range of long term goals from shoring up popular support to cementing South Africa's position as the pre-eminent power in sub-Saharan Africa. Crucially, both the parliamentary opposition and the media, normally quick to jump on any evidence of ANC malfeasance have acquiesced in this process through treating the World Cup as sacrosanct. This kind of subservient boosterism has reached sublimely farcical levels. For instance, the state has set up special courts to process World Cup related cases. A recent exposé by journalist Lionell Faull showed that many of these are in fact standing empty: yet another example of the grotesque leveraging of public funds into white elephant preparations. However, Western Cape premier



Helen Zille cited the same article as proof of South Africa's ability to “deliver” an “efficient and modern” judicial system.

This dreamland of World Cup promises extends to the popular benefits it was supposed to engender: hundreds of thousands of jobs. Billions in GDP [Gross Domestic Product]. The clear fact that these were hollow promises has been brushed aside with vague mumblings about nebulous foreign investment and trickle down economics. From national government downwards everyone is trying to get their piece of the action: even host cities are competing amongst themselves to become the most gentrified ‘World Class Cities’. Taking the idea of treating the state as a branch of advertising to its logical conclusion, cities have licensed images of their stadiums and fan parks to various corporations. For example, the Cape Town stadium belongs to Hyundai, the Moses Mabidha stadium (named after a venerable leader of the South African Communist Party) has gone to Coca-Cola. It seems the trajectory of who really scores in the World Cup is clearly delineated.

These mumbled and ambivalent promises

doing nothing as part of the bid arrangements: many were listlessly hanging around McDonalds. Even more heartening was the sight of the stadiums security guards on strike angry at the pittance they were being paid. These strikes were also repeated at several other stadiums aimed at the practises of the company that FIFA had outsourced too, Stallion Security. In the week that followed. There were similar strikes in Johannesburg and Durban. Predictably, the state was forced to step in and clean up through replacing the strikers with police officers. These strikes are significant as they seem to be the first time that concrete protest has been made against the soccer Czars during a World Cup. And in addition, many of the country's labour unions are threatening to conduct high-profile strikes ignoring cynical government arguments that such actions would be unpatriotic during the World Cup.

FIFA and the state may have patronisingly assumed that people would be happy with scraps from their table, but in their arrogance may not have recognised the fact that South African's are still prepared to take their grievances to the streets. In a more oblique way, this was brought home by the attempt of two stewards to scalp their free tickets to me and my friend Willem. FIFA has predictably been apoplectic about this, but really in a country with the highest rate of economic inequality on Earth this seems like a fair way of making some extra money, not to mention piquancy of the corporate robber barons being themselves outfoxed.

The South African state may collude in its own self-destruction tournament as it strives to meet the almost farcically avaricious demands of FIFA and its partners, but in the midst of this ordinary people have been hacking out public spaces of participation for themselves. It can only be hoped that this will open a space for dialogue and action. In addition, the fact that the national team has been kicked out of the tournament after a frustrating performance means that for the next few weeks the country will be in essence a theme park for tourists now that the nationalist component of the event is no longer viable. Conversely, South Africans are now the spectators in their own country: the result of this remains to be seen. While much of our media focuses on labour unrest and other actions during the event as a negative thing, in reality it shows that radical forms of participatory democracy are alive in South Africa: this is the reality which stands against the common media image of a happy African wilderness eager to participate in its own disenfranchisement.

Christopher McMichael

Christopher McMichael is a PhD candidate at Rhodes University.

Part two of the feature article on Marx's analysis of capitalism will appear in the next issue of *Freedom*.

are also shored up by the perception that the event will at the very least, in the words of a well-respected South African journalistic cliché, “unify a deeply divided country”. It's easy to see this as so much cynical politicking. Certainly the bombardment of corporate advertising, with its stock series of clichés and parade of atrocious theme songs (worst of the tournament must go to Somalian ‘rebel rapper’ K'naans, whose horrific ‘Wavin Flag’ is a vague anthem of political upliftment that chimes nicely with Coca-Cola's CGI'ed adverts of South African life). But it would be a misreading to see all this excitement as simulation.

I was in Cape Town for the opening match and it was like being in a city transformed. I have never seen so many people, South African of all races and classes, congregating in a kind of beneficent chaos. Even the police had to step aside as South African's would have the party that has been promised to them: the fact that ordinary people will be paying for the event for years to come makes a month of hedonism particularly urgent. And as I have travelled around the country, I have noticed a real atmosphere: people seem more

relaxed and civil even. Certain still well established divided have been breached, albeit temporarily. This is not just the case of rich whites learning to use the Vuvuzela: it is also the case of a space of shared public participation and sense of joined excitement. And there are other things at play which suggest that there is more to this than just a temporary feel good hedonism. Ordinary people talking about FIFA's transparent and unhesitant greed and the South African state's collusion in this: there is a sense that the country has been swindled and taken advantage of. These may be small stirrings as yet but in a year when the BP disaster has unmasked (again) the utterly venal nature of corporate power, it is heartening to see that FIFA has been unable to hoodwink the South African public.

A walk around the Cape Stadium on Monday the 14th prior to the Italy-Paraguay match brought many of these issues to light (British readers will be heartened to know that on the way I made the effort of giving the finger to the official *Sun* supporters bus and will surely appreciate this noble gesture against the Murdoch empire). One is confronted with a huge mass of police milling around and





## COMMENT

## ABOUT FREEDOM

## ANGEL ALLEY

As most readers know, anarchism attracts fruit-loops like *Musca domestica* to excrement. This weeks prize muppet award goes to the guy who phoned on Saturday. Starting with the innocuous who should I write to at *Freedom* about a party? It swiftly emerged that this wasn't a bring-a-bottle party but 'the UK Anarchist Party' he was planning to register with the Electoral Commission. Nice try!

On this note commiserations to our comrades in Whitechapel Anarchist Group who recently squatted a disused pub that proved to be a perfect venue for meetings and social events and a general boon to the local community, including vital work organising a campaign against possible English Defence League incursions to the area. Unwisely they also called upon Jim Henson's popular puppets for assistance in keeping the venue secure.

The person responsible, who shall be nameless but who we may refer to as Fozzie Fuckwit Bear, goes and lets the cops and the owners in without so much as a warrant or court papers between them.

In case you're feeling sympathetic, this wasn't van loads of the TSG on a dawn raid but two plainclothes on a mid-afternoon stroll.

So just in case you have any doubts, a copy of the *Squatters Handbook* is available for a mere £1.50 in the shop or from our website – and if you can't afford that, keep your door shut.

## SUBSCRIPTIONS

This issue is vol 71 no 13, so if the number above your name on the address label is 7113 or less, then your subscription is now due for renewal. There's a renewal form on page 16 of this issue or you can now subscribe online at [freedompress.org.uk/news/subscribe](http://freedompress.org.uk/news/subscribe)

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## NEXT ISSUE

The next issue will be dated 17th July 2010 and the last day to get copy to us for that issue will be Thursday 8th July. 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 latest budget is, as to be expected, a continuation of the class war viciously waged by one side. The coalition government have claimed that this is a budget that is "tough but fair". It's clear who it is tough on, but 'fair' is becoming a very debased word.

The Institute for Fiscal Studies, an economic think tank not normally associated with the left, described the new measures introduced by Osborne on top of Labour's cuts from February as "somewhat regressive". Osborne has made clear he intends to make even more cuts to welfare. Already, the poorest 10% of people in this country will see their incomes cut by 2.5% over the next five years. All of the fairly modest increases in spending under Labour over 13 years will be reversed in less than five, kicking us back to the crumbling state we were in the late 1990s.

It's clear that our rulers think they are going to get away with this – they're talking about making cuts to the police for a start. In the eighties, paying the police more was a key component of Thatcher's attack on the unions.

As plenty of people have remarked, a proposed increase in French retirement age to 62 brings millions onto the street; raising it to 66 here elicits barely a flicker. Funnily enough, the people likely to suffer most from the increase in retirement age, manual workers, tend not to have much influence on the way the media report things. There is massive youth unemployment and almost universal age discrimination in employment against anyone over 50. Either this is a gimmick which shifts people in their late 50s and 60s onto unemployment benefit (with housing benefit being cut once they've been on it for a

year) because it's cheaper, or they're expecting to be able to force millions of people into yet-to-be-created minimum wage jobs.

We all know that these cuts are just the beginning – the Tories and their hapless Lib Dem mates are sharpening their axes elsewhere. Vince Cable has claimed that VAT is "fairly" progressive – what planet does he live on? Apart from food, books and children's clothes, we pay it on everything. So for every £1 we spend on anything not zero rated means about an extra two pence. This doesn't sound like much, but it's reduced your spending power. As have the cuts in your pay or benefits – it's not like any other bills will be going down.

The government are desperate to cut public spending, using the mantra of debt. What they have not acknowledged is that debt was used to replace welfare as a way of keeping money circulating in the economy. And the pain is not just in the public sector – all the people I know who've already been cut are in the private sector, contracted to the public sector. Cuts mean reduced spending power, less taxes paid and increased benefit bills. The knock-on effect is stark.

I think the recession will probably deepen, as no governments anywhere appear to be interested in standing up to the markets. But longer term, I think the collapse of the credit/debt model for funding consumption puts capitalism itself in more danger than anyone will admit. They have no idea what to replace it with, except for concentrating more wealth in the hands of the already wealthy, which we already know doesn't work. Once again, the question posed is whether we look forward to socialism, or barbarism.



A protest march at the Old Port in Marseille on 24th June – the proposed increase in the retirement age to 62 has brought millions onto the streets in France.

## Self-harmer arrest shock

I have recently been through an on-going court case involving an incident of self-harm at a train station. Not wishing to go into all the details that led up to it, all I will say is that after this incident I was put on a 'Section Two' and taken to hospital. Three weeks later, surreal events unfolded.

I was met by four officers who, after talking to the doctor, arrested me for being in 'possession of a bladed article in a public place' (it was a supermarket razor blade) and read out my rights. I was then arrested for 'criminal damage' (costs caused to London Underground to mop up the blood), then for 'Section 5 of the Public Order Act' and, last but not least, I was arrested for something relating to a railway by-law.

With these four arrests under their belt, I was driven to the station, where I was stripped, given new clothes, spent two days in the cells under constant watch before being charged, interviewed and taken straight to court the following morning.

The case was adjourned four times pending more reports until I was eventually given an '18 month Conditional Discharge'. Fortunately the last ditch attempt by the Crown Prosecution Service for an ASBO banning me from "intentionally or recklessly spilling bodily fluids on London Underground Property" was thrown out.

The most shocking realisation was that I was far from the first person in the UK to be arrested for anything like this. Not even the first person the probation officer had met. Since the age of thirteen I never foresaw that I could be arrested for carrying a razor blade. It's very common for self-harmers to carry razors on them in the same way an alcoholic might carry a hip-flask. Even the probation believed that while this is a serious issue to address, it should never have gone to court.

The police have gone from targeting knife crime to simply arresting anyone with anything sharp no matter what. But the UK has one of the highest rates of self harm in Europe, at 400 per 100,000 population.<sup>1</sup>

My fear here now is that with self-harm on the increase, both in and out of prison and particularly amongst the young, the police can now tap into this new source to bolster 'knife crime' conviction rates, continue to dole out more 'Section 5' arrests and demonise yet another vast segment of the population.

The question of why I self-harmed that day was never addressed and it's certainly not something I wish to address with the Mental Health 'Service' anymore.

Since 2003, around 30% of female prisoners self-harm each year.<sup>2</sup> The results among men are also dismal. and for young offenders are even worse. Many didn't start until they were in prison.

Cutting can be addictive and in times of stress, emotional upheaval or as simply a relief from the pressures of day-to-day living, self-harm is the unfortunate mechanism that many in our society turn to. Are we now

coming to a point where people are being sent to prison for self-harming?

'Cielarko'

1 Mental Health Foundation website: [mentalhealth.org.uk/information/mental-health-overview/statistics/](http://mentalhealth.org.uk/information/mental-health-overview/statistics/)

2 HM Prison Service: [hmprisonservice.gov.uk/adviceandsupport/prison\\_life/femaleprisoners/](http://hmprisonservice.gov.uk/adviceandsupport/prison_life/femaleprisoners/)

*The editors: Thanks to Cielarko for telling his story. Unfortunately many people in his situation have ended up in jail. In 2005 Rebecca Gidney was imprisoned for a year after police found her locked in Jarrolds department store in Norwich with a knife and razor blade, and about to harm herself. She also pleaded guilty to having a bladed article in a public place.*

## Wondering about Wildcat

I've been reading the paper for a while now and I've been wondering what 'Wildcat' is about.

The last issue I got (no 11, I think) was mental. I didn't understand it at all (the Wildcat part). At first I thought it was because I'm a bit slow. So I showed it to people at work who have been to uni and are more learned on politics. They had the same confused look. I then asked my girlfriend and she told me it wasn't supposed to be funny. She said that Wildcat is used as propaganda. This confused me even more as I didn't really get the point.

I've just got issue, no 12, and I get the point more in this one but it's still a bit shit. I think I'm meant to be on the side of the cat but I just want to punch it. The subjects it covers and the language used just doesn't seem relevant to me.

Anyway that's my rant.

Love the rest of the paper. Keep up the good work.

Samuel

*The editors: Bad luck, Samuel, 'The Cat' stays. However we are not adverse to publishing other cartoons, so if anyone has the urge please get in touch.*

## Music CDs

I'm the keyboard player in this outfit called UNIT – three young British born Chinese lads and a Scottish Singer, all based in East London. We've been putting out CDs since 2000, so this year we celebrate our first decade in the business of political propaganda thinly disguised as pop music.

I know internet downloads are quicker, easier, cheaper, fashionable and probably more ecologically friendly than releasing CDs, but they aren't as much fun to produce and they don't look so nice either. Let's face it telling your mum and dad you've just made another download available can only lead to tears or violence.

I attended a CD launch at your bookshop a few months ago and now we are sending a box of our CDs. We've started to donate copies of our CDs to various other independent political bookshops in the UK, too.

Because our CDs have been selling slowly but consistently since 2003, we've covered our costs and begun to make a small profit – but we aren't in this business for money, so sending our CDs to various independent bookshops serves two purposes: it advertises our group and it gives a small donation to each shop, provided anyone actually buys the discs of course!

Luc Tran

*The editors: Thanks Luc, we are always grateful for donations particularly second-hand CD's and books, so please keep 'em rolling in.*

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## GETTING ACTIVE

### PRISON NEWS

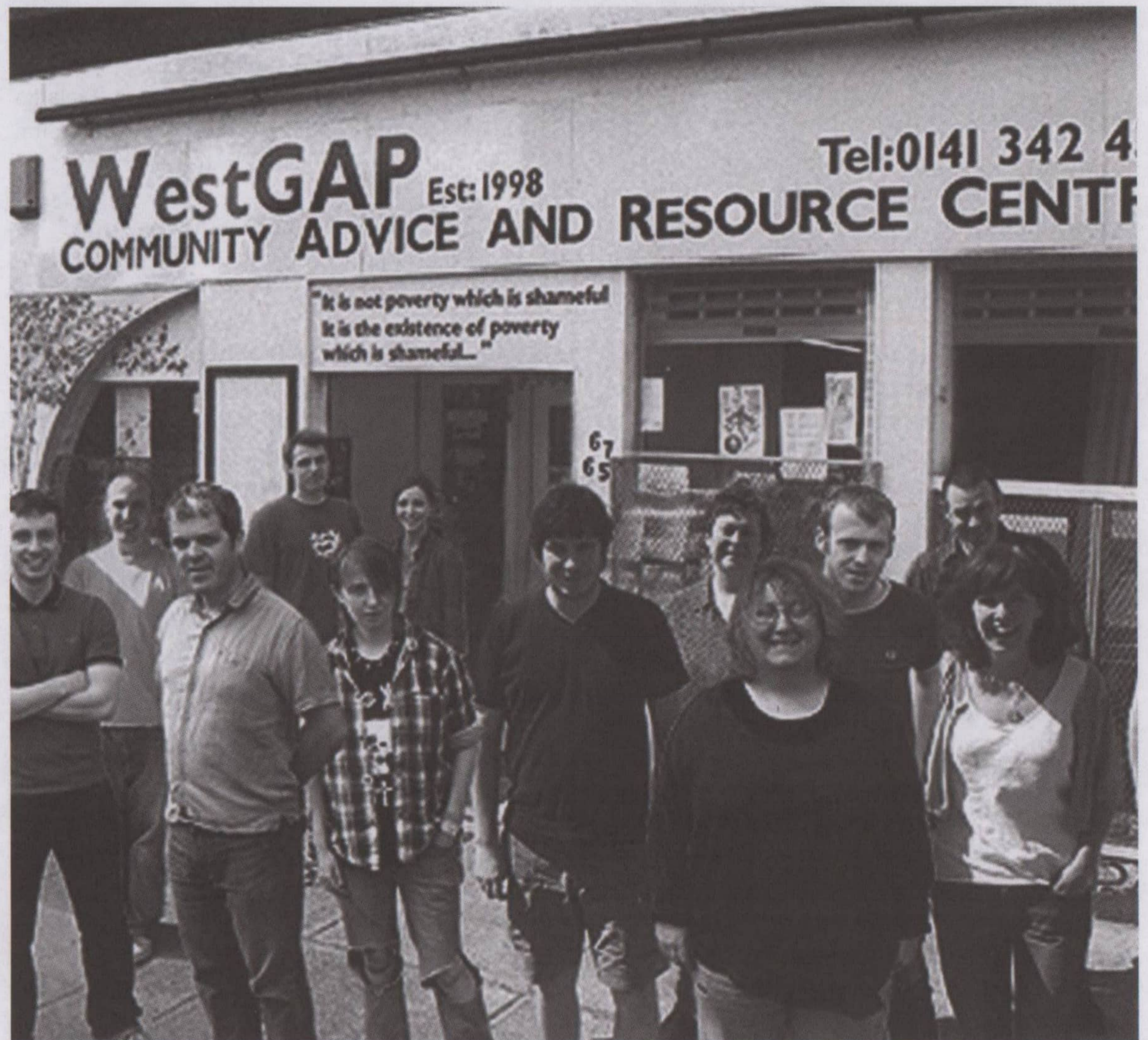
Tories beginning to 'think the unthinkable' In the past week we have come across that rarest of beasts, a Tory politician who actually thinks fewer people should be sent to prison. That that member of the self-proclaimed 'Party of Law and Order' also happens to be a LibCon cabinet minister was even more surprising. So, whilst we await the new government's plans for the future of the prisons building programme in the light of 25% departmental cuts across the board, justice secretary Ken Clarke has come out and said that the new government could save money from the £2.2bn prisons budget by changing sentencing policy. Shock horror: he even went as far as explicitly challenging the public's fear of crime and the need for tougher sentences.

The Tory press inevitably jumped on this, claiming that he intended to bring in the Liberal's manifesto policy of cutting sentences of six months or less in favour of 'community penalties'. Days later the Prison Governor's Association and the National Association of Probation Officers (Napo) upped the ante by calling for the abolition of sentences of less than 12 months. Hell, even the odd chief constable has called for fewer people to be sent to prison, in support of the Scottish government's plans to phase out short prison sentences. So is it can't be that mad, can it?

The basic argument is that shorter sentences don't work and there are cheaper 'alternatives'. According to the Ministry of Justice, 55,333 people were jailed for six months or less last year, equivalent to about 8,500 or 10% of the prison population on any given day according to Napo estimates, at a total cost of about £350m (roughly £45,000 each). Given that Ministry of Justice research also shows that 74% of these prisoners are reconvicted within two years, against 34% for those on community sentences, plus a replacement 'community payback' (sic) programme is likely to cost only £50-60m, it's obvious to see where the government might think they could save money.

However, all community sentences carry a back-up sanction of imprisonment for breaching sentencing orders, and more community sentences would inevitably lead to more non-compliance and therefore people ending up in prison anyway. Additionally, judges would, as they always have done, tend to increase the length of sentences to justify using sentencing at all. These would also inevitably include a greater use of indeterminate sentences, the fastest growing sector of the prison population (approaching 20%), further increasing the prison population.

On the prison-building front, news has also just come in that the planned 800 place Category C-standard Bullingdon immigration prison to be built near Bicester, which was to have been the largest in Europe, is to be cancelled as it is "unaffordable under current plans". Bodes well.



Anti-poverty charity WestGAP's Community Advice and Resource Centre in Glasgow.

● **West Glasgow Against Poverty (WestGAP)**, the long-established, independent, community-based anti-poverty charity opened its doors on Saturday 26th June to launch WestGAP 100, a new community fundraising initiative. Hundreds of people came to their Community Advice and Resource Centre in Partick, Glasgow, to find out about the group, its activities and how they can contribute financially to keep the service going. The idea is to find 100 groups or individuals willing to donate £20 per month, which would cover all the running costs.

WestGAP have been in the forefront of the struggle against poverty in the community for the last nine years, formed by a core group of committed people who refused to be "silent any longer about the poverty that exists in our community. We knew, then, as now, that large numbers of us struggle to survive, bring up our children in poverty, exist on our disability benefit or state pension, or live in damp bedsits without basic facilities."

They operate on a collective basis with an active commitment to equality and an intolerance of sexism, racism and homophobia, and of discrimination based on disability, age or class.

For more info about WestGap see [westgap.co.uk](http://westgap.co.uk)

● **Leeds Anarchist Federation** has issued a call-out for an anti-fascist action coalition to oppose racist/fascist groups in the region. According to the group the revolutionary left have failed to show a unified response that militantly challenges the politics of the English Defence League, who are once again planning to take the streets, this time in Bradford on 28th August.

The bigoted nationalist ideology of the EDL, as well as the oppressive and reactionary influence of Islamism in our communities, divides the working class, therefore the Anarchist Federation Leeds calls for all independent proletarian antifascists in the region to work together, and invites people from the Yorkshire area to get involved in mobilising against reactionary elements in the community.

First meeting will be on Saturday 3rd July, 1pm, Swarthmore Education Centre, 2-7 Woodhouse Square, Leeds, or contact [leeds@af-north.org](mailto:leeds@af-north.org)

● The campaign group **Save Goldsmith's Nursery** is stepping up its fight to prevent the closure of the essential nursery provision at the world famous college in South London.

At the beginning of June parents and nursery staff at Goldsmith's College were told of plans to close the college's nursery within three months. Outraged staff and students demanded an immediate enquiry as the closure, set for September, will leave staff and students with no childcare provision and some staff with almost immediate dismissal. There has already been three demonstrations against the closure with parents, students and staff voicing their anger at the college's lack of consultation and disregard for those who use the facility. The closure is seen as management's attempt to claw back some of the college's financial deficit, although plans were previously presented, and dismissed by the college, to make the nursery 'cost neutral'. Autonomy and Solidarity, Goldsmith's student anarchist group, are said to be involved in the campaign.

See <http://savegoldsmithsnursery.org/>

# Soccer hooligans: break their necks

This article from our archives documents the first emergence of the hooligan football firm and skinhead culture in 1969

As a football fan of long standing, I'm delighted to see a piece about the game in *Freedom* (30th August 1969, 'The Real Troublemakers', Notting Hill SPSH Leaflet) but, as usual, agree with very little of what was said. Once again, it seems to me, the facts of the situation have been exaggerated to the point where our (the anarchist) case has been destroyed...

I've been standing on the terraces watching the Spurs for getting on for 20 years now because I like being part of the mass, I like the companionable emotion of being part of the home crowd, I like being (for just two hours) on the same side as everyone else. Yeah! For just two hours! So far it's not turned me into a fascist zombie ready to put the boot in against rival supporters, programme sellers, hotdog stallholders, bus conductors, railwaymen *and* policemen or to vent my disappointment (or joy) on the windows of the team manager's office, the players' cars, railway carriages and even local shops. But these things are happening!

“Break his leg”... an exhortation heard on terraces at football grounds nowadays (George Best claims he hears it quite often) – Jeff Cloves

The SPSH leaflet says “They [incidents at football matches] aren't new of course, nor are they the slightest bit different from what's going on for years. So why the change in attitude towards them on the part of the police and the club management?”

Well from my experience the things that are going on now are different. “Those arguments with supporters of the other team, a lot of shouting and fist shaking, and then it dies down after you've made it quite plain that you're not standing for any slander and nonsense.” If only it were like that!

What about running fights between Spurs and Arsenal supporters and Chelsea and Arsenal supporters last year, the now familiar rampages after local derbies, the unexploded hand grenade found behind the goal at Highbury last year, attacks on players by spectators *on the pitch*?

What about the proven cases of collusion and corruption by players and management,



the persistent rumours of throwing games that are widely accepted on the terraces, the transfer fiddles, the new 'tactics', the respectable euphemism 'physical' which has now replaced what we used to call 'dirty' play, the unpleasant nationalism aroused by England's world cup win, the emergence of football as a branch of show business, the enormous emphasis on winning at any cost?

Of course I know that when the Hunt Ball hurls bread rolls at the waiters and when debutantes throw champagne glasses out of windows, this is explained away as high spirits, but when an apprentice brickie chucks a coke bottle on a football pitch this is damned as hooliganism.

It's far too simplist [sic] a view to explain these things away in terms of class victimisation. I've seen the growth of the terrace gangs, the 'bother boots', levis, braces, crew cuts which form their uniform... seat cushions thrown from the grandstand can hardly hurt anyone, a mouthful of steel toe-capped boot is another thing altogether. The last game I watched at the Spurs was from the stands *because* of what has been happening on the terraces... the people around me also paid ten bob for their seats. They weren't posh, just ordinary working-class blokes as far as I could tell. They didn't fight or throw things and they may have been there for the same reason as me – as a matter of fact there was no trouble at the game and things seem to be improving at Tottenham.

I believe it to be a *fact* that a lot of trouble (not all the trouble) is being caused

at matches by semi-organised gangs of young blokes – many of whom will be working-class – and it's ridiculous to make martyrs of them *because* they are working-class. The people who suffer from their activities are other working-class people such as I've listed above.

That leaflet is well intentioned, but wrongly directed. Better to explain what is going wrong in football and why, and show how this is affecting crowd behaviour than to wilfully ignore what is going on because it conflicts with a dogmatic view of 'the class war'. Some of the behaviour on the terraces is what one would expect from the National Front not from supposed football fans... when the Spurs played Leeds a couple of seasons back a gang of skinheads treated Johannson, the black South African player, to a chorus of 'fucking nigger... get back to the jungle', every time he got the ball... what is going to happen as more and more English-born black players come into the game?

I'm not arguing for all sweetness and light on the terraces and on the pitch... football's a tough game and people will always lose their tempers, but things *are* getting worse. The Peter Terson play *Zigger Zagger* made an attempt to explain the phenomena of football violence. I think anarchists would be better engaged in the same task than inciting confrontations with the police that can't possibly succeed.

This article first appeared in *Freedom* on 27th September 1969.

## REVIEWS

## WHAT'S ON

## JULY

**4th Annual Independence from America**, this demo focuses on the American base at Menwith Hill, North Yorkshire, with speakers Mark Thomas, Peter Tatchell, musicians and more, outside the American base at Menwith Hill HG3 2RP from 2pm until 7pm, for details phone 01423 884076 or see caab.org.uk

**8th July Amnesty secondhand book sale** from 11am until 3pm, the Brockway Room, Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London WC1R 4RL, all books will be priced at £1 or £1, phone 07771888825 for details or see bookevents.webs.com

**10th A celebration of Colin Ward's life and work** from 2pm at Conway Hall, 25 Red Lion Square, London WC1R 4RL, all welcome, see fiveleaves.co.uk for details.

**16th SchNEWS benefit gig with live music** from Primeval Soup, local anarcho squat punk/ska band Spanner, Bristol based kicking ska/punk outfit Los Albertos and more, with projections by SchMOVIES and info stalls at The Gladstone Pub, Lewes Road, Brighton from 7pm, £5, for details call 01273 685913 or see schnews.org.uk

**23rd to 27th Peace News Summer Camp**, join people from the British peace movement for five days of exploration, celebration and empowerment at Westmill Farm, Watchfield, Oxfordshire, SN6 8TH, £15 to £60 depending on income, call 0207 278 3344, email admin@peacenews.info or see peacenewscamp.info for details.

## AUGUST

**4th to 9th Earth First! Summer Gathering**, Derbyshire (exact location tba) a weekend of workshops around ecological direct action, skill sharing, networking, at a location to be announced nearer the date, for details email summergathering@earthfirst.org.uk or see earthfirst.org.uk, entry will be £20 to £30 according to what you can afford.

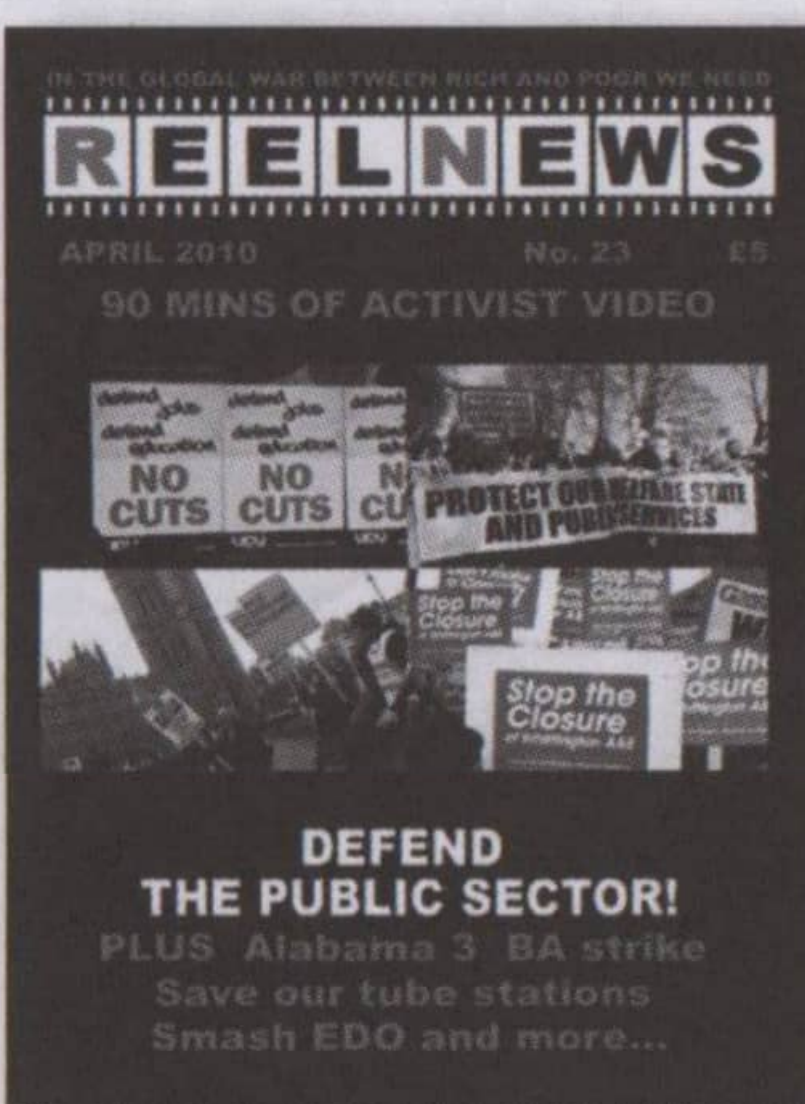
**21st to 24th Camp for Climate Action**, targeting the Royal Bank of Scotland's global headquarters in Edinburgh, see climatecamp.org.uk/actions/edinburgh-2010 for details.

**27th to 30th Animal Rights Summer Gathering**, a weekend of talks, discussions and workshops on a wide range of issues and activities related to animal rights campaigning, as well as a chance to relax and socialise with like-minded people, to be held somewhere near Northampton, email 2010@argathering.org.uk or see argathering.org.uk for more.

## SEPTEMBER

**11th Bristol anarchist bookfair**, with just about anything you could possibly want that's anarchist related: books, merchandise, films, meetings, workshops, vegan café, stalls, campaigns, networking, history, debate, ideas, theory and ways of putting it into practice for action, at Hamilton House, 80 Stokes Croft, Bristol BS1 3QY from 10.30am to 6pm, plus after-party evening, see bristolanarchistbookfair.org

## DVD



**Reel News**  
Issue 23, April  
2010, £5

Reel News publish a bi-monthly DVD of current struggles, demonstrations and activism. A standing order of £3 per month will get you six discs with a free introductory DVD of your choice. The most recent, April 2010, covers picket lines from this year's PCS strikes, strikes at King's College university, a pensioners' demonstration and a 5,000-strong march to save the Accident & Emergency at North London's Whittington Hospital.

There's a separate episode covering the beginning of the British Airways dispute on the first picket lines in March. I like the way

it interviews stewards from BASSA who outline the bullying and severe intimidation which have led to this dispute. Staff talk of the fear of going sick – a staff member with cancer received intimidating phone calls from management whilst sick.

They cover a UAF demonstration against the EDL in Dudley, a Youth Fight for Jobs demo in Barking and an RMT campaign against 800 redundancies.

For light-hearted relief there's an election song from 'Jenny' Cash, and Schmovies of Brighton's serial police-helmet-tipper demonstrating against policing of EDO demonstrations.

The Alabama 3 are interviewed about the release of their new album. I couldn't watch this segment it was far too long – also this band are notoriously hard to work with.

Reel News DVDs give a good round up of recent actions, including some you wouldn't otherwise hear of. I found the graphics on the main menu hard to navigate, but otherwise user friendly. Well recommended for group showings to inspire and amuse, and for others to simply keep up to date with struggles.

Michael Gribben

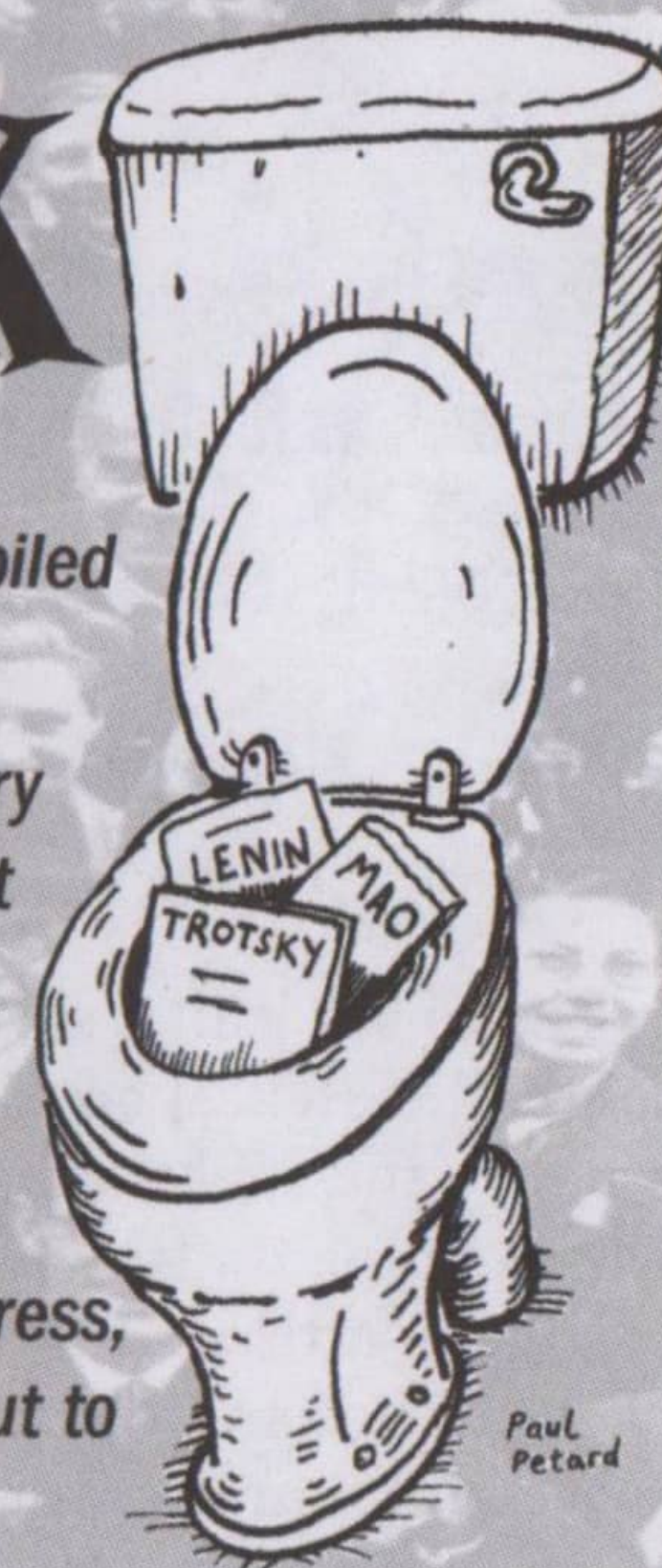
# The Anarchist Quiz Book

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!

Get your copy now for £5 (post free) by mail order from Freedom Press, 84b Whitechapel High Street, London E1 7QX (cheque/PO made out to Freedom Press) or from [www.freedompress.org.uk](http://www.freedompress.org.uk)



## QUIZ ANSWERS

1. Socialist François-Vincent Raspail (1794–1878) stood as the far-left candidate in the Presidential elections of the Second French Republic on 10th December 1848. His manifesto was written by Proudhon and appeared in his paper, *Le Peuple*. He came fourth with 0.49% of the vote.
2. Chile, apparently. Posts on Chilean webforums linking to *The Observer* all laughed at it.
3. It's actually from the band Ska-P's song 'Rayo Vallecano', in which they sing their support of the Madrid team of the same name.
4. From recent events, yes. A Ryanair flight at Prestwick was stranded on the runway for four hours. The Ryanair crew refused to serve refreshments or let people leave during that time. The passengers called the police, who brought them chocolates, sweets and bottled water.

# Mining the past

**John Mapplebeck discovers much to enjoy in Dave Douglass's pit trilogy, but finds the concluding part leaving him wanting more**

The first two volumes of David Douglass's pit trilogy gave notice of a new and original talent. His writing had something of that precise record of the realities of working class life which you can find in Jack Common's *Seven Shifts*, together with the romantic imagination of Len Doherty, the pitman novelist who mined the seams of the South Yorkshire coalfield a decade or so before him.

Take the opening of *The Wheel's Still in Spin*: "Hatfield wastes, Thorne Moors. Thick dripping wet fog, enveloping everything in silent witness, and chill. Black slate roofs blur into pale grey outlines. Webs of wet fog envelop the rows on rows of silent pit houses, the odd surviving tree, and telegraph poles." The prose is so lyrical and exact that you could be standing in front of a painting by his County Durham contemporary, Norman Cornish, or a work by one of the pitman painters of Ashington.

Regrettably, but perhaps inevitably, there are few scenes like this in the third and final volume. The struggle to save coal 25 years ago was bitter and unrelenting with little room for romantic reflection. Dave Douglass was at the heart of it and his new book is an insider's account of that epic struggle. It reads at times like a conference agenda – resolutions passed; points of order sustained; petitions presented – the day to day bureaucracy of administering a union and leading a strike.

There are occasional flashes in the graphic descriptions of the picket line struggles – those brave, brutal, but unequal clashes, between the miners and a police force which more and more came to resemble a band of ruthless mercenaries, licensed and financed by the Thatcher government. I also liked this affectionate tribute to the heavy rock miners and their sympathisers and supporters: "Beetham's was a pub straight out of the Sixties



Above, Dave Douglass with others facing the police in a stand-off at the entrance to Hatfield pit after a scab had been escorted in to work, August 1984; below left, Dave and others leading the charge at Hatfield.

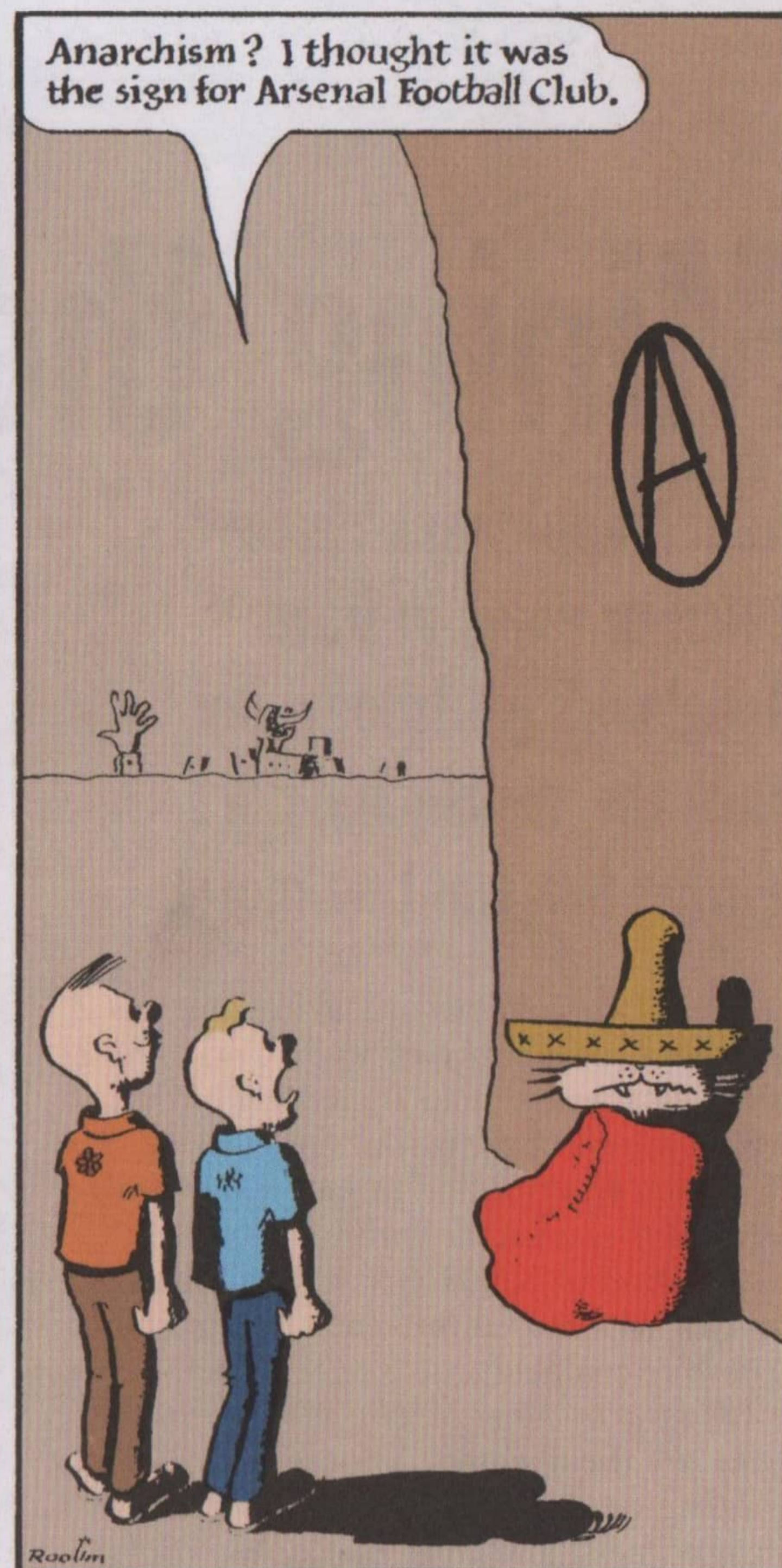
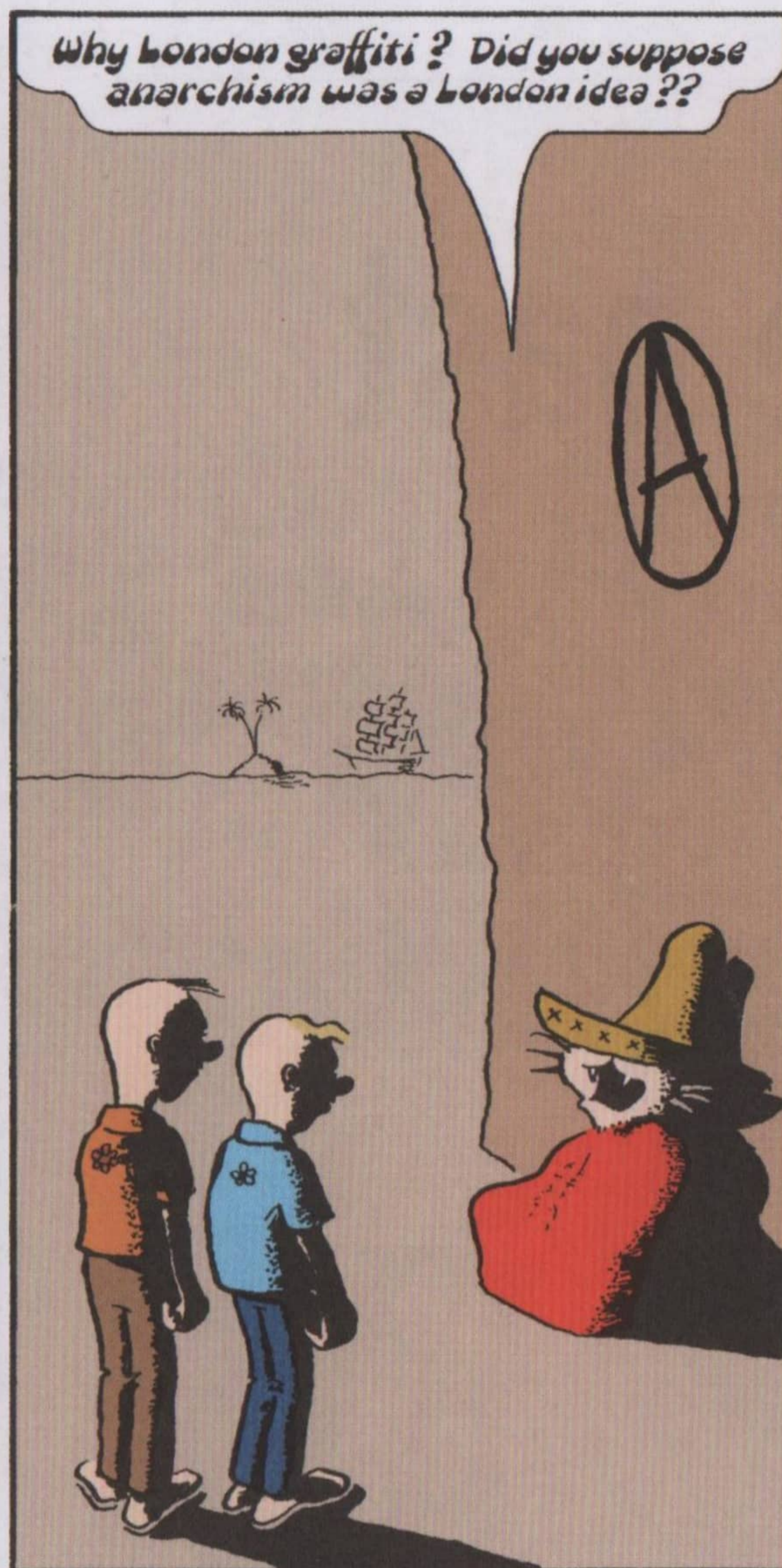
or you'd think it was – Sixties' Newcastle that is, not Sixties' Doncaster. Bikes filled the little road outside the pub, gleaming in defiance, bikers in leathers squeezed past long haired blokes in kaftans and the air was filled with smells of patchouli oil, almost a membership badge among both groups, roll-your-own

tobacco, the occasional whiff of dope. The air was filled with heavy metal."

But in the end it's as a hands-on record of the strike that *Ghost Dancers* has to be judged. And here I have to confess disappointment. Dave Douglass is so mired in the struggle that there is no space for the big picture. Of course, the issues are recorded – the tactical timing of the strike; the symbolic significance of a national ballot; the Libyan fiasco; the TUC arbitration etc., etc., but we are left none the wiser. Or, to be more exact, there is little indication of the author's reaction to these political and moral conflicts.

On the other hand, there are issues on which one would have liked to know more and I suspect that Dave Douglass is in a position to tell us. Unfortunately he doesn't. Why, for example, was Lawrence Daley sidelined and allowed to slope off into obscurity,





## Review

◀ page 15

thereby losing the NUM the greatest president it never had? What did Mick McGahey make, in spite of his public protestations, of his president's tactics and leadership? How far was Arthur Scargill's vanity and ego-mania responsible for the miners defeat? (I failed to find any mention of the South Yorkshire jibe that the NUM president went into the strike with a small house and a big union and came out with a big house and a small union!)

But these are the impertinent questions of an outsider. Those who fought the battles and suffered the pain have a right to their own history. But, as we survey the devastated tundra that was once the home of a great industry, where men and women lived such

"good and comely lives", we have to reflect that they had something more to offer us all than ghost dancing.

*Ghost Dancers* is available from Freedom Bookshop, Houseman's and branches of Waterstones, as are the other two books of the trilogy. It will also be on sale on 10th July at The Durham Miners Gala, Durham City, on the IWW / Working Class Bookstall on the riverside, and also at the Anarchist Bookfair.

*Ghost Dancers: The Miners' Last Generation* by David John Douglass, £12.95. To celebrate the launch of this book, Dave Douglass will at the North East Labour History Society, Tyneside Irish Club, Gallowgate, Newcastle Upon Tyne, on 6th July at 7pm, and then at the History Section of the Tolpuddle Martyrs Festival (in Tolpuddle, Dorset) on the Friday 18th July at 2.15pm.

## THE QUIZ

1. Which presidential election saw a candidate stand with a manifesto written by an anarchist? And how did they do?
2. According to *The Observer*, who sing that they are "the most anarchist, the drunkest fans"?
3. And where does that song originate?
4. Are the Scottish police more reasonable than Ryanair?

Answers on page 14

*The Anarchist Quiz Book* compiled by Martin Howard with illustrations by Paul Petard, is available at £5 (post free) from Freedom Press, 84b Whitechapel High Street, London E1 7QX (cheque payable to Freedom Press) or from [freedompress.org.uk](http://freedompress.org.uk).

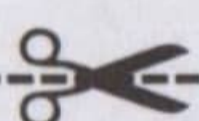
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