

REVOLTING STUDENTS

Battle of Millbank ignites the anti-cuts movement

There has been a flurry of media hype, discussion and now witch-hunts over the actions of thousands of students on Wednesday 10th November. It strikes me that the most important question to be asking, which is not being asked in the mainstream media, is: if you want to stop the cuts and the increases in fees and all the other aspects of privatisation and 'marketisation', how do think that can be done? Once we put it like that, we start to understand why there is such widespread support for the actions during the anti-cuts demo of around 50,000. Then it is not so easy for people to just say that they want to stop the cuts but that they also condemn the actions, because then what exactly are they suggesting we do? Sit back and peacefully take it? No thanks.

Most people realise that actions like this are necessary to get things moving, to inspire people to get on with organising against the cuts across the board. The bureaucracy of unions, such as the NUS and UCU, prevent autonomous, effective action from happening, as people's political efforts are channelled into them. Activists sit in meeting after meeting trying to get votes on motions, etc., when the real useful action is happening despite them in the streets. That's not to say that individuals within unions can't work together effectively and use union resources to initiate action, but we have to remember that the NUS sold out the initial round of resistance to the introduction of fees back in the '90s. The autonomous students' network (ASN) wrote a pamphlet about the NUS in 2007 when it was undergoing reforms, which have made the NUS even less democratic and even more useless.

We have to remember that, even though people like Jenny Jones from the Metropolitan Police Authority says "the violent people aren't real protesters ... real protesters want to make their point and get good headlines for their cause," if it wasn't for Wednesday's direct action most of the debates currently going on wouldn't have even been possible, because a 'usual' demo would've hardly been covered by the media. The discourse would still be that no one can do anything against the cuts and that we have to grin and bear it.

Now we have to put efforts into cross-sector anti-cuts organising and solidarity campaigns

LENS CAP SMASH IT UP AND START AGAIN



Students vent their rage on the Tory Party HQ, Millbank, after 50,000 marched in anger at the Coalition's proposals to charge more for an education. Thousands were to lay siege outside the building as others occupied the roof for hours. Some are predicting this is the kick start to a more militant approach to anti-cuts protests.

around the witch-hunts, which have already started with someone being questioned over the alleged throwing of the fire extinguisher. People at the demo probably weren't keen on objects being hurled down at them, but the point is not to play into the hands of the 'divide and rule' tactics, but to work in solidarity with everyone who took action against the cuts. This has to happen whatever our particular position on tactics is, otherwise all tactics will be rendered useless. Already, solidarity campaigns and further action planning are starting. A national day of action has been called for 24th November. The ASN is planning a London-wide meeting soon, contact us on the email below. Wednesday's actions were just the beginning.

A London student

See also page 4 of this issue, and for info see:
<http://autonomousstudentsnetwork.wordpress.com>
<http://teneleventen.wordpress.com>
<http://nov10.wordpress.com/2010/11>

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NEWS

IN BRIEF

DRUGS: Ever wondered how the country's bankers maintain their non-stop energetic lifestyles? Well, according to this week's annual report from the EU's Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction, the UK is now top of the European rankings for cocaine use. A statistic not to be sniffed at.

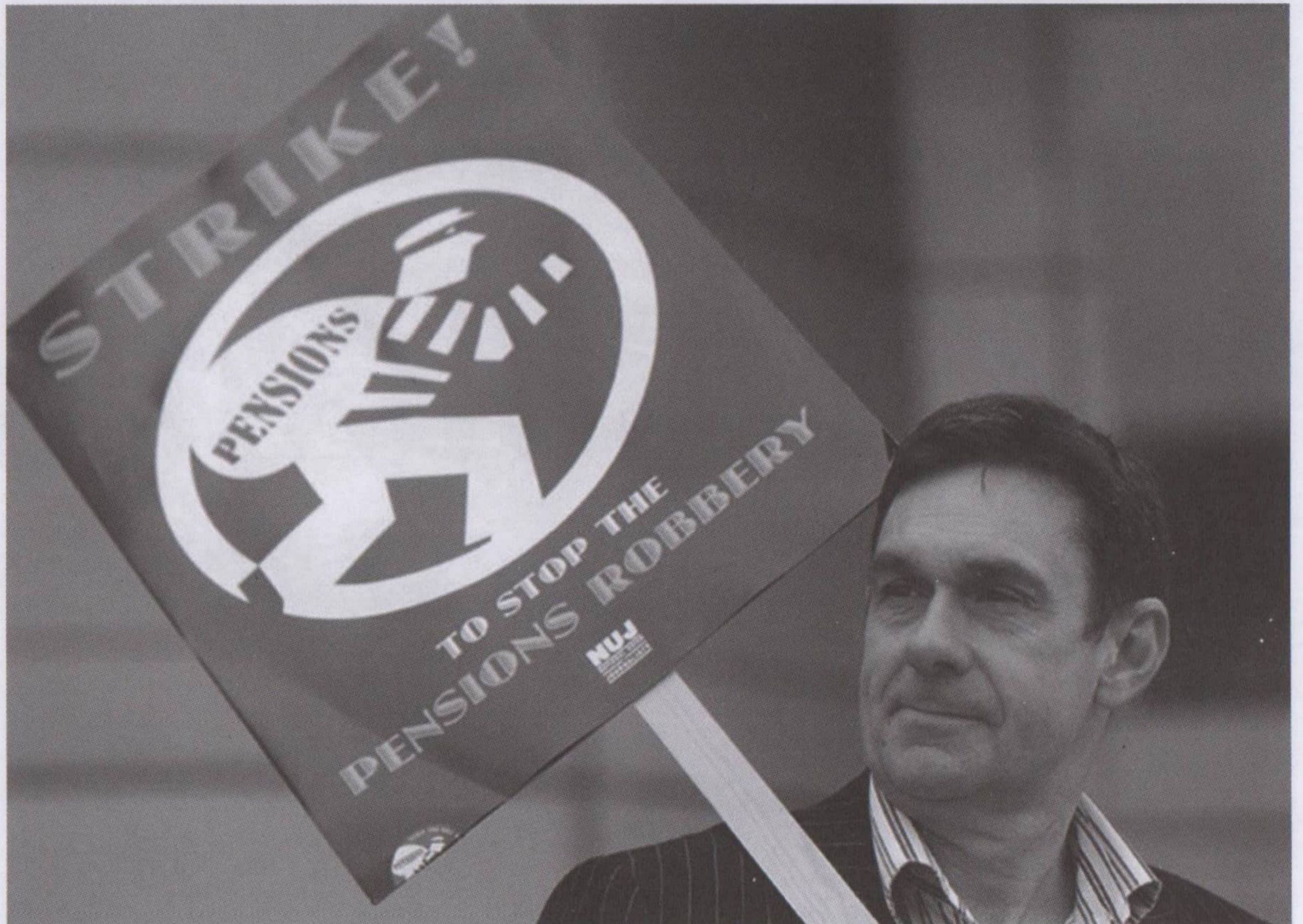
FOOTBALL: Fans of Celtic football club unfurled a massive banner during half time in a match with Aberdeen protesting about the plans by the club to use of the poppy on the team's shirts to commemorate Remembrance Sunday. The fans were part of the Green Brigade, Celtics defiantly left-wing supporters who describe themselves as "anti-racist, anti-sectarian, anti-fascist." The anti-poppy banner, which took up a considerable part of the stand, read 'Your deeds would shame all the devils in Hell. Ireland, Iraq, Afghanistan. No bloodstained poppy on our Hoops'.

LAW: A senior Old Bailey judge has been appointed to oversee the inquest into the death of Ian Tomlinson, the newspaper seller who was killed by police at last year's anti-G20 demonstrations. Peter Thornton QC will take responsibility for the inquiry, set for early next year, from the City of London coroner, Paul Matthews, who wrote to ministers expressing doubts about his own expertise in criminal cases. It was Matthews who denied the IPCC permission to attend the first post mortem on Mr Tomlinson, and appointed corrupt pathologist Freddy Patel to carry it out – which led to the CPS refusing to charge the policeman who caused Tomlinson's death.

POLITICIANS: Three former New Labour MPs accused of fiddling their expenses will face criminal trials after they lost their appeals at the Supreme Court. David Chaytor, Elliot Morley and Jim Devine, who have been accused of theft by false accounting, had claimed any investigation into their expenses and any penalties they face "should lie within the hands of Parliament" rather than a criminal court. However, the Supreme Court has ruled they were not protected by Parliamentary privilege. They will now face separate trials at London's Southwark Crown Court – the first is due to begin on 22nd November.

RETAIL: Twinings have run into trouble with the European Commission after it was discovered the UK tea producers used a grant that breached EU rules. The money was supposed to be used to open new investments, but they chose to close their existing factory in Tyneside instead, making 286 workers redundant, and relocate to Poland. Despite previous assurances that the firm had no EU funding, Twinings was handed over £10m – paid for in part from UK taxes – for the move. The deal means Tyneside workers had effectively subsidised their own unemployment through their taxes.

LENS CAP BBC STRIKE



Everyone's favourite political economist and bookfair participant, Paul Mason, puts his politics into practice as he joins the picket line at the BBC on the first of a series of 48-hour strikes. Journalists, camera operators and engineers balloted voted by 90% for strike action against the corporation's proposed pension cuts.

Football club refuse to cross picket

Independent non-league side FC United of Manchester (FCUM) achieved a memorable victory on 5th November by beating football league team Rochdale in the first round of the FA Cup. Those uninterested in football may not be aware that FCUM were set up as a breakaway team in response to American multi-millionaire Malcolm Glazer's take-over of Manchester United FC five years ago, and immediately set out to do things in a radically different way from most other football clubs. The club is an Industrial and Provident Society where members elect the board, with membership decisions being made on a one-person, one-vote basis. The club pledges to avoid outright commercialism and does not display sponsors logos on the team shirts.

Previously an exhibition was commissioned jointly by FCUM and the Working Class Movement Library to commemorate the centenary of the 1909 strike by team members of Manchester United. Since the club is so aware of its roots, and is prepared to celebrate them, it will therefore come as little surprise to find that the club declined to appear 6th November's edition of the BBC's *Football Focus*, despite the fact that they had just enjoyed the biggest moment in their history – the reason being that the National Union of Journalists members that work at the BBC were on strike, and FCUM decline to effectively cross the picket line.

The shows scab producer, David Garrido, had tried to manipulate FCUM into appearing by telling them the lie that the strike only

applied to newsroom staff, but this ruse was quickly rumbled by the club's general manager Andy Walsh, a former National Executive member of BIFU (now part of Unite union).

Whilst *Football Focus* did carry a brief report about the previous night's match, the location of the programme was beautifully ironic – Old Trafford, the home ground of Manchester United, is the symbol *par excellence* of the capitalist zenith that is modern football.

After the report on FCUM, scab guest and ex-Man United player Nicky Butt told scab presenters Dan Walker and Lee Dixon (ex 'lucky' Arsenal) that the Glazer's ownership style was the "harsh reality of football nowadays" – in his case, the world of crossing picket lines and insulting the memory of Billy Meredith and Charlie Roberts, two old Manchester United players who organised the first ever players union in 1907 and were subsequently banned from playing. Of course, he's right that it is a different world, but then that doesn't stop FCUM and similar clubs striving for something different from the world of millionaire prima donnas, executive boxes, administration, 'business' and solidarity with the bosses rather than the workers.

If FCUM manage to progress to the next round, then there is the tantalising possibility that a draw could see them face Manchester United, and deliver an opportunity for the fans of real football to face the 'consumers' of the spectacle that is the modern game.

Northern Voices



Going underground

RMT London regional organiser Steve Hedley reports on the ongoing tube workers dispute

The National Union of Rail, Maritime and Transport Workers (RMT) has now had three very successful one day strikes in defence of jobs and safety on the underground.

Management propose to do away with 800 frontline station jobs. These are in the main multi-functional staff who, besides selling tickets, work on the barriers, attend to old disabled or blind customers, and those with young kids. These multi-functional staff also despatch trains and, most importantly, ensure the safe evacuation of stations in an emergency. They were the people who were lauded and lionised after they saved lives during the 7/7 bombings. So why get rid of them? Well London Underground/Transport for London (TfL) are well over £7 billion in

debt because of the collapse of public private partnerships (PPP) Metronet and Tubelines which both collapsed after pillaging the industry for years and leaving huge debts. The workers, it seems, have to pay for the excesses of capitalism with their jobs whilst Mike Brown, who sold the PPP, has been resurrected to sell the complete lie that removing 800 people will not affect safety or customer service.

We have been joined in our struggle by the TSSA union, who have never been on strike on London Underground Ltd (LUL) before, and many ASLEF members despite the craven position of their leadership. Our fight is the first industrial battle against the cuts which are being imposed on all workers.

Finance capital has been bailed out to the tune of trillions of pounds and workers are told our pay conditions and services must be sacrificed whilst the culprits reward their own failure with billions in bonuses. The capitalist system with its inherent booms and busts (and not just finance capital) must be gotten

rid of to cure the problem. Meanwhile to save £26 million in staff wages by getting rid of people, TfL/LUL spend £75 million a year in consultants and will lose £100 million a year when the western congestion charge is scrapped so that sloane-rangers can drive their Chelsea tractors unhindered.

We as a union are now considering upping our action and will be asking for physical and financial support from all progressive people.

We have a proud history of solidarity with other workers, most recently during the FBU firefighters strike when many RMT members refused to work on safety grounds. We will shortly be asking you to show solidarity in return so we can win round one in the battle against the cuts.

Freedom will keep its readers informed and updated about future actions, and encourages all anarchists to show solidarity for the tube workers fighting to save their jobs and livelihood. Meanwhile check their website at <http://www.rmtlondoncalling.org.uk/>

Exposing of thuggery does G4S no harm

Market gurus have been putting rent-a-thug outfit G4S to the top of their buy list this month after the firm posted increasing profits and predicted it would soon be benefitting from major new government contracts.

The company, which has become notorious over its handling of deportations leading to the closing of Oakenfield detention centre and the loss of its immigration contracts after the death of Angolan Jimmy Mobenga, has posted a 5.6% rise in profits so far this year.

Despite being heavily discredited over its

appalling standards in its running of detention centres, the firm's only losses have been through the removing of its contracts with the UK Border Protection Agency – because it had been undercut by a rival firm.

And just weeks later, G4S has picked up a whole new contract with the government to run all the remaining job centres it hadn't already taken over – proving that violence and corner-cutting is no impediment to playing a major role in the new Big Society.

Bosses at G4S, which operates in 120 countries worldwide covering almost every aspect of repressive state behaviour, are hoping to follow up their success by offering 25% cost reductions to the government in future security-related contracts.

The firm gave a hint of how this was to be achieved in a recent memorandum of understanding with the government over its prison contracts – it plans to save up to 1% of costs through not bothering to maintain the buildings properly.

ANALYSIS

Anarchist response to the Battle of Millbank



ANARCHIST FEDERATION

Yesterday saw one of the largest and most vibrant protests in London in recent history. Over 50,000 education workers and students took to the capital not only to protest against the rise in tuition fees but reforms in education in general and to protest for a fairer, free higher education system. The Anarchist Federation was among them forming a 'radical workers' and students' bloc' which, along with London Solidarity Federation, argued that capitalism is the cause of this crisis, that the Left and the union leaders cannot be trusted to fight our battles (a point NUS president Aaron Porter later so aptly demonstrated) and that we need united, grass-roots direct action as part of a sustained fightback.

Contrary to the corporate media commentaries, a significant portion of the march also involved itself in the property destruction and occupation at Millbank tower, home to the Conservative Party HQ. Direct action was not limited to this either, with the London School of Economics going into occupation shortly after the end of the protest, a sit-down protest in Parliament Square and some limited property destruction at Liberal Democrat HQ.

Students and education workers have not only demonstrated their anger at the wave of attacks in store for a whole generation of young people, but their lack of faith in parliamentary democracy and the need to take the struggle into their own hands.

Yes, the anarchists were also involved in this action, of course we were. But what is this notion of the 'apolitical' student and education worker that is being promoted by the media? Does the fact that we are anarchists preclude us from being 'normal people', from acting in solidarity with our fellow workers and students? We reject such a paralysing construct. It is designed to suffocate us, to force us into the image of the respectful, peaceful and, ultimately, obedient and ineffectual protester. We, like many of our fellow students and workers, recognise that only direct action will bring about meaningful change. That in order to fight the cuts we need to be not only fighting on the streets but building communities in our campuses, pushing for occupations, sit-ins, walkouts and the inclusion of those often excluded and marginalised in these struggles (the cleaners, porters, administrative and security staff who quietly labour in our universities under minimum wage).

Media pundits and politicians have also argued, and continue to argue, that students are somehow privileged or self-interested. This is the same divisory tactic being used against all public sector workers. In reality, as many students explained through TV interviews, this protest was not so much for themselves but for their younger brothers and sisters or even for their future children who otherwise wouldn't be able to go to university. This is similar to the concern that many public workers have for service users, who will undoubtedly also suffer from cuts to services. We cannot allow these strong ties of solidarity, across generations and between service providers and service users, to be undermined. The rhetoric that certain workers/ students are a privileged group implies they should not be supported by others. We need to recognise this for what it is – a divide and rule tactic.

We also affirm our commitment to supporting all those victimised/arrested as the result of their actions at Millbank towers. We encourage all education workers and students to do the same.

This was a sign of things to come. The students and education workers have been the first to speak in response to the austerity attacks, we encourage the rest of the working class to follow.

WHITECHAPEL ANARCHIST GROUP

The media exposes its true role in our society, branding the students who took direct action yesterday as mindless vandals and attempting to cast them as a small minority, establishing a *status quo* that the bureaucrats of the NUS and the parasitical Left (SWP, etc.) enforce.

As usual, a scapegoat is wanted to explain away this phenomena, and the Whitechapel Anarchist Group are no strangers to playing this game, but it is not about our group or about the anarchist movement. The actions of the day were carried out by free-thinking, brave and passionate individuals who articulated their frustrations through action that struck at the core of power. We do not dismiss them as a crazy fringe. We stand shoulder to shoulder with *all* students who took direct action. Arrests are already over 50, and the state is sure to try and make an example of these young people so as to crush any opposition and instil fear within our society. We ask all those who will be and already are being affected by the cuts to stand together – the RMT, striking firemen, claimants being forced into slave labour, the mass of unemployed – the student body has shown the way and we must step up to the challenge. All protestors who have been arrested must be supported in all the means we have at our disposal – general strikes, mass occupation and direct action – we must stand shoulder to shoulder in struggle and not roll over and take it. The fightback is on.

Reclaiming the night

On 27th November an estimated 2,000 women and girls will march through central London on the Reclaim the Night march, an annual women only event seeking to bring women together to highlight the endemic problem of violence against women.

The first UK Reclaim the Night took place in Leeds in 1977, during the time of the Yorkshire Ripper, in response to the murders of prostitute women and in defiance at police advice for women to stay in at night. Over the years the march has evolved to focus on rape and male violence generally and by the late 1970s and '80s Reclaim the Night marches were taking place all over the world, and became a way for women to come together and visibly take a stand against sexual violence against women.

London's Reclaim the Night March in its current form was revived by London Feminist Network (LFN) in 2004, when 50 women marched. It has grown year on year and in 2009 over 2,000 women and girls marched. It has become a central and significant event for many London feminists.

The London event has had its fair share of controversy, especially in the past few years, with accusations of transphobia, police collaboration and regular physical and verbal altercations occurring between different groups of marchers on the issue of sex-work and prostitution, resulting in tediously inevitable confrontations as the march passes Sparmint Rhino.

This year's march sees a call to boycott the event from some feminists at the F-word (UK's biggest contemporary feminist on-line magazine, resource, etc., and populated by many significant feminist activists and academics) for cis-gendered¹ women to boycott the event because of perceived exclusion of trans women on the women-only march. Despite this contention, which



arises every year, LFN refuses to put on their publicity that trans women are welcome on the march, even though the event is open to all self-defining women.

The feminist movement in the UK is extremely diverse, comprising many political and personal perspectives, and the Reclaim the Night London march is reflective of this. There are women who make that march who are survivors of sexual violence, domestic violence and rape, women who have survived the sex industry or are sex work activists, women who are unemployed or under employed, feminist activists of socialist, liberal, anarchist persuasion, academics, students, trade unionists and workers from many women's organisations, charities and groups. And for many women, especially those new to feminism, it can be a liberating experience, a rare opportunity to experience a women-only space and often provides first contact with liberatory and participatory radical politics. It is not surprising that there is often political conflict, and the debates, discussions and disagreements should be seen as part of the essential consciousness-raising the women's liberation movement has always been committed too. Care must be taken however to ensure that the feminist movement does not become crippled by sectarianism. We must find ways to work together, we must recognise and build on the radical and revolutionary roots of our movement, and we must make clear that everybody is welcome and needed, especially all those who experience the violence of the enforced gender binary.

Coming together in spite of political differences is particularly crucial in light of the cuts that are occurring in women's services, particularly those dealing with and supporting women going through or dealing with the aftermath of domestic and sexual violence and rape. Reclaim the Night provides feminists with an opportunity to not only visibly take a stand against violence against women in all its many forms, but allow us to network and organise against the very real cuts that women's services and organisations are facing.

London Anarcha Feminist Kolektiv

Reclaim the Night will take place on Saturday 27th November. Assemble in Whitehall Place, at 6pm. It is a (self-defining) women-only march followed by an all genders rally and party at the Camden Centre. For more information visit www.reclaimthenight.org.

Background Information

- Why cis gendered attendees of RTN are letting trans women down? See http://www.thefword.org.uk/blog/2010/10/why_cis_attende
- Reclaim the Night: a space for all feminists. Open letter from Feminist Fightback to RTN organisers about physical and verbal altercations on the march and collaboration from march stewards with the police, see <http://www.feministfightback.org.uk/?p=207>

Footnote

1. Cis-gendered, in contrast to transgender, refers to an individual's gender identity and the behaviour or role considered appropriate for one's sex. Cisgender is a neologism that considers "someone who is comfortable in the gender they were assigned at birth."

RECLAIM THE NIGHT 2010


Join with women around the world to mark the United Nations International Day to End Violence Against Women by taking back the streets of London for this national, annual women's march against rape and male violence in all its forms.





SATURDAY 27TH NOVEMBER 2010


Assemble in Whitehall Place, central London, 6pm for women-only march through the centre of the capital to mixed rally at Camden Centre, Euston.

Speakers, stalls, hot Caribbean food, cakes, licensed bar and DJs until late — reclaim your right to party. All welcome.



For more information see our website www.reclaimthenight.org or contact — londonfeminist@yahoo.co.uk



INTERNATIONAL

IN BRIEF

BURMA: A 65-year old democracy activist and opposition leader, Aung San Suu Kyi, was released on the afternoon of 13th November. There was a brief stand-off between supporters and riot cops near her house. Meanwhile, the first election held in the country for 20 years unsurprisingly saw the junta's puppet party come to power.

GERMANY: Tens of thousands of people took to the streets across the country on 13th November against Angela Merkel's financial policies. The protest was organised by the umbrella union DGB. Demands included higher wages and the introduction of a mandatory minimum wage. The march comes a day ahead of the ruling Christian Democratic Union leaders' meeting to re-elect Merkel as the party leader.

MOROCCO: Moroccan security forces used tear gas and batons to clear a protest camp in the Western Sahara, resulting in many injured. There were about 20,000 in 8,000 tents in the camp. The question is that of the independence of Western Sahara, a former Spanish colony annexed by Morocco in 1975. The dispute is the longest of all land-related disputes in Africa.

PALESTINE: Israeli troops closed off a village in West Bank, declaring it a 'military zone' in order to prevent a rally in memory of Yasser Arafat. Homes were raided and inhabitants threatened not to participate in the rally, and checkpoints were established to prevent movement. Earlier in the week a peaceful demonstration against the Israeli Wall was attacked by the troops with gas and stun grenades.

POLAND: On 11th November, Independence Day, about 2,000 people, including members of ZSP, an anti-fascist organisation, clashed with cops as they tried to thwart a far-right nationalist demonstration. Over 33 people were arrested. On the same day four fascists who were on their way to the demonstration were beaten up by anti-fascists wearing balaclavas, who then managed to escape.

TURKEY: In a refreshingly rare legal victory, a UPS worker sacked illegally for joining the TUMTIS (Turkish Road Transport Union) was reinstated. In the last six months 162 UPS workers have been fired unjustly and have been carrying on a determined picket campaign to be reinstated. The Turkish labour law makes the principal employer jointly liable along with the sub-contractor for the latter's workplace-related decisions. So far 136 cases have been prosecuted.

VENEZUELA: There were mass arrests of 33 demonstrators who held up a train at the station in the capital Caracas in a protest against dangerous overburdening and severe delays the subway system. The transport ministry has predictably condemned the act as 'hijacking' and declared the protest illegal.

LENS CAP DREAMTIME?



Australia's Prime minister Julia Gillard has announced there is to be a referendum on whether to amend the constitution to recognise Aborigines as the country's original inhabitants, although some Aboriginal leaders condemned Gillard's proposal as tokenism, given the systematic repression and abuse of the peoples' in the past.

Another Chile miners saga

Miners at the massive Collahuasi copper mine have entered their second week of a strike over conditions and wages. The Collahuasi mine is the world's third largest producer of processed copper – almost 3.5% of the world's total output. The 1,550 unionised miners went on strike on the 5th November, demanding new wage agreements as well as opposing the company's proposal to extend beyond 2013 a routine whereby miners work for seven-day periods followed by seven days off.

"Our strike will be long and definitive," Union official Jacqueline Cerda asserted, adding that "The company is making stratospheric profits." Indeed, the company's official website had last year reported a profit increase of 36% to \$1.56 billion.

However the company is playing it cool and

continuing production using non-unionised and contract labour, claiming that output is normal. Emergency stockpiles of copper ore are being used to meet market requirements. But the union is adamant that the mine is running at 20% of its usual capacity. Business interests are speculating that the Collahuasi miners are planning to collude with other miners to reinforce their bargaining position with their bosses in the upcoming wage talks at three other mines.

Half of the workers are on strike at the mine site, while hundreds of others are protesting at the union's office in Iquique. Union members have also occupied an abandoned school in the city to draw attention to their plight and said they will use it as their office until the dispute over pay and benefits is settled.

Notes from the US

Election

More money was spent this year on the elections than on any previous 'mid-terms' – special interest groups spent US\$80 (£50) million on the November congressional elections, an increase of 500% over 2006.

In no small way this is a result of the Supreme Court's decision in the Citizens United case which opened the door to unlimited spending on elections (which only businesses and the rich can take full advantage of). It almost goes without saying that most money is being spent by the right – outspending unions and 'liberal' groups by seven to one.

At least one McDonald's store owner will be pleased with the result, though. In Canton, Ohio, workers were warned that if the Democrats won they wouldn't receive any pay rises. Their pay stubs in the week before the election also listed the Republican candidates to vote for.

Earnings

Talking of wages, the government's own figures for 2009 recently showed that the top 74 earners in the United States bring home more than do the 20 million lowest-

Marseilles, rebellious or obnoxious?

A firsthand personal account of the garbage-collectors protest in France

The 2013 European Capital of Culture made the headlines in October after transforming itself into the world capital of garbage. Not too flattering a prize, one would assume. Yet, the city was widely described as 'rebellious' for its opposition to a new bill.

It all began with le Président, as most gloomy things do since May 2007 in France. Not the thrifty type (at least where public money is concerned), His Highness Nicolas Sarkozy de Nagy-Bocsa announced in October that he would go ahead with a plan to increase the legal age of retirement from 60 to 62 for a minimum pension, and 65 to 67 for a full pension.

In less time than it takes a Brit to say 'frog', French workers took to the streets, some more eagerly than others. In Marseilles, they did it... their way, passionately and uncontrollably. After all, two extra years at work, in Marspeak, that's two less years of lie-ins, siestas, prolonged aperitifs and trips to the beach. So the incentive to go on strike was there and for three entire weeks, most people did what they ought to do anyway under normal circumstances: not work for anyone and spend time with their loved ones.

The situation quickly became unsustainable, the most noticeable sign of which being the rubbish piling up in the streets, striking dustmen oblige. That alone wasn't too problematic, until rats began gatecrashing, (relatively) clean air disappeared, modern



versions of the caveman reappeared and rediscovered how to make fire (a fag butt in a heap of fermenting refuse does the trick magnificently), cars parked next to the burning dustbins went in flames, the chemist's at the corner of my street was ablaze, and anyone's imagination can picture the rest.

One cool side-effect of the mayhem was that, in the streets of Marseilles, the word 'anarchy' came back in vogue. But the coolness stopped there. The words I would put on that already-gone, smelly October in Marseilles, are 'lethargy' instead of 'anarchy' and 'obnoxious' instead of 'rebellious'.

Striking is good, protesting is healthy and burning stuff can even have a cathartic effect on some, but the whole thing is absolutely useless if it doesn't trigger changes of some kind. Now, what came out of those (non) events? The dustmen went back to work and Marseilles' Council decided to pay half of the 'unworked days' (as we word it so tellingly in French), announcing literally three days later that the Council Tax would go up by 21% in 2011.

So what changed? Sweet frog all, except the minimum age of retirement. Retiring at 62/67 became law on 10th November.

Notes from the US

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paid. Average and total wages for all income brackets except the highest declined in 2009 as well. That was also the 12-month period in which one out of every 34 of those who had earned anything in 2008 actually earned nothing at all.

Along similar lines, a new congressional study by the House Energy and Commerce Committee has revealed that the number of people who were denied medical coverage because of 'pre-existing conditions' has grown by nearly half. Over the last three years the four top insurer profiteers (Aetna, Humana, UnitedHealth Group and WellPoint) have denied coverage to 49% more claimants because of their medical history. If you're already in any way ill, in other words, 'we're not going to help you – it would be too costly'. Three years ago 172,000 were in this category. Last year over a quarter of a million were. As reported earlier this year in *Freedom*,

pregnancy is considered (by these insurers) to be just such a 'pre-existing condition', which usually results in an automatic denial of coverage.

So, protest? Well, there were developments in October in Canada in the case of Alex Hundert, the G20 protest organiser arrested during the summit in June and held for three weeks. On release, he was bailed under conditions that surprised Canadian lawyers – he was forbidden to speak to the media, to participate in any public demonstration or political event, and even forbidden to see his girlfriend without supervision! In mid-September Hundert was arrested again and held for almost a month in jail for speaking on a panel discussion at a university. Released on 13th October, he was arrested again almost immediately without the police revealing why.

Louis Further

G20 Seoul

In another routine display of contempt for what the general population thinks, the G20 top dogs have gone ahead with their business in the South Korean capital, Seoul. Between 20,000 and 40,000 people protested on 7th November, against which 50,000 police were deployed nationwide.

Thousands came out again on the 11th shouting 'Stop G20' and 'No FTA'. Demands included job security and withdrawal of Korean troops from Afghanistan, amid complaints of government repression against unions and migrant workers.

The march was organised by 'Put People First! Korean People's G20 Response Action', a federation of 83 civic groups and were joined by independents, students and international activists. Despite an incident of one woman trying to set herself on fire, the protests have been reported to be non-violent.

FEATURE

On the untold story of Anti Fascist Action

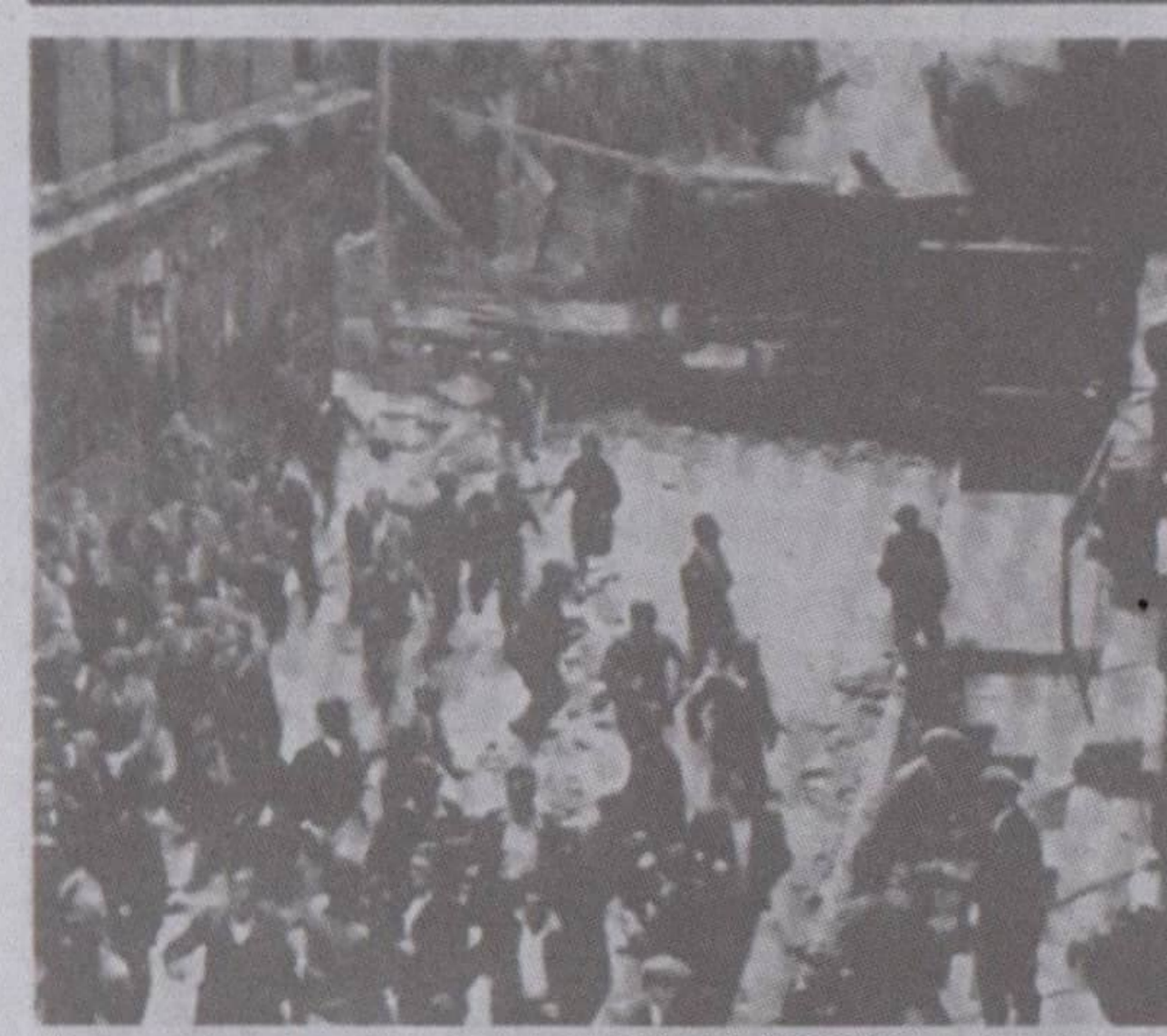
First of a two part extended review of *Beating the Fascists* – its insights and implications

Previously everything from the Red Action stable has been crucial to any understanding of both left wing working class politics and politics in general, past and present in the UK, and so this is. Hard to put down, *Beating the Fascists* is a no-holds-barred account of Red Action (RA) and Anti Fascist Action's

If we agree the vacuum needs to be filled ... then ... if not this way, how? If not us, who? If not now, when? (Red Action)

practical and ruthless application of their aims, principles and practice, of making space for working class politics to develop unfettered by the threat of fascism. If you want to read it for the violence, it competes well with any of the Cass Pennant (West Ham hooligan and author) pulp, but really that would be a waste. A waste of all the blood (and there is lots) and sweat that was lost in the making of this book. And a waste of a significant percentage of working class political analysis in print since 1979. *Beating the Fascists* stands as the critical book on post war UK anti-fascism, in the fact it is written by those involved (not academics) and that its conclusions desperately deserve recognition and immediate application by all those who

BEATING THE FASCISTS



An old East End tradition
NATIONAL DEMONSTRATION
AGAINST RACIST ATTACKS

Assemble 1.00 p.m. Sunday 10th November
Aldgate East tube, Whitechapel High Street, London E1

anti-fascist action

read it and indeed profess to be socialists or anti-fascists in a period when a neo-fascist party gets a million votes in a Euro election. If anarchists, Unit Against Fascism (UAF) or whoever fail to read it and listen to it then it is an indictment on them not the authors.

Mostly any working class orientated anarchists will agree with the politics expressed in *Beating the Fascists*. The need at times to physically confront fascism, the importance of class above race, the opposition to opportunism in the likes of the SWP, the attacks on careerists like Lee Jasper and the racist nonsense of Red Action being told they should have Race Awareness Training, and the critique of multi-culturalism and the role multi-culturalism plays in giving the BNP legitimacy to 'represent' white people when all other 'ethnicity' are represented, "... the underlying thesis behind multi-culturalism was not merely flawed by wrongheaded, reactionary and anti-working class..."

But as an anarchist there are some elements within *Beating the Fascists* that do need comment. By the way I treat this as a Red Action book as much as an AFA book, as it is indeed written from the RA perspective.

It was widely and ignorantly alleged pre-publication that *Beating the Fascists* would be a 'slag-off' of anarchist anti-fascists, betraying an ignorance of Red Action's history of close work with working class anarchism, directly with the Direct Action Movement (DAM) and indirectly with many others (including myself throughout the late 1980s). *Beating the Fascists* reports accurately, and sympathetically, Class War's expulsion from AFA in 1986 on Searchlight planted smears and lies of racism and links with the NF. They miss the story, though, that during the debate, as the platform were losing the argument to Class War, a tearful woman got up and emotionally stated that Class War had petrol bombed a Refugee Centre in Camden; at which point all hell broke loose, and Class War got up and left, followed, as the book describes, by RA and DAM. The truth of the smear was of course entirely different, as we discovered later. Turns out squatters had burnt a A4 possession order pinned to the door of an evicted squat in Camden that unbeknown to the squatters (who were not even Class War!) had been allocated to a refugee group. We all know about Stalinist smears, but to see these operated so disgustingly remains with me to this day.

As regards Searchlight, who most on the anarchist movement understand to be utterly bent, *Beating the Fascists* sits on the fence. Searchlight smeared Class War four times in the period of this book, were exposed previously to that by Duncan Campbell in the 1970s and exposed by O'Hara and themselves on many other occasions. Yet RA carried on working with them. Throughout



Above, A fascist gets taught a lesson at Speakers' Corner, Hyde Park, 27th May 1989; below left, Flyer advertising an AFA national demonstration on 23rd April 1988; below right, a right-winger at the Bloody Sunday Commemoration in Manchester on 28th January 1996.

the book there are instances of Searchlight lies and dodgy behaviour, yet a few pages later we see RA/AFA remain working with them. Indeed the book states they only truly split after the Patrick Hayes issue. And Searchlight were only proscribed by AFA in 1998.

Specifically I find it hard to believe *Beating the Fascists* does not regard the Kensington Town Hall League of St George Meeting in 1991 as a set up by Searchlight, to get RA members arrested and sent down, as it appears to everyone I know. If it was not a Searchlight set up, it was sheer idiocy. *Beating the Fascists* suggests that Gerry Gable's tears on acquittal suggest there was no set up and that Gable claims he himself was set up for investigating the secret services. As if working with the security services, as Gable did, would protect him? Trap sprung, it caught happily for the both security services perps. It was a Searchlight op from start to finish and for many of us with the boundaries between the security services and Searchlight blurred there was only ever one conclusion. I was there and I was also one of the ones

who, sooner rather than later, wanted out as the whole op was crazy and, as the book points out, not long after AFA to 'pull the plug'. RA were lucky they walked away from court on this.

Considering all the evidence both in *Beating the Fascists* and outside, which RA know only too well, the snake Nick Lowles and Searchlight get off remarkably lightly. I suspect it is due to the contradiction of working class anti-fascism that, while their agenda is working class, they end up having to work with people who have reactionary agendas like Searchlight. They obviously continued to receive useful information from Searchlight and to cut that off must have been a step too far. Understandable, but wrong. It is stated in *Beating the Fascists* that "sooner rather than later a progressive left will have to declare war on conservative anti-fascism" but bizarrely AFA never felt it had the confidence to do this.

There are also contradictory comments on Third Period Stalinism. *Beating the Fascists* both notes favourably the Trotskyist critique/myth of the KPD that they did not do enough to fight the Nazis (and Trotsky's support for

anti fascist squads) but also the critique that the KPD operated 'terrorism' against the NSPAD. Actually RA of all people should argue that the issue in the late 1920s and early '30s was not a lack of opposition to the Nazis but, like now, how to fill the



vacuum. While the SPD was the mass party (25–30% of the vote at every election) it was discredited amongst millions of working class for its betrayals, the KPD could then have filled the vacuum, but it was their Leninist politics that made them incapable of relating to the unemployed millions, not their lack of bottle or theory of social fascism. The KPD incidentally never achieved more than 17% of the vote in Germany, and even combined the two parties only hit 40% the once in 1928.

From an anarchist perspective there is little discussion about the mode of operation. From one perspective, the pretty militaristic and top-down MO seems the best way of operating. It certainly produced the goods and protected the participants over a long period. At the time it pisses many anarchists off but for what were the aims, I am not sure the organisation could have been anything different. It is maybe in fact that RA were unable to operate sufficiently openly after the demise of AFA that highlights the dangers of adopting such organisation.

Which brings us to the actual logic of militant anti-fascism. Whilst a chronicle of physical force anti-fascism, in fact the conclusion of *Beating the Fascists* is that that is finished and we must move into a door-to-door strategy. This is a conclusion I believe anarchists should agree with but I, in fact, would go further and say that what is missing from the book is an acknowledgement that what made RA special was not their ability in close combat but their fundamentalism as regards class in politics.

Richard Price
Hackney

Part 2 next issue: Nationalism, community politics and the BNP – how Anti-Fascist Action addressed them in the book.

Beating the Fascists is available from Freedom Press at £15 (post free in the UK) by mail order from 84b Whitechapel High Street, London E1 7QX, or from our website at freedompress.org.uk.

COMMENT

ABOUT FREEDOM

ANGEL ALLEY

"Whenever anarchists become prominent in a riot or some other disorder, the hacks of Fleet Street troop down to the Freedom Bookshop in Aldgate East and interview the people down there. Being completely ignorant, they imagine that the Freedom Group in some sense represents mainstream anarchism. They could not be more wrong."

Thus wrote a contributor to the 1992 *Anarchist Yearbook*. Well, for good or ill, most of the hacks of Wapping are trooping down to our comrades at Whitechapel Anarchist Group, who have done extremely well from all we've seen and heard so far. However we will allow ourselves a tiny bit of self congratulation that Freedom is no longer one faction in the anarchist movement but has input from both national federations and local and campaigning groups. The proof of this was seen when it was anarchists of various backgrounds who came trooping down to Angel Alley to work on media and legal defence strategy after Wednesday's student demo, as well as keeping an eye out on Brick Lane after reports that the EDL might be around.

Like the student demo, we should not get carried away, but as a well known cigar smoking warmonger once said, "it is perhaps the end of the beginning..."

SUBSCRIPTIONS

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NEXT ISSUE

The next issue will be dated 4th December 2010 and the last day to get copy to us for that issue will be Thursday 25th November. You can send your articles to us by email to copy@freedompress.org.uk or by post addressed to 'The Editors', Freedom, 84b Whitechapel High Street, London E1 7QX.

A sideways look

by SVARTFROSK

In the current climate, it is often said by the pro-capitalist media that anarchists are all critical and have no serious suggestions, for example, for savings from the state's budget. This is not true, but I agree we do sometimes give an impression of just being 'against cuts'.

When Cameron got in, he promised a root and branch review of everything the government does. The Comprehensive Spending Review implies that it is looking at building a budget from the base. What could be more reasonable than looking at what is needed by different areas of government activity, then allocating the funds based on that? Which is one reason it will never happen.

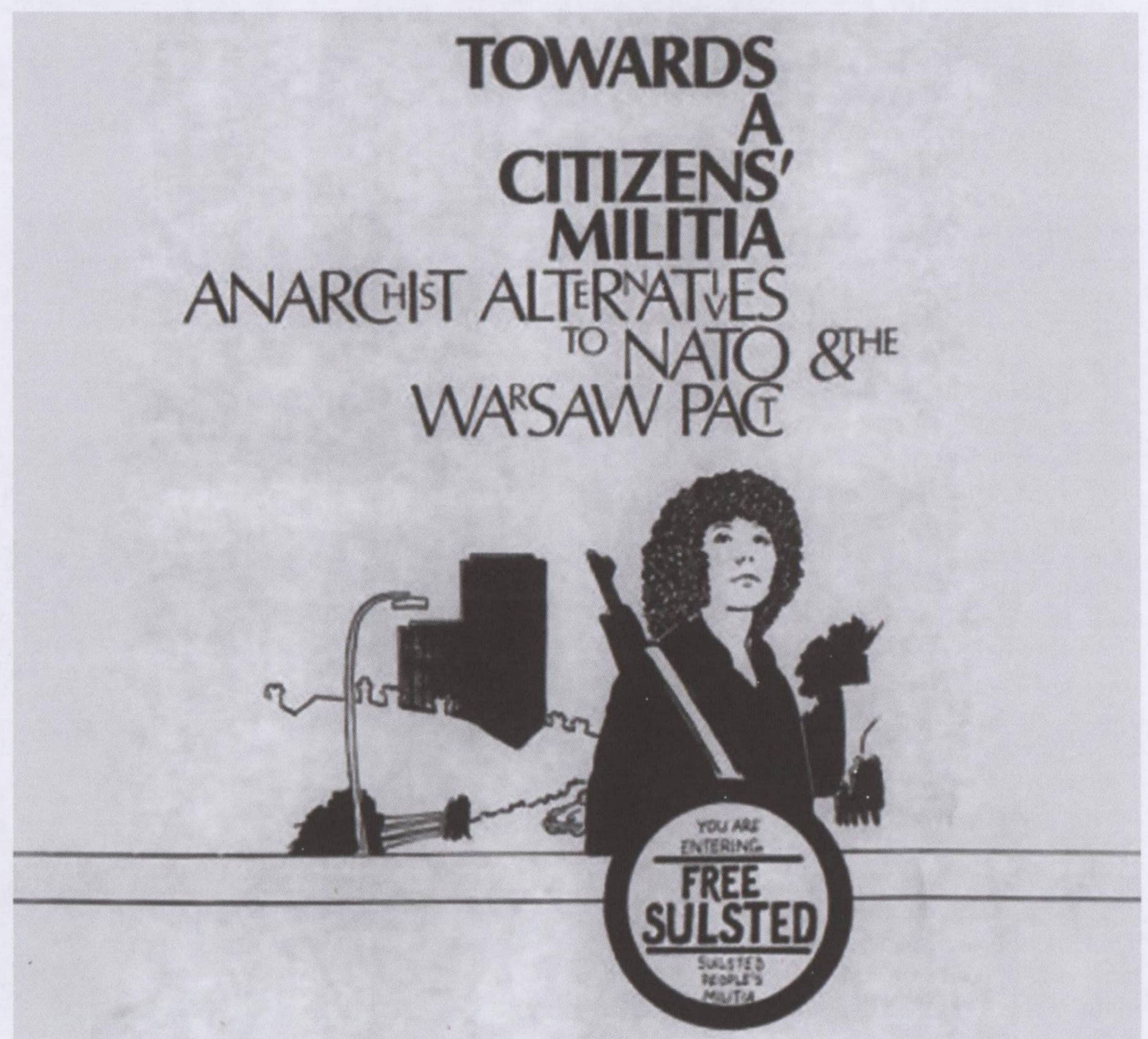
Far be it from me to make suggestions as to how the Con-Dem coalition might manage capitalism better, but there is one anarchist gem going back thirty years which could really help balance those pesky books. In 1980, Cienfuegos Press published *Towards a Citizens Militia: Anarchist Alternatives to NATO and the Warsaw Pact*. It caused quite a furore at the time, was denounced by all the usual suspects and wildly misrepresented.

A mere 36 pages, it gave practical advice on resisting invasion by a foreign power. It was drawn from already-existing sources that were accessible only to the military and specialists who looked out for them. Given that the Warsaw pact has long gone and the alleged threats to Britain come from countries on the other side of the world like Iran or North Korea, who are unlikely to invade, or from terrorists of the far right or Islamic

right, you might ask what use it is now? Frankly, on one level, you'd be quite right. The threats faced are totally different and there is no serious risk of invasion this side of a successful revolutionary movement.

However, all three of the main parties at Westminster seem to think there is a major threat. They are worried about going 'naked into the conference chamber' and wish to keep nuclear weapons and a substantial conventional army, navy and air force, even if the aircraft carriers come without planes. Total cost for 2011-12 will be £33.8 billion. Now, the pamphlet from 1980 argued that defence based on something other than nukes is possible. Not only is it possible, some countries actually go some way towards practising it. And how has a high-technology military fared in the UK's recent wars against guerilla insurgents? Not well, as is evidenced by the military backing the Tories and complaining they've not got enough equipment. They may not, but they still have more than the people they're fighting, which suggests something else is going on.

There are knock-on effects from demilitarising the UK and switching to a citizens militia. For a start, arms dealing is one of Britain's few international success stories. A citizens' militia would mean a lot more guns in circulation, as they would need to be stored close to hand in homes or workplaces. I'm not particularly comfortable with guns being easy to come by, but I think the very idea scares our rulers witless. From their point of view, it's £33.8 billion well spent.



The image anarchism projects

In his short but inspirational book *Fragments of an Anarchist Anthropology*, David Graeber points out that there will be times during any revolution when the worst thing you can possibly do is raise red and black flags and begin issuing bold declarations. Sometimes the wisest thing is not to confront state power (wasting valuable time and energy that could be spent building the structures of a free society within the shell of the old), but to ignore it entirely.

These were some of the thoughts that came to mind as I watched footage of the student protests which ended in the siege of Tory HQ. The inevitable emphasis of the mainstream media on broken glass and projectiles, seamlessly intercut with protestors waving anarchist flags, I need not remind you will have the effect of further cementing the associations, in the minds of the general public at least, between anarchism and violence.

This sort of publicity does as much good for anarchists as the 9-11 and 7-7 terrorist atrocities did for Muslims.

Now more than ever we need to think about the image that anarchism projects to the world at large. That may be a challenge, given the mainstream media's hunger for stories involving violence, but it is a challenge worth rising to. Bakuninist calls to arms aside, anarchism has always had a strong pacifist, communitarian strain, embodied in the ideas of Tolstoy, Thoreau and Kropotkin, and in the creation of autonomous enterprises like Food Not Bombs, Indymedia and volunteer-run social centres.

It is these aspects of anarchism, these forms of mutual aid and voluntary cooperation, that we need to build and publicise here and now, to strengthen our critique of capitalism. Capitalism is increasingly violent and predatory, our aim should be to pose viable alternatives, not mirror it.

Fellow Traveller

Prison riots

Prison riots in Britain, such as those recently at HMP/YOI Moorland and HMYOI Warren Hill [see prison news on page 14] are often sedate affairs, but in Brazil they do things slightly differently. On 8th November a fight between rival gangs in separate prison blocks broke out at the Pedrinhas prison in Sao Luis, a city in northern Brazil. It lasted for 27 hours straight, six prison guards were taken hostage and at least 18 prisoners were left dead, including up to six who were beheaded by rival gang members.

Meanwhile, in a regional court in Samara, Russia, eight defendants standing trial for participating in a riot at the maximum security Samara penitentiary in September 2008 slit their wrists with razor blades during the court hearing. They are amongst 18 prisoners facing 13-27 years additional time for participating in a riot that saw four watchtowers, eight guard stations and much

of the prison torched, leaving two inmates dead and more than 30 more injured.

Bra Bros

Millbank defence campaign

We are a network of people committed to unconditional solidarity with those demonstrating at the Conservative Party HQ in Millbank on 10th November 2010.

This is the least we can do. The state and corporate media have already started a campaign of repression. We have experience of dealing with state repression with defence campaigns. From the Poll Tax Rioters to the Demonstrators against the Israeli Invasion of Gaza (December 2008 to January 2009) and the EDO Decommissioners (January 2009 to May 2010) experience tells us you should be calm and careful what you say and do from now on.

Irrespective of whether you did anything you feel was criminal, the fact that you were at the Conservative HQ on the day in question means you will be treated as a criminal if the police can get away with it.

ADVICE NOW

1. SAY NOTHING TO NO-ONE THAT DOES NOT NEED TO KNOW

You have the right to silence. This means you have the right not to incriminate yourself. So we recommend you do *not*. *say nothing to no-one online or offline, on the phone or in person* about the events. The Police are the State= Babylon= Massa. They are a bureaucratic military organisation *never* to be trusted.

Even if the police put your name and photo in the newspaper, arrest you, take your photo,

you have a right to a solicitor at the police station. Even if they have your picture, and say you committed an offence it does not mean you committed *that* offence or any offence at all. A picture of you touching a So *call a good solicitor*. Again, if you are interviewed, *say nothing*.

2. BE EXTREMELY CAREFUL IN ATTENDING FUTURE DEMOS considering what has happened.

3. KEEP A SOLICITORS NAME AND EMERGENCY NUMBER ON YOU AT ALL TIME

We personally recommend anyone that *may* need a solicitor to opt for Christian Khan Solicitors 020 7631 9500 (ask for Kat Craig) and their emergency 24-hour number is 07659105246, or Hodge Jones & Allen Solicitors (ask for Raj) on 08004370080 or 07659111192.

4. CONSIDER STAYING WITH FRIENDS UNASSOCIATED WITH THE DEMO OR CAMPAIGN SO YOU ARE NOT ISOLATED IF ARRESTED

5. CONTACT US: WE ARE HERE TO HELP

In the coming weeks we will provide more information but sign up to keep updated.

If you have any questions and would like *any help* please contact us. If there is anything you would like to talk about in person please arrange to meet.

We will be raising funds and collating evidence for defence cases and will be in touch with further information in the coming weeks.

November 10th Defence Campaign
remember10112010@gmail.com

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GETTING ACTIVE

PRISON NEWS

The big news in the past fortnight has been the disturbances at HMP/YOI Moorland near Doncaster. This prison, with over 1,000 places, is divided into closed and open sites with separate adult and juvenile blocks, and it was the closed Young Offenders block that erupted initially on Tuesday 2nd November.

Prison officers claim a fight between rival street-gang members sparked the first night's events and also appear to have resulted in three screws being assaulted, with a female staff member suffering a broken jaw. Whatever the initial cause, the 40 young offenders who refused to return to their cells at 7pm ended up causing 'significant damage' to a recreation area. That same night, 60 young offenders at HMYOI Warren Hill in Suffolk also rioted after they had had their evening association stopped, resulting in injuries to three juveniles and two staff with 100 prison places lost due to damage. Tornado riot teams ended their spree at 5.45am.

Warren Hill remained quiet the following day after 48 prisoners were transferred out and extra screws put on duty, but the unrest at Moorland continued, despite the 'ringleaders' being segregated and 86 young offenders being moved to other prisons. That evening saw 55 of the 15-18 year olds again refuse to return to their cells and they then proceeded to wreck the unit for the following eight hours, using pool balls and cues as weapons against prison staff. A mass show of force, with well over 100 Tornado officers, ended the riot and one prisoner was hospitalised following a self-harm incident.

The YOI block remained on lockdown on Thursday night, but Houseblock One in the adult unit erupted instead, with over 100 prisoners on the rampage for seven hours. Cells and offices were damaged and computers and electrical system destroyed. Some prisoners even set up electrified bed frames as barricades, according to the Prison Officers Association (POA). However, one has to take their claims with a pinch of salt as they claim that the three days of riots caused £10 million worth of damage where the police were claiming only £1 million, and that included changing all the prison's locks following the loss of a set of screw's keys. Friday was much less eventful following the transfer out of a further 166 prisoners and the drafting in to the prison of an extra 100 screws to try and keep a lid on things.

Unsurprisingly, given the announcement of large-scale cuts in prison staff, Coalition ministers were noticeably silent about a riot at a prison which had previously been heavily criticised by the Prisons Inspectorate for its too-high use of force and the number of prisoners banged up all day due to lack of 'purposeful activities'. The POA however were swift to blame that and the riots on the previous government's cuts and to issue dire warnings of things to come.



● In response to a call from Palestine for solidarity with their struggle against the apartheid wall, the **Palestine Solidarity Campaign (PSC)** held a Boycott Divestment and Sanctions 'Week of Action' from the 6th to the 16th November 2010. The PSC focused on four companies complicit in the occupation, through a variety of actions – from street protests, e-lobbying, phone-in and social networking sites – to get more people involved in the boycott movement and help bring an end to Israel's occupation. The companies include: Ahava skin care products, whose natural resources are produced in the illegal settlement of Mitzpe Shalem; British Telecom for breaching its ethical policy by its partnership with Bezeq international, which provides telecommunications to illegal settlements; Veolia, a leading partner in the CityPass consortium, contracted to build a light-rail tramway linking west Jerusalem to illegal Jewish settlements in occupied east Jerusalem.

Get in touch with the local PSC branches to find out how you can get involved in your area, see palestinecampaign.org/branches, or the boycott campaign at bigcampaign.org/

● On Saturday 30th October the **United Families & Friends Campaign (UFFC)** held its 12th annual Remembrance Procession in memory of those who have died in police custody, in prison and in psychiatric care. A silent procession to Downing Street was followed by a loud and vocal march on to Parliament Square.

UFFC was formed in early 1997 as a coalition of families and friends of those who have died while in the custody of police

and prison officers, as well as those who have been killed in secure psychiatric hospitals. Since forming, they have consistently challenged the Police Complaints Authority, its successor the Independent Police Complaints Commission, the Crown Prosecution Service and the government to hold those accountable for the deaths in custody – nothing less than the prosecution of the killers of their family members will do. On a number of occasions they have lobbied the government to hold inquiries into these deaths but they have always been refused.

In the UK, one person a week is killed as a result of contact with the police and there have been no prosecutions for murder or manslaughter.

The campaign desperately needs practical and financial support and anyone who can contribute is urged to get in touch: United Families & Friends Campaign, c/o INQUEST, 89-93 Fonthill Rd, London N4 3JH.

● Comrades at **London Class War** have decided to re-launch the group as part of a more pro-active initiative. Given the upsurge in a more confrontational and astute approach to radical politics, those involved felt Class War once again had a role to play, especially in light of the growing anti-cuts movement.

Having previously allowed the group to become a mechanising outlet and propaganda vehicle, some new young blood have conspired with a dash of old hands to re-ignite the fiery rhetoric that made the group such a dangerous and popular anarchist fixture during the turmoil of the 1980s and 1990s. Anyone interested in getting involved should contact localnews4us@yahoo.co.uk

Anarchists of the East End

Joe Jacobs recounts his first encounter with the anarchists

Memory can play tricks on you and you will forgive me if my dates are not always exact, but it must have been 1925. I was almost twelve years old with a few months to spare before returning to school. The rest of the children over the age of three to four were at school. I was in the street where I usually sought to occupy myself without daring to go far away from my small section, when I heard what sounded like a drum being beaten, coming from the direction of Varden Street, which joined my street forming a T-junction. I hurried towards the sound and as I reached the corner I saw a huge multi-coloured banner blowing in the breeze, held by two men on either side with straps over their shoulder meeting at the waist into a brass fitting in which rested the pole supporting the banner walking in front was slightly built man and I was looking into his face which seemed to have a sort of 'far away' look ... Across the top were the words 'The London Jewish Bakers' Trade Union' ... There were about 20 men following the banner and one of them was beating a drum. Bringing up the rear was a man carrying what looked like a small collapsible step ladder.

I was so fascinated that it was some time before I realised that I had left our street and was in fact several streets away, as I followed the procession to the middle of the road, I noticed we had acquired the presence of a policeman walking alongside on the pavement. I continued to follow, seemingly unable to stop and turn back. We arrived at a baker's shop in Jubilee Street. There was a man walking up and down outside with a red armband, bearing the word 'Picket'. He had two placards suspended from his shoulders with words painted on them. I can't remember what they were.

Jubilee Street is where I was told Stalin stayed during his short visit to London. Between Jubilee Street and my street is another street running parallel – all three extending from Commercial Road to the south and Whitechapel Road to the north. This is the famous Sidney Street. I heard many personal accounts of the siege so often connected with Winston Churchill's career as Home Secretary. Most of these tales, which have become part of the folklore of my East End, seldom refer to Peter the Painter and his friends as bandits or criminals, but as anarchists and part of a revolutionary organisation.

The procession stopped, the banner was lowered to the ground the man with the step ladder opened it and it turned out to be a speaker's platform. The thin man with the faraway look climbed onto it and began to talk, at first quite quietly. Gradually his voice got louder and louder. The faraway



look had gone and he became at times very angry and spoke with great emotion. His message was so simple even I could understand it. After describing the terrible condition in which bakers worked, the heat, the long hours through the night, the low wages, the threat of instant dismissal if you displeased the boss and so on, he said that the only way the men could relieve their suffering was to organise in Trade Unions to meet the attacks of the boss by their own united action. This strike, for this is what it was, started because some employers had refused to recognise this union who were demanding that they should stick a small label on the bread which said, 'This is made by Trade Union Labour'. It was not uncommon to see such labels on a variety of products in those days. Many printers still continue this practice. This must have been the first time I heard the words 'United we stand, divided we fall'. I heard them often enough from speakers on many platforms, as time passed.

After about twenty minutes, the speaker left the platform, the procession reformed and we all moved off. The crowd which had formed round the platform dispersed, all talking to each other as they went. We

proceeded as before but by a different route all through the back streets for about a mile or more before arriving at another baker's in a narrow turning called Plumbers Row. The same procedure as before followed outside this shop and once again we left and headed for Walden Street where we all stopped outside a small building. The semi-basement was the headquarters of the London Jewish Bakers' Union. All the men went inside after rolling up the banner with loving care.

The man who had captivated me was called 'Proof', the organising secretary of the union, who I was to hear described as 'The Anarchist'. He went back to Russia some time after the incident I have described. I did hear that he died as a result of his disagreement with the Bolsheviks but I don't know if that is true. It was about 2.30pm and I had been missing from our street for about three hours. I realised then that I was very hungry. I felt elated. I imagine this is how a drug taker must feel after his first 'fix'. Most certainly, something had entered by bloodstream.

From Joe Jacob's seminal political autobiography *Out of the Ghetto*.

REVIEWS

WHAT'S ON

NOVEMBER

■ 20th Northern march against racism, meet 12 noon at Stanhope Street, Arthurs Hill, Newcastle Upon Tyne, for details email tynesidecarn@yahoo.co.uk

■ 20th Nottingham Save Our Services demo, meet 11.30am at Forest Recreation Ground, Nottingham, march to rally at Market Square, Nottingham, for details see <http://nottssos.org.uk>

■ 23rd Picket Nick Clegg in Camden at the Hugo Young Lecture, Kings Place Hall, 190 York Way, London N1 9GU, from 6pm to 9pm – come along and confront him in person – for further details see www.coalitionofresistance.org.uk/?p=3563

■ 24th National walkout and day of action with student occupations and protests against fees and cuts, mobilising university and college students across the country to protest against the increase in fees and cuts to education funding – don't wait for an organised demonstration on your campus, just go for it yourselves from 11am until 9pm, see <http://anticuts.com> or <http://on.fb.me/dxjlll> for more.

■ 24th Liverpool Protest Against Cuts and Fees, after walking out of your school, college or university, head to the Guild of Students, Mount Pleasant, Liverpool, for a rally at 12 noon then march through the city centre to the Town Hall, see facebook.com/event.php?eid=100821293322538

■ 26th to 28th Dissent! A counter-summit camp in response to the G8-G20 in Dijon, France – we propose to bring our stories, experiences, political perceptions, thematic concerns, types of action, to think together on new forms of resistance, full details of locations and times will be sent out by email, contact dissent_fr@riseup.net or see www.dissent-fr.eu for details.

DECEMBER

■ 3rd Benefit gig for Bristol's autonomous spaces – Bristol squatters are a thriving network doing everything from debt advice to bike maintenance, and the squats in Stokes Croft are under threat of eviction – this will be a thumping big gig with ska-punk, acoustic and more at Easton Community Centre, Easton, Bristol, from 9pm until 2am, £5 before 10pm, £7 after, for more see <http://kebelesound.wordpress.com>

■ 4th Global Day of Action on climate change, march on Parliament for Climate Justice and be part of a Global Day of Action on climate, assemble at 12 noon at Speakers Corner, Hyde Park, London for Zero Carbon March, then 2pm rally in Parliament Square, for details phone 020 7833 9311, see globalclimatecampaign.org or campaigncc.org.

■ 4th Norfolk march against the cuts, join in as Norwich erupts in a conflagration of public discontent at the cuts, meet 12 noon at Chapelfield Gardens, Norwich, NR2 1SU and then march to the Forum, for details email ncac@btconnect.com or see norfolkcoalitionagainstcuts.org.

ON THE WRONGS OF

Iain McKay revisits a classic early libertarian socialist vision of a free society

Proudhon's *What is Property?* is a classic for many reasons. Not only did it put a name to a tendency within socialism ("I am an Anarchist") and raise a battle-cry against inequality ("Property is Theft!"), it also sketched a new, free society: anarchy.

The bulk of the book contains Proudhon's searing critique of property. This rests on two key concepts. Firstly, property allowed the owner to exploit its user ("property is theft"). Secondly, that property created authoritarian social relationships between the two ("property is despotism"). These are interrelated, as it is the oppression that property creates which ensures exploitation, while the appropriation of our common heritage by the few gives the rest little alternative but to agree to such domination and let the owner appropriate the fruits of their labour. The notion that workers are free when capitalism forces them to seek employment was demonstrably false: "We

who belong to the proletarian class, property excommunicates us!"

Proudhon's genius and the power of his critique was that he took all the defences of, and apologies for, property and showed that, logically, they could be used to attack that institution. For example, to those who argued that property was required to secure liberty Proudhon rightly objected that "if the liberty of man is sacred, it is equally sacred in all individuals; that, if it needs property for its objective action, that is, for its life, the appropriation of material is equally necessary for all." His critiques of the various rationales for property still hold true, showing how the defenders of property had to choose between self-interest and principle, between hypocrisy and logic.

He contrasts property with possession, the former being "the right to use [something] by his neighbour's labour." *Property* results in the farmer toiling for a landlord or the worker producing for a capitalist. *Possession* is when those who use a resource control it: the worker in a co-operative or the self-employed artisan. Only the former creates "the exploitation of man by man" and authoritarian social relationships.

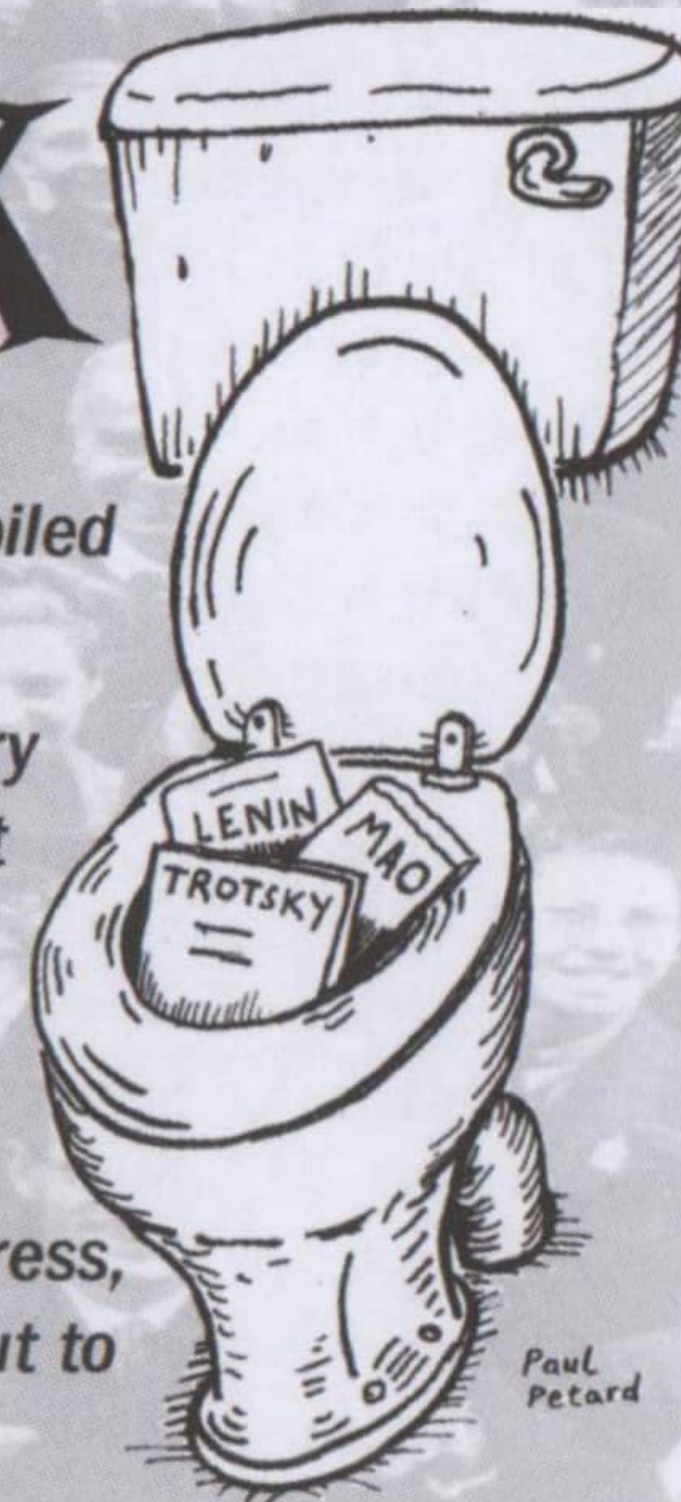
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The Anarchist Quiz Book

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.

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QUIZ ANSWERS

1. Comedian George Carlin.
2. The very existence of flame-throwers proves that some time, somewhere, someone said to themselves, 'You know, I want to set those people over there on fire, but I'm just not close enough to get the job done.'
3. In October 1926, the Shelton Brothers dropped dynamite from a plane on to Shady Rest, the fortified headquarters of

- rival bootlegger Charlie Birger.
4. According to the Book of Isaiah, "They shall beat their swords into ploughshares and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation shall not lift up sword against nation. Neither shall they learn war anymore." Sounds good to me, not sure that many who take the Bible literally have paid much attention to this bit.

PROPERTY RIGHTS

This, he argues, is the cause of capitalism's inequality and crises, the contradictions ("property is impossible") inherent in a system in which workers are exploited by owners. Long before Marx, Proudhon argued for a "scientific socialism" and that workers produced a surplus-value (*aubaine*, translated, as usual, as 'increase') which is appropriated by their boss:

"Whoever labours becomes a proprietor ... And when I say proprietor, I do not mean simply (as do our hypocritical economists) proprietor of his allowance, his salary, his wages – I mean proprietor of the value he creates, and by which the master alone profits ... *The labourer retains, even after he has received his wages, a natural right in the thing he has produced.*"

The capitalist also unjustly appropriates the additional value produced by joint activity, so while the boss "paid all the individual forces, the collective force still remains to be paid." The "free worker produces ten; for me, thinks the proprietor, he will produce twelve" and so to "satisfy property, the labourer must first produce beyond his needs." Thus exploitation occurs within the workplace thanks to the worker having "sold and surrendered his liberty" to the proprietor.

Interestingly, Proudhon argues that as a "result of collective force," all property becomes "collective" and "undivided." Thus his analysis of exploitation *within* production is used to inform his vision of a free society.

So if we really seek liberty for all, we need to abolish property ("If the right of life is equal, the right of labour is equal, and so is the right of occupancy."). Property must be socialised for just "as the traveller does not appropriate the route which he traverses, so the farmer does not appropriate the field which he sows" and "all accumulated capital being social property, no one can be its exclusive proprietor." Workers' self-management must replace wage-labour as managers "must be chosen from the labourers by the labourers themselves."

In short: "those who do not possess today are proprietors by the same title as those who do possess; but instead of inferring that property should be shared by all, I demand, in the name of general security, its entire abolition." Only *collective* ownership and management ensures workers are not exploited – not to mention liberty for all rather than a few for, whether on the land or in industry, the aim was to create a society of "possessors without masters."

Proudhon's vision of a society based on possession (free access, use-rights) has led some to suggest that he favoured small-scale property. This is not the case. All through *What is Property?* he argues for social, common ownership of the means of



production (the "land is indispensable to our existence, consequently a common thing, consequently insusceptible of appropriation"; "all capital, whether material or mental, being the result of collective labour, is, in consequence, collective property").

This may be lost in Proudhon's forceful critique of "community." As usual, the term 'community' (*la communauté*) is here translated as 'communism'. This causes problems as the ideas Proudhon was critiquing were that of the Utopian Socialists Saint-Simon and Fourier. These argued for highly-regulated communities run by industrial chiefs where income was dependent on both labour and the amount invested in the project. While his critique was prescient as regards centrally planned (state) communism, it does not apply to *libertarian* communism – particularly as Proudhon *explicitly* argues, like Kropotkin, for socialising land and the means of production.

Rejecting, like later anarchists, both capitalism and state socialism, he called for a "synthesis of communism and property," a "union" which "will give us the true form of human association." "This third form of society," he stated, "we will call *liberty*."

Significantly, Proudhon's proclamation for anarchy was embedded in his discussion of why the "second effect of property is despotism." Thus anarchist anti-statism is inherently bound-up with its anti-capitalism – and has always been so. He was well aware that property "violates equality by the rights of exclusion and increase, and freedom by despotism." While anarchy was "the absence of a master, of a sovereign," "proprietor" was "synonymous" with "sovereign" for he "imposes his will as law,

and suffers neither contradiction nor control" (It is *landlord* for a reason!). Thus "property is despotism" as "each proprietor is sovereign lord within the sphere of his property" and so freedom and property were incompatible.

His arguments for anarchy in the book's final chapter follow a discussion of animal sociability. This is remarkable in its topicality as modern biology, in the form of reciprocal altruism, has drawn remarkably similar conclusions in its discussions of the evolution of ethics – not to mention the obvious links of both to Kropotkin's equally vindicated *Mutual Aid*."

From his analysis of the social nature of animals and humans, from the feelings of justice that produces, Proudhon drew the conclusion that the society of the future would be an anarchy. As with the economy, association is the social form of a free society of equals (or, to use a more modern term, self-management). While federalism is not explicitly mentioned (Proudhon does so over a decade later), it is implied in his critique of "communism" – if you reject the centralised control of property in utopian communities, you would hardly support a centralised social structure.

And this is what strikes the reader, namely how much of later *revolutionary* anarchist (and Marxist!) thought is contained in this classic from 1840. While we can quibble over certain aspects of his presentation (which he subsequently improved upon) and reject his repulsive patriarchal bigotries as irrelevant and in contradiction to his other ideals, the fact is that Proudhon defined what *anarchism is* (libertarian socialism),

WILDCAT

Anarchy!!
Everyone doing whatever they like, but not impairing anyone else's freedom. A nice idea, but not really possible, is it??

Opinions differ. But anarchism isn't about dreams of perfection in some distant future. Charlotte Wilson, the anarchist who started *Freedom* in 1886, said the purpose of society is to give every individual the largest possible opportunities in life.

And since 1886, have opportunities in life increased as a result of anarchist agitation??

Not a lot, but perhaps a bit. In Britain, in my lifetime, a lot of harmless sexual acts have been decriminalised.

Gaaargh!!
"harmless sexual acts!!"

You say you're for freedom. But what you're advocating: **permissiveness!!**

You see, Pussycat, some people who say anarchism is a nice idea are in fact against freedom.

What's up with you?

All this waffle!!
I think cartoons should be funny.

Review

◀ page 15
laying the foundations which later libertarians like Bakunin and Kropotkin built upon.
So the *Cambridge Texts in the History of Political Thought* series should be praised for presenting *What is Property?* in a fresh translation. This was required as the previous translation, by Benjamin Tucker, had its limitations (such as rendering Proudhon's battle-cry as "Property is Robbery"). Tucker also translated the Second Memoir, 1841's *Letter to M. Blanqui on Property*, which this edition excludes. His Third Memoir, 1842's *Warning to Proprietors*, still awaits translation.
While the book's introduction is useful in

its presentation of the context and evolution of Proudhon's ideas, it stops at the publication of the book proclaiming that this is not the place to discuss it. Quite the reverse! Saying that, given that the works suggested for further reading go from the essential and serious (K. Steven Vincent's *Pierre-Joseph Proudhon and the Rise of French Republican Socialism*) to the ridiculous and malicious (J. Salwyn Schapiro!) perhaps this is for the best.
To conclude: there are ample reasons to read this libertarian classic, not least to discover why it made Proudhon the leading socialist thinker of the nineteenth century.
What is Property? by Pierre-Joseph Proudhon, edited by Donald R. Kelley and Bonnie G. Smith, Cambridge University Press, 1994

THE QUIZ

1. Who asked "If crime fighters fight crime and fire fighters fight fire, what do freedom fighters fight? They never mention that part to us, do they?"
2. The same person asked what question about flame throwers?
3. Where and when were bombs first dropped by planes in the USA?
4. If swords are to be beaten into ploughshares, what happens to the spears?

Answers on page 14

The Anarchist Quiz Book compiled by Martin Howard, with illustrations by Paul Petard, is available at £5 (post free) from freedompress.org.uk

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