

# FREEDOM

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## TUC: STATE LACKEYS

### TUC work with the Met to suppress militancy on 20th October

The Trades Union Congress march and rally in London on 20th October is set to rival last year's in size and scope. Union branches and community groups across the country are organising coaches and chartering trains to get as many people to the event as possible. Meanwhile, behind the scenes the TUC is working closely with the Met to prevent any possible disorder.

On 26th March last year, 500-plus marchers broke away from the main demonstration and headed towards Oxford Street – where UK Uncut were occupying shops to highlight the unpaid tax that could pay for the government's cuts. This led to a merry chase when the police attempted to kettle marchers, and windows and shop fronts were smashed in the process. Unable to curtail this radical action, the Met took out their anger on occupiers in Fortnum & Mason, who were arrested upon leaving the building despite assurances to the contrary, and on protesters in Trafalgar Square, who were kettled and brutalised before being dispersed.

This year, the TUC is keen to ensure that similar radical actions don't happen again. A **page 3** ▶▶

### LENS CAP SAVE THE ARCTIC



A court in the Netherlands has rejected an aggressive attempt by oil giant Shell to stop Greenpeace from protesting near its property. Shell went to court after Greenpeace organised protests against Shell's Arctic drilling plans in an attempt to prevent the environmental group from protesting within 500 metres of its operations, including petrol stations or offices, or face a 1 million euro fine.

## CLASS WAR IN SPAIN

Spain's austerity protests took their most violent turn yet last month as protestors demanded an end to the cuts that are crippling the country.

The protests started as police tried to stop demonstrators surrounding the parliament building. During the course of this action the police found themselves being surrounded. Clashes erupted and rubber bullets were fired. It was a marked difference from last year when police broke up the occupations that racked Spain, this time the protestors fought back with a rage bordering on mania and efforts to quell the violence only made it worse.

The protests have rumbled on into the new month with three days of clashes yet again in Madrid. Barricades were set up to protect the parliament building with tear gas and rubber bullets being used to try

and disperse demonstrators.

The austerity programme in Spain is one of the harshest in Europe, with tax hikes, a pay freeze for public sector workers and cuts to benefits for the unemployed and disabled. Last year saw a general strike by workers in order to halt the measures but the message didn't seem to get through. With talk of an EU bailout looming, the government in Madrid seems determined to push through its ideological agenda before it falls into the arms of IMF led troika, who would doubtless call for the cuts to be even more severe.

Protests have also been ongoing in Portugal, although the violence has not been at the same level as Spain, a country where youth unemployment now stands at 55% and it would seem that the bygone days of peaceful square occupations has long since passed.

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## NEWS

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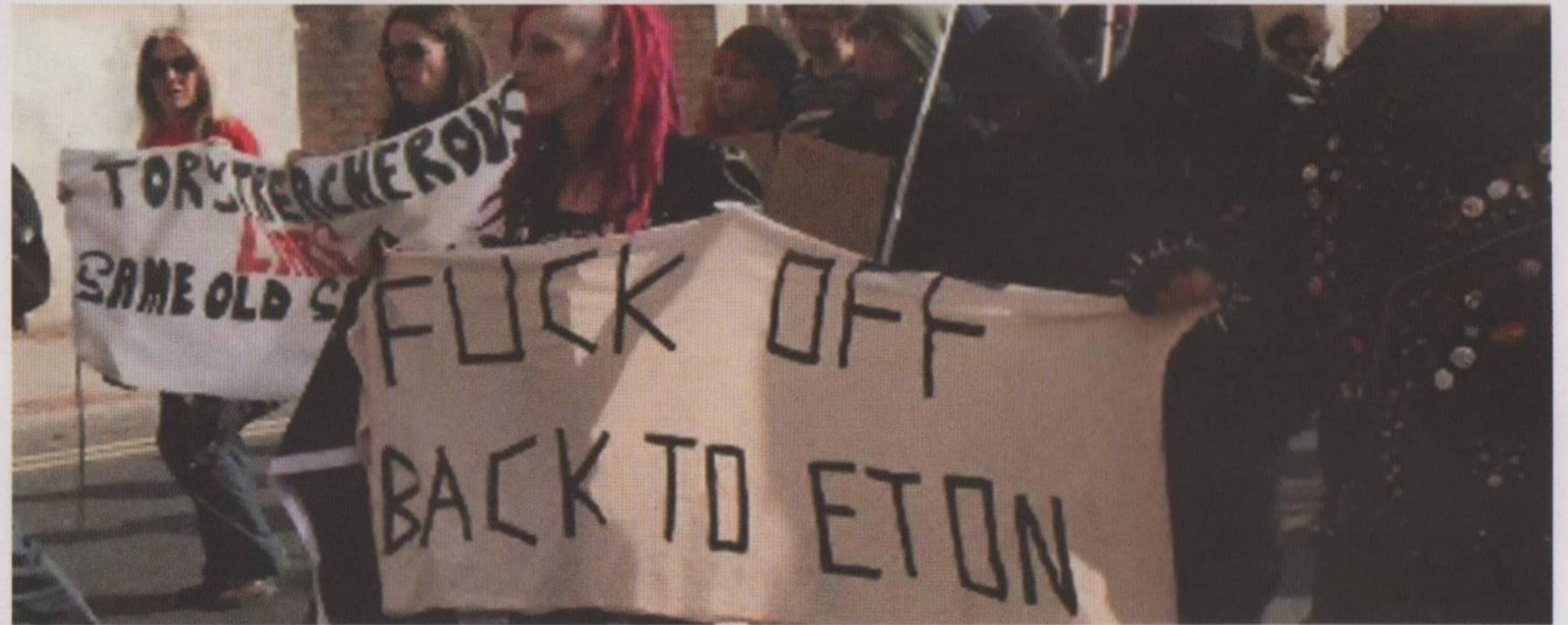
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## LENS CAP BIRMINGHAM



Class war, like Rasputin, never dies... protesters at the Tory Party conference in Birmingham, for more see Ian Bone's blog at <http://ianbone.wordpress.com/>

## End the blacklist

## Construction workers challenge Crossrail over mass sackings

This year has already seen a number of dramatic disputes involving the Sparks, a rank-and-file network of militant electricians working in the construction industry. In February, they succeeded in beating back an attempt by a group of major employers to worsen conditions across the entire construction sector, and this summer they were also involved in a wildcat strike at Ratcliffe power station that forced the reinstatement of a victimised union activist. This success seems to be worrying construction bosses, and in mid-September 28 workers employed at the Crossrail site in Westbourne Park, West London, were sacked with a few hours' notice after raising health and safety concerns.

True to form, the Sparks weren't willing to take this attack lying down, or even to wait around in the hope that Unite's leadership would ballot for eventual action, but instead responded immediately by setting up an unofficial mass picket at the site. Rather than just politely asking delivery trucks not to cross, they set up a roadblock preventing traffic from passing. As well as daily pickets of the Westbourne Park site, construction workers also took the fight to other sites, blocking traffic on Oxford Road with a huge banner reading 'STOP THE VICTIMISATION OF

UNION MEMBERS, END THE BLACKLIST' for an hour as part of a flashmob on 26th September.

On 27th September, the week after the Westbourne Park workers were sacked for raising concerns about safety, a gantry collapsed. While no-one was hurt in the incident, it was still serious enough that the track next to the site had to be closed.

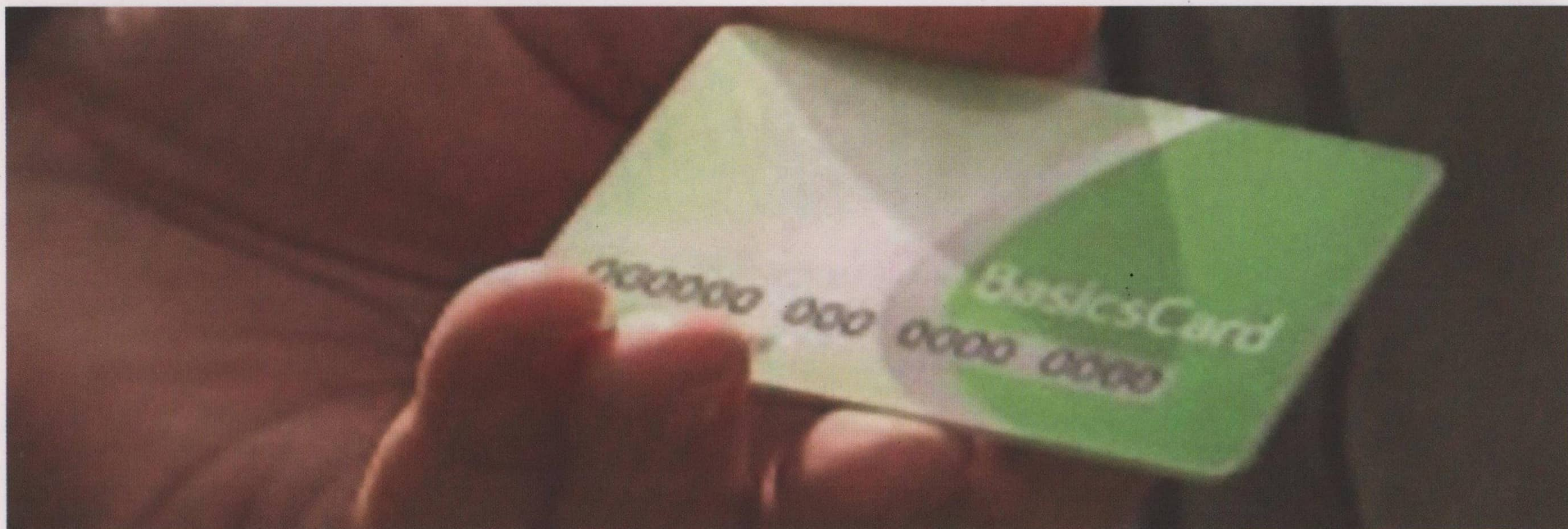
In a separate dispute, the contractor Crown House are attempting to introduce new standard contracts that would undermine existing rates of pay and conditions. Earlier attempts to bring in new contracts were defeated by determined action by rank-and-file construction workers, but Crown House seem to believe they can still push them through, and are threatening workers who refuse to sign with the sack. The Sparks have also been involved in resisting this attack, mounting protests at Crown House sites in Cardiff, Leeds, London and Middlesbrough.

The action in defence of organised workers at Westbourne Park comes in the middle of a wider conflict over blacklisting in the construction industry, as the Blacklisting Support Group continues to campaign over the 3,000 construction workers who had files kept on them for their involvement in union activity. Some 86 blacklisted builders are currently involved in suing the construction firm McAlpine, and if the case is successful it could set a precedent for many more.

Cautiously Pessimistic







# Income management for the poor

From 1st April 2013, Liverpool City Council will replace the crisis loans and community care grants with the Citizen Support Scheme (CSS). It is not just a meaningless re-branding exercise; it has serious ramifications for people all over the country.

The scheme's key differences to those of the existing arrangements are the abolishment of cash payments. These will be replaced with 'food vouchers' and utility 'pre-pay cards'. The council laughingly describe this as a switch to 'holistic care'.

Currently people in receipt of crisis loans and community care grants are free to spend their money as they see fit. The new (CSS) will replace claimant autonomy with restrictive methods of payment that the state can monitor how, where and when it is used.

In short it is nothing more than a tool to ensure that poor people spend their money on whatever the state believes they should.

The Australian government has been trialling a very similar policy to what is being planned

in Liverpool, entitled 'income management'. Through the policy, claimants are provided with a 'basics' card. Depending on the circumstances of the individual's claim, the state are able to 'quarantine' whatever percentage of the claimants benefits that it sees fit. This means that a claimant can only purchase items that their card allows, only from government approved retailers and only in government approved amounts.

Income management is a tool to punitively target the poorest people in society. The Liverpool Claimants Network describes the policy in the following terms: "Income management targets people in poverty with punitive measures that encourages the treatment of welfare recipients as feckless and would fit neatly into the UK government's tales of fraud, criminality and disorder allegedly rampant in the districts of Blighty. Personally, we call those 'tales of survival', but it makes no odds to the privileged-in-power, intent on wiping out welfare on behalf of their capitalist chums."

The (CSS) is punitive, demeaning and could lead to a nationwide version of 'income management'. All the more likely when you consider the other areas of welfare that the government are implementing draconian measures of control, such as ATOS assessments, and the workfare scheme.

Liverpool City Council is going through the process of a 'consultation period', which in other words means a laughably transparent rubber stamping exercise, before they finalise their plans.

On 3rd October, the results of a government 'think tank' poll (sponsored by MasterCard) suggests that a majority of the public support 'government control on how claimants spend their benefits'.

This dubious propaganda will no doubt be used as evidence to justify the City Council's aim to move towards 'income management'. Such naked class warfare should be resisted in the same manner as 'workfare', and the ATOS assessments.

Matthew Black

## TUC: state lackeys

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number of sources confirm that organisers have approached UK Uncut directly, asking them to ensure that they plan no actions for the day which may encroach on the march route. They are able to easily dismiss the anarchists as a "violent minority" when we break away



from the march. But it is much harder to condemn and decry when – like the occupation of Fortnum & Mason – the marchers go past it on their route and cheer it on.

This should come as no surprise, of course. Last year, the TUC and "independent" legal observers Liberty were given desks in the Met's central observation room. Stewards were given training to prevent sit-down protests, and for all intents both organisations were just extra layers of the police operation. They all appeared together at press conferences, smiley and full of promises that the march would remain peaceful.

Alongside the reports that UK Uncut has been approached to steer clear, a number of sources have suggested that the police want to be able to run checks on (and, implicitly, have the final say on) the full list of stewards.

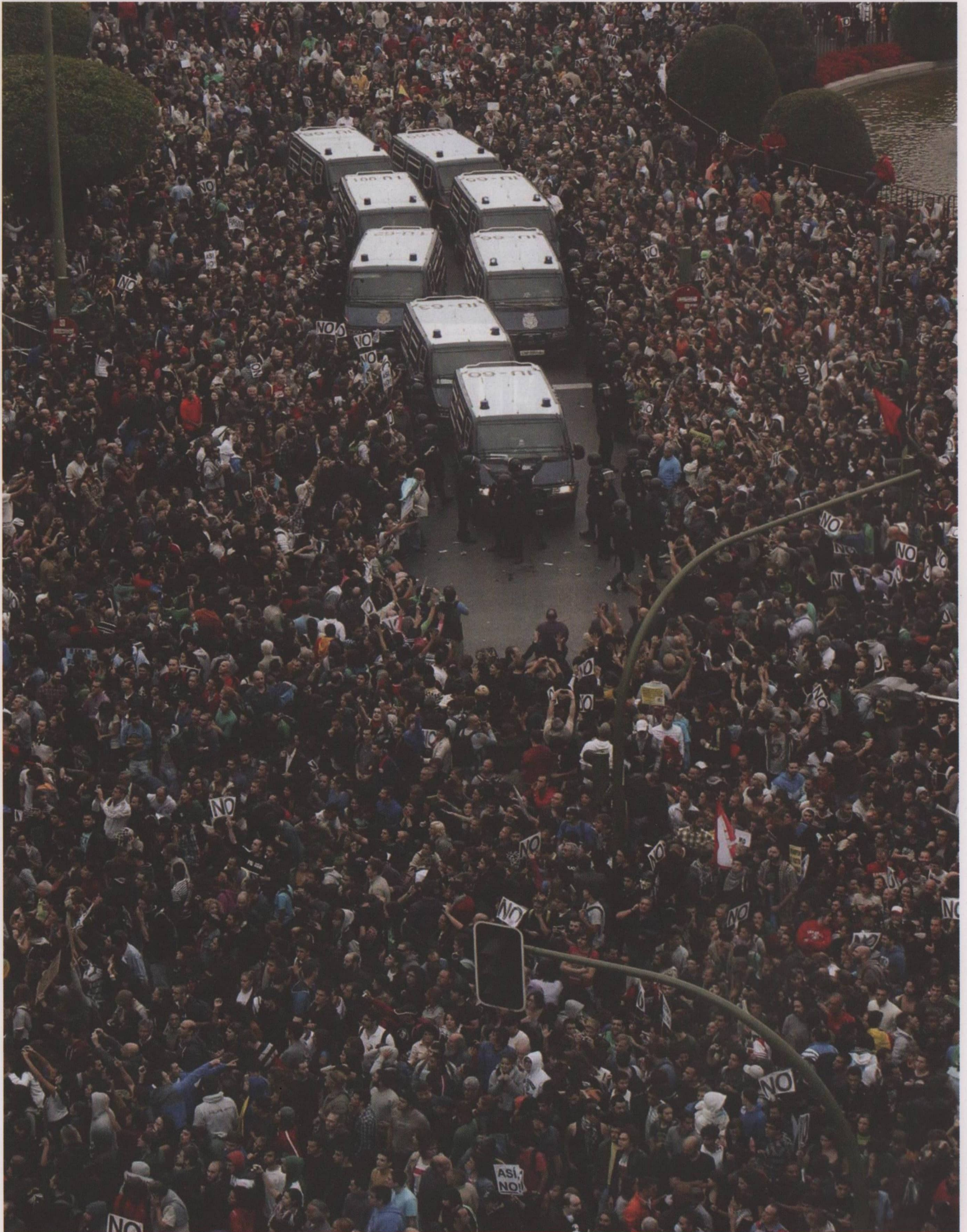
This hasn't come out officially, and nor have I heard whether the TUC has complied. But there is little reason that they would be reticent about this when they are willing for the police to train their stewards and give them a seat in the control room.

It also begs the question of what other information is being asked for (and handed over). Not too long ago, rumours circulated that the TUC had handed the Met a list of 150 "violent activists". Whether the TUC would have such information to give is questionable, but given the history of the TUC and its member unions – including such abominable practices as collaborating with construction industry blacklisting – what's not in doubt is that the TUC will hand over information where they can.

Phil Dickens



## THE BIG PICTURE



Thousands of workers march across 56 cities to protest against the latest round of austerity measures recently announced by the government. People are worried about further job losses. Spain currently has an unemployment rate of 25%, and over 50% in people under 25.



# The practicalities of a general strike

At their September conference, the Trades Union Congress (TUC) approved a motion originally proposed by the Socialist Party-dominated Prison Officers Association. Though such an organisation could never be a hive of radical activity, papers screamed that “vital services could be wiped out”.

In full, the motion read: “Congress accepts that the trade union movement must continue leading from the front against the uncaring government with a coalition of resistance taking coordinated action where possible with far reaching campaigns including the consideration and practicalities of a general strike.”

We are now two and a half years into the tenure of the most reactionary UK government since World War Two. It has implemented austerity measures which have already savaged the living standards of millions, and they are only about a quarter of the way through the slashing cuts they have so far planned.

In the public sector, many thousands of jobs have been destroyed, and a three year wage freeze has already reduced the real value of salaries by around 13%. The government’s plans for a further two year pay rise cap could easily leave public sector employees one fifth worse off than they were in 2009. On top of this, the recent government pension’s raid will see them pay more and work longer to receive less on retirement. Meanwhile, the bankers who triggered the 2008 meltdown are doing better than ever.

If you are a public sector worker, you know how enraged and/or despairing you are. If you’re not, and you’re reading this, you can surely imagine. Now look at that ‘incendiary’ motion again. Isn’t it a ridiculously timid piece of crap?

Lest we forget, Greek workers have staged umpteen one, and two day general strikes since the economic crisis erupted there, and their counterparts in Spain and Portugal have taken similar too. Not one euro of austerity has been prevented. But the motion doesn’t even commit the UK union bosses to organising such a stoppage. Instead, a vague “coalition of resistance” might take “coordinated action”, but only “where



possible” (whatever that means). The “practicalities” of a general strike are under “consideration”, but that certainly doesn’t mean it will happen. In fact, such are the restrictive nature of the Thatcher anti-union laws, it possibly means it won’t. Above all, union tops must ensure their actions remain legal.

I’ve also been considering the practicalities of a general strike, and I’ve concluded that for such a strike to win, it would have to break the law. This surely makes sense, because the laws were framed by the ruling class in such a way as to make winning strikes much more difficult. All these ballot regulations, strike warnings and time limits, they are all there to help corporations, financial aristocrats and their governments win.

It must also be open-ended. Again, this is straightforward in my mind. Imagine a battle, where before you launched an attack on the enemy’s castle you sent them a message. And imagine the message said, ‘Okay, we’re going to attack you for five minutes, and then if we haven’t let us in by then, we’ll just go home. After all, it’s your castle. Don’t want to break the rules.’ Those defending the fortress would know they only had to ride out a short period of time, and then the battle would be won. So yeah, if you want to storm heaven, you have to keep fighting until you’ve won.

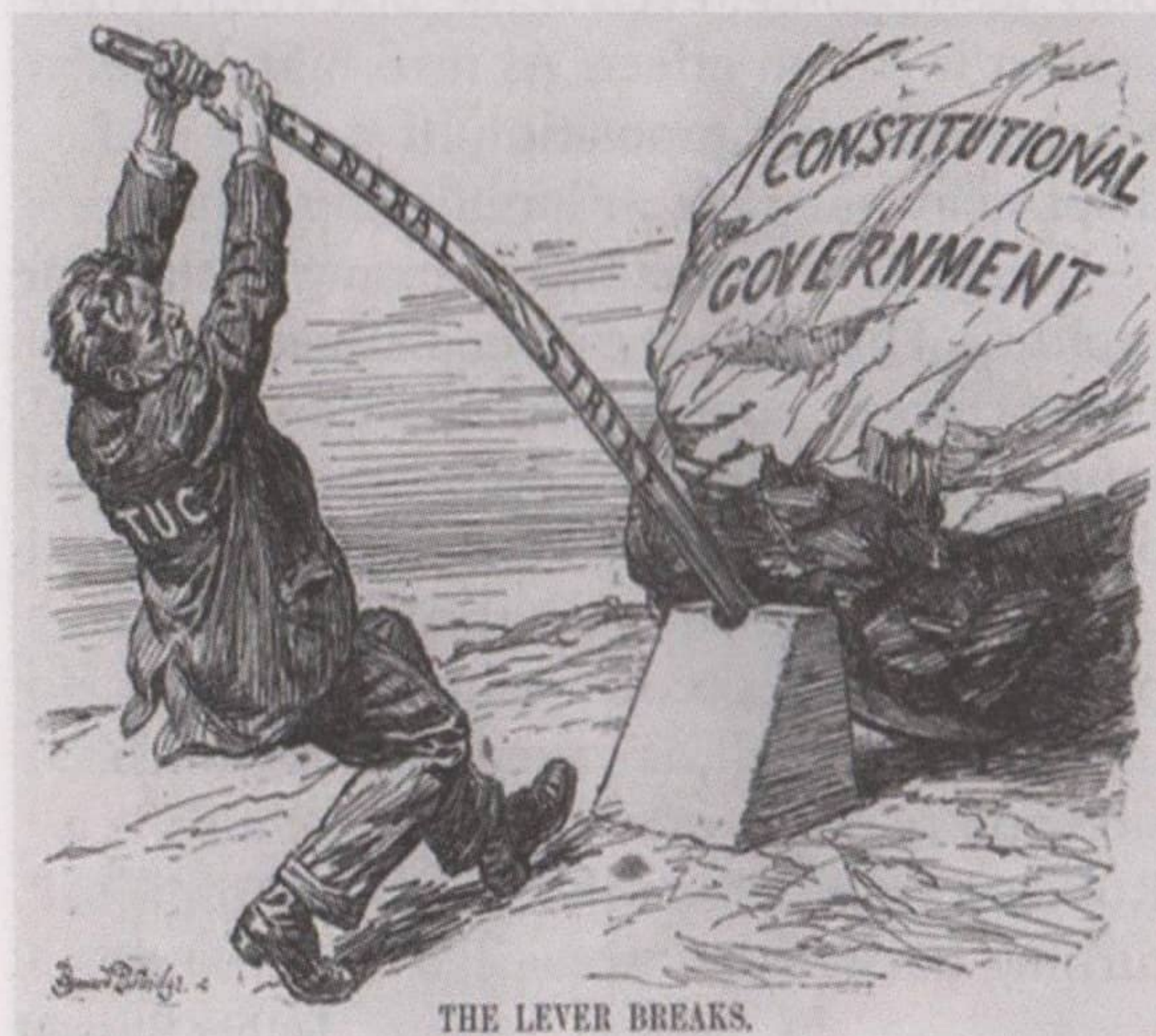
But most of all, a general strike must be controlled by the people with most invested in it, i.e. rank and file workers. They are the ones who will lose pay by striking. They are the ones who will have to stand on picket lines. They are the ones – if, say, the 1926 general strike is anything to go by – who

might face police and even army. The bureaucrats have no stake in behaviour which might actually challenge the status quo. On the contrary, their seriously comfortable lifestyles would be threatened by the type of general strike I have described, because their money depends on maintaining their role as ‘negotiators’. A less polite term would be ‘industrial cops’.

That’s why, for all their talk of working class struggle, the material interests of the bureaucracy very closely align with those of the capitalist class. Perhaps the most blatant embodiment of these contradictions is outgoing TUC general secretary Brendan Barber. While making occasional and relatively mild criticisms of the government for its anti-worker measures, he has sat on the Bank of England board since 2003. He is fully integrated into the ruling class apparatus. So when he talks – as he did at the TUC conference – of an “Olympic-style crusade” to build up the UK “industrial strength”, he does so knowing full well this would, necessarily, mean an enormous attack on wages in an era of global competition. But so long as these poorly paid jobs were unionised, Barber and his parasitic layer would be happy.

Just like with the phony war over pensions, whatever emerges out of these talks between union tops will not seriously challenge the government’s agenda. At most, just at the moment where it looks like it will do just that, the rug will be pulled out from under the feet of rank and filers. The solution I propose might seem utopian, but with options running out, it’s getting more realistic by the day.

Adam Ford





## ANALYSIS

# Anarchist and primitivist philosopher

John Zerzan has recently been visiting the UK, and I talked with him at the Freedom bookshop following his speech to a packed audience at a venue in east London.

John is the author of influential books such as *Elements of Refusal* and *Future Primitive*, and symbolises the militancy of the anarchist movement in North America.

John is certainly not a figure who has time for sterile academic debates without insurrectionary action. After the Seattle riots in 1994 he said "It took Seattle to break the ice. The fact that people got out there and rumbled. You can hold up a sign at demos and little rallies and that'll do nothing. I wish good ideas would just wonderfully work their magic but good ideas are worth nothing if you can't back them up." He talks of the 'tremendous victory' gained by anarchists who caused a planned G8 summit in Chicago to be moved to Camp David because of the fear from the police that they would be unable to control the planned black bloc actions by anarchists.

John is a veteran of militant politics, having been involved in the anti-Vietnam War movement in California in the 1960s. He was subsequently a trade union organizer and began to become increasingly involved in the US anarchist movement. His development as a radical writer and insurrectionary has led him to expand his revolt beyond the area of traditional anarchist-socialist concerns. He has widened and deepened his focus to question the mechanisms of modern life, and has come to the conclusion that the key to freedom

means the dismantling of the techno-industrial world that globally enslaves people. He believes that the idea of technology being a neutral product that can be actively harnessed by people without harm is a fallacy.

He began his speech in London by talking about the recent massacre by an armed young man in a cinema in Denver during a late night screening of the new Batman film.

He followed this account with graphic descriptions of an elderly woman's face peering out of a coffin-like machine that is used to bathe elderly people in Japan. "That seems rather horrific to me" he comments, and he provided this example as evidence of the disappearance of community in modern life.

The sensual bonds that existed in the pre-industrial world have been replaced by tailored dummies that the lonely can hug for comfort, children being unable to distinguish the difference between something real and living and something digital and virtual, and even the existence of cyber mourning, where all physical and psychological links between the living and recently deceased have been erased.

The technology that has spread into the modern world has also extended its poisonous influence into the fabric of a crumbling society, where the threads that bonded people shared with each other and the natural world have been ripped and torn apart. The result is the psychopathic behaviour that is so apparent in developed countries.



He ended his talk by recalling his trip to Brazil, where he was invited by a gathering of anarchists. He produced a pamphlet for the meeting and his granddaughter drew a cartoon image for the cover. The image depicts a mountain with lines of people walking to the top. The accompanying caption has queuing climbers saying "we've come this far, we won't go back now!" before jumping from the summit into the sea on the other side.

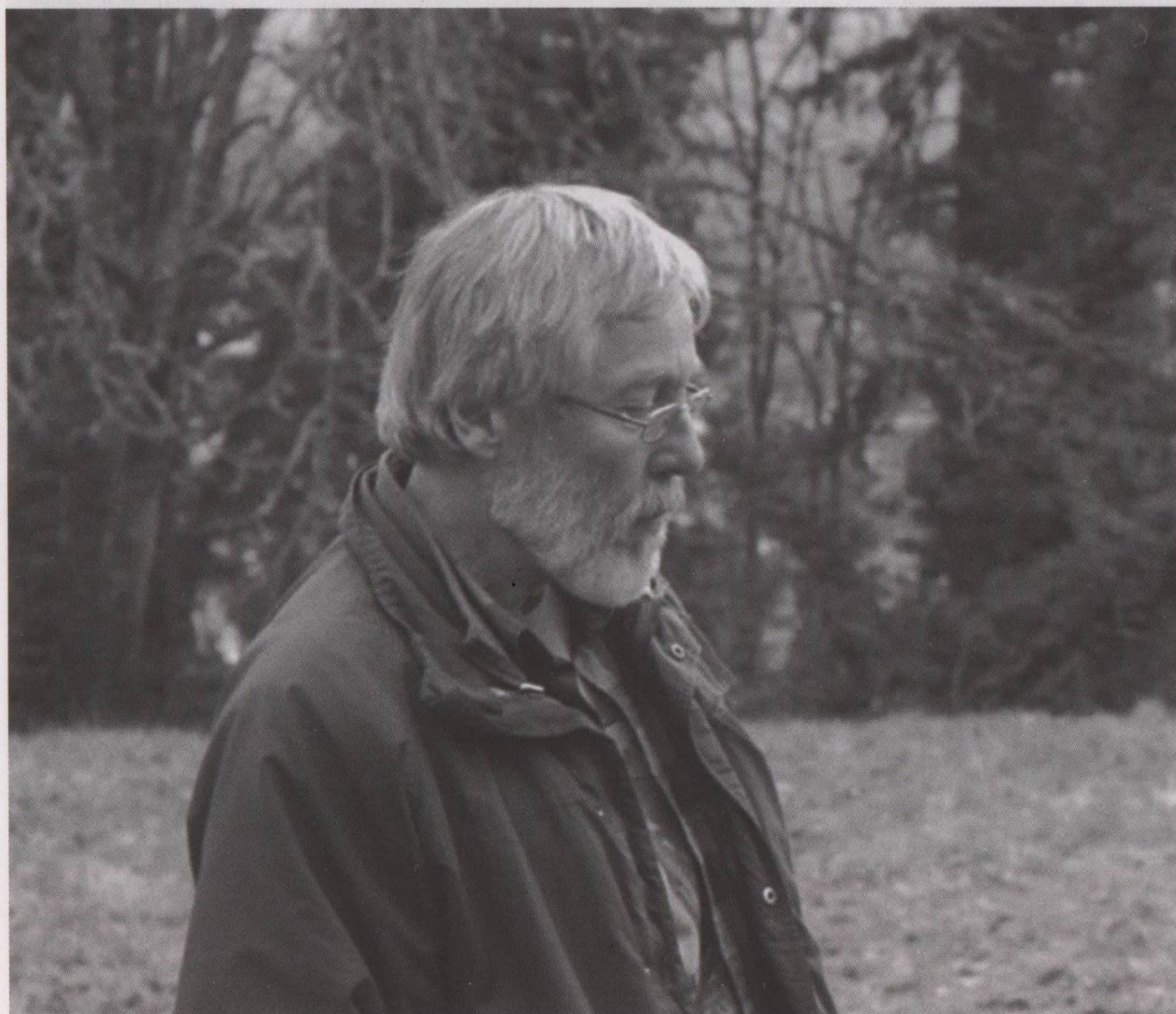
John is adamant that the time to draw back from the mad world that we are living in is now... the time for action is now, and that meaningful action can take many different forms.

His optimism for revolutionary change is clear and he talks to me enthusiastically about his recent experience in Spain, "I'm impressed by the openness of militancy in Spain... in Barcelona it was so moving".

He is certain that the insurrectionary tide that is sweeping the world should not however follow the mistaken path of the traditional left and its hidden agendas. "Getting involved with people, putting things on the table, being transparent... asking what do you want to preserve, what do you want to get rid of? These are important points."

In his book *Running on Emptiness, The Pathology of Civilization*, he states that "today opposition is anarchist or it is non-existent. Anarchism, if not anarchy, is the only scene going, even if the blackout on the subject is still in effect. As if to match the accelerating decomposition of society and displacement of life at large, determined resistance is also metamorphosing with some rapidity. This time the bohemian schiz-fluxers, green yuppies, hobbyist anarcho-journalists, condescending organizers of the poor, hip nihil-aesthetes and all the other 'anarchists' who thought their pretentious pastimes would go on unchallenged indefinitely – well, it's time to pick which side you're on. It may be that here also is a Rubicon from which there will be no turning back."

Luther Blissett





Time to move on – IMC London is signing off

The Indymedia London collective has taken the decision to close.

Over the last 13 years the internet and the way people use it has changed dramatically.

When Indymedia started it broke new ground, technically, socially and politically. Blogging was yet to take off, so providing a way for people to publish their own news stories and multimedia reports from protests and campaigns without any log-on was a game-changer. This model of 'open publishing' or 'direct media' allowed everyone to add their voice to the collaborative creation of news, challenging the dominance of single narrative news journalism.

The stated purpose was to erode the dividing line between reporter and participant, between active producers and passive audiences, to show that everyone had the ability to be a journalist and speak for themselves.

At the same time Indymedia organised transparently and via consensus, drawing a distinction between democratic participatory media (by the people for the people) and the hidden agendas and processes of the corporate media monoliths and their vested interests.

Powered by advances in technology, it provided an infrastructure that was needed and which people wanted to use. At the



time, Indymedia was pretty much the only game in town.

The IMC London collective says that "it is with a sad heart that we bring this latest chapter to an end. Firstly thanks to all the people, friends and comrades who have participated in the project with us over the years, as users, as members of the London and other imc collectives, or as supporters behind the scenes.

"All of us wish to continue working in a similar terrain and view what comes next as a development from the work that's already been done. However for us, this Indymedia project is, for many reasons, no longer the one which we think is tactically useful to put our energy into. There are still many features of the project that we believe to be important and essential, but others which are less so."

See <http://london.indymedia.org/articles/13128> for the full article and further information.

# Fascists and state repression

The following observations are in no way typical of the majority of anarchists, just a small minority I have encountered in recent weeks.

The last few months has seen a marked increase in the active interference by the police in the activities of various far-right groups, such as the English Defence League, Infidels of Britain, National Front and the Combined Ex Forces (CxF).

Individual fascists have received letters ordering them not to attend events; they have had mobile phones, computers, and other hardware confiscated and houses raided. They have been arrested prior to attending demonstrations, and detained in the cells for the duration of the demonstrations without charge. There are several examples of fascists being arrested for making racist comments online, and for uploading provocative film clips.

The 'Infidels of Britain' in particular have come in from some very close attention from the counter-terrorism police, who are openly attempting to hamstring their activities.

The state interest in the 'Infidels' has increased since they started charging into town halls, staging roof top protests on local government buildings, and making threatening comments online.

Within the last month there have been film clips of EDL boneheads on a protest in London being battered by the police. These pictures have been widely disseminated online, and have been the source of much hilarity too many...

Whilst I can always raise a smile at the misfortune of fascists, the idea of revelling in misfortune brought about by the state does not sit comfortably with me whatsoever.

Having spoken to a variety of people, read discussion forums, and seen various on-line threads, you would think that some people believe that the state are only interested in targeting fascists.

Fascists are undertaking ridiculous activities without any forethought of the potential consequences, and are presenting themselves on a plate for the authorities.

As so-called 'revolutionaries', how do we expect to achieve even the smallest amount of radical social change without having to fight against state intervention? Do we think the ruling elite will roll out a red carpet and instruct the police to stand aside?

We have already seen activists snatched out of their beds on the day of the Royal Wedding to prevent protests, several examples of police infiltration within environmental groups, and anarchists being arrested at Heathrow, on their return from St Imier.

Whenever the state deems anarchists or whoever they deem to be 'far-left' as a threat, then we can expect much of the same, if not worse.

So however tempting it may be to gloat at the misfortune of fascists, we should be focusing more on watching each other's backs, and taking the threat of the state much less flippantly.

Matthew Black





## INTERNATIONAL

### NEWS IN BRIEF

**GREECE:** In response to the on-going violence meted out in joint operations by members of the Golden Dawn and the Greek police, anti-fascists in Athens have taken to organising motorcycle patrols during the night. The patrols are aiming to prevent attacks on immigrants and their property, and are having some success. There are several reports of fascists being hospitalised after coming in contact with the patrols.

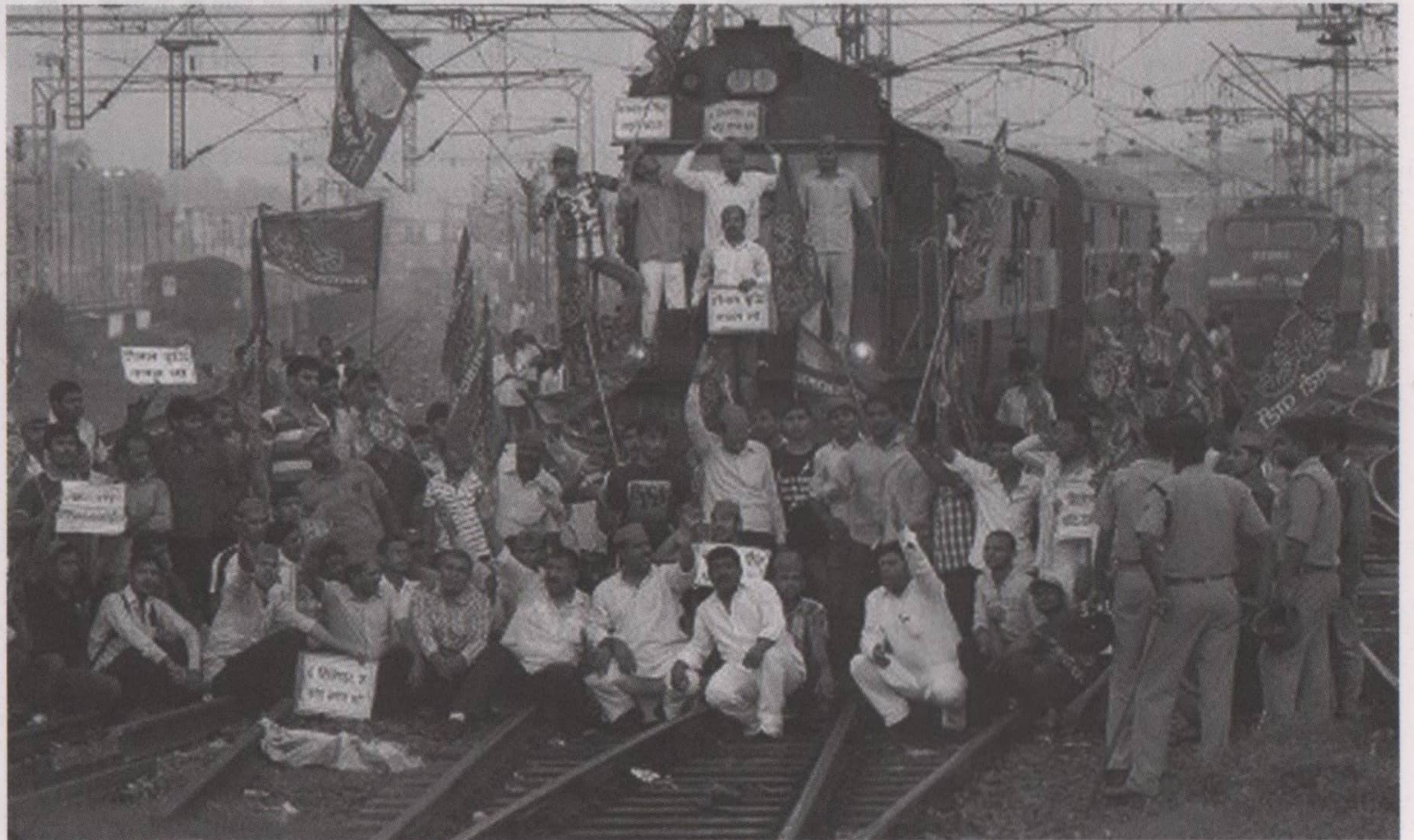
**TURKEY:** Textile workers in the Turkish town of Antep have staged a wildcat strike, and are demanding a pay rise and improvements to their atrocious working conditions. As news of the unofficial action spread, over 7,000 workers across seven factories joined the strike. The workers, sick of their union's feeble wage negotiations, bypassed it and mandated their own representatives. After ten days of striking, the workers had won pay rises of around 20%, and a big increase in their holiday entitlements.

**INDIA:** Four thousand anti-nuclear protesters have defied a police ban and marched on a Russian-owned coastal power station in the region of Tamil Nadu. The peaceful protesters were brutally attacked and driven into the sea by the police, who used sticks, tear-gas and rubber bullets. The protesters are angry that the Indian government have signed a deal with the Russian owners that means if any accidents occur at the power station, they will not be held responsible, even if the fault lies with them. The deal also allows the power station to become operational without having to meet basic health and safety standards.

**CHINA:** A workers advocacy centre in the region of Shenzhen has been broken into and ransacked by a group of around sixty goons armed with hammers. They stole equipment and paperwork before welding doors shut, preventing anyone re-entering the premises. Attempts by staff to put remaining property into storage were thwarted by the facility manager who refused to rent his space to them. Some employees have been refused housing by landlords and others have been harassed outside their homes. The advocacy service is the tenth such place to be targeted by thugs who are believed to have been hired by local factory managers in an attempt to suppress workplace militancy that has become commonplace over the last year.

**ITALY:** Faced with redundancy, hundreds of aluminium workers from Sardinia travelled to Rome to protest outside the industry ministry, where a meeting between government officials and factory owners was due to take place. Violent clashes with the police ensued as workers attempted to storm the building. Workers were violently suppressed by riot police, and there were reports of numerous injuries. The loss of over 2,000 jobs would be a huge blow to Sardinia, where unemployment is double the national average.

### LENS CAP INDIA



Indian workers blockade a rail line as part of a general strike against wide ranging economic reforms, and the slashing of fuel subsidies.

## Union busting is the fashion

At 'Texim', a Turkish textile factory that produces clothing for Hugo Boss and Pierre Cardin, 38 workers have been sacked for legitimate trade union organising. Their crime was attempting to resist punishing changes to working conditions, and to object to an impossible 50% increase in production from machine operators in the knitting department.

Workers from the knitting department have led the drive for unionisation at Texim, and it is solely workers from the knitting department who have been singled out for dismissal.

Following their dismissal, the sacked workers and their supporters have been peacefully protesting outside the factory, demanding to be reinstated.

After fifty days of the peaceful protest, the bosses became impatient and arranged for the intervention of the police to bring the

dispute to an end. As a morning picket was due to start as usual, twelve buses of police officers in full riot gear arrived at the factory gates.

Workers were attacked and forced away from the factory, and subsequently 'penned in' several blocks away. Any workers who attempted to leave the pen and return to the factory were assaulted by the police. There are reports of many workers being injured, with at least two being hospitalised.

Since the dismissals, trade union membership in the factory has rocketed, which has led the bosses to sack several other well know militants and agitators.

In Turkey, union busting is rife, particularly in the textile industry. This year has seen many examples of bosses laughing in the face of labour legislation, whilst the government simply turns a blind eye.

Matthew Black

## Notes from the US

In mid-September about 25,000 teachers in Chicago struck for the first time in 25 years.

Legally, they can only take action on pay. In fact this move is part of concerted resistance to education 'reforms' designed to foster greater elitism and corporate culture in the city's schools; these are being pushed by Obama supporter, Mayor Rahm Emanuel.

As commercial practices are applied to more and more schools, teachers allude to the absence of even basic resources, staff and buildings, safety and equipment. Early in the strike, community support – and that from pupils' families – was strong and vocal.

Occupy Wall Street is preparing to mark its first anniversary. Meanwhile activists from Occupy Austin recently found out that their arrests on felony charges after a protest last December are the direct result of equipment (PVC pipes in which to link their arms) which was suggested, bought and made by a police detective who infiltrated their group.

Violence of another kind continues in the case of alleged US army whistle-blower, Bradley Manning – he is accused of leaking a mass of documents to WikiLeaks. Now Manning's defence lawyers are arguing for

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# Pizza workers face wage cut

## Worldwide solidarity with Domino's delivery drivers

Despite a record breaking increase in annual sales of 69.7%, the Australian arm of Domino's Pizza have slashed the wages of thousands of their drivers by 19%.

In typically contemptible fashion, Domino's informed drivers they were going to steal their wages by putting up posters on store notice boards.

Earlier this year drivers complained that they were being underpaid. Domino's agreed to look at their wages and, following an assessment, they decided the drivers were being paid too much. The CEO of Domino's, Don Meji, went on the record to say that Australian Domino's workers are being paid much more than their colleagues in other countries, and that this needed to be looked at.

The union that legally represents the drivers, the Shop, Distributive and Allied Employees (SDA), is the largest in the country, but has been nothing more than useless. Instead it has been drivers who are members of the Anarcho-Syndicalist Federation (ASF) that have been leading the fight-back against Domino's.

Protests have been organised outside Domino's headquarters in Melbourne, and there has been a rolling programme of pickets outside numerous Domino's outlets. Added to this, there have been numerous solidarity demonstrations around the world and communications blockades organised by the various sections of the International Workers' Association (IWA).

Not only do the drivers want their lost wages to be reinstated, they want a pay rise that will put them on the same rate as the in-store workers. The disparity in pay between workers is due in part to the failure of the SDA to properly negotiate on their behalf

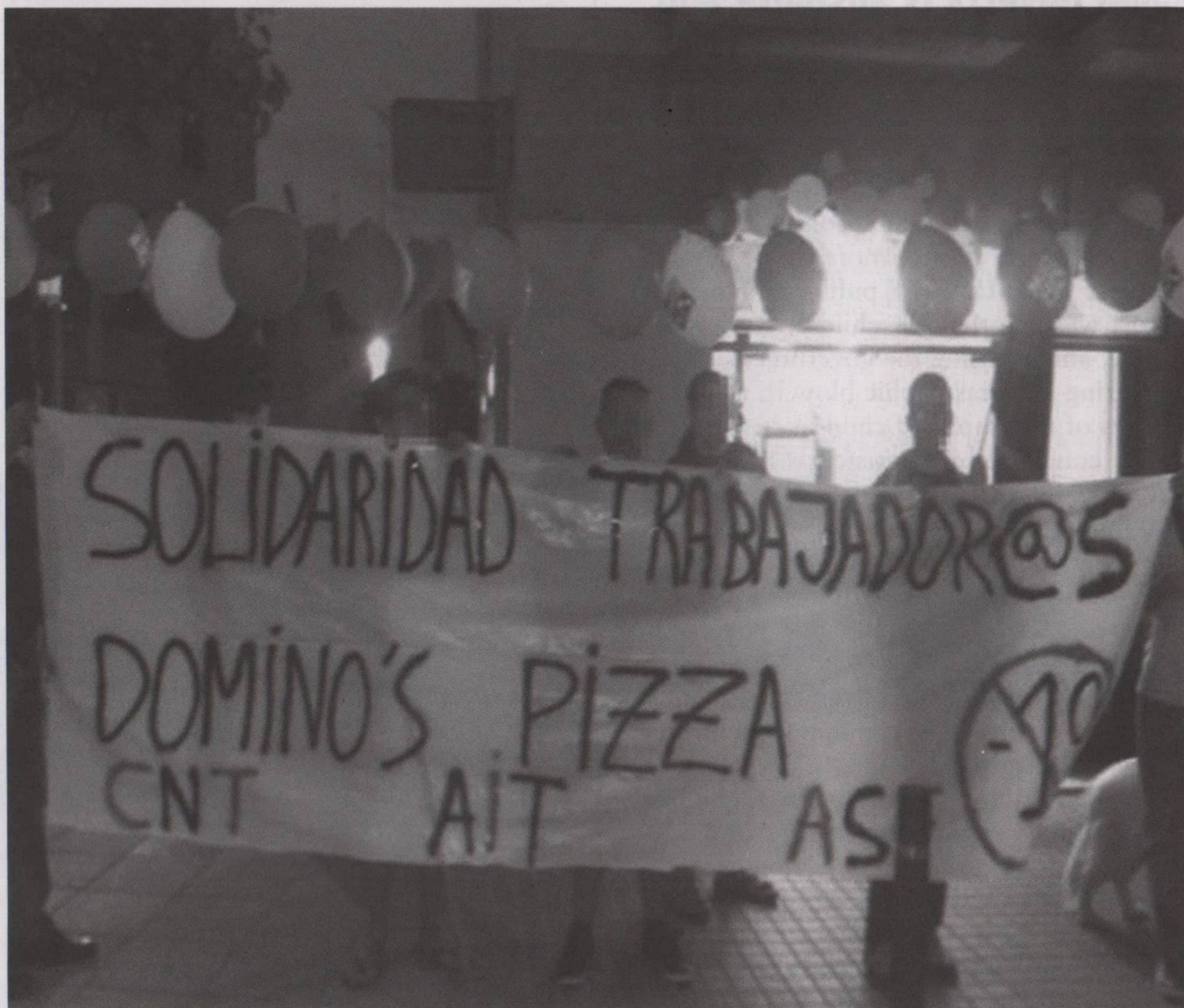
## Notes from the US

### ◀ page 8

all charges to be dropped because of the 'unlawful pre-trial punishment' to which he was subjected in 2010 and 2011. For 23 to 24 hours a day he was kept in a cell which measured just six feet by eight feet, which prevented from lying down or even leaning against the wall when he was not sleeping. Further details of his conditions are appalling. And this is before any trial, remember.

In economic news, the Justice Department advised last month that it has no plans to charge anyone in Goldman Sachs with the improper trading of subprime mortgages during the recent and current financial crisis.

The Securities and Exchange Commission,



the last time that pay scales were reviewed in 2001.

The government 'Fair Work' Ombudsman who agreed to Domino's rationale and rubber-stamped the wage cuts has, unsurprisingly, declined to comment on the dispute.

The Dominos dispute is part of a wider attack on workers' pay and conditions in the Australian food and hospitality industry. Many restaurant owners, including millionaire celebrity chefs, have complained that across the industry, wages are too high, workers too inflexible and, as a result, many businesses are being forced to close down.

This is not the experience of people who

whose stated purpose is "...to protect investors, maintain fair, orderly, and efficient markets...", also announced that it is abandoning its probe of Goldman Sachs.

This even though a thorough and convincing report by the US Senate called for an investigation of the company eighteen months ago after it had emerged that Goldman Sachs took advantage of unsuspecting clients by unloading subprime loans... simultaneously betting against the viability of what it was selling. Capitalism in full force.

Judges have also been in the news in the matter of racism spying: a federal judge recently dismissed a lawsuit which accused the FBI of violating civil liberties when the

work in the catering and hospitality industries. Wages have been historically poor and workers are expected to work very long hours across highly unsocial shift patterns,

The bosses claim that there is a necessity to reduce wages in tough economic times in order to remain competitive. An annual increase in sales of 67% show that there are no tough economic times for Domino's. They are just using the recession as a smokescreen to slash wages to maximise their profits.

Proof if ever it was needed that the workers have nothing in common with the boss class.

Matthew Black

agency used an informant to spy on various mosques in California.

Craig Monteilh, once an informant, admitted posing as a Muslim convert in order to collect the personal information of mosque members – and record their meetings and conversations.

In mid-August, though, US District Judge Cormac Carney threw out the case with the good old, 'it would risk disclosing government secrets' excuse.

Two groups representing the plaintiffs – the American Civil Liberties Union and the Council on American-Islamic Relations – plan to appeal.

Louis Further



## ECONOMICS

# Why inequality matters

## Child poverty is absolute and relative – Jeremy Cliffe at the Spirit Level

The distinction between absolute and relative poverty is once more in the news. Just last week, UNICEF published a new report warning that UK child poverty is set to rise, and accusing the government of delivering a “catastrophic blow to the futures of thousands of children”.

The conclusion is consistent with last autumn’s IFS forecast predicting that some 400,000 will be pulled under the poverty line by government cuts, and that by 2020, 23% of British children will live in poverty. The target set by the 2010 Child Poverty Act is under 5%.

But some speculate that the government intends to abandon the commitment enshrined in the 2010 legislation.

The definition of child poverty (“children in households earning under 60% of median income”) used in the Act is relative, not absolute. The Centre for Social Justice (CSJ), close to the Work and Pensions Secretary Iain Duncan Smith, last week called this “crude and flawed”.

Of course, ‘absolute poverty’ – the fulfilment of base needs – matters. But various ‘absolute’ measures (crime, social mobility, health, violence, teenage pregnancy) correlate closely to relative poverty: to the level of inequality in a society.

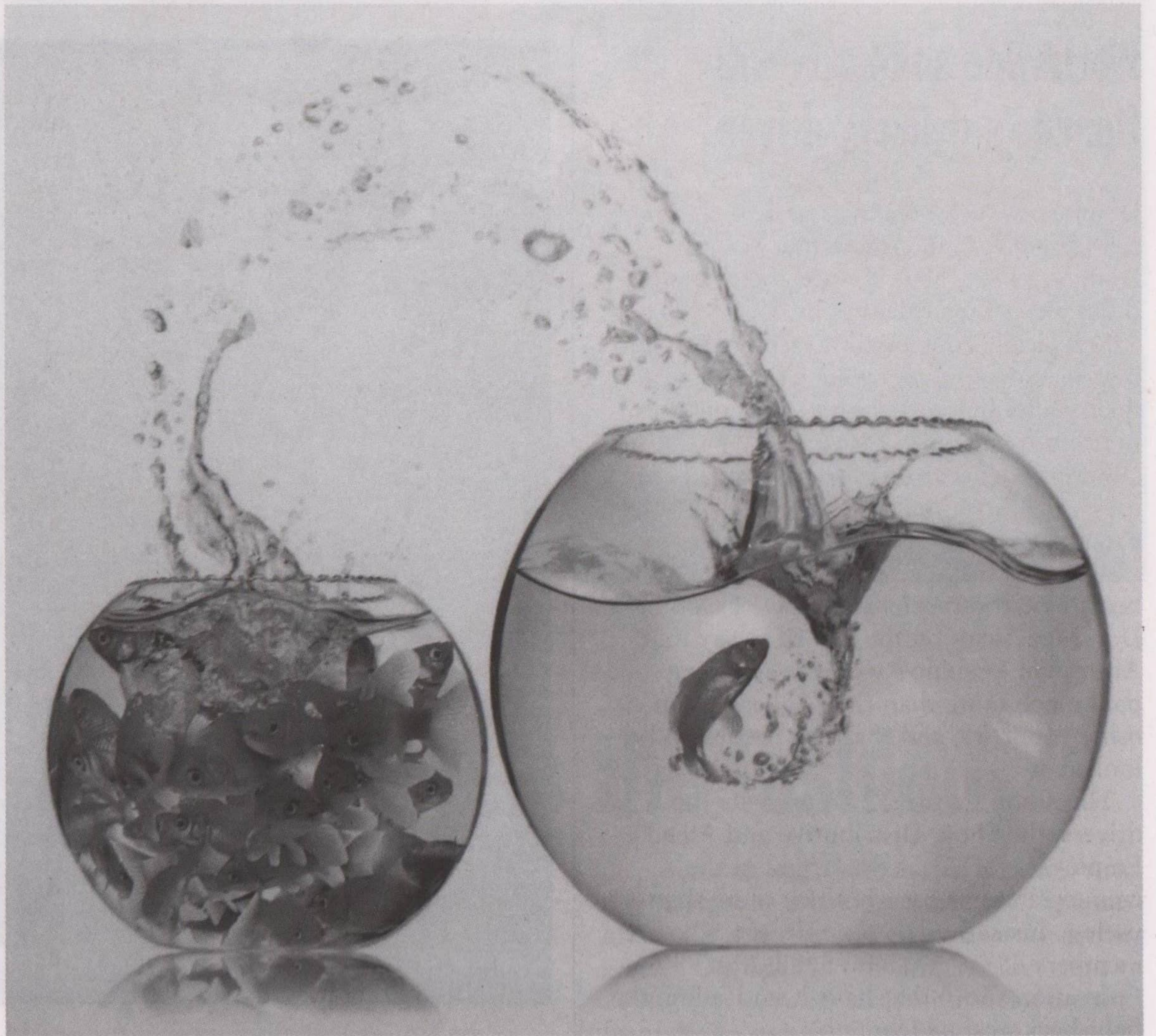
This is the thesis of *The Spirit Level*, a book by Richard Wilkinson and Kate Pickett that, according to *The Sunday Times*, contains “a big idea, big enough to change political thinking.” Using evidence that, to quote *The Economist*, is “painstakingly marshalled” and “hard to dispute”, the book demonstrates a clear relationship between inequality and a whole range of social ills. It shows, for example, that levels of imprisonment, drug abuse and mental illness are higher in unequal societies, and that levels of social mobility, trust and health are lower.

Why? As the gap between rich and poor grows, society becomes more hierarchical, bonds of community break down and anxiety, rivalry and insecurity mount.

And children in stratified societies are highly vulnerable to the effects. They are more likely to suffer from obesity, bullying, and low educational attainment; girls are more likely to become teenage mothers, boys to be drawn into violence. This inevitably blights the poorest most, which is why ‘child poverty’ should be expressed as a relative condition.

If poverty means living on the wrong side of town, this study shows that it is markedly worse when ‘town’ is divided and segmented by income differences.

But this does not just apply to disadvantaged groups. High levels of relative poverty make



everyone worse off. Take UNICEF's ranking of child well-being in 21 developed countries (in which the UK comes last); *The Spirit Level* reveals that this index correlates not – as one might expect – to average living standards, but to inequality. The book shows that its detrimental effects go right up the income scale.

The CSJ argues that the relative child poverty measure “confuses poverty with inequality,” brushing aside the latter as “inevitable in a free society”. It calls for a focus on the “underlying causes of blighted young lives, such as family breakdown, welfare dependency and educational failure, rather than the symptoms of low relative income.”

In doing so, it betrays an all-too common attitude: that the size of the gap *per se* has no bearing on the impoverished condition of those children at the bottom; that “the symptoms of low relative income” are fundamentally distinct from these broader social problems.

The findings articulated by Wilkinson and Pickett in *The Spirit Level* show why anti-poverty policies built on these assumptions are doomed to fail. To tackle child poverty is to tackle the exclusion of young people from the common experiences and accepted living standards of a given society; a pernicious yet relative condition.

Yet the CSJ's comments exemplify a widespread ignorance of the social consequences of inequality in the UK (higher, and growing

faster, than in almost any other developed economy). Addressing the awareness gap is a crucial first step to building a coalition to close the income gap.

That is why a team led by Katharine Round are currently raising money to make *The Spirit Level* into an international documentary.

Drawing inspiration from such agenda-setting titles as *An Inconvenient Truth* and *The Age of Stupid*, this promises to communicate the effects of inequality, on children and others, in a format that can be screened in cinemas and on television, spread via social networks and shown to policy-makers. The film will blend hard evidence with human tales from around the globe.

The aims: spread the word, spark action, and achieve real, tangible change.

Those interested in backing the campaign can do so in several ways. If just 2,500 people pre-buy a download, it will meet its £30,000 target; with one month left to go, the campaign is already over halfway there. But this is not about money.

Supporters are equally urged to link to the campaign website, share and re-tweet the Facebook ([www.facebook.com/SpiritLevelDocumentary](http://www.facebook.com/SpiritLevelDocumentary)) and Twitter ([twitter.com/spiritleveldoc](http://twitter.com/spiritleveldoc)) pages, and sign up for the mailing list.

<http://thespiritleveldocumentary.com/blog>  
See [www.indiegogo.com/spiritlevelfilm](http://www.indiegogo.com/spiritlevelfilm) for more information



# The Bonnot Gang

**It's 100th year anniversary of the Bonnot Gang, a group of anarchist bandits who operated in the Paris of the Belle Époque**

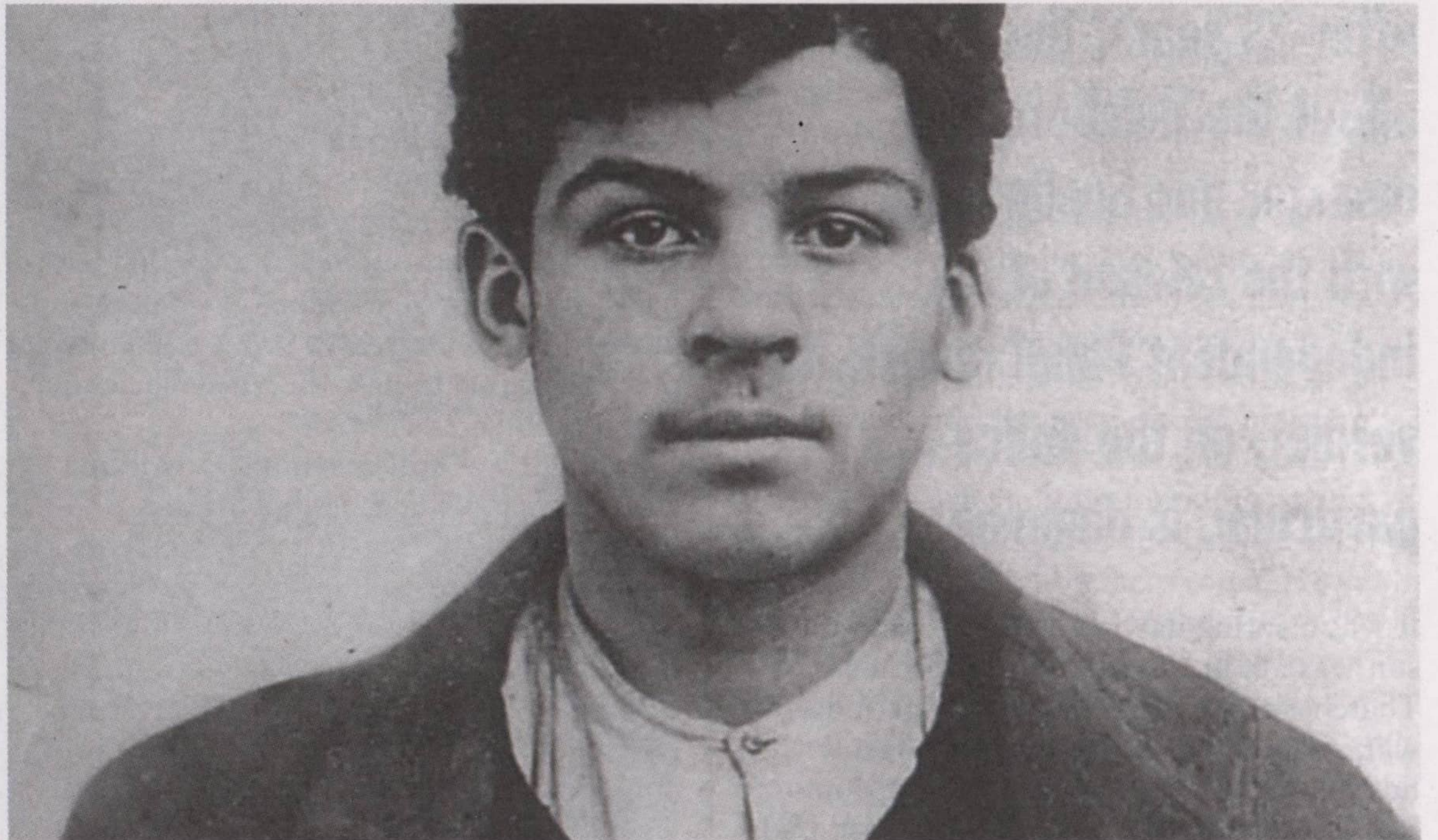
The Bonnot Gang are famous for being the first to use automobiles as getaway cars and were well known in their day for high profile robbing sprees and violent antics. The group continue to divide opinion due to the questions they raise concerning currents in contemporary Anarchism, namely the struggle between the Syndicalist and Individualist tendencies. This tension has shaped Anarchism since the dawn of revolutionary Unionism.

The roots of the Bonnot Gang can be found in the French Illegalist movement of the nineteenth century. After the destruction of the Paris Commune Anarchist tactics turned to revenge – bombings, shootings and attacks on property were commonplace. Many of these acts were financed by robberies, such as those carried out by Ravachol, but as the terror continued the illegal dimension took on a life of its own. The cry of *La Reprise Individual* arose, the idea that theft from the rich was justified as they lived off the backs of the poor. Robbery ceased to be robbery and became reclaiming what was wrongfully taken. The two most prominent men to practise this philosophy were Clement Duval and Marius Jacob.

As time went on the Illegalist philosophy became even more extreme. Illegal activity became an end in itself, requiring no justification. If society was the product of capitalist social relations, then war against that society by any means necessary was entirely proper. This outlook reached its nadir with the Bonnot Gang.

The Paris Illegalists gathered around the *L'Anarchie* paper. One of the people who gravitated toward *L'Anarchie* was Octave Garnier (pictured above), a young anarchist from Fontainebleau. Garnier had been a thief since the age of thirteen and by his late teens was a hardened criminal who had served time in numerous institutions. Garnier moved into a house with future Bonnot Gang members Raymond Callemin, Jean De Boe and Edouard Carouy. He found work as a Navy and made a living on the side by burgling houses. But Garnier was hungry for more – bigger heists that bought in more money. He started consultation with Callemin about forming a gang which could facilitate such activity. Into this fray stepped Jules Bonnot.

Bonnot was a petty criminal and anarchist who had served time in the French Army. He was recently returned from Geneva where he had been fired from his job after attacking his manager with an iron bar. The gang planned



and schemed throughout the summer of 1911, before striking on the 21st December at the Société Générale Bank in Paris. The loot was roughly five thousand pounds. This disappointing first haul did not stop the robbers from striking again in a way that would send shivers through middle class French society. On the 2nd January 1912 they entered the Paris home of M. Moreau, murdered him and his maid and absconded with thirty thousand francs.

The early part of 1912 was the apex of the gangs crime spree, by March of that year they had killed two policemen and later on in that month murdered a chauffeur before stealing his car, yet they had also left themselves open to attack with acts of incredible bravado. In one such act Bonnot had shown up brandishing a Browning pistol at the offices of *Le Petit Parisien*, a bourgeois Paris newspaper. Bonnot apparently objected to the papers coverage of the group and at one point had loudly proclaimed “We’ll burn off our last round against the cops, and if they don’t care to come, we’ll certainly know how to find them”. It was after this incident that the press came up with the moniker ‘The Bonnot Gang’.

By the time the group split in April 1912 several of their members and supporters were under arrest. Bonnot was hiding in a safe house in Choisy-le-Roi, where he met his untimely end on 28th April. After holding officers at bay for hours, the chief of Police ordered the house demolished. Dynamite was bought in to blow off the front of the building before Bonnot was repeatedly shot as he lay dying amongst the rubble.

Octave Garnier and gang member René Valet didn’t last much longer. They holed up in the suburb of Nogent-Sur-Marne until 14th May before being killed in a shoot-out with the police. It was an abrupt end to a terror that had sent shockwaves through France.

So what can the Bonnot Gang teach us today? Those of us who describe ourselves as anarchists are often tarred with the brush of violence. The Bonnot Gang would seem to justify such an assertion, but it is important to note that the gang came from a very narrow milieu and were, in their day, despised by anarcho-syndicalists who often bore the brunt of state repression due to the acts of the Illegalists.

It must also be recognised that the strongest and most stable anarchist movements (those of Spain, Greece, Italy, early twentieth century Argentina) are precisely those that have engaged with the social struggles of their day and not merely sought to ‘go it alone’.

Though we all admire the figure of the dashing bandit, the Bonnot Gang killed working class people in a remorseless fashion and in his last will and testament Octave Garnier even bragged “Why Kill Workers? They are vile slaves, without them there wouldn’t be the bourgeois and the rich.” This particular phrase shows how nastily the individualist strain of anarchism can turn in on itself, and yet without individualism would there be any anarchism? If we’re not individualists first then what’s our problem with state socialism? These are valid questions that still need to be worked out, not least because in recent years the rise of Insurrectionism has made them more important than ever.

With anarchist attacks of increasing violence and frequency taking place in both Greece and Italy, we find ourselves confronted with same problems as 1912. Is it best to grasp the nettle and throw ourselves into a self-destructive struggle with society in order to realise our individualism; or should we build a movement that is capable of taking on the state and capital in the more long term? Is it possible to do both? The resolving of these issues is the question of the future.

Paul Williams



FEATURE

FEATURE

# HILLSBOROUGH: THE REAL TRUTH

**After 23 years, the real truth about the Hillsborough disaster has finally been told with the release of an Independent Panel report. Its verdict, on the police in particular, is damning...**

It was a spring day in April 1989 and the sun was about to set on over a decade of Thatcher's iron rule of Britain, a period of war, civil unrest and government openly hostile to the working class. Many people had already paid the price for this. Hundreds more would pay today, 96 of them with their lives.

Thatcher had signalled her intent almost immediately on coming to office, approving a 45% pay rise for police forces nationwide. This was, without doubt, a calculated attempt to bring the police onside before her assault on workers across the country. The riots of the early '80s only strengthened her determination when it came to assuring the loyalty of "Maggie's boot boys".

A culture of unaccountability was being fostered among police forces across the country and this was best and most publicly illustrated by South Yorkshire Police. They had clashed violently with striking miners at the Orgreave coking plant in 1984, charging with mounted units and short-shield squads. Police maintained they were attacked by striking miners and they retaliated in self-defence. 95 miners were charged with rioting. All 95 were acquitted as it became clear in court that police evidence was unreliable. But to Thatcher and the police, the miners were "the mob".

The miners' account of the events at Orgreave differed significantly from those of

the police. The miners had been ushered into a field by the police and surrounded on three sides, with a railway line on the fourth side. Here they were attacked by mounted police units and police on foot wielding batons. Video footage of the day seems to support this version of events. The miners had been sitting or standing in small groups in that field in Orgreave. Some of them were playing a game to pass the time. The game was football.

Football was still essentially a working class game in Britain. Following a period in the game's history littered with incidents of hooliganism, football fans were viewed with contempt by the country's establishment and treated like animals by the establishment's enforcers. And the supporters of Liverpool Football Club were considered to be the ultimate example.

English clubs had been banned from European competition four years earlier following the deaths of thirty-nine Juventus supporters during crowd trouble at the European Cup final against Liverpool. Following years of decline in the city, with soaring unemployment, militant industrial action and the Toxteth riots of 1981, along with unflattering portrayals of the city and its people in the media, an image of the work-shy, violent, criminal Scouser had built up. The city's response was to elect a Labour council controlled by the Militant Tendency which signalled its intent to tackle the Thatcher government's cuts by any means necessary.

And so it was against this background of demonisation, class warfare and a police force that thought it could get away with anything that an FA Cup semi-final between Liverpool and Nottingham Forest turned first to disaster and then to unforgiveable scandal.

Leading up to the 1989 semi-final, concerns had been raised by Liverpool Football Club and the FA about the ticket allocation for the game. Liverpool, with a much larger following than Nottingham



Forest, had been allocated the smaller West Stand and Leppings Lane terrace instead of the much larger Kop end. Police were in charge of the ticket allocation for the match and their decision seems to have primarily been based on the direction from which each club's supporters would arrive.

We know that 96 people died as a result of the disaster. We know about *The Sun's* "The Truth" headline. However, the Taylor report following the disaster identified the cause as "a failure of police control". The Sun's allegations were blown apart and the police narrative dismissed as falsehood.

Yet the police version of events persisted in the public consciousness. As the families fought through an inquest and subsequent private prosecutions of the police officers in charge on the day, they were always under enormous pressure to "move on". But the campaign groups set up in the wake of the disaster knew that much more had happened behind the scenes. They felt the inquest was flawed and that, despite the Taylor report, the police had come out of the ordeal clean.

The Hillsborough Independent Panel report, which was released on 12th September this year, pulls no punches on the police involvement in the disaster and subsequent events. The panel, after scrutinising previously sealed documents,

found that warnings from previous disasters at Bolton's Burnden Park, Glasgow Rangers' Ibrox and the fire at Bradford's Valley Parade had not been heeded. Hillsborough did not meet minimum safety requirements and did not have a valid safety certificate. Perhaps more damning, along with the police negligence on the day, the panel found that there had been a co-ordinated effort by South Yorkshire Police to deflect the blame onto Liverpool supporters.

The filtering system for fans outside the stadium which had been in place in 1988 was abandoned in 1989. As was acknowledged in the Taylor report, Duckenfield had ordered exit gate C opened to relieve congestion outside but nobody was in place to direct incoming fans away from the already full central pens on the terrace. Duckenfield had told FA representatives that this gate had been forced open by ticketless Liverpool supporters, a lie immediately relayed to the media and sent worldwide.

Ambulances were not allowed onto the pitch as police were convinced the problems in the Leppings Lane terrace were being caused by crowd disorder rather than overcrowding. While supporters were breaking down advertising hoardings to use as makeshift stretchers, the police and

ambulance response inside the stadium was uncoordinated and chaotic. Families arriving to identify dead relatives were subjected to interrogation which focused on the amount of alcohol their dead relatives had consumed.

The report discovered that blood alcohol levels were taken from all of those who had died, including children, one as young as ten. Hospitals had also taken blood alcohol levels from survivors without recording the results in their medical files. Officers told local MP Irvine Patnick they had been

attacked and urinated upon by fans. Within an hour of the disaster, the police had decided on a narrative and were doing their best to make sure the story was constructed and released.

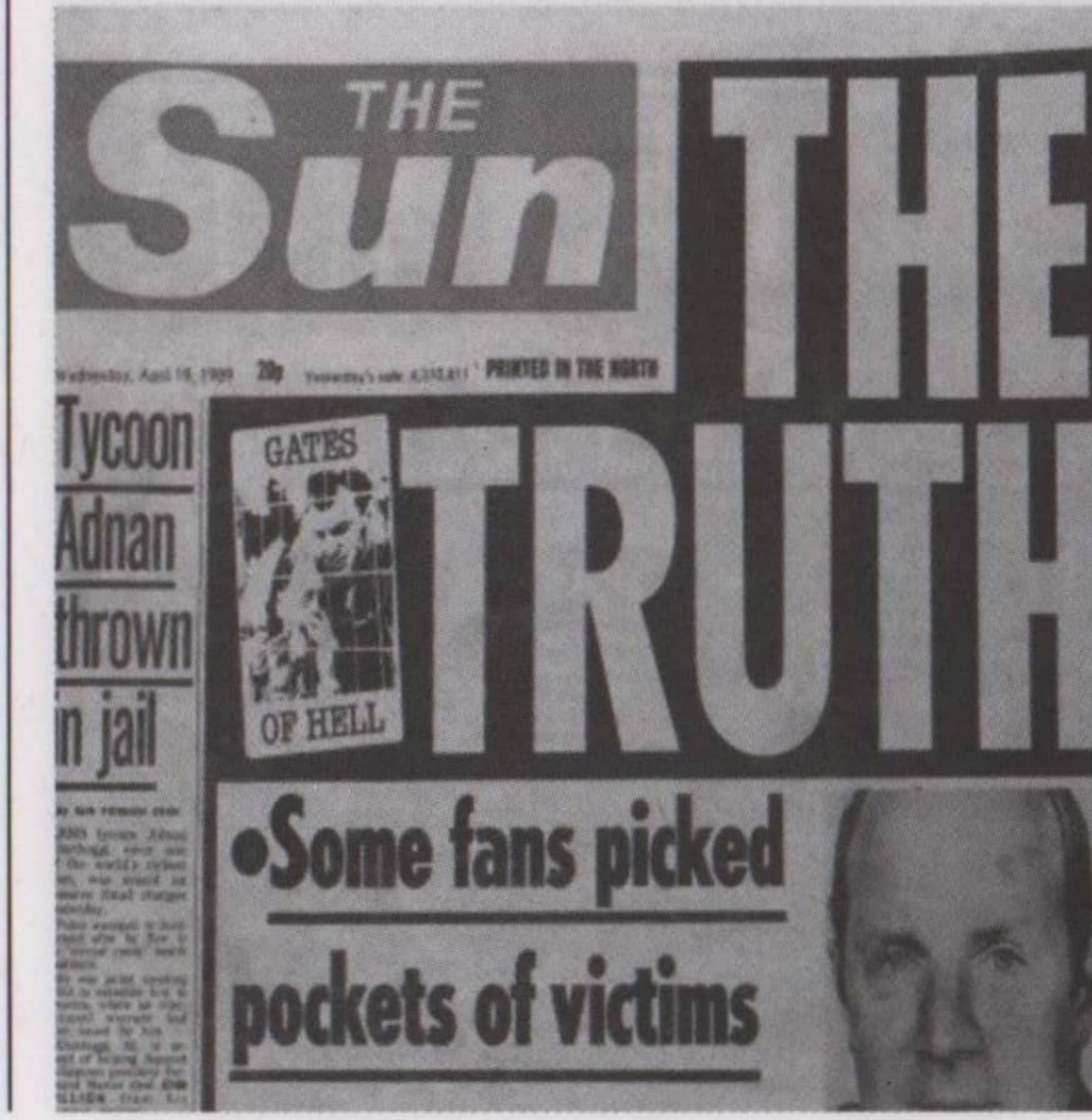
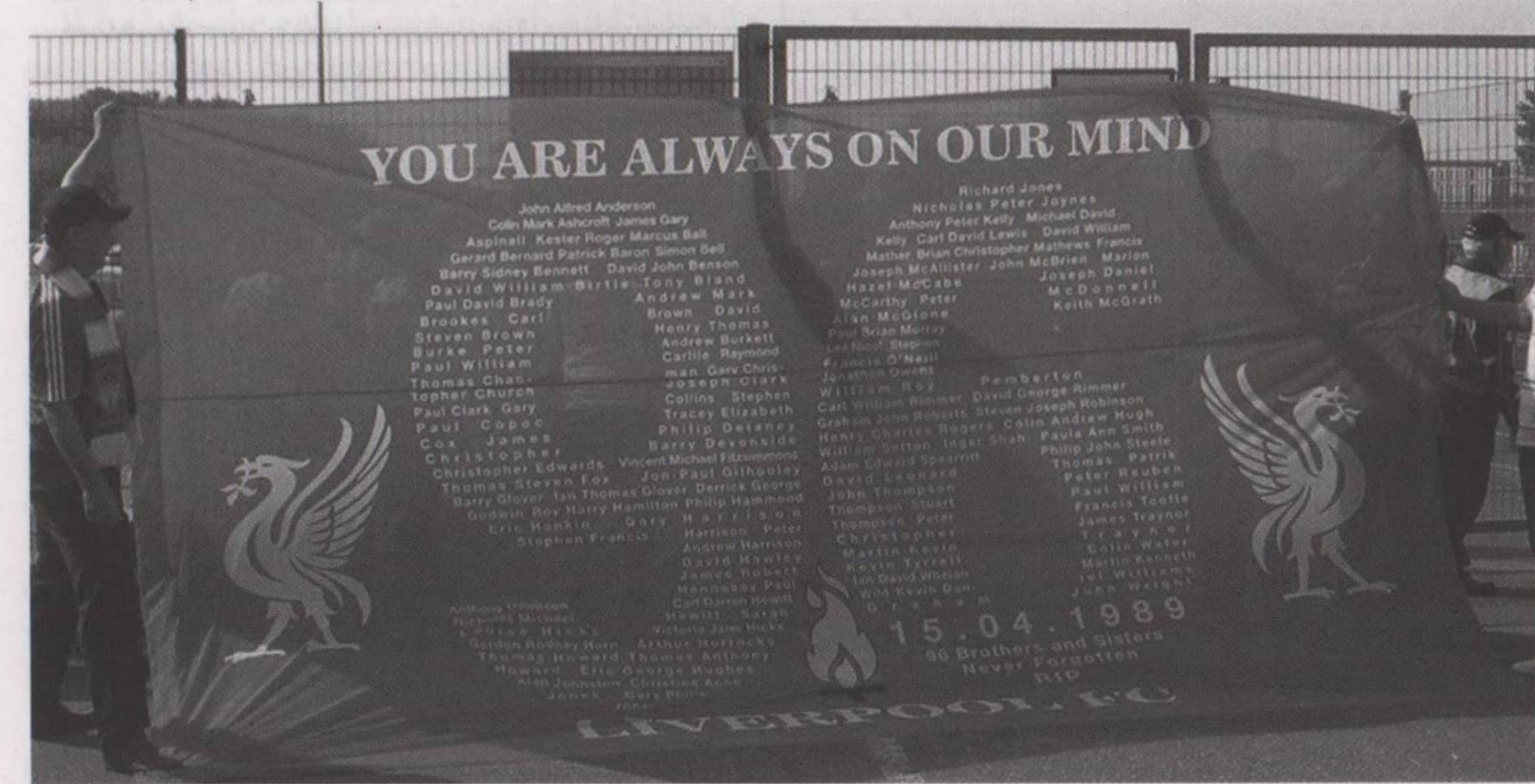
The panel found that in the days and weeks following the disaster, South Yorkshire Police engaged in what has been termed a "black propaganda operation". Senior officers and local Police Federation officials met and the need for the police to ensure their story was "rock solid" was discussed. A press release found its way to the White's News Agency in Sheffield and the story was passed by them to papers nationwide. The sources for the story were senior South Yorkshire officers and Irvine Patnick MP. Officers' statements were systematically edited to remove criticism of senior officers and the police operation.

The coroner at the inquest into the disaster which followed the Taylor report, based on evidence from pathologists, assumed that everyone who died was already critically injured by 3.15pm. A cut-off point for evidence was established for this time, meaning that a scrutiny of the emergency response and police actions in the immediate aftermath was not possible. The inquest soon became a forum for South Yorkshire police to reiterate their case against supporters and to respond to criticisms in the Taylor report. The panel found that the 3.15pm cut-off could not be justified and that as many as 41 of those who died were not critically injured by this point and could have been saved if the response had been better.

The Hillsborough Independent Panel report should now be the final vindication of the families' and groups' fight for justice over 23 long, difficult years. The report makes shocking reading for some. For others, like the Orgreave miners, the Guildford Four or Birmingham Six, or the families of Jean-Charles de Menezes, Ian Tomlinson and Mark Duggan, it will be depressingly familiar: a police force above the law acting in its own interests, hiding its own failings, corruption and abuse of power behind a curtain of lies. Hundreds of officers were on duty that day. Indeed, many are still employed by the force. But barely a single police officer spoke out over those 23 years despite knowing the real truth of Hillsborough.

The police nationwide had a free hand to act above the law as long as it was in the interests of Thatcher's government. Tough on the IRA, tough on the unions, tough on football supporters. They were all "the enemy within", the demons built up by the Tories and the right-wing media to justify government policy of the day. This is what the police exist to do. Football has changed since then. Little else has.

Jay O'Doom





## INTERVIEW

# A chat with Kent Anarchists

## Joe Maguire had chance to ask them a few things...

Kent Anarchists are a new group trying to find their feet, obviously in Kent. They have recently put out a number requests for contacts and are running a regularly updated blog at <http://kentanarchists.wordpress.com>

*JM: Can you give an introduction to the group? Outline where you're based and what your activities are, at present time?*

**KA:** Kent Anarchists is a Working Class Anarchist group that promotes self organisation, mutual aid and solidarity within the Working Class community. We seek to work within the community with people through their day to day struggles against the State and Capitalism. We believe that we (the Working Class) to be the driving force for revolution and social liberation.

We are against the following:

- We are against all Political Parties.
- We are against all authoritarian organisations and groups, whether left wing or right wing.
- We reject the State and Capitalism.

We promote the following:

- Self organisation of Working Class communities by Working Class people themselves.
- Working councils for Working Class people.
- Working Class mutual aid and solidarity, serving the interests of our Working Class community.

*What are your objectives, immediate, long-term, etc?*

Our immediate objectives are to develop relationships and contacts within our community/region. We work within the community by promoting Anarchist ideas/history, through propaganda distribution and social meets.

Our long term goals are to create a strong Anarchist presence within the region that can work with the local community.

*How are you organised? Do you intend to affiliate to either of the federations, either, as a group or as members? Do you have wider contacts?*

At the moment most of us are not affiliated with any federations. We see ourselves as more of a community action group. This does not mean we would not welcome

members of Anarchist federations to the group, or that we wouldn't work with them. But as of now we feel it is in our best interests to be non-aligned.

*Is there a wider history of radicalism in Kent? Your blog links to a miners' festival, but these are closed, no? Can you give a wider overview of 'the scene' and the 'balance of forces' in Kent? Are leftist groups dominant? Do groups like EDL have a presence?*

The local history of radicalism in Kent is very limited. This is something we clearly want to change by developing radical ideas and promoting Anarchism. There are the usual leftist groups in the area such as the SWP. But these groups have very little support (if any) within the community.

*Do we know whatever happened to the East Kent Anarchists?*

The old East Kent Anarchists eventually had people drift away and move on, whether it be through moving out of the area or simply losing interest. A handful of people put in some hard work at first, but in recent years it has been inactive. We still have contact with one or two members of the old group.

*How would you assess the wider anarchist movement, its strengths and weaknesses? And, what role do you think local groups can play?*

The Anarchist movement in the last few years, because of austerity, has seen a kind of revival. People do want to explore an alternative to Capitalism. The community group is essential to developing Anarchism into the wider public, and for its success. We believe this is the only way Anarchism will connect with people and be successful in achieving our aspirations.

*How do people reach the group?*

The main problems we believe Anarchism faces is keeping people interested and active. Many people come into groups expecting revolution or some massive change right away. We wish this was the case, but sadly it isn't. It will take much hard work and dedication, and this is something we are willing to do. We also believe that Anarchism needs to open itself up a little more and become accessible to the public and not be so 'ghettoised' as it has been in the past.

*Anything additional you wish to add?*

We are looking forward to the challenges ahead. We would welcome all local Anarchists, and local people with Anarchist ideas and principles to get in touch and join in with the group.

Email: [kentanarchists@riseup.net](mailto:kentanarchists@riseup.net)

Blog: <http://kentanarchists.wordpress.com/>





## Prisoner art exhibition

A Prisoner Art Exhibition, collected and co-ordinated by Anarchist Black Cross (ABC) groups and allies, has now arrived at Colorama #2 (or C2), South London, as it begins a year-long tour visiting over a dozen venues across England, Wales and Ireland.

Opposite the old Colorama Cinema, C2 is fast becoming a hub of activity as residents transform the office block and ground level warehouse into an anarchist social centre, while hosting the start of the ABC art tour for approximately 10 days. It will then move on to Britain's largest anarchist bookshop at Freedom Press in Whitechapel, before being displayed at the London Anarchist Bookfair at the University of London on 27th October.

Featuring 32 pieces from seven current and past prisoners, including well-known artist Lucy Edkins and Phil Africa from the MOVE family, the exhibition shows the artistic talent of those behind bars, as well as highlighting the political cases of the prisoners themselves.

From collaboration between Bristol and London ABC the art exhibition aims to be an extension of solidarity to those behind bars, as part of the many ways to support prisoners. The Anarchist Black Cross has been a banner name for prison abolition for over a century, with groups in the UK re-forming in the 1960s, and now a global network of anarchist prisoner support groups.

Commenting on the art exhibition in July 2012, Ben Gunn, a recently released lifer who spent 33 years inside, said: "In attempting to see into the darkest corners of the state's activities, we are privileged to have the spotlight provided by prison artists... Struggling to obtain their bare tools for creativity they tower above their captivity to reveal their unique perspective – I hope that their art invites you to think – and be moved to *act*."

- until 6th October: Colorama #2, 44-58 Lancaster Street, Southwark, London SE1 0RP\* (viewings 2pm until 6pm).
- 7th to 26th October: Freedom Bookshop, Angel Alley, 84b Whitechapel High Street, London E1 7QX (open Monday to Saturdays 12 noon until 6pm, Sundays 12 noon until 4pm).
- 27th October: London Anarchist Bookfair, Queen Mary, University of London, Mile End Road, London E1 4NS (open from 10am until 6pm).

London Anarchist Black Cross

\* The building with the double doors, ring the string bell round to the left of the entrance.

# Detention continues

## John Bowden questions his continued unlawful detention

In 1982 I was sentenced to life imprisonment, with the trial judge's recommendation that I should serve at least 25 years before the Parole Board would consider my release. Legally, therefore, the trial judge had authorised my detention until 2005, after which a judicial body, the Parole Board, would have to authorise my continued detention.

In the case of prisoners sentenced to life in jail, they are in fact set 'tariffs', which are the minimum and specific length of time they are to be detained in the interests of retribution and punishment. Once that 'tariff', or period of imprisonment, has been served the continued detention of the lifer must be authorised by the Parole Board. That is the law. It is a law also underpinned by Article 5 of the European Convention on Human Rights.

In June of 2011, six years after the expiry of my 'tariff' and the original trial judge's recommendation, the Parole Board finally reviewed my detention. After a brief hearing, they authorised my continued detention for a further twelve months. That twelve months has now passed and I remain in jail with no sign of when my imprisonment is likely to be 'reviewed' again. I am therefore being detained unlawfully.

The average sentence of imprisonment for holding a person unlawfully against their will, usually referred to as hostage taking, is ten years.

The prison authorities have persuaded a compliant Parole Board that although I

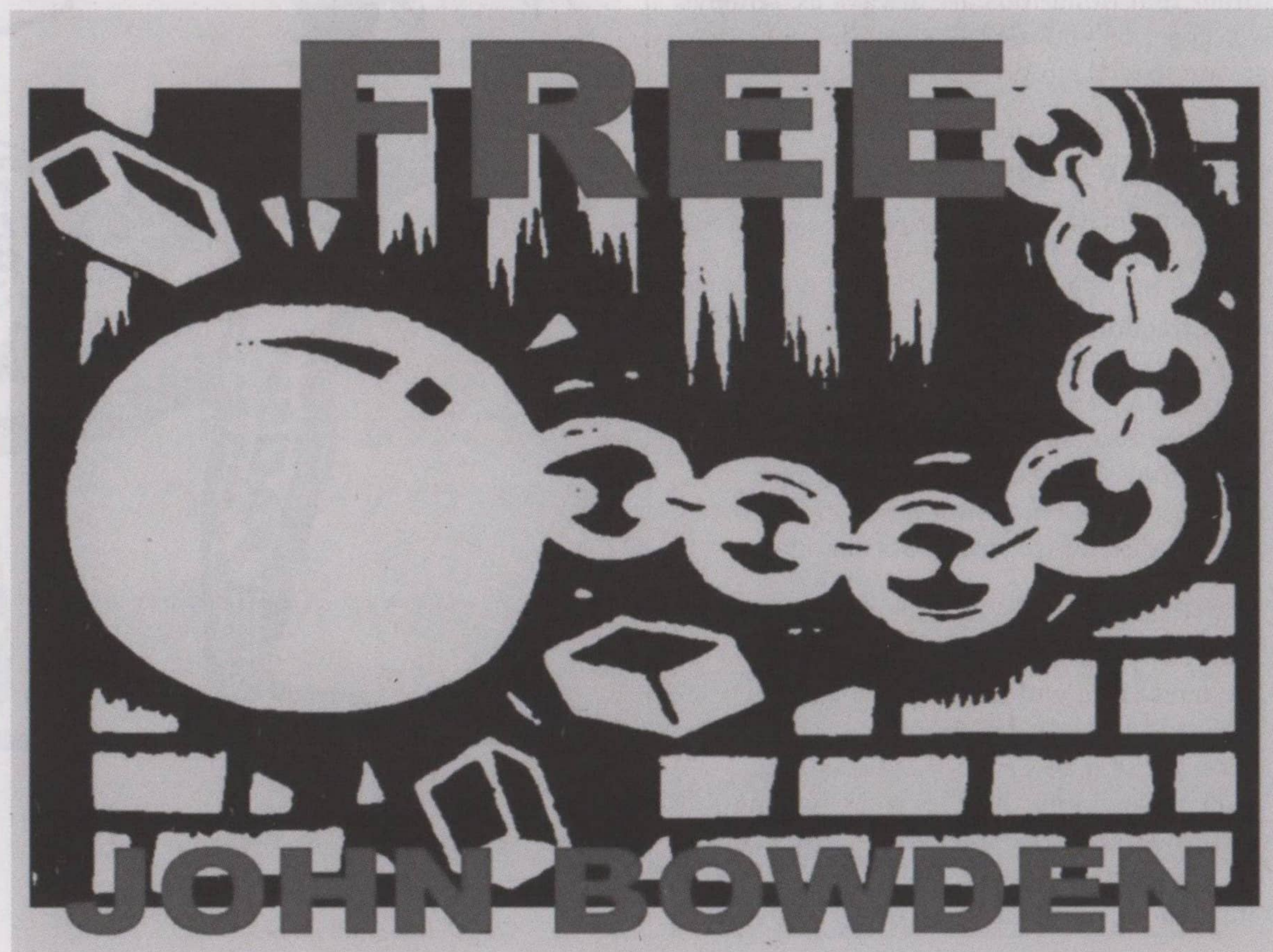
represent little or no risk to the wider community (a prime criterion for releasing life sentence prisoners), I am however a prisoner of strong 'anti-authoritarian' beliefs and ideas centred on my relationship with the prison system, and fuelled by my contact with politically 'subversive' groups on the outside. That primarily is why I remain imprisoned, and imprisoned unlawfully at the moment.

I was sentenced to life imprisonment with two other men in 1982. Both were 'model prisoners' and both were released almost 20 years ago. I remain in jail because of my activities in organising and protesting against a prison system that routinely and systematically abuses prisoners' basic human rights. Indeed, by continuing to detain me without proper legal authorisation, my own basic human rights are being breached.

If the prison authorities are determined to detain me, even unlawfully, unless I compromise my basic human integrity by never questioning or challenging their abuses of power, then I am prepared to die in here. Before surrendering what is vital to my humanity, my spirit of resistance, I would sooner surrender my very life and existence. In fact, true human survival in prison has a fairly straightforward root. A refusal to compromise, even where there is nothing to gain. So if my captors have to now break the law to continue imprisoning me, so be it.

Please send letters and cards of support to John at: John Bowden, 6729, HMP Shotts, Cantrell Road, Shotts, Scotland, M17 4LE.

You can download John Bowden's pamphlet *Tear down the Walls!* free of charge from the Leeds ABC website, see <http://leedsabc.org/>





## COMMENT

## ABOUT FREEDOM ANGEL ALLEY

Anarcho Crimbo comes round again with the London Anarchist Bookfair. We hope to be seeing lots of friends and comrades at our stall and meeting as well as, of course, the after bookfair soiree at the shop. With this issue reaching a wider and new audience here's a quick round up of what happens in our building.

Freedom bookshop is on the ground floor of the building in Angel Alley, Whitechapel. Above the shop are the offices of Corporate Watch, the Solidarity Federation, the Advisory Service for Squatters and the London Coalition Against Poverty. We also have a meeting room which doubles as a art exhibition space. There are meetings of various radical groups most nights of the week and we do a regular exhibition launch on the first Thursday of each month. There are open days for advice from LDMG (Legal Defence & Monitoring Group) on Fridays and ABC (Anarchist Black Cross) on Sundays, but the shop is frequented by many interesting characters in the movement at all times and is well worth dropping in for a cuppa and a chat.

To keep all this going requires filthy lucre, and here you can help by buying books and/or the paper, *Freedom*. We'd also like to take the opportunity to thank all those comrades who have been so supportive in our recent difficulties.

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## NEXT ISSUE DEADLINE

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

# A sideways look

by SVARTFROSK

Things are bad. We know. They're going to get worse.

There is nowhere to hide. You can try and put up with it but it will still get worse. Ignoring the worsening conditions around you won't change them. You could try and do something about them. It may not work. It will be risky. It could be costly, in terms of liberty or financially, maybe physically. But so could doing nothing.

So, maybe you accept that things are bad. You don't see how you can do anything about them. But I ask you, who else will? There is no other answer, no one else will help you if you are not prepared to help yourself. It's a basic principle of solidarity – it is two way, reciprocal. We are stronger together, we know it; it is why our enemies use divide and rule tactics.

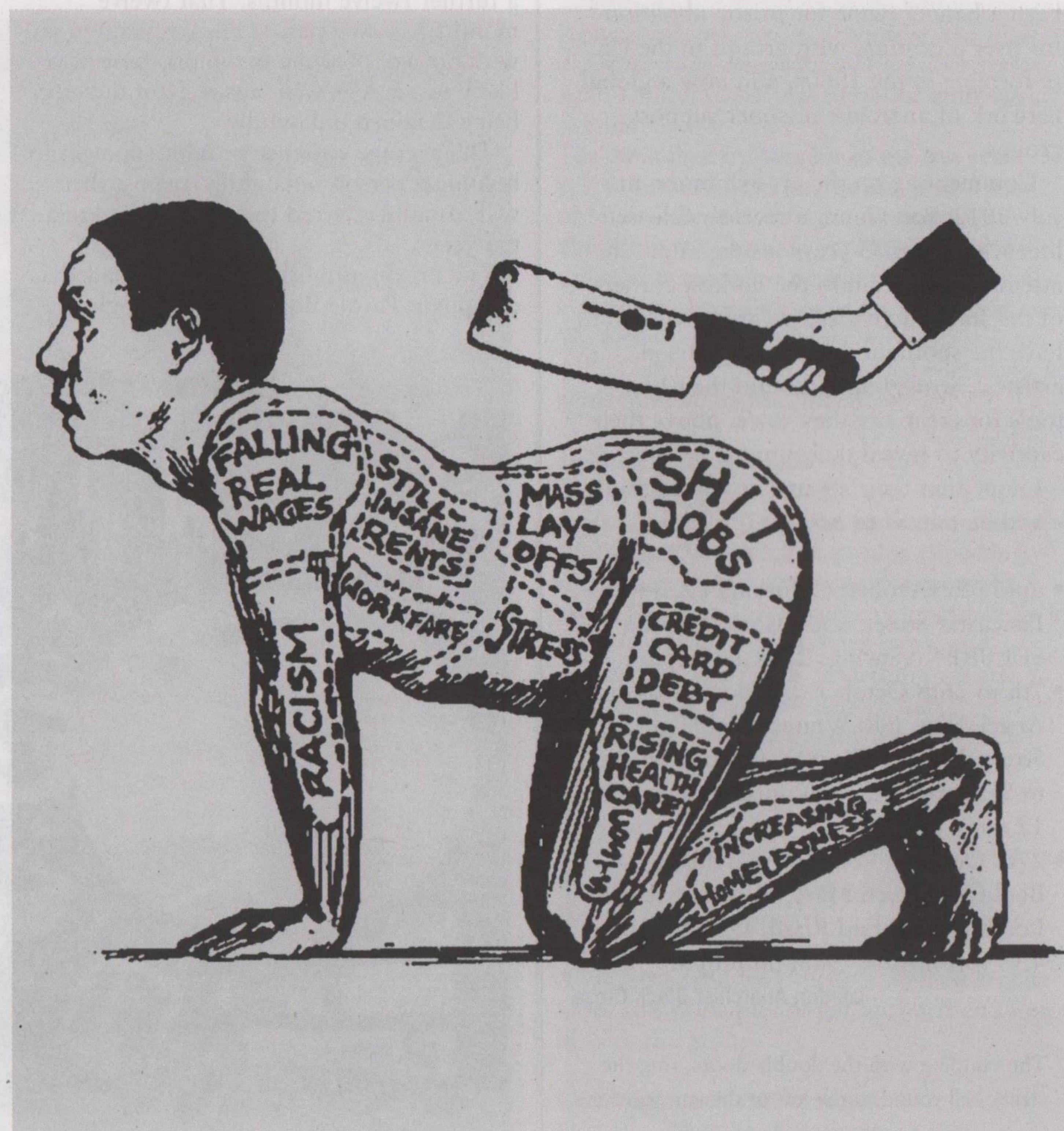
You owe it to yourself to stand up for yourself. After all, no one else will. We owe it to ourselves to all do the same. But what are we standing up for? The Trade Union Congress suggests "A Future that Works". The only thing you can say positively about work is that having it it is better than being without in a capitalist society. Much of it is pointless, what isn't pointless is badly organised so that some people work all the hours of the week while others are pilloried for not having a job. Divide and rule. As the

old song goes, "How can I get a job when you're holding down two?"

And every service closed, every benefit denied, the constant drip drip drip of the rich and powerful stealing everything under our noses, continues to justify resistance. I want to have the time to be human, to share that time and create wondrous things, even if they are only transitory. Instead I face the drudgery of work. Capitalism enriches a handful beyond their wildest dreams and shackles the rest of us. Is it really the best we can do? And I remember before the crash: guess what? – it was still crap then.

For every manager running around intimidating staff; for every landlord racking up the rent. For every mortgage company seeking to foreclose; for every bully in a uniform; for every box-ticker posing as a medical advisor; for every hospital adding to waiting lists; for every councillor shutting libraries; for every financier growing fat on corporate welfare; for every below inflation pay rise; for every above inflation fare rise; for every women's refuge closed by callous posh boys. It is time to say enough!

This is a class war. You don't need to choose a side, one has already been picked for you. Time to stand up and fight for ourselves and fight for all of us.





I am pretty disappointed by Adam's article ['The politics behind the London IWW split' by Adam Ford in *Freedom*, September].

A few facts:

The IWW does not operate on the basis of recallable delegates, and all decisions by the membership as a whole. Its officers are not elected by the whole membership but at a very small conference, and indeed some of them have never been elected! I found out there was a National Secretary by him emailing me – he was never elected. The officers run the union via an email list, they do not meet as a transparent accountable executive body (the USA IWW has an elected General Executive). In reality the IWW is run by a very small group of people, you may even say a clique. Others in IWW call it a bureaucracy.

Of course it is true they don't have "bureaucracies which negotiate with the bosses", that is because except for those of us who have left they don't have any workers organised as IWW who need to meet with bosses!

The IWW strategy conference document was not just from me, it was seconded by Alberto Durango, and adopted by the cleaners branch. The strategy conference was not a decision making conference, the vote on the paper was actually not declared but the top-table – yes there was one – said it was 50-50.

The rancour which has "impacted on the effectiveness of the cleaners' campaigns", has been going on since the majority of the UNITE Cleaners Branch and Latin American Workers Association decided to join IWW and see how it developed. Remember IWW did not organise the cleaners – the cleaners were already organised and joined IWW.

The IWW is the site of a constant fight between personalities, the clique who run the IWW (BIRA) often identified with Liberty & Solidarity and other forms of anarchists. It is an activist network and not

a union in any sense of the word. The cleaners and other workers we organised were constantly being subject to attacks for their activities by one lot or another, or efforts to use them against one lot or another. Meanwhile no workers were being organised except by those of us who have now left.

Symptomatic is that at the John Lewis strike not a single penny was raised by the IWW to keep the strikers going, all our support came from PCS financially, and RMT materially. When we organised the strike the first communication from IWW was by the appointed national secretary worried about legal ramifications – actually we organised the first and no doubt last legal strike of the IWW in Britain.

As you can see we wanted to remain an affiliate of IWW, we have never received a response to our letter. Just tirades of abuse and lies. When we left UNITE we were subjected no attacks at all, or have been since. Yet the IWW have subjected us to a tirade of abuse and lies. Even a so-called campaign of a notice called 'whose side are you on'. A good question – why is there constant public declarations that cleaners don't know that the IWGB is not registered and don't have the benefits. The people writing this on websites don't know if IWGB is registered or not – but by making these claims inviting employers to attack cleaners who are IWGB members and not recognise their union.

More recently at Société Générale, whose workers have never been in IWW and were all organised by IWGB, two members of the IWW London General Members Branch went to the workers behind our backs – Gabi Quevedo informed the cleaners that myself and Alberto Durango were suspended by IWW and we had set up IWGB to steal their money. She organised to meet all the workers supported by the person interviewed by Adam Ford to get them to leave IWGB.

All this at a time when we are in the middle of a fight with the employers – where we have now won the London Living Wage and are fighting to stop their hours being cut. Fortunately, workers are not stupid and told them to get lost.

As for me being a messiah – well I was asked to be IWW National Secretary and I declined, I was also asked to become IWW London and South East Regional Organiser and I declined. I have sought no acclaim in the IWW and, in the time I was in it, I concentrated entirely on organising campaigns and confronting bosses. I had very little involvement in the IWW outside of organising cleaners and bus workers, if that makes me messiah then there a few Judas Iscariots out there and they certainly want to crucify me.

I am meant to be speaking at The Commune School; we aim to talk about our organising work and campaigns. We are focusing on the workers struggles please comrades concentrate on that not the destructive fantasies of sectarian socialism.

Chris Ford

*Andrew Marr's History of the World* is a series of BBC programmes. The first show, on Sunday 23rd September, included a piece about the earliest known township, unearthed by archeologists at Catalhoyuk in Anatolia, a city of about 8,000 people which lasted from 7500 to 5700 BCE.

Catalhoyuk has no large houses indicating royalty or religious hierarchy, and the evidence is that men and women had equal social status. A society where everyone co-operated and there were no bosses, Marr remarks in his presentation, seems to fit the modern ideal of anarchism.

It is pleasant to know that at least one British journalist knows what anarchism is about.

Donald Room

## DONATE YOUR OLD BOOKS

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

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

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## GETTING ACTIVE

## WHAT'S ON

## OCTOBER

■ **2nd and 16th Practical Squatting Evening** at LARC, 62 Fieldgate Street, London E1 1ES from 7pm to 8pm, for more see <http://www.squatter.org.uk/>

■ **4th, 11th, 18th and 25th** London group of The Anarchist Federation meets weekly on Thursday evenings at Freedom Bookshop 84b Whitechapel High Street, London E1 7QX. If you would like to attend please email [london@afed.org.uk](mailto:london@afed.org.uk) beforehand.

■ **7th Rare Doings at Camberwell**, radical history walk featuring rioting Chartists, Leninist artists, general strikers, anti-fascists, squatted streets and centres, the fight for the right to live, and the mad and proud, meet at 2pm, Camberwell Green by the corner of Camberwell Church Street, London SE5.

■ **9th Radical Anthropology talks, Cultural evolution, language and robots** with Luc Steels at St Martin's Community Centre, 43 Carol Street, London NW1 0HT from 6.15 to 9pm, £10/£5/£3, for details see [www.radicalanthropologygroup.org](http://www.radicalanthropologygroup.org)

■ **9th and 23rd Practical Squatting Evening** at 56a Infoshop, 56a Crampton Street, London SE17 3AE from 7pm to 8pm, see <http://www.56a.org.uk/> for details.

■ **13th News from Nowhere Club** presents 'Quakers and Peace Work', with speaker Kate Green at The Epicentre, West Street, Leytonstone E11 4LJ, buffet 7.30pm, talk starts 8pm, for details see <http://www.newsfromnowhereclub.org/>

■ **16th Radical Anthropology talks, Did women once rule the world?** with Chris Knight at St Martin's Community Centre, 43 Carol Street, London NW1 0HT from 6.15 to 9pm, £10/£5/£3, for details see [www.radicalanthropologygroup.org](http://www.radicalanthropologygroup.org)

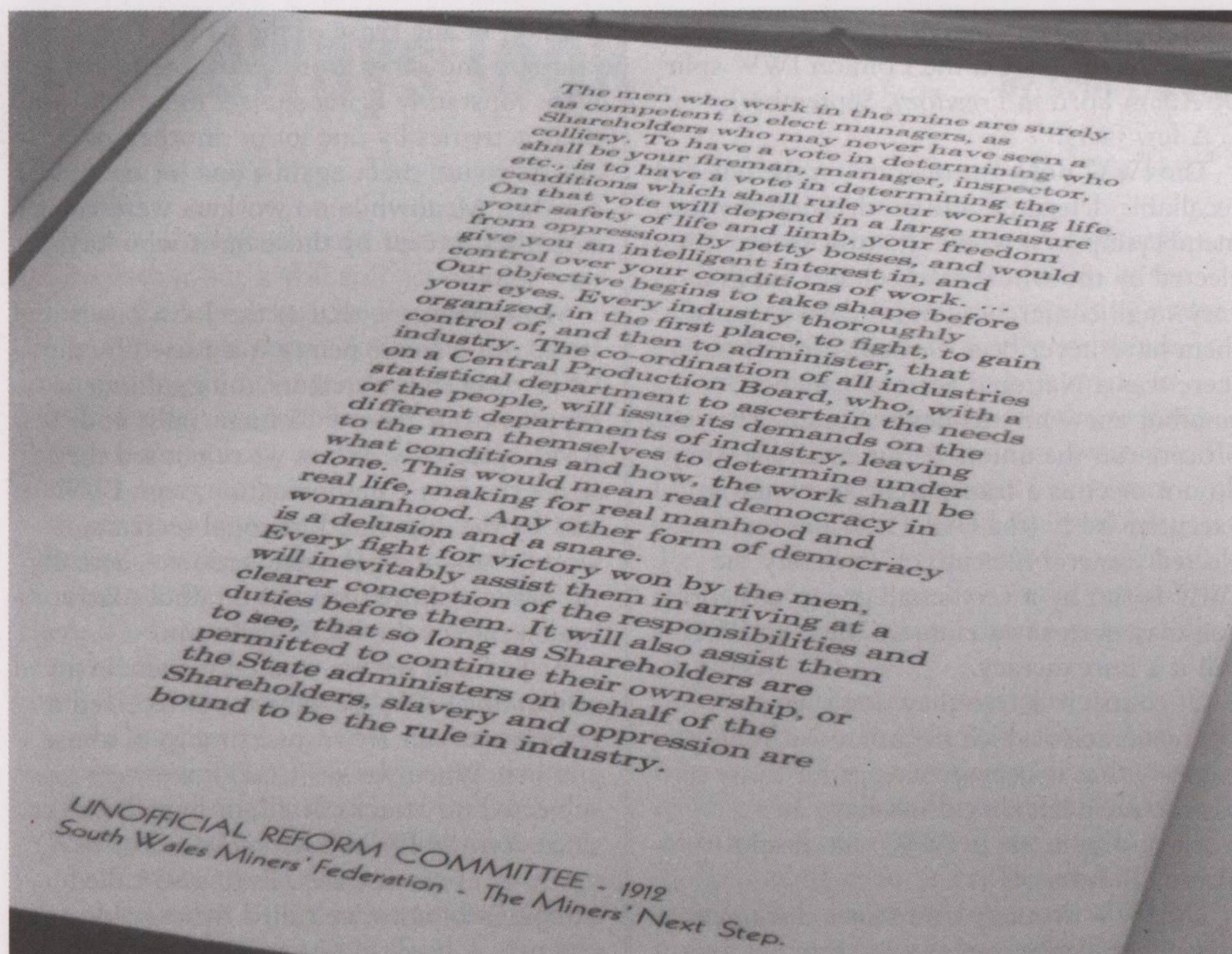
■ **19th The Red & Black Club** at LARC, 62 Fieldgate Street, London E1 1ES from 8pm, Dissident Island Radio will be broadcasting live as the local anarchists host a traditional east end knees-up.

■ **22nd After Summerhill: What Happened to the Pupils of Britain's Most Radical School?** with author Hussein Lucas and guest Danë Goodsman from 7pm to 9pm at the Cowley Club, 12 London Road, Brighton BN2 5JL, see [www.cowleyclub.org.uk](http://www.cowleyclub.org.uk)

■ **23rd Radical Anthropology talks, An introduction to archaeo-astronomy** with Fabio Silva at St Martin's Community Centre, 43 Carol Street, London NW1 0HT from 6.15 to 9pm, £10/£5/£3, for details see [www.radicalanthropologygroup.org](http://www.radicalanthropologygroup.org)

■ **28th Talk with a speaker from Abahlali Base Mjondolo** (the South African shack dwellers movement), organised by Squatters Network of Brighton and Cowley Books, starts at 4pm at the Cowley Club, 12 London Road, Brighton BN2 5JL, for details see [www.cowleyclub.org.uk](http://www.cowleyclub.org.uk)

■ **30th Radical Anthropology talks, Russian Futurism and Chomsky's revolution in linguistics** with Chris Knight at St Martin's Community Centre, 43 Carol Street, London NW1 0HT from 6.15 to 9pm, £10/£5/£3, see [www.radicalanthropologygroup.org](http://www.radicalanthropologygroup.org)



● **Noam Chomsky quotes:** is an exhibition of letterpress prints by Adam Burton featuring a series of printed letterpress posters of text quotes taken from a range of thinkers and writers during the last 250 years which have illustrated various ideas throughout Noam Chomsky's work in political analysis and the study of language, addressing issues such as the crimes and legitimacy of the state, worker control over industry, education, anarchist collectivisation, political organisation, human nature, social revolution, creativity, propaganda and public relations, the foundations of government, wage slavery and other topics.

Each print is accompanied by a pamphlet of the original essay, article or speech that has been quoted and a collection of books used to research the project will be on display. The prints are on sale for £3 each – the related pamphlet is provided free with the print. Proceeds from sales will be donated to *Freedom* newspaper.

The exhibition will be open from Thursday 11th October to Saturday 3rd November 2012 at X Marks the Bökship, 210 / Unit 3 Cambridge Heath Road, London E2 9NQ. Opening hours are Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays from 11am until 6pm. See <http://www.freedompress.org.uk/news/events-2/noam-chomsky-quotes/>

● The organisation Liberty & Solidarity has disbanded. Here's their statement:

"Over the past four years of our existence, Liberty & Solidarity members up and down the country have gotten thoroughly involved in union branches and residents groups. We hope we have made a positive impact, arguing for an organising based approach and for syndicalist ideas. We have learnt a lot through this experience and it has undoubtedly shaped our perspective, with many of our younger members having their first taste of working within the labour movement.

"Consequently Liberty & Solidarity has changed. Whereas in 2008 we started out with the intent of forging a platformist anarchist organisation, clearly now our politics are less aligned with anarchism and far more with syndicalism. Not only our politics, but also our analysis, our understanding of the labour movement and its problems has changed dramatically. Furthermore, the world in 2012 looks a lot different to that of 2008, when the credit crunch was just coming into effect, before any talk of cuts or austerity.

"Given our changing politics and perspectives, and given the changed political terrain in which we operate, we believe that Liberty & Solidarity is no longer an organisation that serves a useful function. Whilst it has had its fair share of successes, we currently find the organisation too small to be maintainable in an efficient manner.

"Consequently, Liberty & Solidarity's seventh biannual conference has taken the decision to disband the organisation.

"We are still proud of what Liberty & Solidarity has achieved and we hope to continue to work together towards shared goals, engaging with an ever broader range of trade unionists and community activists. Our project, the empowerment of working people within the workplace and society, remains the same."





# Lock-out backfires on NFL bosses

## Incompetent scabs hand victory to locked out referees

For the first seven weeks of the National Football League (NFL) season, bosses have locked out all 212 unionised referees.

The issues that have led to the dispute are the same as those that started the recent National Hockey League (NHL) players lock-out, namely pay and pensions.

As in most American sports, the contracts for all staff in the NFL are negotiated centrally every few years, and salaries are usually calculated based on a percentage of the overall income of the league.

The (NFL) is the most profitable sports league on earth. Last year it had a turnover of over \$9 billion, and is expected to rise to \$14 billion within the next three years. As you would expect, the bulk of the wage bill is spent on the players, with the average salary being around \$1.9 million.

NFL referees earn a good wage, despite in

theory only working on match days. The referees claim that in actual fact they work virtually full time and put lots of extra preparation prior to games.

They are demanding a similar percentage raise that they negotiated in 2006, but the bosses refused. This is despite record profits and the salaries of referees only accounting for 1% of the entire NFL wage budget. To rub salt into the wounds, the bosses planned to substantially slash the referee's pension scheme. Alterations to the scheme will save the NFL around \$16 million in total over the next eight years, yet in the same eight years, the NFL will bring in monies over \$130 billion.

Whilst many have little or no sympathy for the referees, who can earn around \$100,000 a year, it is the thin end of the wedge, as the next people in line will be the grounds keepers, the arena staff and countless other workers who are directly employed by the NFL.

Unfortunately for the NFL they did not expect that amateur, mid-level referees would act in solidarity with their NFL colleagues,

and refuse the NFL's tempting opportunity to officiate in games at the highest level. Instead, the NFL has had to draft in referees from local leagues, school teams and children's teams.

The performance of the 'scabs' has been so monumentally bad that NFL bosses have caved in and given the referees exactly what they wanted, rather than face the growing backlash from fans.

Matthew Black



## World Cup being built on slavery

◀ page 24

worker can leave the country, by withholding passports of migrants. Before a migrant even enters, he or she often has paid extortionate recruitment fees, from several hundred up to a several thousand dollars. The debt is repaid from their derisory wages.

Sponsorship, and therefore company control, combined with recruitment-induced debt, means that migrants are forced into working and living conditions amounting to forced labour. Abuse, beatings, sexual assault is the natural product of such a system of almost absolute employer control, which also sees the non-payment of wages and horrendous

housing conditions in prison-like barracks. A modern-day commercial sport event is being prepared by modern-day slavery.

The regime pretends to abide to international labour law, and there are 'labour unions'. However, the right of strike and anything resembling workers organising are lacking. Resistance is extremely risky. "We don't complain, because if we complain for anything, the company will kick us out", claims a migrant worker from Nepal.

Human Rights Watch are pushing the issue of migrant workers' maltreatment into the public domain, lobbying the organisational

committee and FIFA, and the international trade union movement. The Qatari government and FIFA have made promises but progress has been very that limited. There are huge amounts of money at stake, which means that the huge corporations involved are unlikely to want to reduce their profit margins for the sake of such minor trivialities as modern day slavery.

Things will only change when the spirit of revolt that has engulfed the region finally reaches the construction sites and workers barracks in the exploiters paradise that is Qatar.

Peter Storm

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## REVIEWS

## FICTION

Putting the Social into Libertarian Socialism

"How was Edinburgh?" Dave asked Connie, as he joined her in the Hurstbourne Arms.

"It was good, thanks."

"Well, I'm pleased you finally took a break. You've been overdoing it, you look a lot fresher now," he said.

"Oh, thanks!" she replied, smiling.

"You know I didn't mean it like that. So, what's up?"

"I think it's time to widen what we do as a group, so it's not all actions and activism," said Connie. "I'd like us to have more social activities and more time and space to reflect on what we do," she went on.

"Sounds good to me," said Dave. "But it tends to be you who always wants to focus on the serious stuff."

"Yeah, I know, but the other stuff is serious too. I'm not interested in building a world where no one has any fun or any time to relax. I know I overstretch myself at times and I need to rein myself in."

"Indeed," said Dave. "If we are truly building the new world in the shell of the old, we need to recognise our limits at times. Anyway, what sort of social activities?"

And so, two weeks later, at the community centre near West Street, the Hurstbourne Anarchist Group had the first of what they hoped would be regular socials. Caz and Connie and Dave all made some food. Pete got a bar together, though it ran out of bitter, leaving Dave moaning all night about pissy lager. A comrade travelled over with guitar and songs and sang for forty minutes. One of the older guys did some poetry, but the less said about it the better. Some of the younger students did some rapping. Connie introduced a short film and after, there was karaoke. Dave did a song with a ukelele. Someone told some jokes.

At the end of the night, Dave was counting up.

"We've only made thirty quid," he said.

"It doesn't matter," said Connie. "We had some fun and we made people smile and recognise that we are real people not super-activists. And we started."

"Started what?" asked Dave.

"To build the new world in the shell of the old," she replied. Dave looked blank.

"Revolution isn't just about the overthrow of the old, it's about the new as well. We can't see all the new, because so much of it is yet to be made. But we can take steps along the way."

"How is a few beers and some food in a community centre steps along the way?" asked Dave.

"Didn't you see how nearly everyone did something? It was a collective effort, a night that was about taking part, not just watching."

Martin H.

To be continued...

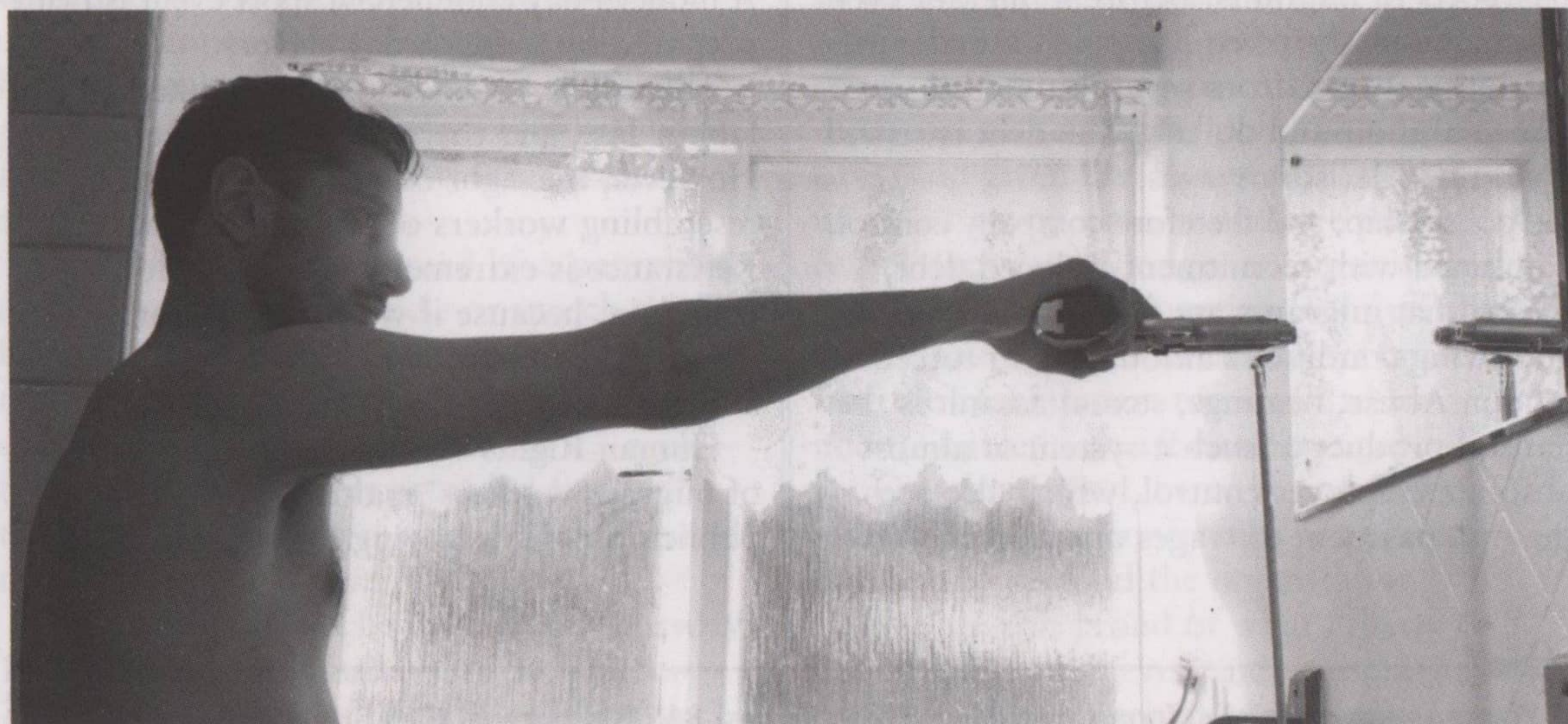
# THE YOUTH C

**Official 'truth' being more dishonest as well as stranger than fiction, Tom Jennings looks instead at feral youth fairy tales screened since last year's August riots**

Set in Forest Gate, around the corner from the epicentre of sickmaking Olympics jingoism, Ben Drew's *Ill Manors* dissects hard knock lives and estates of mind among petty gangsters, drug dealers and crack whores – accompanied by musical persona Plan B's blistering soundtrack fulminating against lumpen demonisation and the inevitable consequences of increasing deprivation and brutal hopelessness. Authentic dialogue and appropriately appalling scenarios are convincingly delivered by pros like Riz Ahmed and Natalie Press and the director's acquaintances and discoveries familiar with the environs and themes depicted – with slick cinematography, structuring and stylistics influenced by Tarantino, Scorsese and the UK urban crime subgenre which since

*Kidulthood* (Menhaj Huda, 2006) had grown increasingly stale.<sup>1</sup> And, despite inexorable deceleration from manic verisimilitude toward soap-operatic contrivance, the film effectively conveys the grim determinism of limited horizons and Hobson's choices while still carving out space for gallows humour and unlikely altruism.

The film-maker's honesty and integrity in representing his native constituency shine through – himself narrowly avoiding their fates due to fortunate coincidences culminating in present multimedia stardom – helping *Ill Manors* benefit from sophisticated weaving of multiple strands and characters, with the latter's backstories illustrated in Super-8 flashbacks overlain with rap commentary. However, its principal effectiveness lies in the gaps and contradictions thus opened up, which simplistic moral, social or political just-so stories, let alone linear narratives, cannot resolve – and neither can Drew's own public statements. So early abuse and abandonment cemented by callous indifference and repression, bitter poverty and utter lack of prospects surely render anti-social delinquency exponentially more likely and hard to resist. Yet the film only locates hope in the ethics of individuals, which first marginally infect their peers and then dovetail with the genuine goodwill of



## QUIZ ANSWERS

1. Also known as the Prisoners (Temporary Discharge for Ill Health) Act 1913, it made the Suffragettes' hunger strikes in prison in their fight to win the vote legal, and stated that they would be released from prison as soon as they became ill. It was passed because the government were worried about public opinion after hunger-striking Suffragettes were force-fed. As a result of the Act suffragettes were no longer force-fed whilst in prison and were instead released when they reached a level of extreme weakness. Though still weak, the women were watched and often re-arrested for trivial reasons, thus restarting the whole

process, like a cat playing with its prey.  
 2. Radio 4 sacked almost all of its studio managers and got announcers to agree to do the job of linking programmes and keep the station on air as well. Charlotte Green refused to sign this new contract and insisted on having an engineer standing by.  
 3. It was 252 times. The local NHS trust said they did not believe "that Serco had benefited from altering the data". So that's alright then.  
 4. Insane Clown Posse. The FBI referred to the Juggalos as a "concern to law enforcement".



# OF TODAY...

the authorities – a suspiciously conservative stance for a hip-hop iconoclast supposedly speaking the truth to power.

## We Found Hope in a Loveless Place

As Plan B's lyrics ferociously emphasise, the entire political-economic apparatus surrounding poor neighbourhoods cripples their potential, excused in victim-blaming discourse flogged by the politicians, professionals and media he righteously, and rightfully, scorns. But this resonates throughout communities too, and indeed the film shows local small capitalists fully complicit in all levels of degradation while mouthing hateful clichés about the evils of others. Meanwhile Drew proposes charitably funded community mentors, or "vigilante social workers"<sup>2</sup> – not as temporary measures rescuing a few incipient lost souls, but long-term Big Society renewal tactics. Perhaps he too can't admit that his own material security and status precisely depend on the same rotten system, even though his spectacular entertainments help illuminate its baleful effects – as well as, arguably, reinforcing the banal philosophy of meaningless meritocracy which guarantees fame and fortune for an elite more-or-less criminal few (and keeps sundry stripes of police in jobs) while enslaving many millions of addicts to futility.

While probably less appealing to its consumers, several television documentaries about the riots paint a less reactionary picture of those involved than the 'pure criminality' bullshit *Ill Manors* inadvertently chimes with. *My Child the Rioter* (BBC2, 31st January), *Riots: The Aftershock* (BBC3, 9th July), and especially *The Riots: In Their Own Words* (BBC2, 13th August)<sup>3</sup> hint at the diverse circumstances and contexts of destructive and self-destructive behaviour among frustrated youth as well as exploding



convenient catch-all stereotypes of lax morality, inadequate parents and a barely human underclass. A palpable sense emerges of generalised incomprehension and pessimism about the future amid accelerating assaults on any tolerable life world for those without the means to pay for an alternative – or even to conceive of one, given the participants' regular recourse to outdated homilies of working-class respectability and middle-class aspiration. Current affairs editors don't dare argue, of course – but *The Angels' Share* (pictured below) manages somewhat of a social-realist cinematic deconstruction.

## Spirits Levelled

As in *Looking for Eric* (reviewed in *Freedom*, 26th September 2009), director Ken Loach

and screenwriter Paul Laverty foreground banter and bonhomie among working-class characters in hard times. Motivated by outrage at the treatment of young people, their new knockabout comedy follows a motley crew of Glaswegian thugs and inadequates – complete with wise idiot of folkloric proportions as the butt of most of the jokes. Aggravated assaulter Robbie (impressive newcomer Paul Brannigan, himself with a violent background) is spared time due to his girlfriend's imminent childbirth, but resolutions to go straight are strenuously tested by all in his orbit – except the community payback supervisor, who shares a love of single malts and ferries our heroes to extra-curricular distillery visits. Learning of an impending auction of rare vintage as well as venal corruption among its posh devotees, they devise a heist creaming off enough to sell for silly money. The bodged plan works and Robbie's deal includes an apprenticeship in whisky tasting, which he has unexpectedly demonstrated great talent for.

A lightweight, often hilarious, whimsy requiring way too much luck for credibility – yet shirking neither the horrors of grievous bodily harmfulness nor the stranglehold of vicious circles – the film nonetheless smuggles in manifold whiffs of subversive flavour. *The Angels' Share* is that fraction of spirits evaporating in the cask – here, a multiple metaphor for extracted profit, added value from luxury trade or craftsmanship, and the miniscule odds of lowlifes transcending biographies given extra poignancy with only Robbie likely to invest prudently. And if traditional romance prompts rehabilitation, the most intransigent impediment to family values is his partner's tyrannical dad despite standing as prominent local businessman.

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## THE ARTS

## BLAKE IN THE AUT



"William Blake had a very low opinion of traditional political philosophy, associating it with the mechanical and utilitarian mind of John Locke whose defence of government as the protector of private property had become the dominant Whig ideology. Blake even put down the 'wretched State of Political Science, which is the Science of Sciences'.

"It has been suggested that Blake came to despair of politics after his trial for sedition at the turn of the century. Certainly he wrote around 1810, 'I am really sorry to see my Countrymen trouble themselves about Politics'.

## Review

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With social work only succeeding by flouting professional rules, Robbie's chance arising purely via recidivism, and betterment depending on commodity infrastructure availing the wealthy by pandering to snobbish pretensions of superior taste which insiders cynically exploit as self-serving lies in a thoroughly rigged game – hardly anything of bourgeois worthiness thus remains intact. The moral of the story? By all means cheerlead 'success' –

Yet Blake only despaired of politics in its conventional sense of factions and parties jockeying for power. His position can be called anti-political only if politics is defined in its narrow sense of the art of government. Blake was not frightened from politics but he reached the anarchist conclusion that conventional politics in the form of governments are a denial of life and an insuperable bar to human freedom."

(Taken from *William Blake: Visionary Anarchist* by Peter Marshal, published by Freedom Press, £6)

but keep it fucking real, even when enjoying a fantasy.<sup>4</sup>

<http://libcom.org/blog/tom-jennings>

### Footnotes

- 1 See 'The Poverty of Imagination', *Variant* 43 ([www.variant.org.uk](http://www.variant.org.uk)) for a critical survey of contemporary UK films about deprived youth.
- 2 In a parallel universe, this may have included Mark Duggan – a longtime advisor to wayward

The Autonomy Club, which is situated above Freedom Bookshop, continues to host some truly great art exhibitions.

Possibly the most celebrated exhibition so far this year has been the group show inspired by the work of William Blake (pictured here), which also hosted a couple of very popular, and rather eventful music, poetry and talk nights.

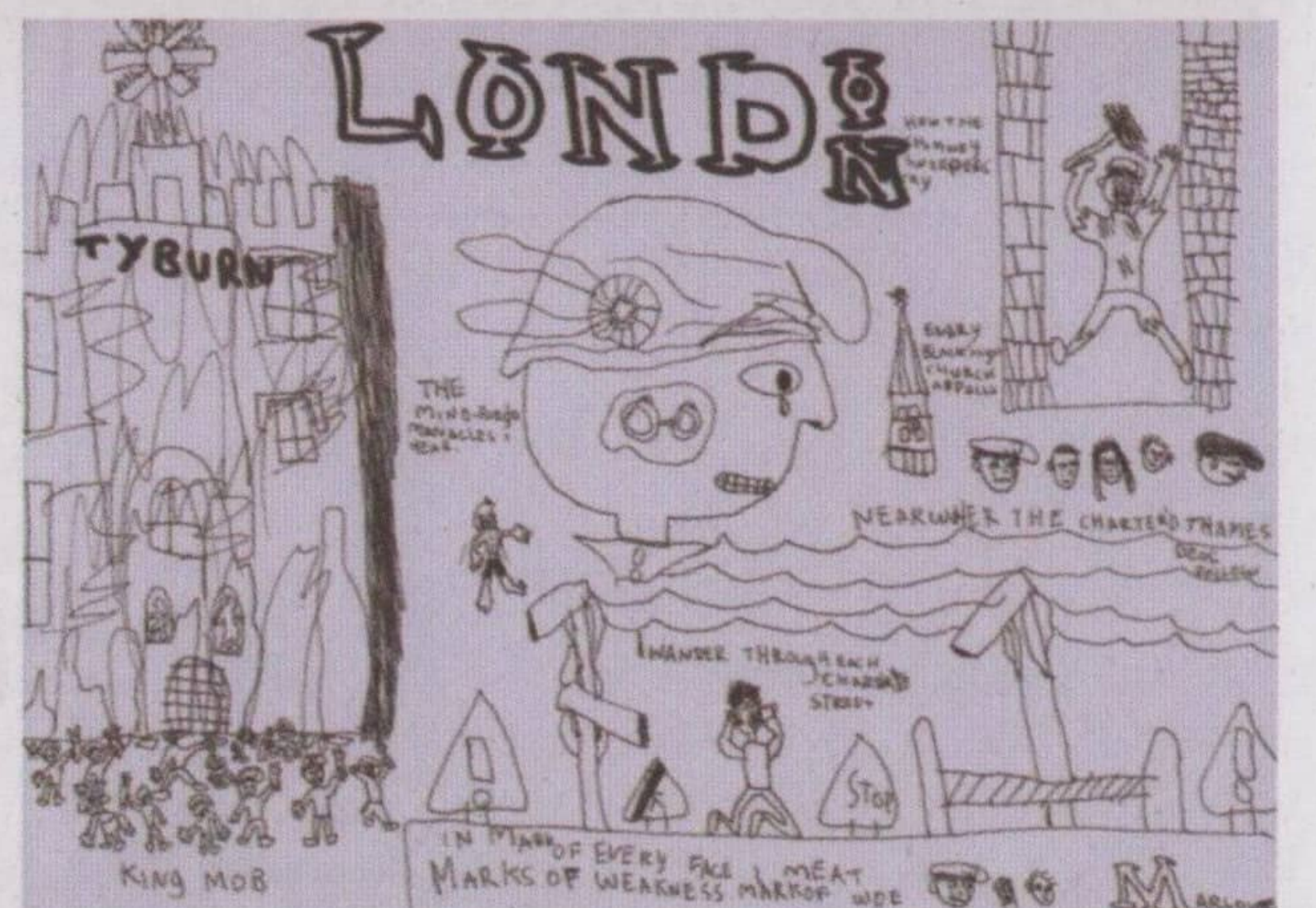
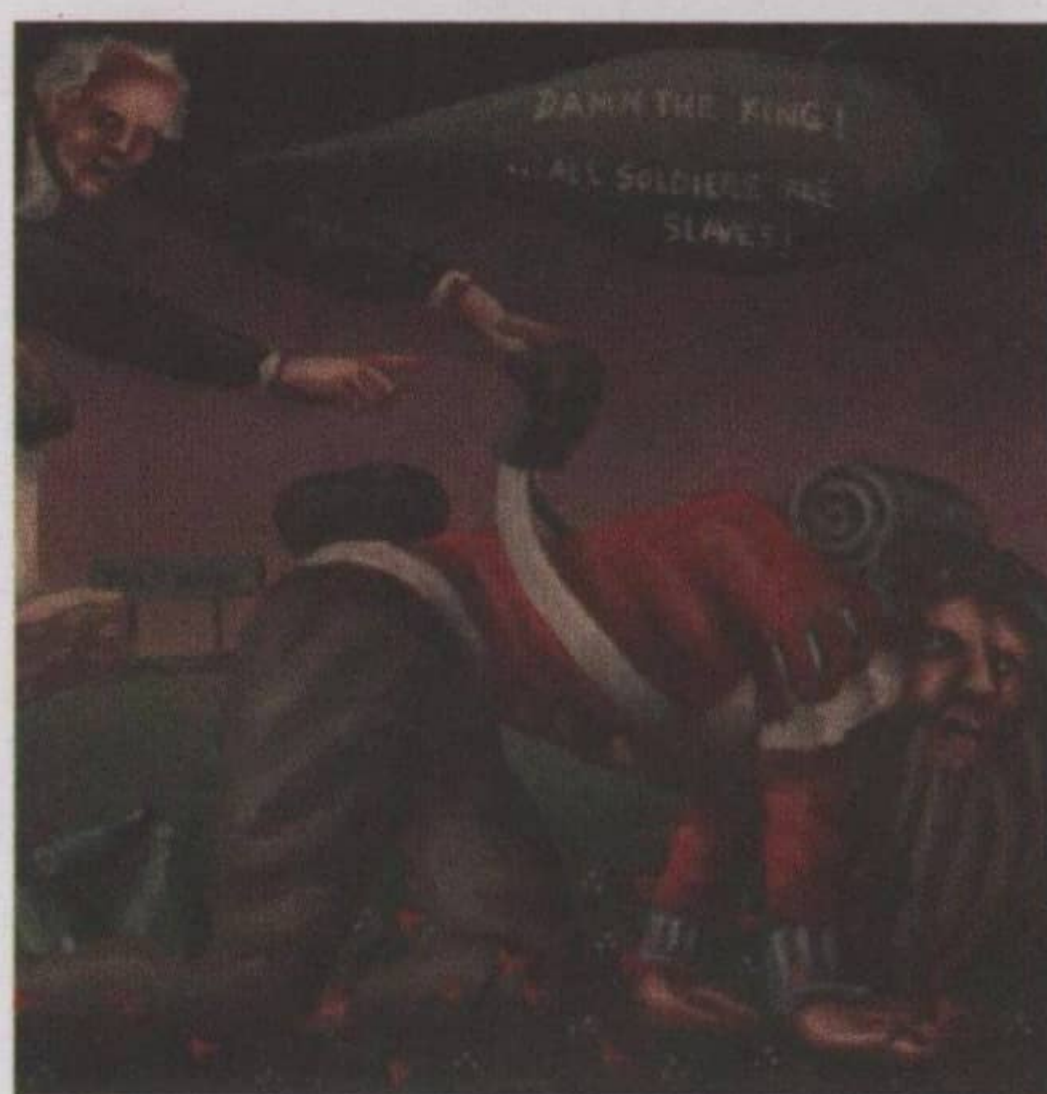
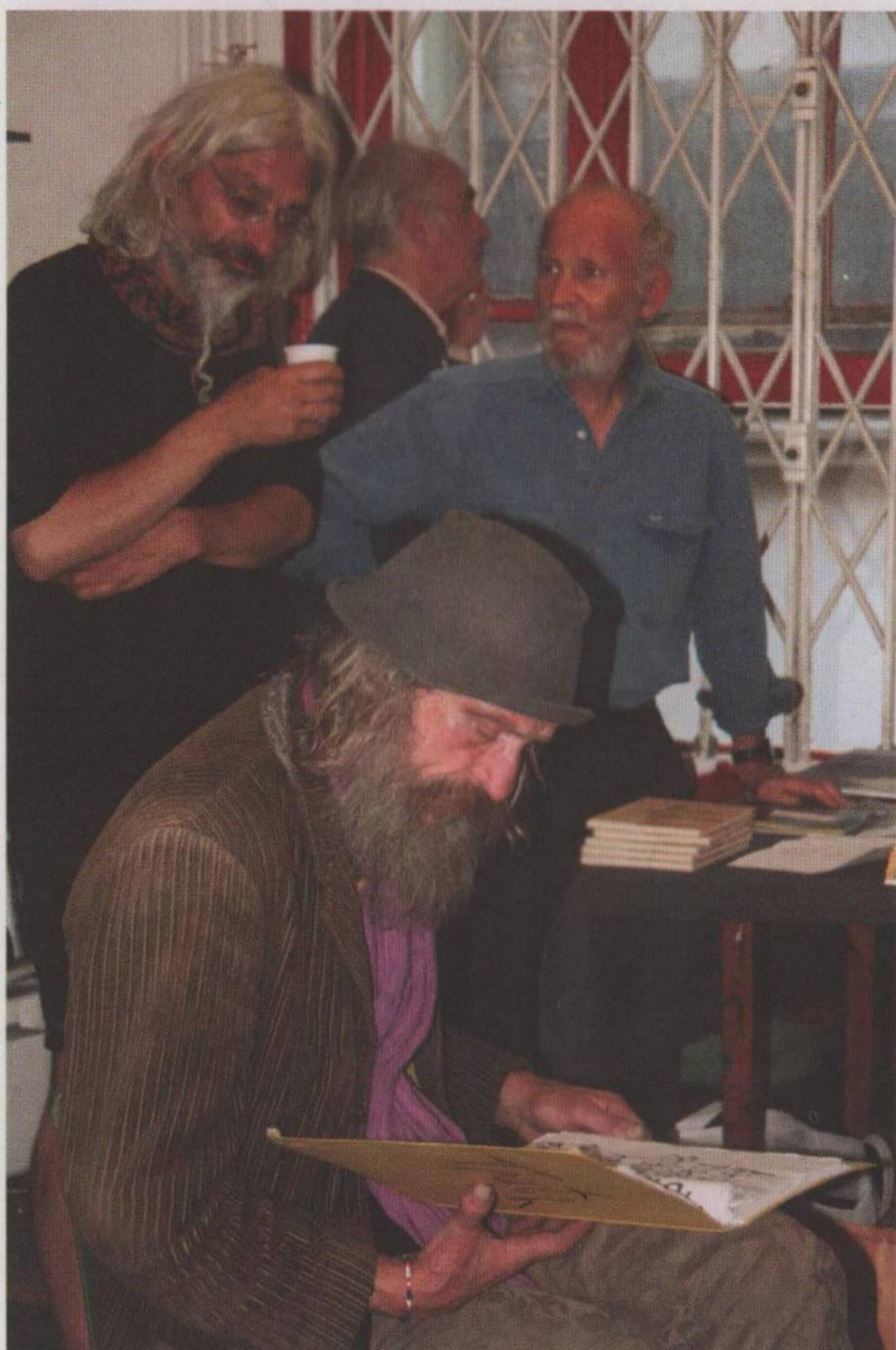
For information about the shows or to enquire about the availability of the Autonomy Club space please email [m@s-kollegive.com](mailto:m@s-kollegive.com)

youth – whose killing by police triggered last August's events.

- 3 Based on the LSE/*Guardian* study 'Reading the Riots', originally scheduled for screening on 21st July but banned by a trial judge – presumably so its 'truth' wouldn't interfere with the course of riot-related injustice.
- 4 An appreciation, incidentally, which is entirely absent from Plan B's ghetto X-Factor efforts in *Project Hackney* (BBC3, 12th August).



# ONOMY CLUB





## SPORT

# World Cup being built on slavery



One of the Arab countries apparently untouched by the revolutionary spring is Qatar. The tide of protest and revolt more or less passed this Emirate by. The main news outlet that is providing news on these events, Al-Jazeera, is state owned and does not provide much in the way of criticisms of the regime.

This is changing, and the reason is sport. In ten years time Qatar will host the 2022 football World Cup. A decade of frantic commercial

building, investment in accommodation and facilities has started. Who will undertake all of this work? Not the Emir or his family, not the Qatari citizens, who are a relatively affluent minority in the country with limited civil rights and a welfare system funded by Qatar's abundant oil riches. The rest are migrant workers, and they make up 94% of the labour force of Qatar. These migrants – plus a million more to be recruited – are going

to build the stadiums, the facilities, and the infrastructure upgrade required for the world's biggest ever football extravaganza.

These migrant workers, mainly from South Asia, live and work under terrible circumstances of exploitation and neglect. Under a system of sponsorship, the power to change jobs belongs to the companies these labourers work for. The sponsors decide whether the

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## THE QUIZ

1. What was the Cat and Mouse Act?
2. BBC Radio announcer Charlotte Green has taken redundancy. What cost-cutting measure was she the last hold-out against?
3. How many times did private company Serco falsify data in a six month period while running out of hours doctor services for Cornwall?
4. Which musical act is suing the FBI after they labelled their fans, known as Juggalos, a criminal gang?

Answers on page 20

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

### WILDCAT

