

## UNDERCOVER COP SCANDAL

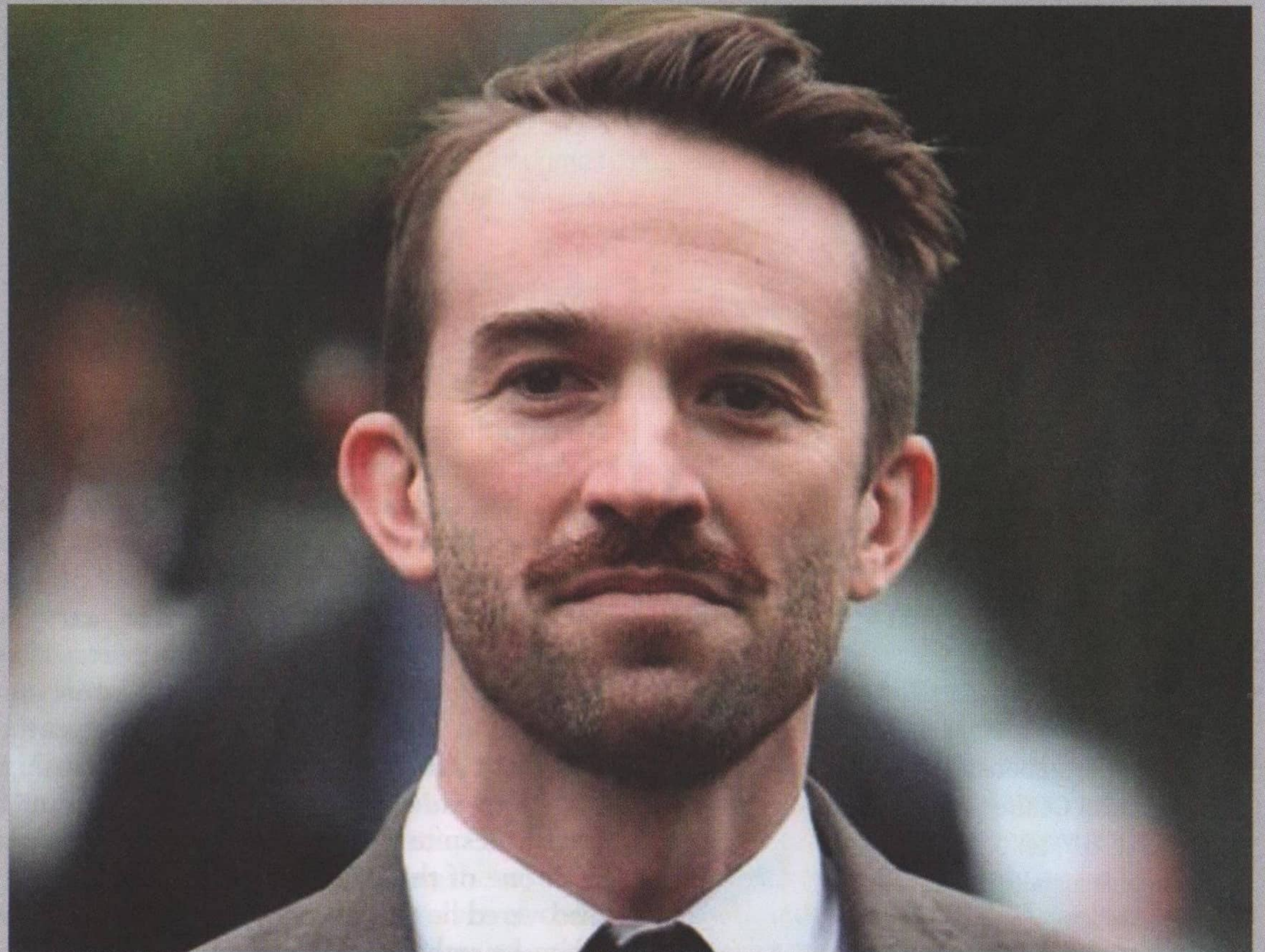
### Police spy sent to smear the family of Stephen Lawrence

Whistleblower Peter Francis has revealed that the police sent him to watch the family and friends of murdered black teenager Stephen Lawrence. He was tasked with finding a way to smear them and damage their campaign to highlight the police incompetence which bungled an investigation into the death of their son – incompetence which resulted in a 19-year gap between the murder and the police finding Lawrence's killers.

Francis went undercover as an anti-racist activist shortly after Lawrence was murdered in 1993. He spent four years trying to get dirt on the Lawrence family and Stephen's close friends – including Duwayne Brooks, who was with Stephen when he died and the key witness in the murder trial. It was Francis who found evidence which got Brooks arrested after an alleged fight during a demo outside the BNP headquarters. Brooks was charged but not prosecuted. Francis claims he was ordered to monitor a collection of other black justice campaigns as well as the Lawrence campaign. Met Police Commissioner Bernard Hogan-Howe has insisted that he knew nothing of the operation, saying: "If these

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### LENS CAP BACK TO BOTANY BAY?



Australian activist Trenton Oldfield, who had his application for UK visa renewal refused. Oldfield is being forced to leave the country because he swam in front of the 2012 Oxford and Cambridge boat race in protest at its elitism. He has already served a draconian two month prison sentence for the 'crime'.

## G8 PROTESTS

The 39th G8 summit was held in London and drew in a great deal of controversy – mainly because all sensible people are highly sceptical of large groups of rich folk eating posh food whilst apparently discussing how to tackle issues such as poverty, hunger, the environment and war.

The G8, the G20, the G4 and many of the other summit meetings in the 'G' franchise have also been considered failures and have historically resulted in protest. David Cameron's agenda for the 39th G8 meeting is mainly based around 'tax compliance', 'trade advancement' and 'transparency'. Fairly ironic considering Mr Cameron's handling of the Leveson inquiry was allegedly far from transparent and he has thus far failed to do anything about large corporations' non-payment of tax.

Eight thousand specially trained riot police, at the handsome cost of £5 million, were drafted in to deal with any potential unrest.

A group of London squatters living in an abandoned cop shop in Beak Street, Soho, were raided and arrested ahead of the protests based on the idea that they might be 'in possession of weapons' and 'intent on causing criminal damage'.

In total there were 32 arrests, many of which were as a result of the Beak Street raids. Two people were taken to hospital with minor injuries.

Chief Constable Matt Baggot of the Christian Police Association stated that the G8 summit was "peaceful and secure". I'm not sure Matt Baggot was actually there.

Anne-Marie

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## NEWS

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## LENS CAP MANCHESTER



Over 100 anti-fascists from around the north gathered in Manchester and marched from the university campus on Oxford road in solidarity with murdered French anti-fascist, Clément Meric. They later gathered in all Saints Park for a vigil and several anti-fascist speeches.

## Undercover cop scandal

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allegations are true, it's a disgrace, and the Metropolitan Police Service will apologise."

And that's not the only nosy policeman in the news... Bob Lambert, who famously went as far as fathering a child with an activist, has been revealed to be the co-writer of the McLibel leaflet. Lambert spent five years infiltrating London Greenpeace between 1984 and 1989, during which time he became involved in campaigning on the three-year McLibel court case. He had four relationships with activists before disappearing without trace – despite the fact that he had had a son with one of the women. The women only discovered he was an undercover cop last year, when he rather rashly went to speak at an anti-racist conference in his new capacity as a professor of Terrorism Studies, and was chased by Greenpeace members who recognised him and subsequently outed him. At least some of them are stupid enough to catch.

To add insult to injury, the police also

recently made a blanket refusal to name at least 42 dead children whose identities have been used by undercover police, provoking an outcry from parents concerned that their child's memory may have been abused in this chilling way. The Met Commissioner offered an apology, calling the identity thefts "morally repugnant", but refused to even entertain the idea of returning these names and the lives attached to them to their rightful owners.

An ambiguous response to the issue which nevertheless makes one thing clear: for the foreseeable future – whether the police and government admit it or not, and even in the embarrassing wake of these awful revelations – it is likely that our lives will continue to be the property of a corrupt police state, leaving us vulnerable to the most intimate attacks imaginable. They just might get a little bit cleverer at trying to cover it up.

Charlotte Dingle

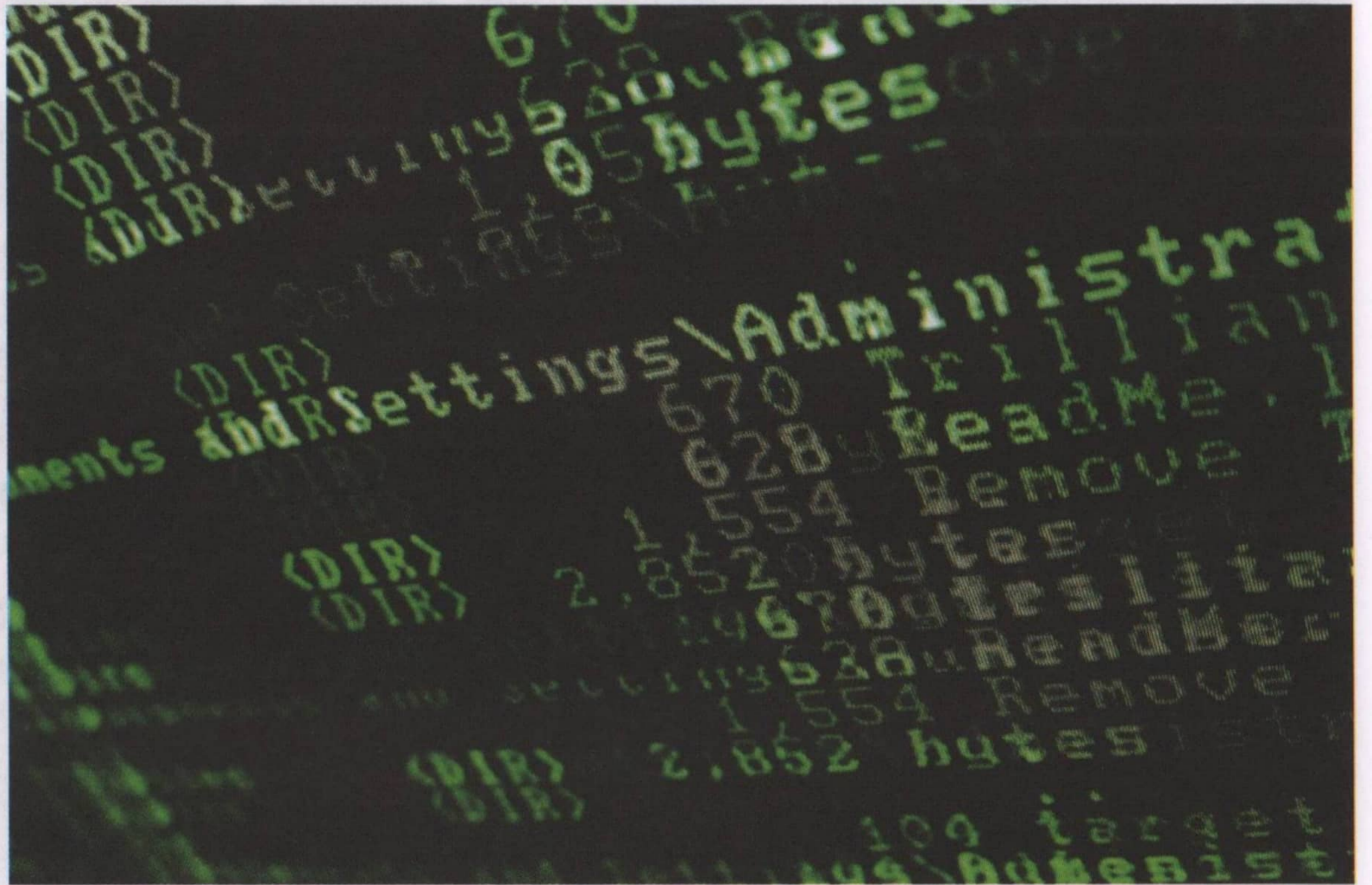
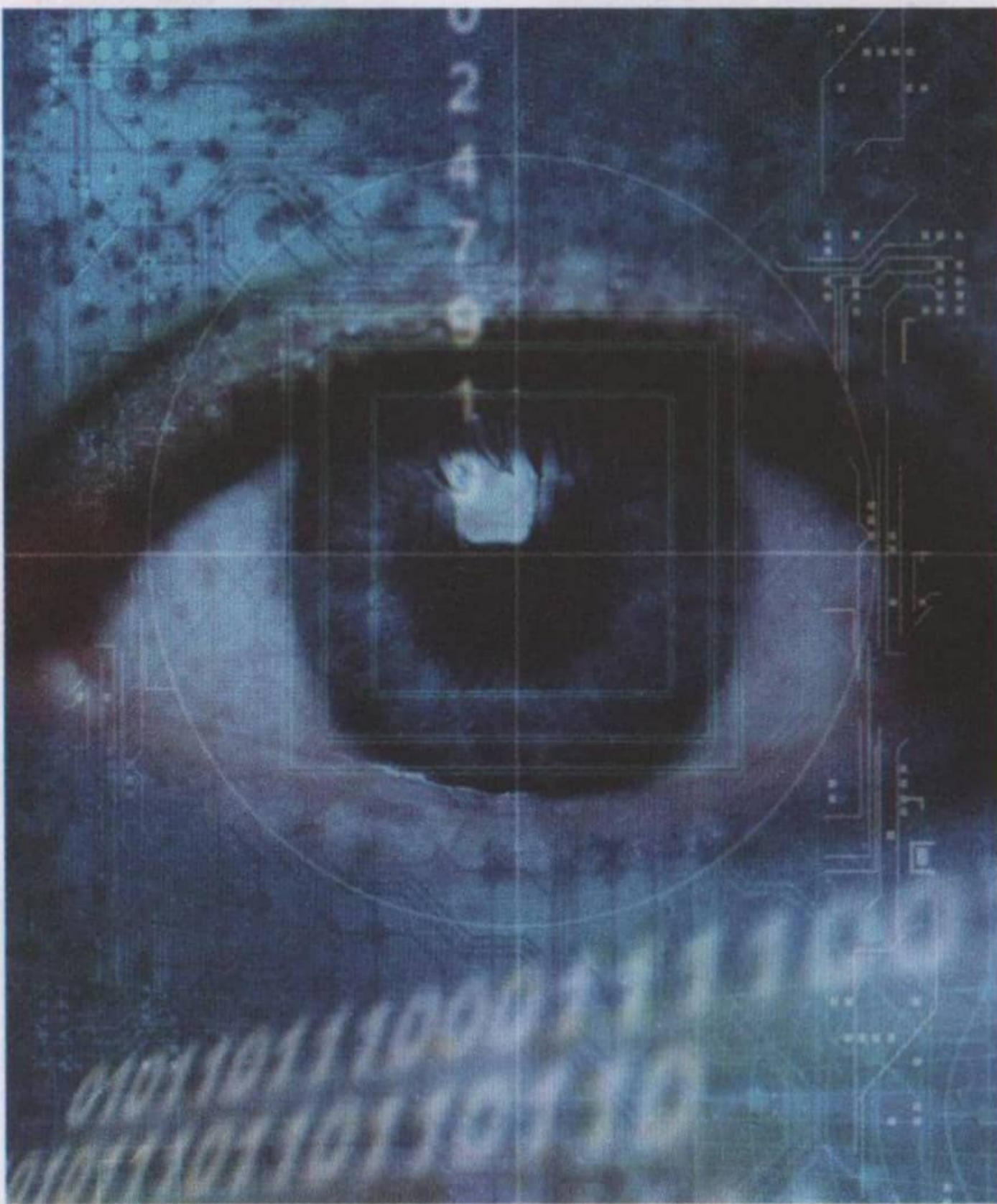


Protesters picketed London's police headquarters in 2011 calling for an independent inquiry into the deployment of undercover officers.

# Open secrets

## Richard Challinor on the latest government surveillance scandal

Thanks to the bravery of Edward Snowden, Glenn Greenwald and others, we now know a lot more about the vast and powerful surveillance apparatus of the US and UK. The US National Security Agency has collected a very large portion of all the electronic communications on this planet, to be stored for some hundreds of years if needed, in a giant computer center in Utah. Here, the finest algorithms humans have devised sift through the data for patterns – presumably such things as word use, association, geographical location and so on. The British Government Communications Headquarters (GCHQ), which might as well have been called MiniComm, has been anxious to keep pace, taking vast sums from tax payers in order to protect them by surveilling them.



The liberal media has been outraged by this. But why? We give so much so willingly to Facebook, selling our liberty for liberation; our deal was made with Mephistopheles, why complain now when he returns for the payment? Here the left-of-centre media brandishes its sword courageously, but it is not quite sure for what cause.

Anarchism offers four principled objections. The first is trust and corruption. Power always corrupts – it isn't a question of finding the right sort of person. Besides, the wrong sort of people always get themselves to the front of the line either way. Tolkien was right to have Gandalf say "I dare not take it, Frodo, not even to keep it safe". Who would you trust with all of the data in the world? Would you trust yourself?

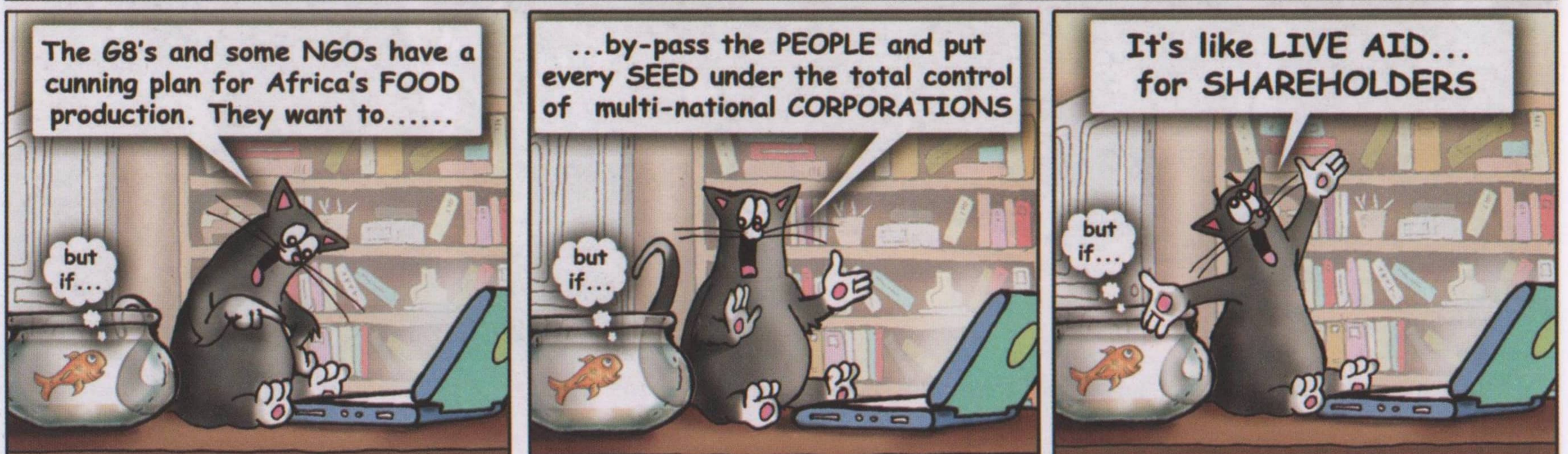
The second principle is the need and right of every person to be free. To deny information or autonomy is to infantilise, to demean, to lessen the dignity of a person.

The third is that democracy, which many abstractly claim to love, requires knowledge as well as the ability to act on that knowledge. To give a person a choice between two options they can't know about is absurd.

In creativity we find the final, and most interesting, objection. As Noam Chomsky says: "To enquire and to create – these are the centres around which all human pursuits more or less directly revolve." Despite the dogmas of education and industry, all humans are creative, and creativity requires space to experiment and share. This cannot be done under surveillance, or under the cosh. Michel Foucault envisaged a prison, the Panopticon, in which all cells were transparent and observed from a central opaque tower. The possibility of surveillance becomes the same as constant surveillance, so the prisoners surveil themselves and no prison guards are needed. It is under the shade of this tower that the flowers of deviance and dissent will wilt.

## CAT'S on the INTERNET

by *Marcos*



# THE BIG PICTURE



On 8th June 2013 members and supporters of the Fire Brigades Union (FBU) marched in protest over the proposed closure of Clerkenwell and Kingsland fire stations.

# The Turkish revolt

## Steve Ash on the state-instigated violence in Gezi Park

A month after the violent eviction of the peaceful Gezi Park sit-in on 28th May, the far right Islamist regime of Recep Erdogan faces growing civil unrest from its angry population. The regime's increasingly brutal crackdown has so far only succeeded in swelling the numbers of a diverse alliance of Laicists, Kemalists, leftists, anarchists, greens, anti-capitalist Islamists, Kurds and queers, who have become increasingly determined to overthrow a regime they regard as fascistic and oppressive.

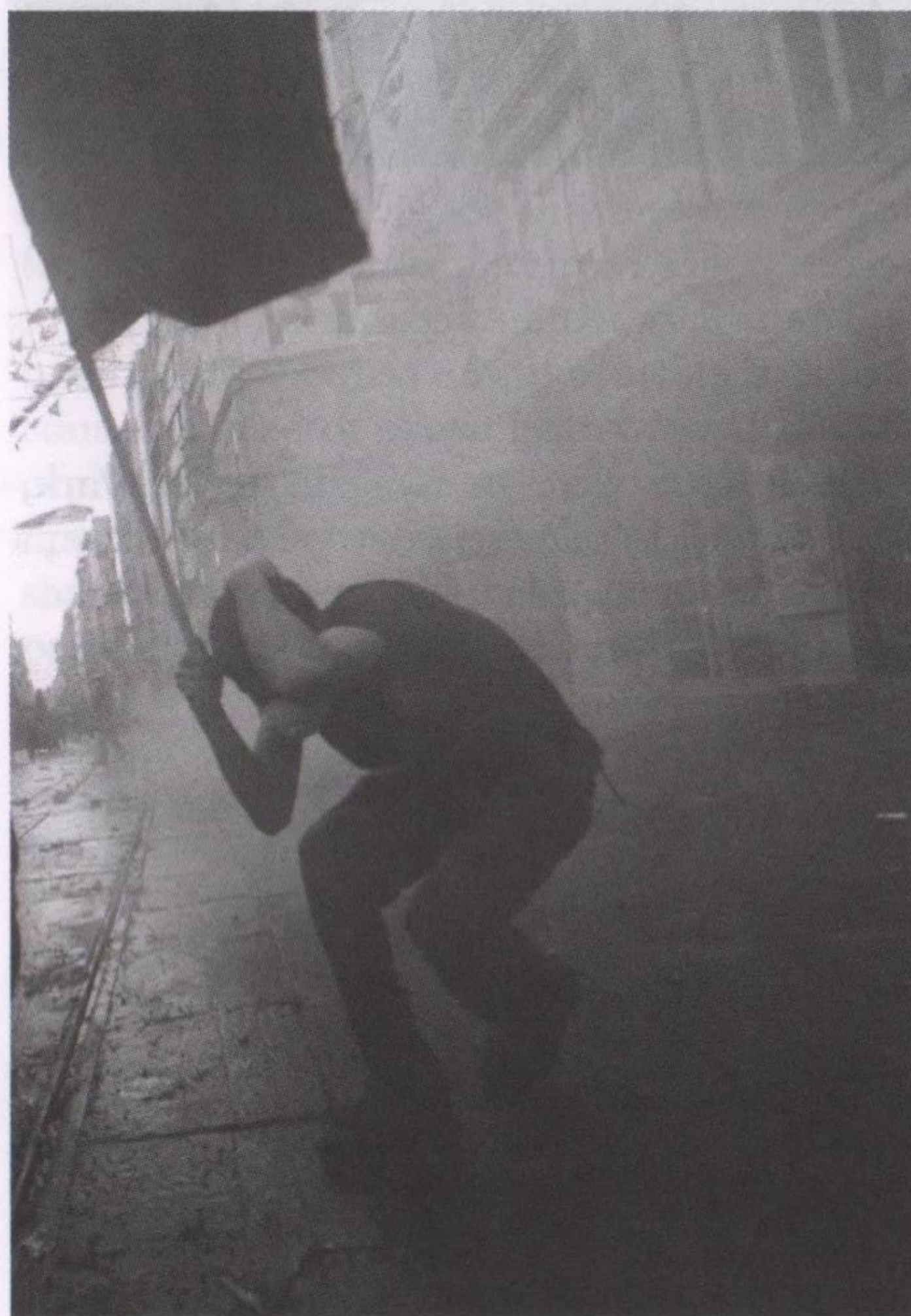
Events began in late May when protesters staged a sit-in at Istanbul's Gezi Park, which was being redeveloped as a shopping mall to be housed inside a reconstruction of Taksim Military Barracks. This peaceful demonstration by eco-activists, concerned about one of Istanbul's last green spaces, was broken up on the 28th May by an aggressive police action. Instead of suppressing dissent however this led to an unprecedented response from those long critical of the Erdogan government, and further protests and strikes were called in solidarity with Gezi Park activists. This transformed the demonstrations into broader actions in support of the right of protest and free speech, which quickly evolved into a general resistance to the Islamist regime itself. Discontent had been brewing in Turkey for months with a ban on alcohol, and even kissing in the street, angering the traditionally secular country. In a panic reaction the government ordered the police to suppress these actions with whatever force was necessary.

On the 30th and 31st May police attacked the demonstrators with water cannon, tear-gas, plastic bullets and electric batons, clearing Gezi Park and injuring hundred of people (reports also came in of caustic chemical weapons being used). Crowds grew to over 10,000 in response and battles between demonstrators and police carried on into the night. As thousands more protesters crossed the Bosphorus Bridge in support of their comrades and leftist groups became



increasingly involved the government wobbled and made conciliatory gestures, with the police allowing protesters to occupy Taksim Square, the scene of many political events in the past. Soon similar occupations and demonstrations took place in other Turkish cities, including Ankara, Izmir and Bursa, with conflict between police and demonstrators extremely violent in some places.

This spontaneous, leaderless resistance at the heart of what was becoming an open insurrection against the Erdogan regime has drawn comparisons with the Arab Spring. However, whereas the Arab countries were relatively free of anarchist influence (with the possible exception of Egypt, that has a growing anarchist presence) Turkey has a long history of anarchism and although still marginal this has had a significant influence on the uprising. Another interesting development has been an increasing coming together



of many Turks and Kurds as allies against the regime. There is also a strong element of anti-capitalism behind the protests, with Erdogan being seen as a strongman imposing a market economy on Turkey. However, the majority are more specifically hostile to the totalitarian nature of the regime, a feature that unites the left with both liberal reformists and secular nationalists.

Erdogan's government has offered limited concessions to the protesters, and although one group of self-appointed spokespeople began to negotiate with him, they were swiftly rejected. Erdogan has become increasingly paranoid, at first accusing Syrians and Iranians of fostering insurrection the country (a possible minor factor given the situation in Syria), but offering no evidence. He has resorted to the arrest of migrants, and more recently claimed that the events in Brazil and Egypt are linked to the Turkish uprising as



part of some imaginary international movement. A mass rally orchestrated by Erdogan's AKP party bolstered the regime and led to increasing ultimatums on the protesters.

One of the most surprising elements of the demonstrations has been the continual use of humour and non-violent resistance by the protesters and their supporters. This extends beyond the familiar use of sloganised graffiti and political cartoons to full street theatre and carnivalesque mockery of the government (occasionally even taken up by supporters in the mainstream media). A recent technique deployed in the face of accusations of 'terrorism' has been the 'standing man' demo, where protesters stand silent and unmoving during occupations. Such forms of resistance are admirable, but how long it can be sustained in the face of the horrendous violence from the state is debatable.

It is hard to imagine how the Islamist government could become more violent. There are reports of fatal shootings, beatings, demonstrators being maimed and blinded by water cannons, tear-gas rounds being fired directly at head height and vicious attacks on demonstrators' homes and make-shift hospitals by the security forces. Large numbers of people have already been arrested without charge and many have disappeared. Some of my own online contact with people on the scene was worryingly cut short.

On the 12th June an aggressive coordinated police operation cleared Taksim Square and three days later an even more violent attack broke through the barricades around Gezi Park. During these events the Bosphorus Bridge was closed and electronic devices were allegedly used to prevent radio and telephone coordination among the demonstrators. Both these attacks also followed the same pattern of excessive force and the brutal use of weaponry. Yet the protests went on across the country, with new camps being formed and the trade union movement planning general strikes. At the time of writing, a massive police offensive is reported to have scattered demonstrators, which has led to the renewed occupation of dozens of parks around Istanbul. Spontaneous clashes are also being reported across the country and the likelihood of a general strike appears ever more real. We can only hope for a just solution to Turkey's strife.

## ANALYSIS

# Turkey: an eyewitness account



## Rafet Arslan on his country's ongoing uprising

At the time of writing, the resistance in Turkey has been going on for a month. A historical breaking point is being played out on the street, among local forums, in meetings and on marches.

The political system in Turkey has been becoming more and more authoritative: drowning people in pessimism, isolation, hopelessness, loneliness, fear and despair. Restrictions on birth control; the continuous insistence by the government that all families must have a minimum of three children; prohibition of abortion; laws which violate animal rights; urban transformation laws which ruin historical/cultural values in cities; increasing pressure on unions; new restrictions on selling alcoholic drinks; continuous censorship of the media... The list goes on. There was every possibility of an open dictatorship coming about at the next election.

On 27th May 2013, a handful of citizens in Taksim Square standing against the felling of trees in Gezi Park were suddenly attacked and exposed to pepper gas. News spread and others joined them. A few days later, the small group of protestors was attacked and dragged from the park by police. And then it really started. Over one million protestors arrived at Taksim, at the same time as fellow protestors filled squares in over 48 different cities. Socialists, liberals, Muslims, artists, environmentalists, social democrats, Turkish/Kurdish nationalists, anarchists, rival football club fans, LGBT activists... all standing together.

On 1st June, when the non-stop 34-hour resistance had transformed into a civil

revolt, police retreated from Taksim Square and Gezi Park. And after that moment, during the course of the next 11 days, the map of a new world began to be drawn. After the tents were set up again in Gezi Park, 'free camps' in many cities were formed – living spaces where money and power did not count led to new autonomous areas. 'The Revolution Market' where everything was given free; 'Gezi Library' where anyone could take and leave books; 'Gezi Orchard' where natural planting models were tested; art workshops; performances. Taksim Square and its surroundings changed into a carnival inside the barricades.

However, the government launched a media attack on the resistance. They insisted they were a marginal movement of vandals and carried out a vicious disinformation campaign. In response to this, the resistance reacted against this situation and carried out its own campaign, a wide range boycott against central media and their financiers. This boycott gave a quick result and stock market turned over. Interest rates fell by 7.5% and the stock market dropped by 19%. Outside the media centres which misinformed or distorted the news, thousands of people launched protests and are still protesting. From the earliest days of resistance citizens formed their own civil media broadcasting via 3G technologies.

Meanwhile, the government created made-up counter-propaganda, suggesting this was not a protest but a civil coup attempt against an elected rulership. They accused the protestors of being against religion. In fact, this resistance was definitely not a conflict between seculars and Muslims, but between the majority longing for a new world and the authority trying to suppress it. As individuals and as organised groups, there

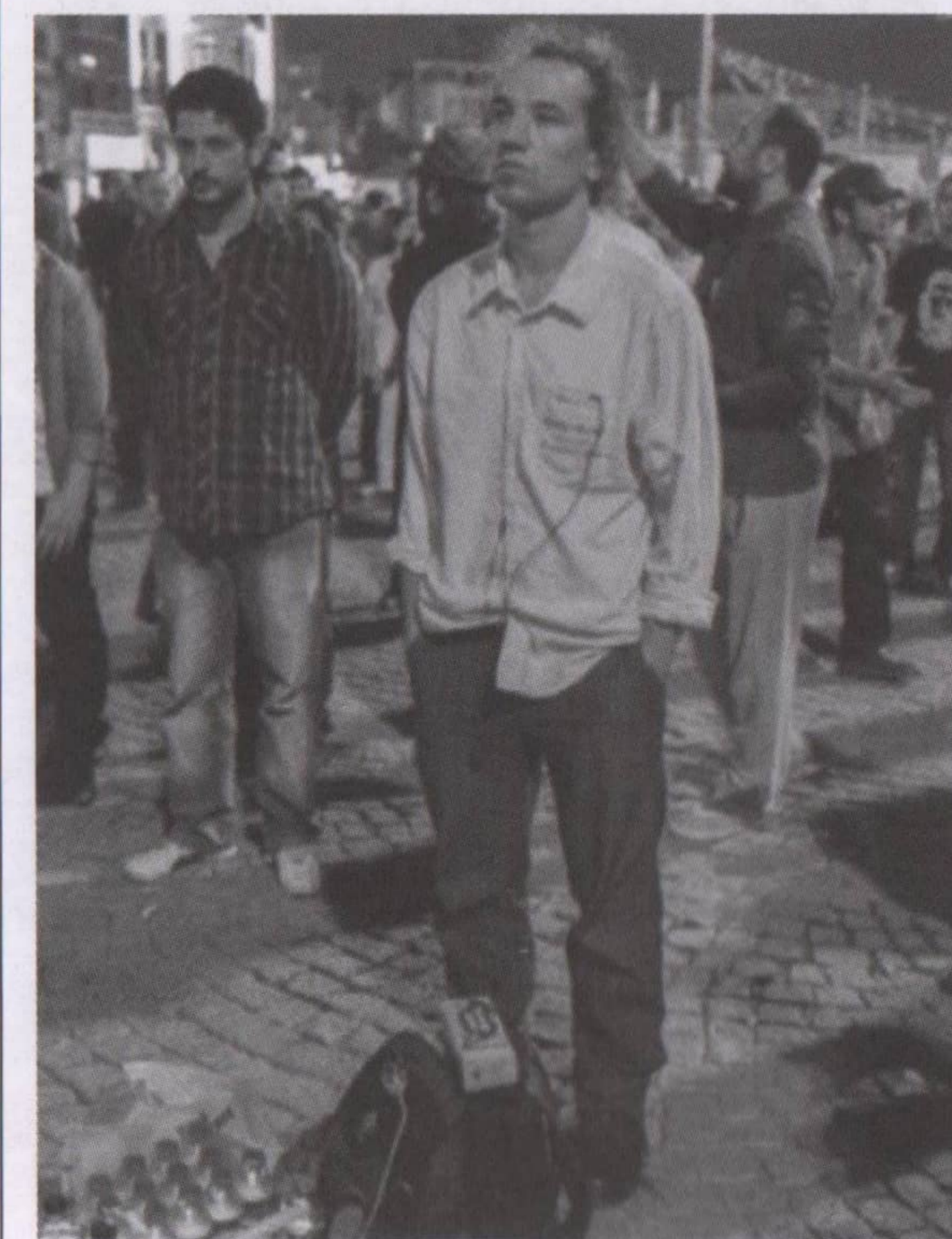
were lots of Muslims among the protestors. Anticapitalist Muslims took part in the resistance from the beginning with great determination and devotion. This civil resistance movement was not just against the government's own party and government but all rulers, parties and the ways of ruling that they developed during the course of history in the country.

The police descended on the square again on 11th June. Many foreign television channels broadcasted the operation live, including a seven-hour slot on CNN. After a four-day police siege, on 15th June the park was invaded and the police took control. And it is still under police invasion. According to government reports, 4,900 people have been taken into custody and 70 people have been arrested during the resistance. The Turkish Medical Association figures say there have been a total number of 7,681 injured, 63 heavily injured and four dead. Of course the figures may be much higher.

The siege provoked the beginning of the 'Standing Man' protests and turned into a countrywide 'radical civil disobedience' movement. On 16th June, the first public forums were formed with the call of "Çarşı" group, supporters of Besiktas Football Club, who were prominent in the resistance. Soon, these forums started to appear all over the country. And now, every night in 48 different districts of Istanbul, public forums are still being held as a form of direct democracy. These forums advocate avoiding shopping centres and credit cards and introducing a bartering system. The resistance on the streets continues: movements have taken place in 79 of Turkey's 81 cities.

This country is on the edge of shaping a new global order. As everybody in Gezi Park says, this is just the beginning...

Translated from Turkish to English by Ali Kartal and Ayşe Özkan



## DEBATING THE LEGACY OF ANARCHO-PUNK

Around fifty academics, students, amateur researchers and punk enthusiasts gathered at Oxford Brookes University on 28th June for a conference reconsidering the impact and legacy of anarchist-punk band Crass and the anarcho-punk movement.

The event was organised under the auspices of the new and informal Punk Scholars' Network (PSN), an association open to anyone interested in researching, writing and publishing on any aspect of the past, present and future of punk internationally.

The morning session of the 'No Sir, I Won't' conference (its name an inversion of the title of Crass' fifth studio album *Yes Sir, I Will*) offered two presentations: the first exploring the changing perceptions within anarcho-punk of the utility of political violence; and the second examining the sometimes awkward relationship between anarchist punks and activists in the 'traditional, formal' anarchist movement.

In the afternoon, a trio of presentations looked at the presentation of anarcho-punk in the canon of punk documentary film making; at the representation of political ideas in the distinctive graphics and iconography of anarchist punk; and at the sometimes challenging tensions between the musical and political ambitions of anarcho-punk bands.

The day concluded with a panel discussion featuring academic and author George McKay, founder member of Crass Penny Rimbaud and Sarah McHendry (who'd spent her youth as a feminist punk activist in Telford), each of whom spoke of their different experiences in the original anarcho-punk wave. Rimbaud in particular provided an intentionally challenging and provocative account of his work with Crass, Exitstencil Press and Crass Records. The interactive panel session, which generated a large number of questions and a great deal of debate, generated some illuminating personal perspectives, complementing the more analytical presentations that preceded it.

The conference also included an exhibition of anarcho-punk graphic design – featuring record sleeves, posters and political artwork – accompanied by an illustrated booklet authored by exhibition designer Russ Bentley.

This highly productive conference is evidence of the growing interest amongst radical punk historians in the UK in drawing together a critical participant account of the experience of anarcho-punk, and its contribution to the wider political and cultural history of British anarchism.

Rich Cross

facebook.com/groups/157886251064866/  
http://thehippiesnowwearblack.org.uk

# A close shave

Over the past year there has been a resurgence in body-hair activism and discussion within the feminist community. However, it is still the case that whenever an unshaven woman 'dares' to show her body hair in public, she is often met with a barrage of criticism regarding her appearance. Amidst these hysterical cries which denounce body hair on women as dirty, unhygienic, 'unnatural' or 'unfeminine', there are two recurring comments which I would like to explore, both of which centre around the notion of 'free choice'.

Firstly, the claim that a woman is free to stop shaving her arms/legs/pubic area so long as she 'accepts' the fact that no man will ever find her sexually attractive again; secondly, the statement made by some women that they "choose to continue shaving as it just looks and feels better!"

The former comment is perhaps easier to refute, in that firstly it is patently untrue: I know plenty of women who are hairy and have successful relationships with men. Of course, the act of a woman choosing to stop shaving should be made first and foremost for the woman herself.

And those women who 'choose' to remove body hair? To what extent can this really be considered a free choice within a patriarchal, capitalist society? When every single media image we see of women is hairless and shaved, waxed or photoshopped to perfection? When waxing salons offer their

services to pre-teens, and firms such as Gillette spend millions of pounds every year on marketing?

Body hair removal did not become a widespread practice until the 1920s, when hemlines rose and sleeveless dresses came into fashion. Razor manufacturers at the time saw this as an opportunity to create a new market, and soon started putting out adverts to stimulate demand for hair-removal products. Patriarchy and capitalism worked (and continue to work) together in order to foster insecurities in women and thus encourage them to buy more products. And because the idealised image of a hairless woman is impossible to maintain, women are encouraged not only to perpetually spend money on depilatory practices but also to participate in a never-ending, time-consuming cycle of hair removal: just one aspect of what Naomi Wolf has termed 'beauty work', or the extra labour that women are expected to perform in order to look even half-way respectable.

It is clear, then, that the act of hair removal is not simply influenced by patriarchy but also by capitalism and its imperative to consume endlessly. This is why for women throwing away the razor is still a radical act of both feminism and anti-capitalism. Start your own razor-rejection revolution today!

Tasha Skerman-Gray

Armpits4August team member

www.armpits4august.org



## INTERNATIONAL

## NEWS IN BRIEF

**BULGARIA:** Each day for the last month thousands of protesters have descended on the Bulgarian parliament building in the capital city, Sofia. People are angry at the austerity measures implemented by ruling three party coalition, and have accused them of behaving like the mafia. Peaceful protests have been steadily escalating over the last week. Entrances to the parliament building have been blockaded to prevent MP's entering, and when they have managed to enter they have been barricaded to prevent them from leaving. Protesters have clashed with riot police on an almost nightly basis.

**GREECE:** Close to three hundred people on 150 motorbikes have taken part in an anti-fascist patrol in a suburb of northern Athens. The patrol did a circuit through the city centre before returning to the start point in Exarchia. This is the latest of five large anti-fascist patrols in Athens, and one of many across the country. Unlike previous patrols which have been a target for police brutality, the patrol was largely uneventful, yet successful in keeping fascists from the Golden Dawn, off the streets.

**INDONESIA:** Workers in Indonesia are fighting a battle against poverty wages and the right to basic health care coverage. Indonesia has not escaped the fall-out from the global economic crisis. Incredible rates of inflation coupled with real terms wage cuts have left many people in desperate conditions. Workers across many sectors have walked off the job in protest at the government's latest fuel price hike. After months of slowly creeping up to crazy levels, the price of fuel went up 44% – literally overnight. Workers are saying enough is enough, and refusing to return to work until a subsidy is introduced to stabilise prices.

**POLAND:** In a bid to make the country more competitive in world markets, the government has abolished the eight-hour working day – a right which was won almost 100 years ago. As well as allowing the bosses to increase working hours, the government are in the process of relaxing a whole host of laws pertaining to basic terms and conditions within the workplace – all of which are being implemented in the name of 'progress' and 'competitiveness' in an age of austerity. The bosses must be laughing into their sleeves.

**SOUTH AFRICA:** Nikulenko Gwala was murdered on the 26th June. He is the fourth housing activist to have been assassinated in Durban in the last six months. Gwala had been a leading activist in the struggle against evictions and widespread corruption across local housing projects. His murder came hours after he organised a protest against the allocation of housing to people who are members of the ruling party.

## LENS CAP FRANCE



Fifteen thousand people march through Paris to remember Clément Meric, an 18 year old student and antifascist activist who had been murdered by a group of neo-nazis in a busy shopping district of Paris. All those arrested for the attack have ties to the 'Revolutionary Nationalist Youth' group. They have had their murder charges downgraded to manslaughter, as the judge accepted their claims that they did not intend to kill Clément.

## Political prisoners seize control

Over fifty political prisoners seized control of a Vietnamese prison for several hours, demanding a more humane regime, improved conditions and food.

The prisoners gained control of the facility following violent clashes with prison staff and local police. The prison governor was held hostage throughout the duration of the prisoner's control.

The Xuan Loc prison, close to Ho Chi Minh City, houses many of Vietnam's political dissidents, including several high profile bloggers such as Tran Hunh Duy Thuc, currently serving a 16 year sentence for attempted subversion, and members of the 'People's Democratic Party of Vietnam' – banned by the government.

A police spokesperson said that: "The disturbance was ignited by some leading prisoners. We identified 40 prisoners who

organised the riot and hostage taking, and they will be punished in accordance with the law".

The disturbance comes days after the high profile revolutionary poet, Cu Huy Ha Vu, ended a three week hunger strike, demanding better treatment from prison staff.

Prison staff and riot police mounted several attempts to regain control of the prison, but were repelled by a bombardment of rocks and human excrement. Several police officers reported minor injuries.

Control of the prison was returned to staff following negotiation with the Ministry of Public Security, who promised to look at the regime.

Prison uprisings have been a rare occurrence in Vietnam, as the government cracks down on any person or groups that attempts to challenge its authority.

Matt Black

## Notes from the US

### Surveillance

As the news confirming massive government and corporate surveillance broke in early June, the emphasis by the main propaganda channels in the United States was on the extent to which the exposure by Greenwald, Snowden and the *Guardian* and *Washington Post*, etc., was 'irresponsible' and 'itself a

crime' etc. The usual twittering and puff about celebrities, infantilising entertainment and the rightness of American belligerence and greed continued almost as though there had been no such major development.

Earlier, in mid May, the US Department of Justice appeared to have targeted The

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# Squatters clash with police

## Residents in the Philippines battle with police over forced evictions

Thousands of people living in slums in Manila have fought fierce battles with police, who are trying to evict them from their homes in order to make way for a multi-billion dollar project to turn the area into a new \$65 billion business district, due to be completed over the next three years.

As police moved in to the 29 hectare North Triangle area of the city, residents erected barricades and fought back the police using rocks, nail bombs and bags of faeces. The police repeatedly charged the barricades with batons and teargas, but without success.

Of the 10,000 families housed in the area, 8,000 have already been relocated (violently removed) over the last two years, since the government signed a huge deal with a leading real estate company.

Many of the residents are migrants who earn poverty wages, and have lived in their homes for over 30 years. The site that the government are proposing to relocate people to is many miles away from Manila, their families and their jobs. Many of the sites earmarked to house relocated families are in a much worse state than the slums they already lived in, yet the government claims that the knock-on effect of the new business district would be that the quality of life for those moved on would be drastically improved.

Successive governments have made many attempts to shift (force) hundreds of thousands of people from the slums that surround Manila out into the countryside. However as there are no job opportunities, or any plans to create any, so people just move back to Manila.

## Notes from the US

### ◀ page 8

Associated Press when it secretly obtained a significant number of the AP journalists' phone records. The chief executive of the AP called the act a "massive and unprecedented intrusion".

Records were taken for the work and personal phone numbers of individual reporters and general AP office numbers in New York, Washington DC and Hartford, Connecticut, as well as for the main number for the AP in the House of Representatives press gallery. They were from April and May 2012 and seem to have concentrated on those working on a story in May 2012 which revealed details of a CIA operation in Yemen to stop an alleged terror plot – even though AP postponed publication of the story at the government's request.



In a typically callous statement, the minister responsible for the project claims that those refusing to vacate their homes of several decades are "Professional Squatters" and militants who are agitating for a better relocation package, and that "they will not be tolerated, and dealt with accordingly".

Local media reported that at least one police officer required hospital treatment, as did up to twenty people evicted from the site. The police claim to have arrested over 30 people, but later released all of them without charge.

### Protest

Workers in the fast-food sector in various (mostly midwest) states have been holding a series of strikes and walk-outs. In mid May these actions spread to Milwaukee following Detroit, St Louis, Chicago and New York City. Their demand is for a US\$15 (£9.80)-an-hour wage and the right to unionise.

### Economy

As the protests grow by teachers against the planned closure in Chicago of 50 schools, the billionaire business tycoon Penny Pritzker from that city seems likely to be confirmed Obama's new commerce secretary. One of her qualifications is as one of those who expanded sub-prime lending at the Chicago-based Superior Bank owned by her family. It

In the run up to the evictions the government have engaged in a not so subtle campaign of smearing the squatters. They have inserted stories in newspapers claiming that much of the flooding that left 70% of Manila underwater was due to the seventy thousand squatters who live alongside Manila's waterways, leaving rubbish and blocking drains. The media have gone along with this version of events, choosing to ignore the fact that over a month's rainfall landed on Manila in the space of six hours.

Matt Black

failed and uninsured many savers lost over US\$100,000 (£66,260) worth of savings.

This month US lawmakers are preparing to slash government food aid programmes. But a report published at the end of May by the International Human Rights Clinic at New York University's School of Law finds that an astonishing one in six people in the United States lives in a household unable to provide adequate food. Of the 50 million people going hungry, nearly 17 million are children.

Louis Further

### References

Human Rights Clinic (New York University's School of Law): <http://www.law.nyu.edu/academics/clinics/year/intlhumanrights/index.htm>

## ECONOMICS

# Kropotkin and property ownership

The Russian anarcho-communist and Freedom Press founder Peter Kropotkin outlined his argument against private property and its enforcement by the state in *The Conquest of Bread*, where he outlines an emotive and intuitive account written with the intention of being succinct, readable and intellectually vociferous. In this instance, it shares a common feature of all anarchist philosophical texts in that they espouse anti-authoritarian, anti-capitalist visions of society without the obfuscation of other strands of left-wing academia. As political philosophers are misinterpreted, underappreciated or wilfully ignored by the political class, as a neoliberal consensus pushes through vicious austerity measures in the guise of common-sense necessity, the clarity and astutely-directed indignation of Kropotkin is more than welcome as a means of shedding light on modern economic discourse.

Published in anarchist journals around Europe and eventually as a book in 1892, Kropotkin's voice was one among many at the advent of what scholars such as Slavoj Žižek refer to as 'actually existing socialism', and written as a reaction to the exclusively aristocratic/industrialist landownership. Private property is not the nuanced, difficult economic subject that cuts across multiple class brackets as created by modern neoliberalism, but is a luxury only afforded the rich, and for this reason, the layperson to anarchist theory may be surprised by the ambition of Kropotkin's assertions.

Kropotkin wishes to convince the reader that a homeowner's right to his property is illegitimate. The money spent by the homeowner in purchasing the house is not the product of his or her own toil – rather the house's value is contingent to its location relative to other property and therefore its value is not reducible to the labour that created the dwelling in the first instance. Kropotkin's central justification for his economic theory is predicated on the understanding that value is impossible to quantify in free, fair market denominations because all labour and value is contingent on the labour of others. The writing of this article is labour, but I required a laptop to type, that had to be designed by a company, physically built by workers, distributed by a lorry driver.



That's assuming, too, that my labour is not mixed with any book by Kropotkin I've ever read, Kropotkin himself as the writer of my original stimulus and all other inspirations, products of labour that he required... *ad infinitum*. This allows Kropotkin's statements on private property to be understood as consistent with an overarching economic communism.

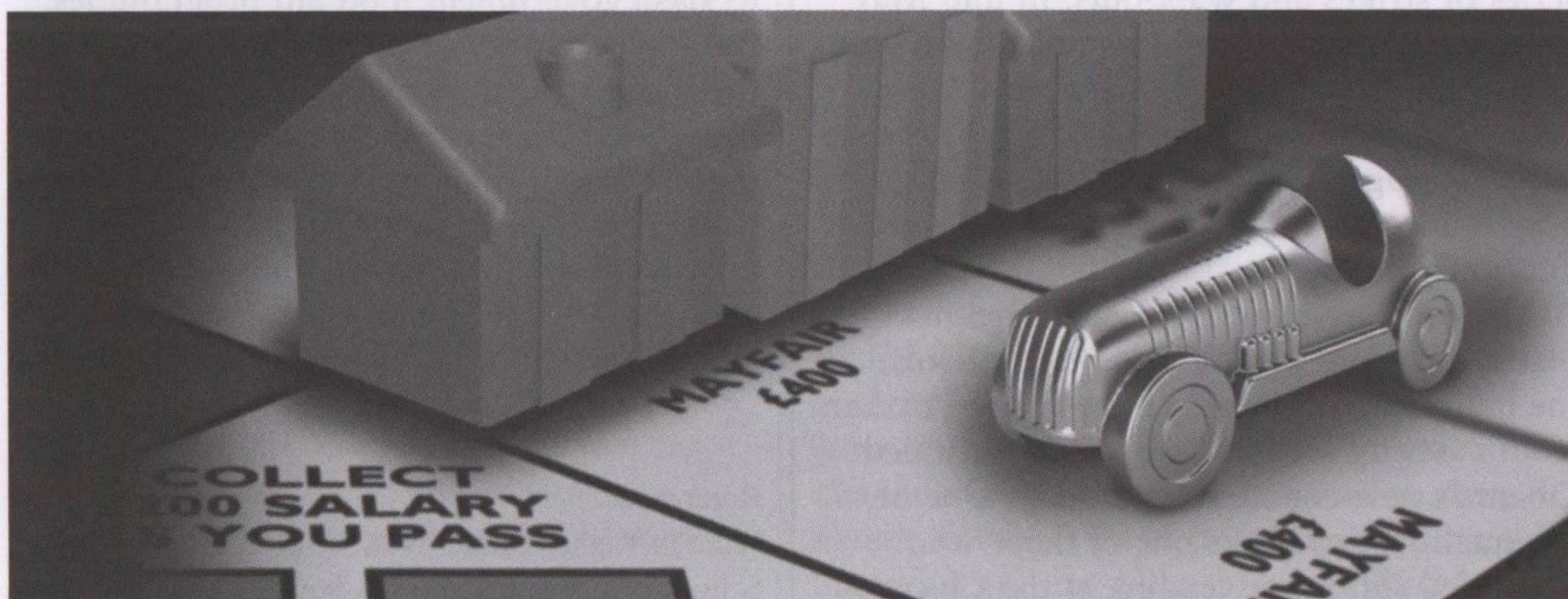
The proposition is that a homeowner cannot have built their own home because that which is required to build a property is labour that stretches over many workers and overlaps many individual and communal enterprises – “[the house] was erected, decorated and furnished by innumerable workers in the timber yards, the brick fields and the workshop, toiling for life on the minimum wage” [page 69]. Now that Kropotkin has deduced that a homeowner is not justified in claiming to have built their own home or to have purchased it in order to make the dwelling convertible into a capital commodity, he considers the value expropriated from the property in relation to its location.

Kropotkin's example is a flat in Paris, “a house in certain parts of Paris is worth a thousand pounds of sterling, not because a thousand pounds' worth of labour have been expended on that particular house, but because it is in Paris; because of centuries

workmen, artists, thinkers, men of learning and letters have contributed to make Paris what it is today... it is the fruit of eighteen centuries of toil, the work of fifty generations of the whole French nation” [page 70]. It is not difficult to transpose this view of Paris onto a modern perspective of gentrified London boroughs, or indeed for any reader to think of the historical significance, and for good or bad fortune, the contingency with which the value of a dwelling can be ascribed. To quote Kropotkin, “who, then, can appropriate to himself the tiniest plot of ground, or the meanest building in such a city, without committing a flagrant injustice? Who, then, has the right to sell to any bidder the smallest portion of the common heritage?” [page 70]. What real harm would be done if families no longer owed their livelihood to the bank? What if disused houses could be refurbished and utilised to house the needy and the poor without police intervention? How can anyone say that for the people to acquiesce the surplus property of inherited, illegitimate aristocratic wealth to alleviate genuine suffering would be morally unjust?

In a world where millions of people live without a dwelling and private property is used as a means for procuring capital returns on investments, most self-identifying homeowners are actually equity partners with financial institutions. There is a dearth of social housing being built across Europe and beyond - it is not inconceivable to see how the arbitrary establishment of something as important as living space as a commodity has had detrimental effects on the lives of those without private property as monetary collateral. Hopefully Kropotkin's argument has challenged your preconceptions on the issue of private property, whether you are a casual reader that will pause for thought next time you flick through the local property pages, or a committed anarchist that has had the moral fortitude of your movement's next wave of demonstrations reinforced.

Jamie Ranger



# A lot of fuss about nothing?

## An anarchist perspective on nihilism

A hundred years ago, the Russian writer Turgenev used the term nihilists to describe a generation of young men in rebellion against Czarist Russia. They called into question not only the existence of moral values, but also, more importantly, the legitimacy of the Russian state. This argument provoked a series of bombings and assassinations across Europe, usually blamed on anarchists, but sometimes committed by *agents provocateurs* in the pay of governments.

In 1908, G.K. Chesterton published a fantasy novel called *The Man who was Thursday*. Its subtitle was: *a nightmare*. Chesterton's character the poet Lucian Gregory has this to say about bomb-throwing: "An anarchist is an artist. The man who throws a bomb is an artist, because he prefers a great moment to everything... An artist disregards all governments, abolishes all conventions. The poet delights in disorder only."

The linking of anarchist with bomb-thrower is immediately apparent (the link with art and poetry may need more teasing out!). The central focus of the novel is not so much active anarchists, who ranged from bomb-throwers through peaceful collectivists to trade unionists. Chesterton centres his attack on what might be described as philosophical anarchism. A detective remarks: "The head of one of our departments... is certain that the scientific and artistic worlds are silently bound in a crusade against the Family and the State."

Exactly so. To criticise family and state is not to deny the existence of moral values. Rather it is to question whether the moral values represented by such a society are indeed genuine.

Friedrich Nietzsche questions whether words such as truth and morality have objective values. Do they mean the same thing for all times and places? After many decades of obscurity Nietzsche was taken up by scholars towards the end of the twentieth century to query precisely the existence of objective truth and moral standards. Often with the best possible motives, such as respect for difference between cultures over what might constitute 'the good', 'the true', 'the desirable'. Yet by doing so these writers cut across the internationalisation of the notion of human rights. If there is a tactical value in upholding difference, there is an absolute value in upholding the unity of people. One race, the human race.

So who benefited from this new relativism? There is little doubt that the winners were the true nihilists of the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s. Not the squatters, the opponents of the poll tax and of privatisation, the 'Right to Work' campaigners, but those in government



Civil Guards round up some of the 1,000 suspects arrested during 'Tragic Week' in Barcelona, Spain.

and the City who were taking decisions to break up old industries, settled communities, values of solidarity and care for others. They believed in nothing beyond self-interest and the abstractions of profit-and-loss accounts. They believed in money.

Chesterton's book on the threat of philosophical anarchism appeared in 1908. In 1909, Barcelona, one of the few cities in Europe with a developed anarchist movement erupted in violence. During the riots of the Tragic Week, some 80 religious buildings were burned, troops fired on, and demonstrating workers killed. Subsequent historians have placed much of the blame not on the libertarians, but on *agents provocateurs* placed among the Catalan working-class by the Spanish government, keen to discredit the largely middle-class cause of Catalan autonomy. But the authorities needed to pin the blame if possible on a single person. They found him – Francesc Ferrer, anarcho-syndicalist and founder of Barcelona's free school movement. Education free, that is, of the teachings of the Catholic church. The trial was summary, the verdict guilty, the execution immediate. And if the government had its scapegoat, the libertarian cause had a martyr they have still not forgotten.

William Archer, translator of Ibsen, and later a great figure in the English theatre, wrote a book about it. His book *The life, trial and death of Francisco Ferrer* (he used the Castilian Spanish form of Ferrer's first name) is a fine example of investigative journalism of 100 years ago. Archer began from a rationalist position: was indeed the

'instigator and director of the rising'. He looked for evidence. Archer located Ferrer's main political activity in the period 1885-95. By 1909, he claims, Ferrer had become convinced that no successful revolution could take place in a country where half the population was illiterate; hence his new career as the founder of the 'Modern School'.

Returning to the charge that Ferrer had incited these riots, Archer emphasises throughout the certainty of the government and the army that they had 'got their man', and the speed and corner-cutting involved in both trial and sentence.

Nihilism, then, is a dangerous fire to play with. At its most savage and negative worst, it contributes little or nothing to the sum total of human happiness. And does not intend to do so. By denying moral standards and values, it undermines existing social relations. That, again, is its purpose. Yet paradoxically it can also suggest the possibility of a breakthrough to more humane values, to true solidarity between people, and to a morality that asserts our unity and equality, not to mention our essential goodness as human beings. The Barcelona libertarians of the early twentieth century were not nihilists. By 1909 they were a well organised political movement dedicated to the overthrow of the state, but in order to build something better. As another of their heroes, Buenaventura Durruti, stated shortly before dying at the front in the Spanish Civil War, "We are not afraid of ruins, we are going to inherit the earth... we carry a new world in our hearts."

Joe Herbert

# THE BIN MAN PROBLEM

Jamie Ranger looks at creating a more DIY society

Let's imagine that anarchism has prevailed; capitalism has been abandoned as the mould for the global economy, national borders have been whisked away in a stream of joyous internationalist fervour and free enterprise has been replaced with a decentralised, stateless world of common ownership where the needs of the many are prioritised over the needs of the few. Class has been eradicated, reason has flourished over superstition, and the traditions of culture are respected in a tolerant, critical and never sanctimonious fashion. The obsolescence and absurdity of the stock exchange has been replaced with the gift exchange; the professor is valued over the preacher; the artist over the aesthete; the worker over the manager – yet there is one daunting question which may in fact derail this post-political bliss and send all the world's community into a cavalcade of uncertainty and disrepair: who is going to do the bins?

This essay is an attempt to isolate one of the largest theoretical economic critiques of anarchist politics within the microcosm of local chores – in a world of pure opportunity, where anything is possible and people are free to pursue their dream professions, why be a bin-man? However associated with redistribution of a sort it may be, even the most potently ideological leftist must concede that there is an issue to be resolved here.

Peter Gelderloos attempted to answer this problem in his profound collection of answers to scepticism *Anarchy Works*. Gelderloos considers personal responsibility, the division of labours and the inability to outsource consequences, as the factors responsible for ensuring the continuance of this post-capitalist civility. In the absence of large corporations attempting to offload their environmental responsibilities to save money, and the fact that waste cannot be offloaded onto countries happy to remove the problem for a fee, Gelderloos argues that the sheer volume of waste to be disposed of will significantly smaller than it is in the current system. With the visible consequences of leaving waste out



directly impinging upon daily life, it is far more likely to be removed responsibly and swiftly. Besides, given the post-capitalist nature of this theoretical society, there will be no need to cut corners for further profit, and thus more recyclable, perishable materials will be used in production, making the task easier and more efficient. Industrial scale problems will be eradicated because there will be no reason to put the cost of a task before the quality of a task, and the consequence of attempting to shun responsibility will directly impact the community, and therefore, be neither beneficial for the individuals attempting such misdemeanours, nor would it benefit their personal livelihoods, even if one removes the community factor from the equation.

Personal responsibility is perhaps an easy political concept to espouse given its presence in all major and radical ideologies across the political spectrum, and it is no different in anarchist theory. If you create a mess, you clear it up, and if your mess starts to impact on the community in a harmful way, then suitable punishment could indeed be implemented by those affected. In a post-capitalist world with an absence of entitlement, why would you seek to destroy the aesthetics or utility of your community, of the property with which you have built your home and livelihood, or disrupt the free lives of your neighbours by failing to perform such a simple task as taking your rubbish to the local landfill? If the rule is as simple as you clean up for yourself, then it is easier to establish those who shun their responsibilities. Gelderloos cites Freetown Christiania, an anarchist microstate in Copenhagen, which works on similar principles; a mixture of this 'do-it-yourself' attitude in dual correspondence with a 'garbage committee' that is answerable to the 'Common Meeting' allowed the streets and all property to be as clean as in any statist society.

The division of labour is Gelderloos' final consideration. In an anti-capitalist society, why should menial tasks such as being a bin man – perhaps it ought to be bin person – be a career path? Consider the borough of Whitechapel, where Freedom Press proudly resides, and its roughly 12,500 inhabitants. Imagine that it takes 50 rubbish collectors about four hours once a week to canvass Whitechapel in rubbish trucks, collect all the rubbish and dump it in the district's landfill site. Assuming that people at pension age, children and the disabled were exempt from this local duty, leaving around 7,500 people who could potentially fulfil this task. That means that an eligible individual could be called up for 'waste disposal duty', or however you wish to delicately or eloquently legitimise it with the verbose language of citizenship, every three years (two years and 46 weeks) on average for only four hours of voluntary work. Now imagine a situation where people



also volunteer as well as those called upon for disposal duty work in conjunction, in the same way that volunteers help look after the disabled and the elderly to aid vital public services in contemporary capitalist society. What better way to teach an unruly teenager responsibility as a parent than to make him volunteer for bin duty for two or three weeks? What better way to contribute to society from home than to literally 'take out the trash'? This could also be in conjunction with an online service wherein a household can tick themselves off the list, allowing the voluntary service to miss out households that have already sorted their own rubbish

farfetched and bizarre; we best keep the legal system as it is now and change nothing' to be demonstrably absurd. Yet there are people that buy into anti-capitalist beliefs, they believe that people before profit is a logically sound starting point for an economy, they question hierarchical structures and the imposing trend of nationalism and cultural traditions to distort the benefits of internationalist considerations, and yet they stumble at the final hurdle, usually over a practical concern as banal and as trivial as 'who would take the bins out in this glorious social utopia?'

Whilst I believe Gelderloos neglects to mention the idea of civic duties, it is probably because he is a writer with much bigger fish to metaphorically fry, but it is a point that I felt necessary to raise. Furthermore, there is a stigmatisation of the job the bin collector which distorts the practicalities of the problem. In a capitalist society, a bin collector is essentially the job of doing a chore for the council; it is a job you take because of under-employment, because somebody has to do it (which is true even in pure anarchism) and because it is a job that usually falls upon those in society without the formal qualifications with which to gain a better job. It is a low rung on a hierarchical ladder, and it is stigmatised as the work of someone who couldn't get a job doing anything more intellectually or physically demanding. But of course, in an anti-capitalist society, the job of being a bin collector is not one in a hierarchical chain, but simply a chore like any other. You collect the bins because the bins need collecting, it is as integral to any civilised society as any sort of career in medical health and it requires less training so there are fewer excuses not to contribute. With this in mind, bin collection becomes a classless activity that is as necessary for the maintenance of a civic life as brushing your own teeth, washing your own clothes, buying/collecting your own food or flushing your own toilet. To conclude, it would seamlessly become just another aspect of everyday life.

This feature is an attempt to consider the practical application of anarchist theory onto contemporary life and conclude that for all the ill-informed criticisms of radical politics, the hardship of distributive responsibility will be so insignificant in comparison to the overwhelming improvement of the lives of millions of people worldwide. The notion that a small, simple voluntary effort to allow a community to remain aesthetically pleasing, sufficiently hygienic and environmentally accountable is a bridge too far for most individuals appears to be a pathetic riposte to the overriding vision of a better world. So what does an anarchist say to someone who asks them who will do their bins? 'We've given you paradise, do them yourself!'

out and focus on houses that are unable to fulfil this personal duty for whatever reason, age, disability, etc., and given that people are not going to be working for the pursuit of personal security, there will be plenty of free time for people to contribute to the cause. In fact, with a lot of additional volunteers, we're looking at a morning's worth of work every three years – hardly a sufficient reason to retain the *status quo*.

I believe Gelderloos' positions to be simple, yet effective, responses to the bin man problem, and I would also like to propose an analysis of my own. In fact, my analysis is perhaps more focused on the question

itself, and why it is often raised as a practical issue. It is difficult to imagine a situation where people first considered the idea of due process, of a judge without limitless powers, and a court that is balanced by the anonymous decision-making of a jury being questioned not because of its theoretical claims to fairness, justice and democracy as a soothing counter-mechanism to legal authoritarianism, but being questioned from the ensuing position, 'who would be on the jury?' The question appears so obviously resolved by civic duty, so easily ascertained by common-sense, that the idea of people concluding, 'you're right, this legal vision sounds too

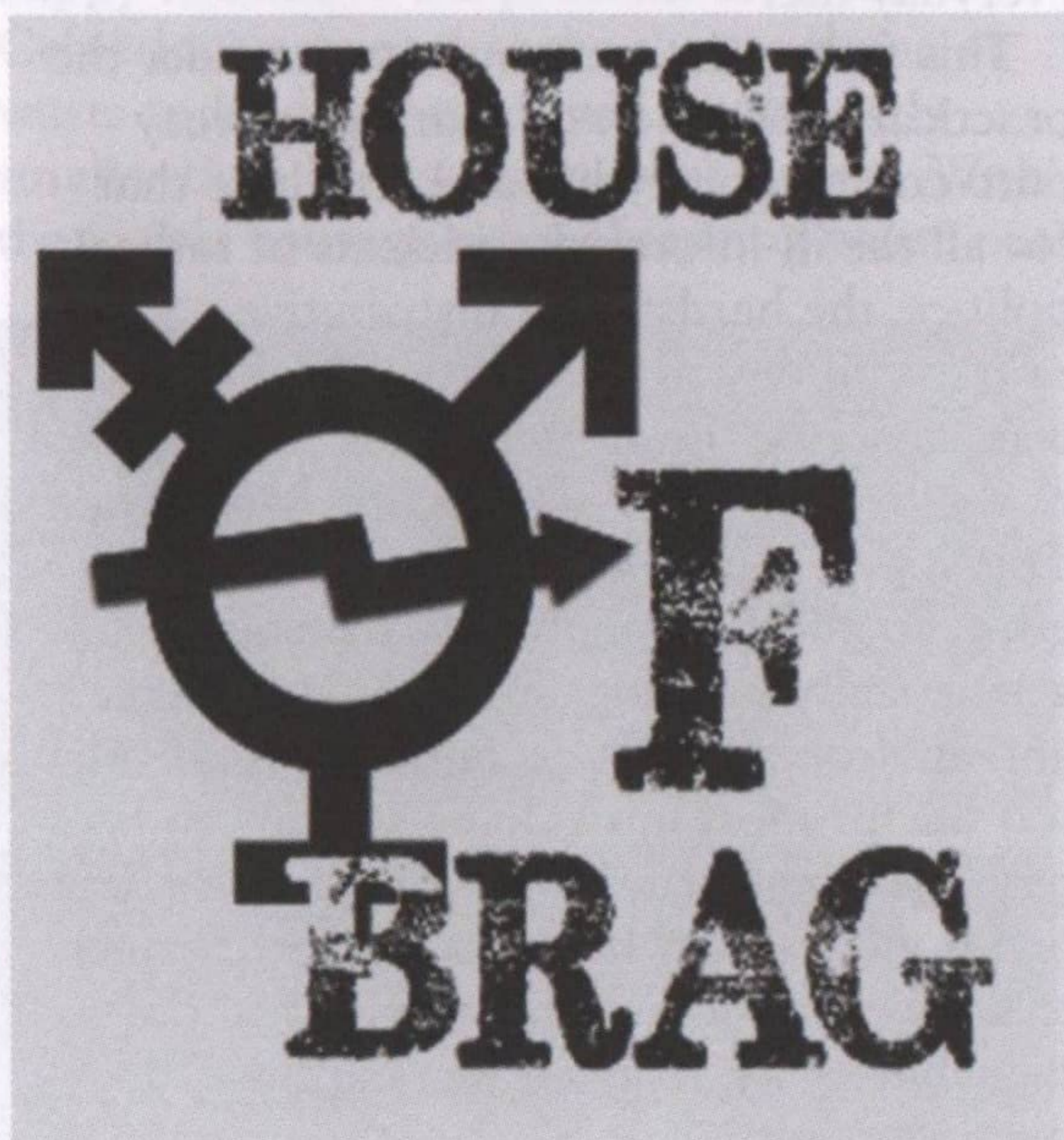
## INTERVIEW

# The London Queer Social Centre

**House of Brag: The London Queer Social Centre is 'a loose and constantly shifting collection of individuals with no official manifesto or policy but bound by queer and anarchist politics'.**

At the time of writing the group are squatting an abandoned pub for a few weeks to host an 'alternative to Pride', featuring queer workshops ranging from 'Laughter Yoga' to a climactic 'Riot Grrrl/Queercore Gig and Danceparty'. I went down on the day of London Pride, after skipping the hideous parade in which corporations and pigs held up bulk-printed banners, largely reading shit like 'Marriage is so gay', and attended a free dinner at the House of Brag.

Most of the people I got speaking with were attending for the first time, and this was probably down to the roaming queer street party the group had organised for later that night. Everyone seemed to be enjoying the space thoroughly, helping themselves to delicious skipped food and discussing with sadness the shambles of the day's parade, but excited for the night's anti-parade. While I was in the bathroom admiring a bit of paper stuck to the mirror that said 'You're beautiful xxx', people were preparing placards on the pavement for the night, some were alone, reading and others were helping out with the dinner, while the rest were in the pub garden socialising. The two newbies I spoke with the most were really just excited at the fact that somewhere like the House of Brag exists – I know I was. In a city where the gay clubs are mostly dominated by white cis gay men, where you're charged ridiculous amounts to even enter before being expected to pay a fiver for a drink, it's refreshing and even



reassuring to know that there are others who are as pissed off about the 'pink pound' as you are, and to come together for something as communal as a dinner is fabulous. The music was fucking great too. Who doesn't love a bit of Aaliyah?

I got speaking to someone who was amongst those who set up the House of Brag a year or so ago, and was glad to hear what they had to say about the collective. A few queer comrades wanted to see a non-commercial alternative to the gay scene, a space that was non-alcohol oriented and where people could learn about queer issues, socialise and organise – above all to provide a community. So they squatted a building and did just that.

Since being evicted from their original squat on Braganza Street, the group have carried on in their attempts to provide a platform for queer folk to stimulate ideas for resistance. They host a queer film night every Sunday, showing films like Bruce LaBruce's *The Revolution is My Boyfriend* and *Paris is Burning*, and their alternative to Pride pop-up has had brilliant workshops going every day for two weeks. The newest thing to come out of the collective is South London Bash Back!, a project generating a lot of excitement. Taking influence from the Bash Back! chapters of the USA, the group hope to provide a phone network for queer and trans\* people in need of some backup in rough situations. The Bragger I spoke to described a situation that they apparently hear of a lot – a queer or trans\* person being stuck at a party with a group of nasties outside, waiting to jump them. Through

calling up Bash Back! the party-goer would be able to quickly get a group who could escort them to safety.

Queer Anarchist initiatives and spaces are keys to further inclusivity in the anarchist movement in London. As seen at the House of Brag, there are many angry queer and trans\* people excited to find an outlet for our contempt towards mainstream gay culture. The more spaces like this that are created, the more queer and trans\* people will come together to learn about resistance against the capitalist patriarchy which excludes us from our own spaces – be it Pride marches or bars. A patriarchy which dictates oppressive gender stereotypes as desirable and advocates a docile, domesticated LGBT 'community' is as harmful to queer people as much as it is to everyone else. But only we can create our own platforms for resistance and an inclusive community ourselves, so let's get organised! Form a Bash Back! chapter in your area, find a local squat and ask if you can organise a queer event, such as a movie night, party or discussion meeting, or anything else that is fabulous and revolutionary.

The House of Brag will be taking a well-deserved rest after their Alternative to Pride pop-up, but will be returning for another pop-up in months to come. A few Braggers are organising different projects in the meantime.

Billy Knox

For more info on House of Brag: The London Queer Social Centre check out <http://houseofbrag.wordpress.com/>

● According to a Freedom of Information request by the *Daily Mirror*, since 2010 2,300 of the 44,000 screws (5%) employed in England and Wales have been found guilty of crimes such as trafficking, sexual assaults and violence, but only 478 (2%) were sacked. Some 1,439 screws received written warnings, some final, for offences including abusive behaviour, 'inappropriate relationships' with inmates, trafficking contraband, sleeping on duty, assaulting colleagues and sex assaults or harassment. Another 146 were reprimanded for allowing prisoners to escape, attacking colleagues, fraud, theft and racial harassment. And, bizarrely, 125 officers had 'no further action' taken against them for assaults on colleagues and inmates, bullying, sexual assault and abusive behaviour to staff and inmates.

● Long-term anarchist prisoner and vociferous prisons campaigner Sean Swain (see April issue) has been the victim of an on-going harassment campaign by prison authorities who have been trying to tie him in with the leadership of the ultra-leftist prison sabotage group the Army of the Twelve Monkeys (A12M), which has been active in the Ohio prison system. At a new hearing on 30th April, Sean was again found guilty of being the A12M leader and founder despite the testimony of Leslie Dillon (Monkey #9), a founding member of A12M, that Sean was not a member or involved in any of their actions. Instead further charges and evidence were laid before the board, even though they claimed that the RIB was a rehearing. Despite Sean pointing out this and numerous other legal infractions, he has now been railroaded back into solitary.

Write to Sean at: Sean Swain #243-205, MANCI, P.O. Box 788, Mansfield, Ohio 44901, USA and drop [redbirdprisonabolition@riseup.net](mailto:redbirdprisonabolition@riseup.net) an email so they can verify that he received it.

● Italian prisons are notorious for their degrading conditions. With 147 prisoners for every 100 places (compared to the European average of 105), it is one of the most overcrowded prison populations in Europe – and home to an alarming suicide rate among prisoners.

Back in January, judges at the European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg ordered Italy to correct the "degrading and inhumane conditions" in its prisons and to pay €100,000 in damages to the seven prisoners who had fewer than three square metres of space each. In April Italy challenged that ruling, but at the end of May, their appeal was rejected and they were given one year to sort their act out.

Even the Italian Justice Minister Annamaria Cancellieri has stated that the "prisons are not worthy of a civilised country". Prepare for summer riots and hunger strikes.

# Hauled up

## THE NEW FACE OF UK LEGAL AID

Just when you thought that Justice Secretary Chris Grayling's ever more elaborate schemes to privatise vast swathes of the prison and criminal justice sectors could not get any more bizarre, out comes news that as a consequence of his 'never mind the quality... feel the width' reorganisation of Legal Aid, the haulage contractors Eddie Stobart are thinking about getting into the cheapo lawyers market.

Now, if you want significant amounts of something moving from A to B on a regular basis, then this denizen of reality television/truck-spotters is definitely a good choice. But defending you at trial!?

Except that the new reorganisation of Legal Aid means that you no longer have any say in who represents you in court if you have to claim legal aid in order to pay for your defence. Instead, you ring up a call centre and they pick somebody off a list and you are stuck with them, Stobarts or not.

And the inevitable outcome of this will be more people going to prison who otherwise might have beaten their charge(s) if they had the chance to pick someone they thought was competent. They may lose through their representative's incompetence, lack of engagement, or desire to cut corners and therefore their firm's costs. This inevitably means more plea bargains/early guilty pleas.

Of course the idea of Stobarts providing legal representation has produced something of a headline opportunity for the tabloids, as has the 'kot kontrabandist' (contraband cat) cat caught transporting two mobile phones and two mobile chargers strapped around its midriff into a Russian prison (someone should have told them that cats don't have the most reliable of homing instincts) and other trivialisations of an environment that

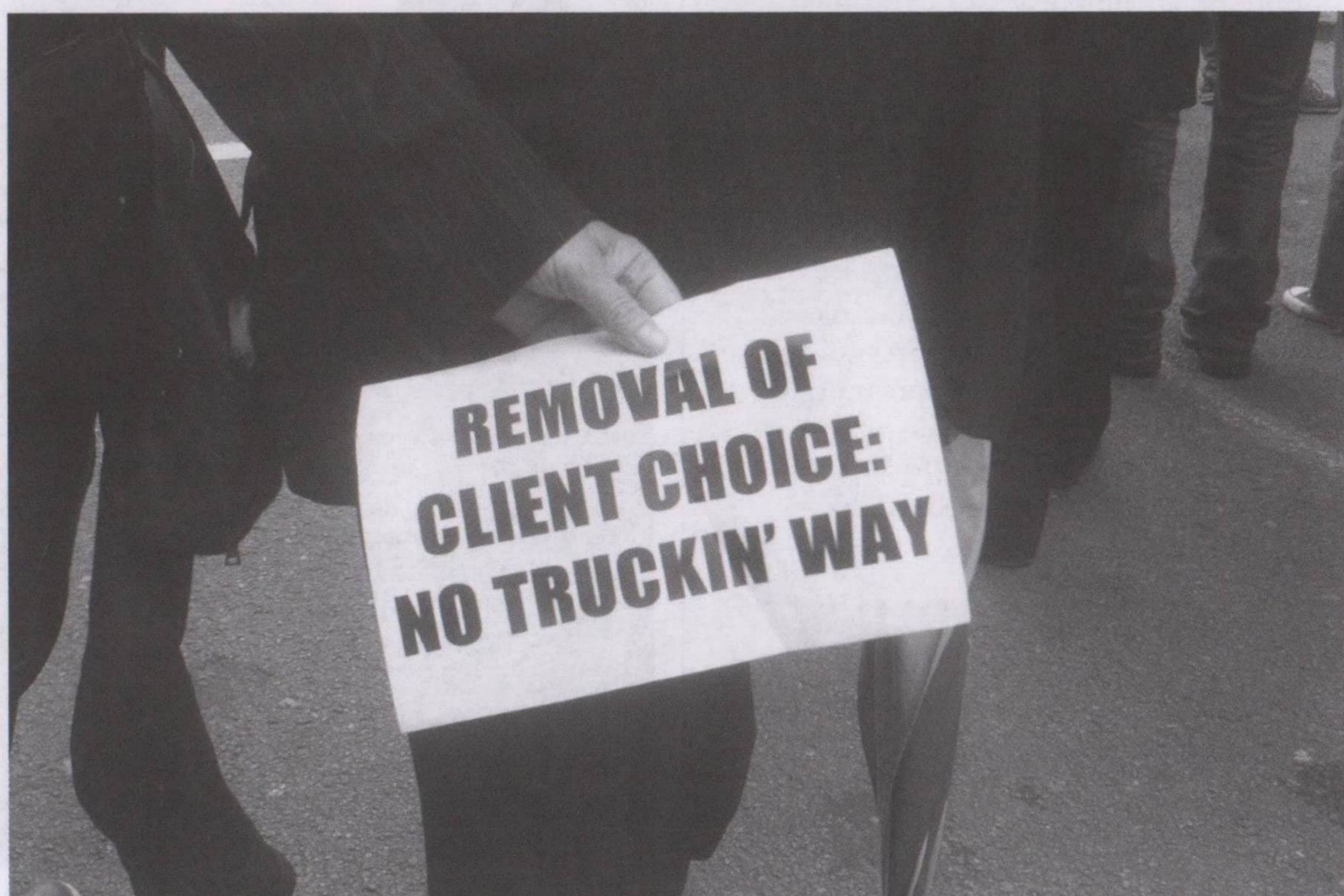
can seriously damage one's health but that few of us enter by choice.

## PRISON SUICIDE STATS RELEASED

Conspicuously absent from the mainstream media in the past month have been the latest prison statistics from the Council of Europe (for 2010-11). The standouts in these are the suicide rates for three western European countries: Netherlands with 17 self-inflicted deaths per 10,000 inmates (71.4% of all deaths), Belgium 16.7 per 10,000 (35.2%), and France 15.5 (53.4% and the highest total number of such deaths at 95), against an average of 6.7 for Council's member countries. The fact that the Netherlands has such a relatively low incarceration rate (69.5 prisoners per 100,000 of the population) and prison density (93.8 prisoners per 100 places), makes the Dutch self-inflicted death rate stand out even more starkly.

Compare this to England and Wales and its 6.8 suicides per 10,000 inmates (29.4% of all deaths) against a relatively high incarceration rate (152 per 100,000) and 96.6 inmates per 100 places, and the Dutch figures are even more surprising. The comparable figures in Scotland are twice those in England and Wales, with 12.7 suicides totalling 62.5% of all deaths (at 157.3 per 100,000 and 5.7% over capacity).

Overall, 1.86 million people are confined in the 47 countries of the Council in 2011, down 2% over the year. However, the rate grew from 149 to 154 prisoners for every 100,000 inhabitants and the prison systems in 20 countries were over capacity, the most overcrowded being the Russian Federation at 546 prisoners per 100,000 of the population. As Russia refuses to take part in the Council's data-gathering programme, suicide and overcrowding, their figures are not available for comparison.



A march in Manchester against the legal aid cuts, 21st May 2013.

## COMMENT

**ABOUT FREEDOM  
ANGEL ALLEY**

This is only the June edition of Angel Alley but thanks to Doctor Who, who lent us the Tardis to help with the reconstruction, we can report on things that will have happened in the shop by mid July. So here's what the future brings. The shop is now back downstairs although there's still some work to be done on the windows and lights. The alleyway will be covered in a new sand coloured surface and shortly afterwards we will be able to have a beach party (early August we reckon – check the website for details). We can also reveal that protests against the G8 co-ordinated from the Info point based in our very own Autonomy Club (that's the meeting room upstairs for anyone not in the know) will result in the crumbling of Capital and the State and the establishment of an environmentally secure global community based on freedom and cooperation... Sorry, that was the Doc reversing the polarity of the neutron flow again and landing us in the parallel universe of the bloody unlikely.

Back in the real world we are, as always, on the lookout for donations of second-hand books while exciting new additions include *Undercover* detailing the activities of police spies in the movement (does anyone know someone with a van these days?) and an expanded range of postcards from gathered images.

**SUBSCRIPTIONS**

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**NEXT ISSUE DEADLINE**

The next issue will be dated July 2013 and the last day to get copy to us for that issue will be Wednesday 12th June. 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

Not long ago a school governor at my kids' primary died. He'd been connected to the school for a long time, had lived almost all his life in a neighbouring street and had even gone there as a child. He was appointed by the council as a Labour Party member with a local connection. As far as I can tell, he didn't do a huge amount of work within the Labour Party, he was best known for coaching sports to generations of local kids. A friend who went to his funeral told me of hundreds of people, of all ages and backgrounds, paying their respects and speaking of the difference he made to their lives with great warmth and affection.

In so far as we can talk about working or middle class areas, one of the big differences between them is that there are far more middle class people with the confidence and certainty that they are right to make a fuss about issues that affect them. Labour still retain a tribal loyalty from some working class people, but the days when ordinary workers could progress beyond being a back-bench councillor are long gone. The spat in Falkirk between Unite and the Labour right is basically about which group of professional politicians gets the MPs job.

The other traditional route for working class people into any sort of politics was through trade unions. But a majority of union members are now graduates, so their claim to speak for the working class is not uncontested. Partly, this change comes from the decline of traditional blue collar work

and the concentration of union members in professions like teaching, social work and universities.

So, if working class people want to make a difference around them they usually find that politics is closed off to them. In itself, this isn't a bad thing. Politics as practised is often a distraction and usually harmful to our interests. But the fact that it is closed off to working class people is symptomatic of the disdain the ruling class hold us in.

So, if we recognise that politics isn't for the likes of us, what is? Many put their energy into running sports training or teams, or, less fashionably, things like the Scouts or Guides. When I was a child, in a deprived part of outer London, the local state provided one summer of youth provision, but the Scouts, Guides and even Boys Brigade all flourished. The people who ran the Scouts and immeasurably broadened my horizons were a mix of low-level local government clerks and lorry drivers.

Something that the political class doesn't get, with its crap about big society and the like, is that working class folk want more than just getting by, both for ourselves and our kids. The space to do things like sports activities, or youth groups, has been partly filled by the state in the last few decades, though youth work is usually the first cut made when the going gets tough. Ultimately, doing something to help build kids' confidence may turn out to be more political than any sort of political activity.



Combining politics and play, Andy Burnham and Ed Balls on rope swings at an adventure playground.

## Your number's up...

Your piece in the May issue about cops breaking and entering the wrong houses was particularly close to home for me (if you'll pardon the expression). It happened to my brother and he still hasn't got over the shock five years later. Of course he never got an apology and it took him ages to get any compensation for the damage. But hey – this is all part of a rich tradition of the authorities never returning the courtesy they demand of us. Don't even get me started on the ex-girlfriend who had the bailiffs over because of a duplicate tax record (she'd had the audacity to move house). Or the high number of friends I have who've spent the night (or longer) in police cells for peaceful protests or even just unspecified crimes.

Incidents like this just serve to remind us of the extent to which we are owned...

Orlando True

## Suspicious minds...

Oi *Freedom!* I love what you do but I think we need a few more LOLs to enter the equation. I've always been particularly amused by the world of crazy conspiracy theorists who go one step too far (and give the rest of us a bad name). I'm talking lizards and aliens, cheesy moons, Jesus in a pancake... How about you draft in a columnist to take a tongue-in-cheek look at what happens when paranoia goes a bit too far...

Also I want free sweets with the next issue. No green ones please, though – they remind me too much of lizards.

Skip Paul

## Solidarity from South Africa

Abahlali baseMjondolo is a democratic, membership-based movement of shack-dwellers and other poor people in South Africa. In 2005 our experience of suffering and injustice led us to organise and represent ourselves. We are struggling for land and housing as a vital step towards the restoration of our dignity and the recognition of our equality. We have been severely punished by those who want to keep us in our place and we have faced serious repression.

We keep our movement strong by making sure that it always remains in the hands of its members. We call this a living politics. We take very seriously the fact that the system that has marginalised and oppressed us here in South Africa is the very system that marginalises and oppresses the people of Turkey. And we have not forgotten that the first people to be in solidarity with our struggle outside of South Africa were the comrades at Sendika and People's House in Turkey.

We have studied the statements from our Turkish colleagues carefully. We condemn Prime Minister Erdogan and his government's

attack on people who are trying to voice their democratic reactions and demands in the city squares. We condemn his attacks on the Turkish people with despotic measures including tear gas, water cannons, beatings, shootings and threats of civil war. Such attacks are not just undemocratic. They are criminal.

We call upon Prime Minister Erdogan and his Turkish government to stop waging war on democrats and democratic formations.

We call on all progressive movements around the world to stand in solidarity with the Turkish struggle.

We also call upon the South African government to remember how the world stood in solidarity with the struggle against apartheid in its darkest days.

[www.abahlali.org](http://www.abahlali.org)

## Turkish TV channel under threat

Hayat TV, a progressive Turkish television channel, has received a closure order from the Turkish broadcasting regulator RTUK, Radio and Television High Commission, in effect from 12:00 p.m. Friday, 14th June 2013. The closure order was given with the pretext that Hayat TV, which has been broadcasting since March 2007, has no licence. This is not true. And there is every reason to believe that this decision is completely linked to the recent events in Turkey.

The last couple of weeks have witnessed a significant popular movement in Turkey. It started in Istanbul's Gezi Park and quickly spread all over the country as a protest movement against the current government's anti-democratic implementations and for more democratic rights and freedoms.

Since the first day of the protests Hayat TV has given a wide coverage to these events despite the government's warnings and its attempts for censorship. It is because of this that Hayat TV is facing closure, and four other TV channels have been given a fine by RTUK.

We condemn this arbitrary and unlawful decision which is an attack on democratic rights and freedoms and call for it to be reversed.

Please copy and send the following text to the authorities listed below:

I, the undersigned, have heard that Hayat TV, a progressive Turkish TV channel has received a closure order by RTUK, Radio & Television High Commission, in effect from Friday, 14th June 2013. I strongly believe that this is an attack on democratic rights and freedoms and urge for this decision to be reversed.

- Radio & Television High Commission  
rtuk@rtuk.gov.tr
- Binali Yildirim, Minister for Transport, Maritime and Communication  
binali.yildirim@tbmm.gov.tr
- Prime Minister's Office  
bimer@basbakanlik.gov.tr

Oktay Sahbaz

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## GETTING ACTIVE

## WHAT'S ON

## JUNE

■ **18th** Radical Anthropology talks, *The origin of the family, private property and the state* with Chris Knight at St Martin's Community Centre, 43 Carol Street, London NW1 0HT from 6.15 to 9pm, for details see [www.radicalanthropologygroup.org](http://www.radicalanthropologygroup.org)

■ **21st** 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.

■ **25th** Radical Anthropology talks, *Red stars and snowy mountains: linking folklore and archaeology* with Fabio Silva at St Martin's Community Centre, 43 Carol Street, London NW1 0HT from 6.15 to 9pm, for further details see [www.radicalanthropologygroup.org](http://www.radicalanthropologygroup.org)

## JULY

■ **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.

■ **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.

■ **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.

## AUGUST

■ **1st, 8th, 15th, 22nd and 29th** London group of The Anarchist Federation meets weekly on Thursday evenings at Freedom Bookshop 84b Whitechapel High Street, London E1 7QX. If you would like to attend please email [london@afed.org.uk](mailto:london@afed.org.uk).

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

■ **7th to 11th** Earth First! Summer Gathering near Bexhill, for further details see <http://efgathering.weebly.com/>

■ **10th** News from Nowhere Club presents *Political Biography* with speaker Rania Khan at The Epicentre, West Street, Leytonstone E11 4LJ, buffet 7.30pm, talk starts 8pm, see <http://www.newsfromnowhereclub.org/> or call 0208 555 5248 for details.

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

■ **22nd** Reel News film night at The Grosvenor, 17 Sidney Road, Stockwell, London SW9 0TP, from 7.30pm until 11.30pm, see <http://reelnews.co.uk> for further details.



Photograph © Guy Smallman

● There's a selection of pictures currently on show in the Freedom Press Bookshop which have been taken by photographer **Guy Smallman** at some of the recent March For England demonstrations in Brighton. They're well worth a look, and you can pick up some books as well at the same time.

● On 1st June Essex Anti-Fascists organised a counter demonstration against the EDL in Colchester, who had come to town to lay a wreath in memory of Lee Rigby, the soldier murdered in Woolwich in May. They claimed they'd only come to show their respect to a fallen soldier, but we didn't buy it.

At 12.30pm we gathered at the Colchester war memorial – a statue that stands in memory of those who died fighting fascism in Europe in the 1940s – where the EDL planned to lay their wreath and hold a minute's silence. The Castle Pub, opposite the memorial, had been chosen by the EDL as their meeting point and was already filling up with boneheads and thugs. By around 1pm we numbered about 120, had unfurled our banner – reading 'No Pasaran!



They Shall Not Pass!' – and had begun letting the gathered scum know what we thought of them.

When the EDL spokesman holding their wreath came forward at around 2pm, we moved to block him and his crew of drunk racist buddies with chants of "They Shall Not Pass!". Thus began a stalemate that lasted almost three hours. Fascists on one side, trying to shamelessly exploit a dead man for their own gain, and a (much larger) crowd of anti-fascists on the other determined not to let that happen with a heavy police line between us.

Suddenly, at around 4pm, the 'senior officer' informed us that she had decided that we were "intimidating members of the public" and "detering them from acts they had the legal right to perform". We refused to move and, in a space of seconds, the police descended on us. They forced us back, trampling on the flowers and wreaths left by others.

With our demonstration cleared out of the way, the EDL were free to lay their wreath, which they did with the backing of nazi salutes from at least four of their members (*pictured left*). In our fury we let the police know how disgusted we were – they had allowed fascists to desecrate a war memorial and proved that they were just as bad as the racist scum we'd come to oppose. The tears in eyes of several cops (a rare sight if ever there was one) showed that even they knew that what they had just done was fundamentally wrong. When it was over, several of our fellow anti-fascists received death threats from EDL members and the police did nothing.

Clearly it's time for us to think long and hard about our tactics. Simply outnumbering the fascists isn't enough when the police will do almost anything to help them. Next time the EDL show their face here, we need to be prepared.

Essex Anti-Fascists

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

# Nazi fighter snubbed

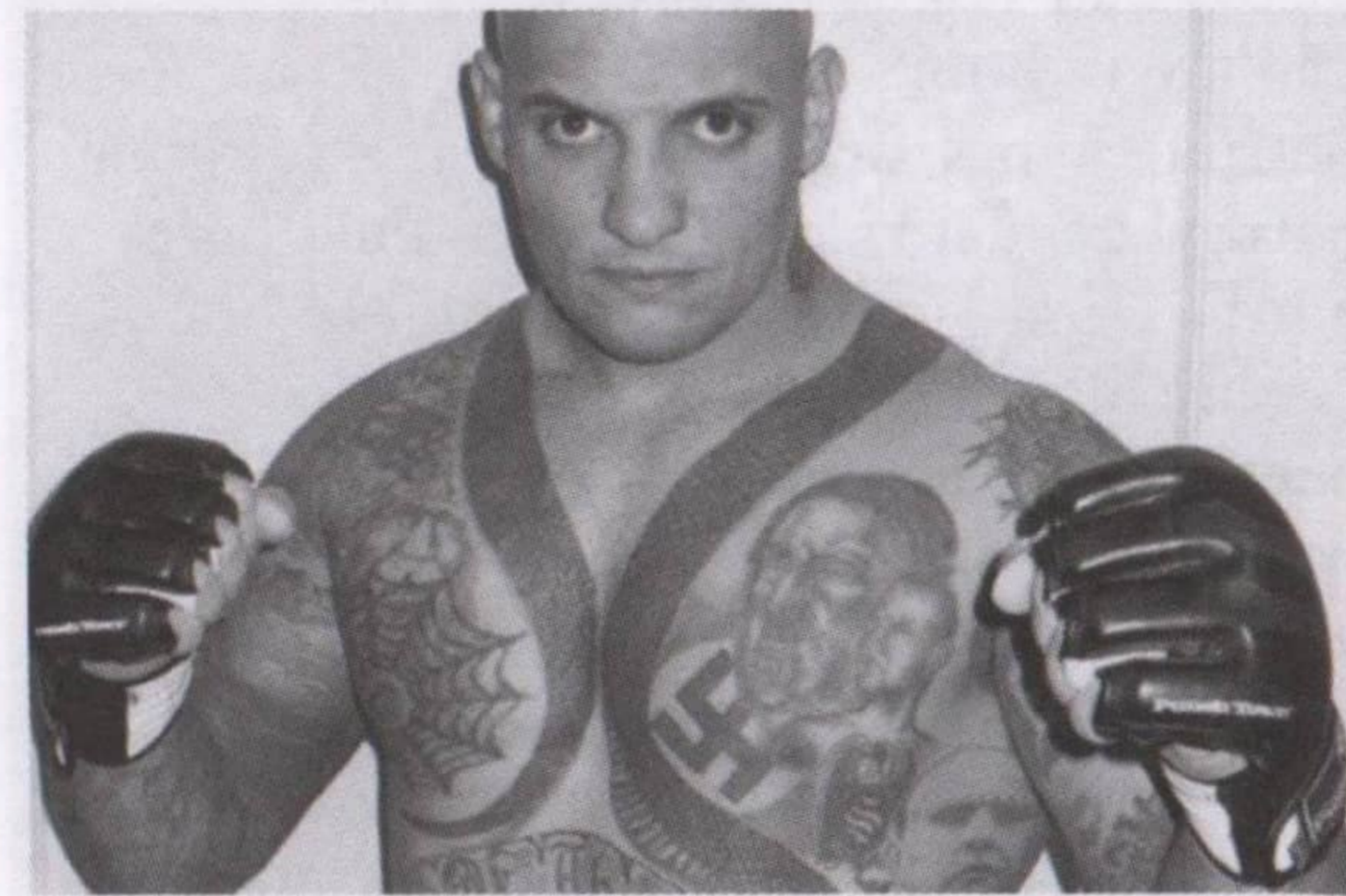
Organisers of an MMA tournament (Mixed Martial Arts) have bowed to pressure from anti-fascist campaigners and removed neo-nazi fighter Attila Petrovski from the fight schedule. Hungarian fighter, Petrovski, is covered from head to foot in tattoos of fascist symbols, a large picture of Adolf Hitler, and the words 'Death to the Jews' crudely written across his abdomen.

Organisers initially refused to drop him from the fight card, claiming that his political affiliations are none of their business, but then reluctantly dropped him after the tournament sponsors and the local media had been pressured by anti-fascists.

A local journalist said: "Let me tell you one thing. The main problem isn't whether the guy has a tattoo or not. The main problem is that they knowingly invited a nazi guy to compete. They would have provided him with money, that basically equals support of neo-nazism. On the other hand, there are a

number of nazis in MMA circles, at least here in the Czech Republic. They're promoted on the websites of the gyms, they do training. So I think there's a deeper connection between these two worlds, and it's not going away too soon I think."

Petrovski claims that there has been a massive overreaction, claiming that he is not a neo-nazi, and does not have any far-right sympathies whatsoever. He claims that his



tattoos are a reminder of the 'errors of youth'. He claims he is a changed man, and kick-boxing has changed his life and given something positive to focus on.

Unfortunately for Petrovski and his future in MMA, his 'open' Facebook profile suggests that his nazi tattoos are anything but a remnant of a past life. His profile picture is of him posing in a t-shirt with a picture of the former neo-nazi punk band, Skrewdriver, on the front. He also provides film clips of him displaying a Nazi salute following a victory in the ring.

It is said that fascism within the MMA scene is a growing problem throughout countries in central Europe. Fascist sportsmen and women should not be viewed or approached any differently than a fascist musician or politician. They should be given absolutely no platform, exposed, and chased out of town at every opportunity. No Pasaran!

Matt Black

## Clueless Blatter strikes again

◀ page 24

Blatter and the other parasites at the top of the FIFA tree are worried that the protests at the Confederations Cup will escalate at next summer's World Cup – an event that is watched by billions worldwide.

Throughout the Confederations Cup, tens of thousands of protesters clashed with the security forces outside the stadium. Whilst some news agencies carried footage of the demonstrations, the BBC – who had the television rights to the tournament – played down events, claiming they were small and short-lived. One broadcast showed an interview outside the Maracana stadium claiming the protests had ended and that everything was quiet. The interview was clearly several hours old, as it was broad

daylight. Yet when the match started five minutes later, it was approaching sunset, and a quick look at an independent newsfeed online showed that there was 100,000 people gathering outside the stadium.

No doubt this crude manipulation of the truth by the BBC was instigated by the control freaks at FIFA who can prevent the BBC and other broadcasters from purchasing rights to their tournaments – should they choose to do so.

Blatter's views were not shared by many of the Brazilian national team. Striker, Hulk, said: "I see these demonstrators and I know that they are right. We know that Brazil needs to improve in many areas and must let

the demonstrators express themselves."

Blatter smugly claims that whilst he accepts there are issues with poverty throughout Brazil, "no one forced the World Cup on them" and that if they wanted to host the World Cup, they would have to spend billions building new stadiums and upgrading the national infrastructure.

Brazil is in the midst of the biggest wave of strikes and protests to hit the country in over twenty years. As next year's World Cup approaches and Brazilians realise they are completely priced out of the stadiums they have been bankrupted in order to pay for, it could be a long hot summer for Blatter and FIFA.

Matt Black

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REVIEWS ACTIVE

## FILM

**We Steal Secrets: The Story of Wikileaks**

directed by Alex Gibney

A mainstream documentary is never going to shed much more light on a subject than the mainstream media, especially if the subject is whistleblowing on the American government. *We Steal Secrets* essentially serves to bring together a patchwork of existing coverage of the Wikileaks scandal, peppered with exclusive interviews with key figures including Adrian Lamo, James Ball, Nick Davies and Donald Bostom. Director Alex Gibney and Julian Assange famously fell out before filming started, meaning that all interviews with Assange are previously recorded footage rather than anything Gibney shot. Assange asked for a £1m fee to appear in the film, and when Gibney refused, Assange asked him instead if he would spy on the other interview subjects for him. Gibney told Assange this was out of the question.

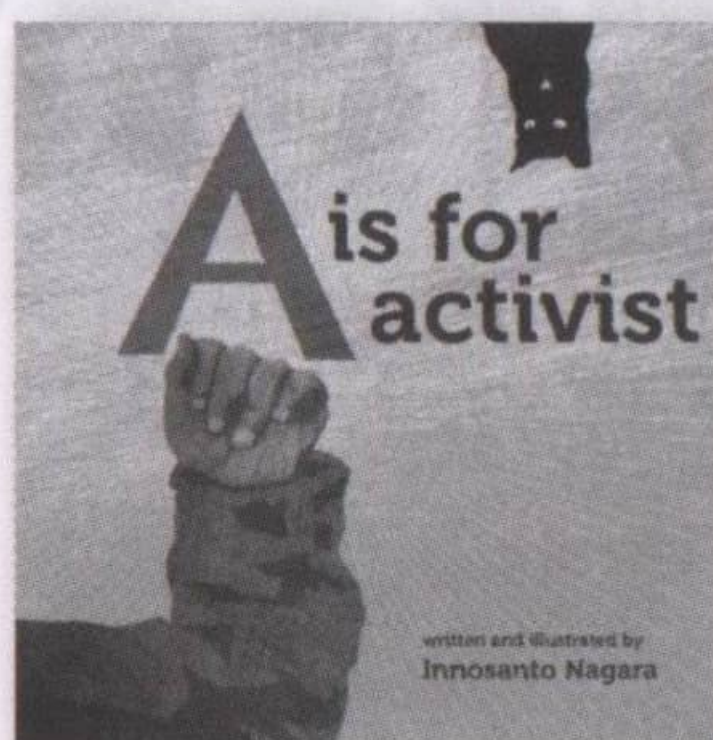
Like the media coverage of the Wikileaks scandal, *We Steal Secrets* also blurs the personal and political – it is coloured by a voyeuristic obsession with the personal lives of Assange and Bradley Manning. Leaked online conversations between Lamo and Manning, detailing the latter's chronic mental health issues and gender confusion, are excruciatingly typed out in enormous letters across the screen. It's pretty unsavoury to focus on this in a serious documentary, especially considering that Manning is a very vulnerable man probably about to suffer the incredibly sinister prospect of life in jail for bravely leaking army secrets.

Of course, unlike the grim unpicking of Manning's inner turmoil, the rape claims against Assange are undoubtedly potentially politically relevant. The smear theory – along with the issue of whether or not he would have been so doggedly pursued for the crimes if he had been someone else – are issues rightly explored. However, at the same time countless magazine covers depicting Assange in provocative poses are flashed across the screen and the viewer is reminded endlessly how much he likes women. It all seems a bit gratuitous. While the question of whether or not he is an egotist and rapist motivated more by a desire for power, fame and sex symbol status than ethics is important and interesting in its own right, just like the fact that Manning seemed motivated to commit his crime because of a passion for justice at all costs. But it does rather distract from what was intended to be the main subject of the documentary: the leaked secrets themselves, the government's reaction to the leaking and the effects and potential effects of the leaking. There is a feeling that this intense speculation about the psychology of the main players makes the documentary lean a bit too far in the direction of biographical fallacy.

Charlotte Dingle

*The Fiction column will return in our next issue.*

## BOOK

**A is for Activist**

by Innosanto Nagara  
published by Kupu-Kupu Press  
\$15 from [www.aisforactivist.com](http://www.aisforactivist.com)

For radical parents, it sometimes feels like the deck is stacked when it comes to kids' media that represents progressive values. Children's books often tokenise girls, depend on stereotypes, and push kids into fulfilling narrow gender roles. Diverse families are hard to find – most mainstream kids' books feature all white kids living with two heterosexual parents. For those who want to help raise feminist, cooperative, anti-racist, and anti-authoritarian children, the challenge can be daunting.

A founding member of Design Action Collective, a worker-owned cooperative design studio in Oakland, Innosanto Nagara wanted a book to teach his son the ABCs – and the principles that drove his activism. "It was important to me that the book be one that I too would enjoy reading over and over – not something I'd want to hide after day three, even if my son loved it," he says.

The result? An abecedarium called *A is for Activist*. This ABC board book captivates, educates, and agitates the children that activists raise.

Far from the usual fare that kids read – stories of helpless (anorexic) princesses being

saved by rich (white) men on horses – Nagara brings a simple book with complex underlying meaning, weaving mentions of the Occupy movement, LGBTQ rights, unionism, feminism and Malcolm X with gorgeous illustration.

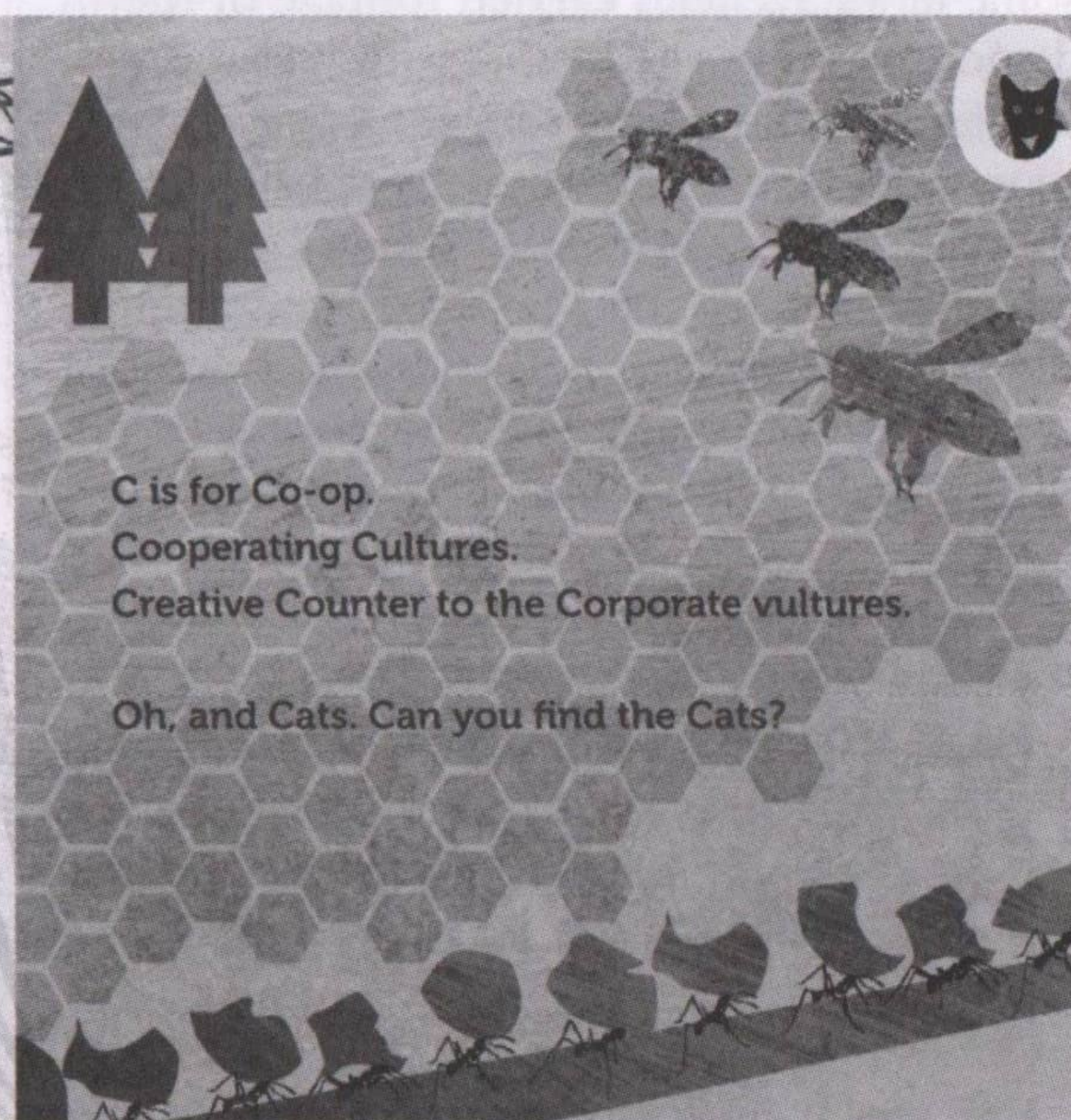
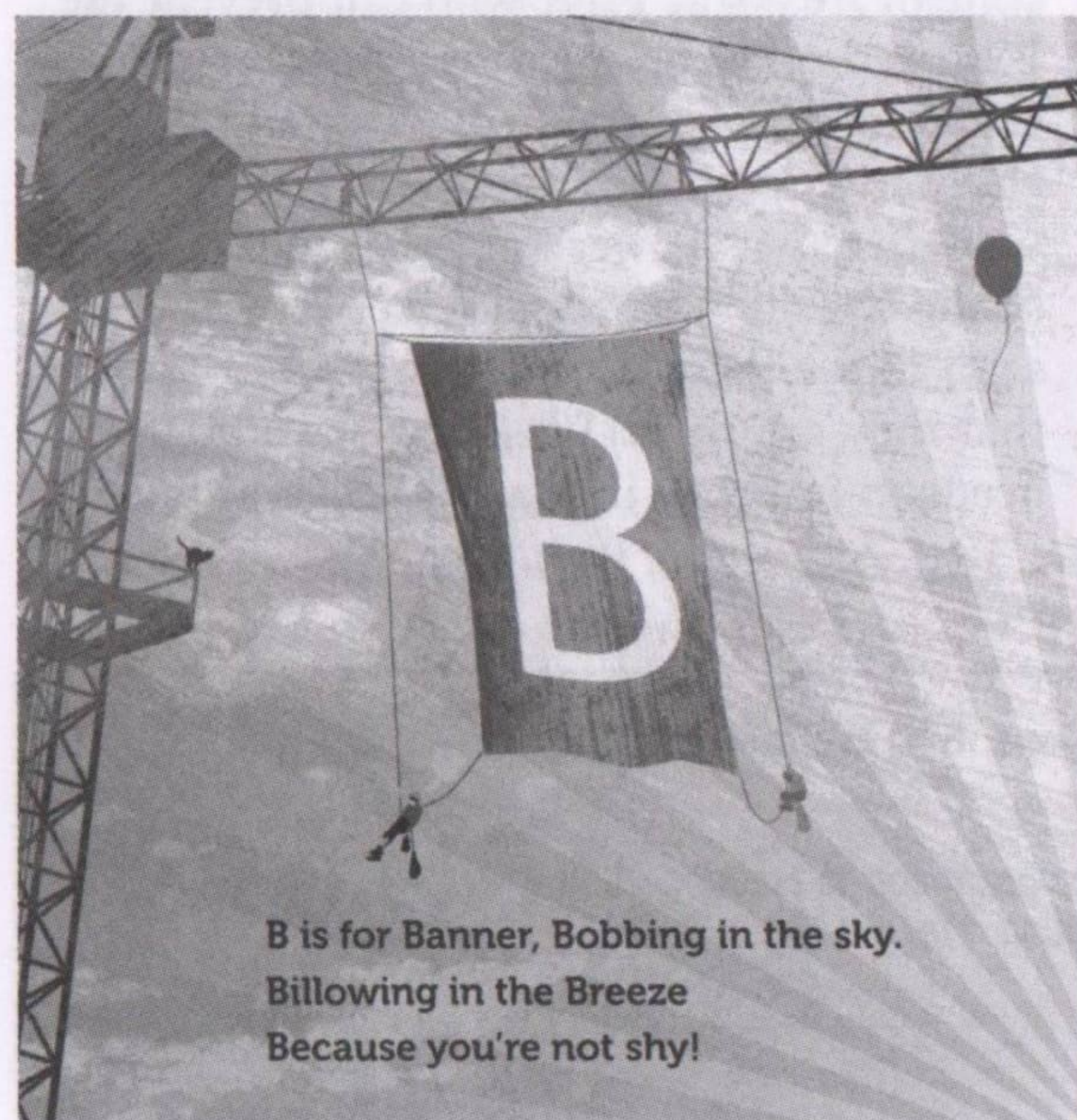
Like any other ABC book, alliteration acts as an anchor, keeping little ears attuned to the story's message. The rhyme schemes are fun, even if some of the concepts seem outside the grasp of a young audience. But the opportunity to re-read as children grow and explain the concept of, say, May Day, is exactly what Nagara was looking for. "I wanted this book for the quieter, more intimate time I spend with my child," he says.

While this is truly a book to be celebrated in the home, it has garnered some very public praise. Author Naomi Klein called the book "full of wit, beauty, and fun!" Medea Benjamin, cofounder of Global Exchange and Code Pink, said the book gave "a message that is sure to resonate with kids, who have an innate sense of fairness."

For progressive activists, this book provides an opportunity to foster that sense of fairness. Parents who want to raise their kids to raise their fists would do well to get them started with *A is for Activist*.

Zakk Flash

Dr Zakk Flash is an anarchist political writer, radical community activist, and curator of the Central Oklahoma Black/Red Alliance (COBRA). He is currently working with OpOK Relief as part of the People's Response to the historic Oklahoma tornadoes.



## QUIZ ANSWERS

1. Over 300. Little is known about victims or targets and estimates of dead civilians range from single figures each year to more than a thousand.
2. The novelist John Brunner in *The Shockwave Rider*, 1975.
3. The effect of Payment Protection Insurance (PPI) repayments from the banks to people who were mis-sold policies. There was no

effect from any of Chancellor George Osborne's other policies.

4. He said in many places they felt they were working not so much for the bank as against it. Anthropologist Karel Williams called banks "loose federations of money-making franchises". Interviewees used phrases like "perpetual civil war" and "it's us against the bank".

# Daoism and Anarchism

Adam Britner looks at this critique of state autonomy in China

For the uninitiated, the Dao, derived from the Dao De Jing (also known as Tao/Tao Te Ching) is a classical Chinese text thought to have been produced around sixth BCE by a mystical hermit called Laozi. It's an ambiguous set of poems mainly in the form of advice, purporting virtues and wisdom primarily in the attainment of peace.

From the outset a number of people will undoubtedly object to the premise of a book contrasting and comparing a modern revolutionary idea with something that has the trappings of a religion, or an esoteric fad. Rapp tries to cover that, to varying degrees of success, but if you're dismissive of religion, utopian thought and pacifism, then you're going to have problems with a good core of the writing that's presented.

The book, as Rapp sees it is "aimed at helping non-China specialists to see anarchism as not just a Euro-American concept". The way this is done is twofold. He contrasts the political nature of the Dao, and the extent of its similarities with anarchism. This forms the premise of the first part of the book.

The second is about misfired Maoist critiques of the Dao and the emergence of 'neo-anarchist' trends within modern China, from twentieth century onwards. Utilising a term he's derived from Roberto Michels, Rapp uses neo-anarchism as a 'negative elite theory' for those who are grappling with the reality of the bureaucratic nature of the Chinese state, even sometimes within Marxist theory, including inner PRC dissenters. In addition, the book also has appendices of translated Daoist texts of some of the works he discusses at length.

Rightly, the book begins with a definition of anarchism. To Rapp, anarchism is "the idea that the state rules for itself whenever it



can... [and] in being able to gain autonomy from its subjects". Onto this Rapp adds a caveat about wanting to move beyond seeing revolution as a shibboleth to anarchist politics. Whether you think this is an attempt to shoehorn Daoism into the anarchist sphere, or it's about tracing a libertarian strain of thought historically, I will leave to the reader. Through the course of the book I oscillated between the two.

The roots of the Dao and Laozi begin in pre-centralised China. The emergence of the first imperial dynasty, Qin, around 221BCE is seen as one of the bloodiest episodes in the country's history. The Qin dynasty gave rise to what we would recognise as a modern repressive state. The Dao is not only a critique of the move toward centralism, but also contains tracts in praise of pre-feudal lifestyles. Whether there were genuine communistic style communities that survived Qin empire building, or whether this was a swan song to a lost age is hotly contested. Rapp doesn't seem to take a definitive view on this, he does however, take issue with a number of scholars who seem to paint the Dao as being in favour of a benevolent government. Rapp believes centrally that the Dao is about 'undermining political authority.'

From Laozi the radicalism associated with the DDJ seems to go through spates. Rapp eludes somewhere this is because it's incorporated as a religion by feudal warlords squeezed out by Confucius, but also because it emerges as a current usually in the face of crisis. But notable recantations are brought forward by Ruan Ji, Tao Qian,

Bao Jing and the rather ambiguous Zhunagzi. All of whom espouse something we could constitute as having libertarian flourishes to them and some of their abridged works are included in the appendices.

There is a very interesting discussion on the meaning of the utopian nature of the Dao, speculation as to the influences the Dao had, even on Confucius, but for me there was an unanswered problem about why the Dao was unable to evoke social movements. The second problem, which is picked up with the emergence of the early Chinese anarchist movement, is the almost zero political influence Daoism had past the twentieth century. Noted historian Arif Dirlik stated that early writings on Chinese anarchism overstated the influence of the Dao, but by Rapp's closing of the book, despite having discussed the Dao at some length he acknowledges almost the same, but puts hope in a revival of the Dao in opposition to renewed interest in Maoism and Confucius.

By contrast the second half of the book is a potted history of libertarian currents in the modern period. Rapp takes us through the early Chinese anarchist movement and then through the various epicentres of inner and outer party theoreticians, activists and what have you. This part of the book is sublime and slightly different to the more politically elusive tone of the chapters on Daoism.

We are introduced to Shengwulian, who were a dissident Red Guard organisation emanating from the frenzy of the Cultural

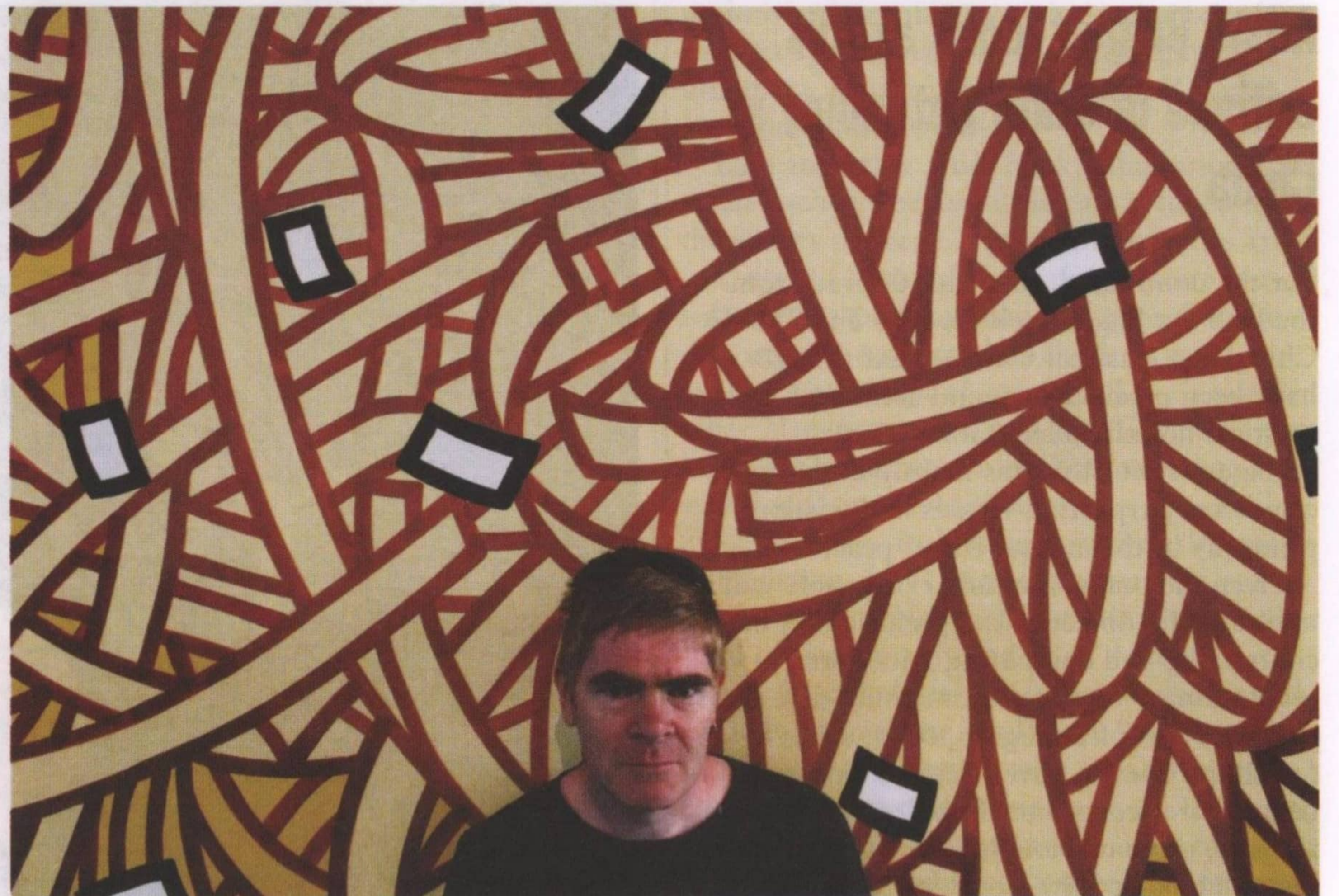


## THE ARTS

## THE HECKLERS

We spoke to artist and curator Cedar Lewisohn about this new exhibition of politically orientated art

Heckler is an old term, which originated in Dundee, I think. Its origins are in the textile trade up in Scotland. In the nineteenth century the hecklers became known as the most troublesome part of the workforce. Now the more modern meaning is more about someone who interrupts proceedings without being invited to do so. I think the relevance of this title in relation to this exhibition is basically that I see all the artists in the show as hecklers, one way or another. They are using their work to question orthodoxies. They might be political orthodoxies or aesthetic ones. I think the thing which is relevant about the word 'heckle' is to me it seems also slightly related to frustration. People heckle because they disagree with what happening and a frustrated into action. I guess, outside of the art, this is the wider implication of the show's title.



*I understand that the show was going to be called Anarchy Now. So how is anarchism related to the show and is anarchism relevant to the arts today and society as a whole?*

One of the suggested titles for the show was Anarchy Now. I like that title for a number of reasons. It's kind of playful and pop, like Painting Now, or something like that. Then again it's also like an instruction or it suggests some kind of survey. The show is a sort of mash up and remix of some previous projects with new editions also. To me it's just kind of funny that any venue would not want to go with the title Anarchy Now. But in a way, I think The Hecklers says the same thing, but in a slightly more gentle way. Overall though, there is certainly a strand of anarchism running through the show – sometime in literal depictions of people holding the anarchist flag, in various situations, or in more subtle ways. To me all the handmade objects in the show, the stone carving, or handmade runs, have this same spirit as the people depicted on protest marches. I guess an anarchist magazine is the last place that I need to say that the term anarchism in popular use, particularly the mainstream media, generally misreported. In the MSM anarchism is most often presented as a kind of nihilist chaos, whereas to me, I



## Book review

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Revolution, who were wanting to take the fight to the 'Red Bureaucracy' much further, the Democracy Wall Movement (who were famed for the "Mao Zedong was thirty percent right and seventy percent wrong!" statement) and a host of theorists who started raising critiques around the nature of the bureaucracy, the Asiatic Mode of Production and the need for a change of direction. Some of these people on some level may never have actually broken with

the state or the PRC, but that's not entirely the point. These were a number of tendencies taking to the right path in an otherwise unenviable set of circumstances, both intellectually and in terms of repression. Somewhere in the midst of all this is a very interesting analysis and then a debate on the influence of anarchist ideas on Mao (yes, Mao!).

There might be a lot of bones to pick over, and I am still not sure on the political

cannon of the Dao, but the comparison from the book contrasting the politics to Kropotkin and Tolstoy is apt, and frankly there is much worse you could be reading.

*Daoism and Anarchism: Critiques of State Autonomy in Ancient and Modern China* by John A. Rapp, published by Bloomsbury Academic, £18.99. John A. Rapp is also the author of *Autocracy and China's Rebel Founding Emperors: Comparing Chairman Mao and Ming Taizu*.

think of anarchism just as everybody having the freedom to do what they want. That freedom might mean total calm; it might lead to a protest. How this is relevant to society as a whole is I guess also linked to the point about frustration. Everybody is frustrated with politicians, shitty aspects of media culture and all the rest. So there more people are frustrated, the more they will look for alternatives.

*There are about 20 artists of very different styles and backgrounds. How did you manage to assemble such a menagerie and how are they all related?*

The artists in the show are all quite varied without a doubt. But I think what holds them



all together is an attitude which comes across in the work. It's interesting that there are a couple of pieces in the show which are abstract

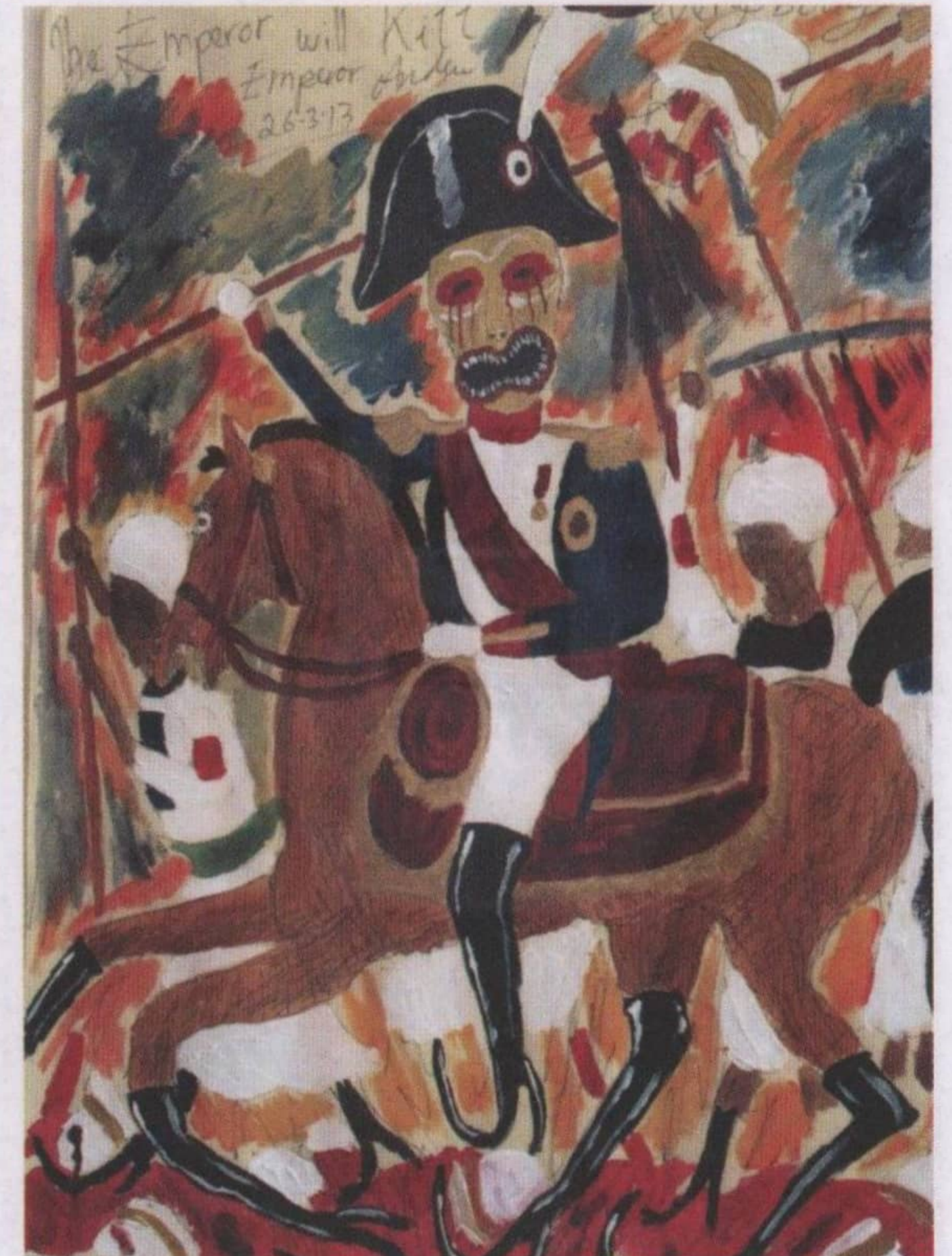


or verge on abstraction, but somehow they still sit happily with the pieces that are more clearly political.

*Do you think art just comments on society or does it have the power to change society?* I think art can take place in lots of locations should not be limited to objects in galleries or museums. So for me, a TV show could be art, or a really well made chair. Clearly there are loads of TV shows which are not art, but all I'm saying we don't need to box ourselves in. But definitely I think that artworks, in whatever format they take can change the way people think about the world. And

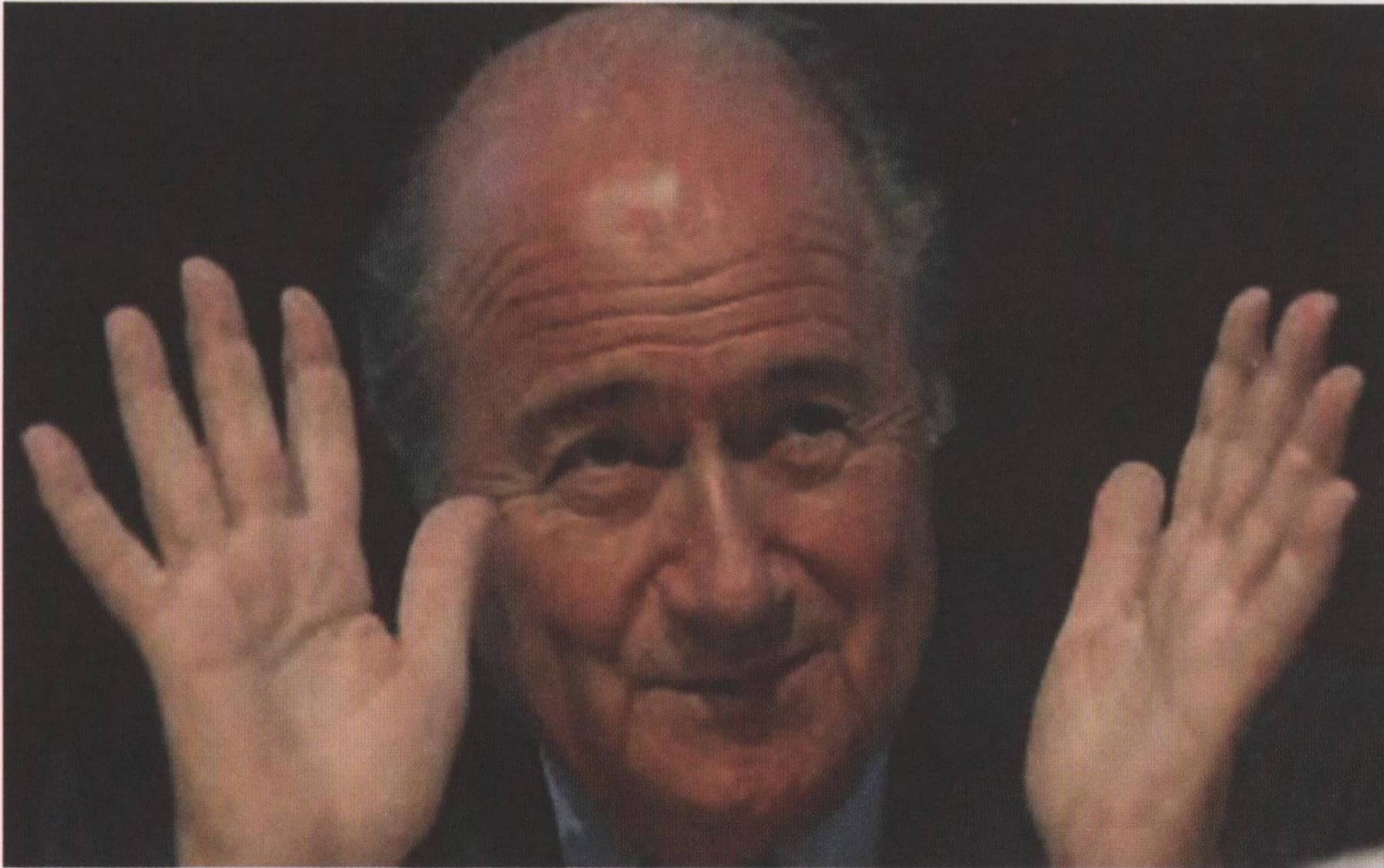
when I think of the works over say, they last ten years or so that have done that, most of them probably where not in art galleries. That does not mean for second that I think galleries are redundant, if anything, they are more important than ever, to provide a neutral space where experiments can happen and people can be removed for a time from the chaos outside.

The Hecklers is at The New Art Gallery Walsall, Gallery Square, Walsall WS2 8LG, tel: 01922 654 400, from 19th July until 22nd September 2013. See [www.thenewartgallerywalsall.org.uk](http://www.thenewartgallerywalsall.org.uk) for details, or email [info@thenewartgallerywalsall.org.uk](mailto:info@thenewartgallerywalsall.org.uk)



SPORT

# Clueless Blatter strikes again



The FIFA President, millionaire, spiv and professional idiot, Sepp Blatter, has once again put his foot in it. Famous for more stupid opinions than Prince Philip, Blatter, who once claimed that players who have been called “black cunts” should just “shake the hand of their abuser and put it behind them”, has accused protesters in Brazil of

trying to hijack the recent Confederations cup for political purposes.

Whilst Brazil is being bankrupted by crooked politicians in order to bankroll the hosting of the next football World Cup and Olympic Games and the associated displacement of nearly 250,000 people in huge gentrification projects, ordinary Brazilians

have had the audacity to show their anger at football matches that are being broadcast around the world.

Blatter is said to be furious that football has been hijacked to make a political point. In an interview he said: “I can understand that people are not happy, but they should not use football to make their demands heard”.

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## THE QUIZ

1. Under President Bush the US carried out drone strikes in Pakistan. How many have there been under Obama?
2. Who wrote: “For all the claims one hears about the liberating impact of the data-net, the truth is that it’s wished on most of us a brand-new reason for paranoia.”?
3. According to the Office of Budget Responsibility’s assessment of last year’s budget, what was the source of the modest boost to “household consumption growth”?
4. According to Joris Luyendijk, a Dutch journalist who has been interviewing bank staff, how do bank employees regard themselves?

Answers on page 20

