

## COPS OFF CAMPUS!

### UK-wide demonstrations held following protest ban at University of London

The first 'Cops off Campus' demos were held across campuses throughout the UK on the 4th and 5th December following an anti-protest ruling imposed by the University of London. The police obligingly turned up and showed exactly why they should stay away. One video very clearly shows a policeman punching a man. Another shows an officer lifting a woman up and hurling her to the ground as she screams in distress.

Further protests on 11th December saw an admittedly diminished police presence compared to the first protests – despite protestors (shock, horror) committing an arson attack on a bin next to Senate House, which made the front pages of many newspapers. In addition to the violence, 41 arrests were also made during the protests – mostly for 'suspected breach of the peace and affray'. One of those arrested was, tellingly, a journalist reporting on the protest. Demonstrators were also kettled during the earlier protests.

'Cops off Campus' was launched largely in response to a bizarre and draconian court **page 3** ▶▶

## MANDELA DIES

Anti-apartheid campaigner Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela succumbed to a prolonged respiratory condition on 5th December. He was 95. Mandela spent over 27 years in prison for his involvement with the ANC (African National Congress), before embarking on a controversial stint as South Africa's first black president between 1994 and 1999.

The racial segregation of South Africans known as apartheid began in 1948 under the National Party. In 1964, Mandela was sent to prison for sabotage and conspiracy violently to overthrow the government. His arrest marked the start of years of disquiet in South Africa. He was finally released by president F.W. de Klerk in 1990. After leaving prison he was made ANC president.

While Mandela was in prison, his wife

### LENS CAP LONDON



Protesters experienced police violence and arrests at the 'Cops off Campus!' demonstrations held at the beginning of December.

Winnie's Mandela United Football Club was accused of ruthlessly killing opponents – men, women and children – from all racial groups. Although he never openly condemned the group's actions, after his release Mandela divorced and distanced himself from Winnie, who had also been having an affair. She was later convicted of kidnapping and assault.

Sadly political power, as it so often does, corrupted. President Mandela brought in privatisation of services, failed to address economic inequality and forged dubious allegiances including friendships with dictators Colonel Moammar Quaddafi of Libya and President Suharto of Indonesia. Mandela is undoubtedly best remembered as the brave, unelected freedom fighter of his earlier years.

Charlotte Dingle

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ISSN 0016-0504



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## NEWS

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## LENS CAP COPS OFF CAMPUS



Photo © Iostinurrock

On 6th December the national day of action started off with a healthy number of protesters out and... no cops at all in the vicinity of Malet Street in London, which meant that the protest was able to move away from the area unimpeded.

## Cops off campus!

◀ page 1

order obtained by the University of London, which makes it a criminal offence for people (including its own students) to protest on its premises for six months from 4th December onwards. The University of London is the second largest university body in the UK, comprised of 18 constituent universities including UCL (University College London), Birkbeck, Goldsmiths, Kings College, the Courtauld Institute of Art, the London School of Economics (LSE) and the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS). UCL and Goldsmiths in particular are – ironically – renowned for being progressive institutions. Goldsmiths is famous for being highly political and UCL was the first sectarian UK university as well as being the first UK university to admit female students.

The University of London has been the site of many demos in recent months thanks to the 3Cosas campaign, which seeks to obtain equal sick pay, holidays and pensions for its outsourced workers (mainly cleaning and maintenance staff). An internal ban on protesting imposed by the university over the summer resulted in senior staff calling the police on a group of 3Cosas campaigners at the beginning of term. Officers arrived at the scene armed with tasers and promptly started to kettle the protestors.

Another recent high-profile attempt to quash campus protests saw five students at the University of Sussex suspended after being identified as organisers of a sit-in protest which took place at the end of November. The occupation was staged in response to the university's outsourcing of catering services. They have all had their suspensions lifted but still face disciplinary action.

All a stark and terrifying reminder of how viciously our right to protest is being eroded – and how we are duty-bound to fight back at whatever cost.

Charlotte Dingle

- Keep up with the Cops off Campus campaign highlights on Twitter by searching for the hashtag #copsoffcampus
- The 3cosas campaign can be followed at [www.3cosascampaign.wordpress.com](http://www.3cosascampaign.wordpress.com), [www.facebook.com/3coca](http://www.facebook.com/3coca) and [www.twitter.com/3cosascampaign](http://www.twitter.com/3cosascampaign)
- You can sign a petition to lift the protest ban (started by a group of UCL human rights students) here <http://uolfreedomofassembly.wordpress.com/2013/12/>



CCTV surveillance van recording protesters.

Photo © Iostinurrock

# Activist avoids deportation

**Campaigner Trenton Oldfield has won the right to remain in the UK**

Oldfield was convicted on a charge of causing 'public nuisance' and threatened with deportation for the 'crime' of swimming in front of the 2012 Oxford and Cambridge boat race as a statement against elitism. He stopped the race for half an hour, in what was rather surprisingly the first incident of its kind in the odorous event's 158-year history.

The Australian activist served six months in prison before being sentenced to an obligatory return to his 'home' country. Oldfield was deemed a "threat to national security", and his presence 'undesirable' and "not conducive to the public good", if he should be allowed to stay in the country. He discovered while in prison that his wife was about to give birth to their first child, adding an extra level of panic to his predicament.

Despite Oldfield's eventual triumph, numbers of unfair deportations look set to rise. Home Secretary Theresa May (who is also Minister for Women and Equalities) has been enthusiastically imposing and planning a range of restrictions on immigration into



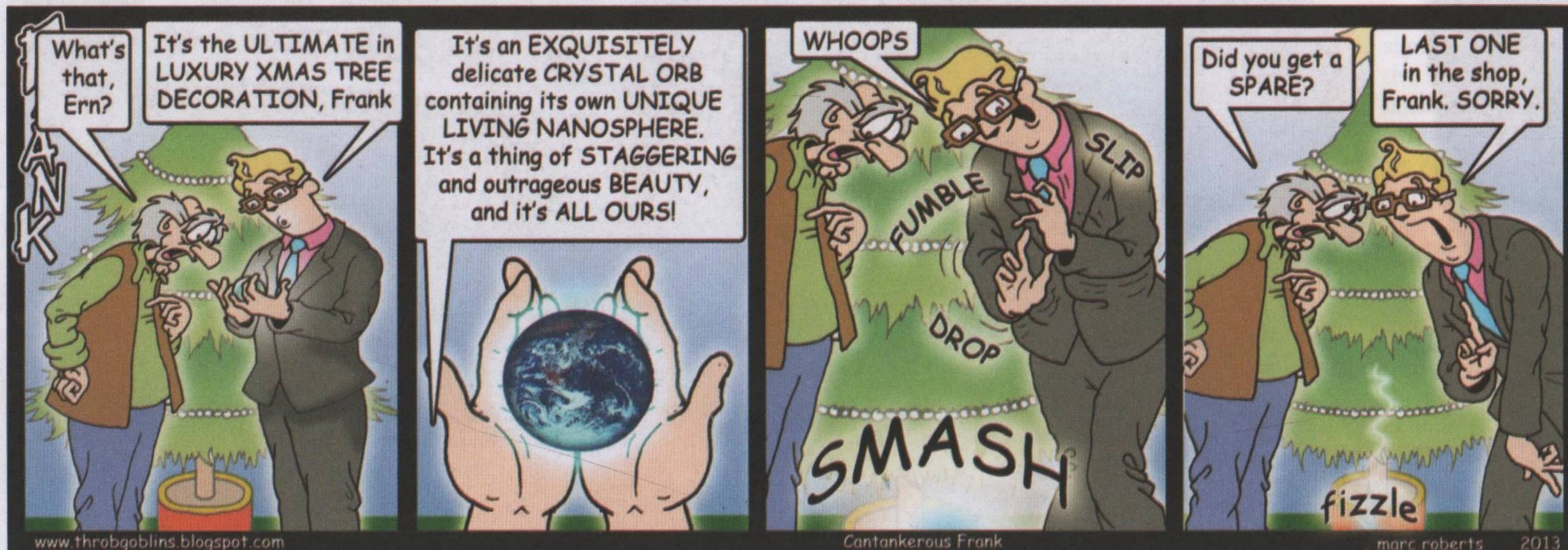
the UK, including a chilling promise that she would "deport foreign criminals first, then hear their appeals". The number of appeal rights for foreign criminals will be reduced from 17 to four – a move which May hopes will halve the current average of 70,000 deportation appeals a year. A promise to repeal the Human Rights Act will also appear in the next Conservative manifesto, which if implemented would enable further reforms. May has described the "right to a family life" grounds for appeal included in the Act as a 'free-for-all'.

Oldfield addressed press and supporters outside the Immigration Appeals Tribunal in London, saying: "What I would like to say is this happens every single day in this building to all sorts of people. We need to

start paying attention to these people who are experiencing what can be quite a violent experience of having the state come down on you." He continued: "Deportation is an old ideal and it's from another time – 1,000 years ago. We need to rethink that and the media's attention needs to be on not me anymore, but the people who are going in and out of this building. That's where the real issue is."

He went on to explain how he planned the protest after caring for his wife's sick father, who was dying of cancer: "I think I was vulnerable... realising how short life can be. I saw poverty and I saw the laws the government were passing that were going to make life substantially harder."

Charlotte Dingle



# THE BIG PICTURE



Anti-fur demonstrators visited department stores in London on 30th November as part of a CAFT (Coalition Against the Fur Trade) protest.

# Easy targets

## Akwesi Shaddai asks if drones are reshaping the law

The evolution of drone technology since the start of the ‘war on terror’ has transformed warfare beyond recognition. Once limited to surveillance operations, these ‘unmanned aerial vehicles’ now come equipped with hellfire missiles, facial recognition, license plate readers, and on-board sensors that detect heat and motion. They can monitor Wi-Fi networks, listen-in on phone calls, scramble communication signals, and provide an ‘eye in the sky’, day and night, in all weather conditions. The most sophisticated models now carry a series of cameras that can monitor an entire city from over twenty thousand feet in the air, and zoom in on any object with enough clarity to lip-read. These machines are also surprisingly cheap to manufacture, and can remain airborne without refueling for up to 48 hours – all while being controlled from the safety of the other side of the world. Increasingly, these drones are now being deployed to conduct so-called ‘signature strikes’ against anyone observed to be acting ‘suspiciously’ – without even first identifying who they are.

Bearing all this in mind, it really isn’t hard to understand why military drones have captured the public’s imagination in recent years. They are silent, pilotless, killing machines with capabilities straight out of a Hollywood blockbuster. However, as bewildering as drone weaponry clearly is, it seems that the wider legal debate on their use has become lost in the clamour to understand the technology. Although media attention has rightly focused on the thousands of civilians killed by drone strikes in Yemen, Somalia, Iraq, Pakistan, and Afghanistan, the biggest question remains unanswered – why are targeted killings on the increase? The unpopularity in the West of further troop deployments is one obvious explanation, as

is Osama Bin Laden’s alleged confession that his militants “cannot fight (unmanned) air strikes with explosives”.

Nevertheless, despite being fairly logical, these justifications fail to reveal the interconnected relationship between the use of drones for targeted killings and the subsequent development of international law. The intention of this article is to shed light on this ‘unseen nexus’, and place the topic of military drones within a much-needed broader legal context. It’s quite frankly remarkable that this relationship still remains hidden, as despite the deafening silence of the mainstream media, more people are realising that the world has been given a narrow account of the ‘war on terror’, instead of the big picture.

Indeed, much of the media attention on drones has focused on the post-9/11 military campaigns of the United States. Although President George W. Bush was the first to deploy drones and provide them with a legal justification, the thousands of victims of ‘collateral damage’ since 2008 have ensured that the Obama administration has become synonymous with their widespread use.

Yet despite America being at the forefront of drone technology, it’s a well-known fact that Israel is the world’s biggest exporter of military drones. Like the US, the State of Israel openly acknowledges that drone weaponry has allowed them to conduct targeted killings of questionable legality more efficiently. Likewise, Israel shares America’s reluctance to reveal statistics relating to their use of drones, and instead keeps a close guard on all operational information. However, perhaps less well known is the fact that Israel has admitted that their official policy of targeted killings is intended to serve a legal as well as military purpose. To clarify this position, we should first consider the opinion of the esteemed Israeli military analyst, Zeev Schiff: “The Israeli Army has always struck civilian populations, purposely and consciously... The Army has never distinguished civilian targets.”

You’re our Commander-In-Chief...

Can you take the drones out of the hands of the CIA? Can you stop the signature strikes killing people on the basis of suspicious activities?

Medea Benjamin, interrupting President Obama during his speech on US drone policy on 23rd May 2013

Taking his informed judgment into account, now consider the equally unequivocal words of Colonel Daniel Reisner, the former head of the Israeli Defense Force International Law Division: “What we are seeing now is a revision of international law... If you do something for long enough, the world will accept it. The whole of international law is now based on the notion that an act that is forbidden today becomes permissible if executed by enough countries. International law progresses through violations. We invented the targeted assassination thesis and we had to push it.”

In effect, his statement is an admission of deliberate, indiscriminate and illegal targeted killings, not only to achieve immediate military goals, but also to eventually create new international legal norms relating to warfare and human rights. Put another way, the Israeli military seeks to overcome established law by violating it – and they make no attempt to sugarcoat their intentions. Thus said, when we take this ideology to its logical conclusion, the full implications are just as terrifying as a sky full of drones.

But where did this ideology originate? Given the bloody history of Palestine since the British Mandate, and the violent founding of the State of Israel, it’s difficult to ascertain exactly when the deliberate violation of human rights became official Israeli government policy. Arguably the escalation of the 2008 Gaza War provides a significant milestone, as it was during the infamous ‘Operation Cast Lead’ that legal advisers to the IDF became more open about their strategies and goals. Professor Asa Kasher is widely credited with providing much of the legal and moral justification for the war. He advised Israeli troops that the Geneva Convention was outdated, and described the population of Gaza as “neighbours of terrorists”, implying that they shouldn’t enjoy the rights of civilians living under an occupation. In his own words, he stated: “The media don’t understand the nature of international law... Much of it is customary law... We in Israel are in a key position in the development of law... What we are doing is becoming the law.”



A remote-controlled Predator drone fires a missile.

## ANALYSIS

# Negative energy

## How the politics of technology affect us as anarchists

Over the last two years, a group of people from different grassroots organisational backgrounds have come together to try to change the debate about the politics of technology. We are organising a gathering in May 2014 called Breaking the Frame, which is an attempt to bring people together to address the politics of technology in general, both theoretically and practically. We want to go beyond continuing with campaigning on specific technologies, such as fracking, nuclear, the recently proposed automation of the London tube and surveillance technologies, and continuing to think about all these technologies as separate issues. There are common themes that apply to all of these, in addition to the specific issues with each different technology, that we think are crucial to the functioning of capitalism at present.

We feel that developing our understanding of these underlying power relations will enhance our ability to organise effectively around technology in general as it exists materially in the form of specific technologies, and thereby around the complex inter-relationship between capitalism and technology. We think this is an essential part of anti-capitalist struggle, but one which often gets overlooked.

### Capitalism and technology

Most radical critiques of capitalism assume that the root of the problem is the power relations at the heart of the capitalist economic system, which 'corrupt' the purity and 'objectivity' of science. However it can be argued that the economic and social domination in many ways actually takes its lead, methods ('scientific management'), concepts (e.g. efficiency) and structures from its technical partner, and that this is what defines modernity. The technocratic mindset of domination of nature which emerged in the scientific revolution of the seventeenth century is as much to blame for the ecological crisis as is the capitalist drive to exploit natural resources.

Technology is a key force that drives the development of our society, and choices about which technologies we use are therefore inherently highly political. The development of new technologies is almost entirely in the hands of military, technocratic and corporate elites, and its design tends to serve the interests of those elites and to reinforce their power. As a result, although they do, of course, bring some genuine benefits for ordinary people, new technologies constantly create social and environmental problems.

We tend to deal with these problems reactively, as if they were a series of un-connected 'side effects' of technological progress. We find ourselves on a kind of



treadmill, constantly having to cope with new problems caused by the latest technology.

It's obvious that a much more systematic and joined-up approach to technology is needed. However, the need for a systematic approach is more urgent than ever for numerous reasons. The impacts of industrial capitalism upon global ecology have reached a critical point, but as a reaction to the environmental crisis, extremely dangerous technofixes, such as nuclear power, 'geo-engineering' (i.e. intentional manipulation of the climate system) and synthetic biology are being proposed, in order to continue with business as usual.

### 'Efficiency' or class power?

Let's look at a current example: announcements by Transport for London that they plan to close most ticket offices on the tube and move to direct payment via contactless bank cards. There has been a lot of discussion on Facebook (yet another politically problematic technology) and on the open internet today about these proposals. Most discussions focus on job losses and unions, which is crucial. But another important aspect is the implications of the enforcement of the new contactless bank card technology. Will we get to the point where you have to have a bank account to travel on the tube? Meaning of course that it will be impossible to travel anonymously, which has massive surveillance and civil liberties implications.

Boris himself said that the changes to the tube are driven by supposedly apolitical "changes in technology". This is the sort of explanation we often hear when authoritarian measures are being enforced, as if these

'changes in technology' aren't an active, political decision themselves. As if this pathway towards greater control is inevitable. As if 'technology' is synonymous with 'progress'. But, wait a minute, which class of people do these changes benefit? Is 'efficiency' really politically neutral?

We invite you to come to the Breaking the Frame gathering, which is an attempt to overcome the fragmentation in the politics of technology, and to articulate a new politics that can genuinely deal with the root causes of the issues we face. That new politics will be based on bringing together the insights of different campaigns and movements, and learning from each other. Amongst the principles of a new critical discourse on technology are:

- Opposition to technologies that are 'hurtful to commonality' (i.e. to the common good, including the environment) and to 'technofixes' for social problems
- Support for technologies that help to satisfy real human needs and empower the powerless, e.g. some non-corporate renewable energy technologies
- Technology should be developed under democratic control, rather than under the control of private interests and the military.

### Details of the gathering:

The gathering will be held at Unstone Grange, near Sheffield in Derbyshire, on 2nd to 5th May 2014. We are also organising a series of monthly events in central London.

Beth Lawrence and Ned Ludd

For more information, visit [www.breakingtheframe.org.uk](http://www.breakingtheframe.org.uk) or email us at [luddites200@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:luddites200@yahoo.co.uk).

## LESSONS FROM NATURE

Autonomy is not only an eco-evolutionary term in biology but it is also related with a constitutive political element in the history of human societies. Mitochondria and chloroplasts are self-exiled organelles, located inside the plant cell. They have their own genome as a consequence of chronic endosymbiotic syndrome. The semi-autonomous subcellular compartments are characterised by a unique physiological orientation with a functional imprinting inside the cell. In parallel, these two biogenic structures maintain an orchestration with the nucleus which is the central genetic compartment of the cell. Moreover, oscillations in the concentration of molecules with an evergreen biochemical character, are governing that inter-communication via free diffusion through the physical borders of the cellular organelles.

As an analogy, liberal ideas found a democratic homeland thanks to the activism of non-governmental organisations during the post-industrial era. By contrast, the authoritative suppression ignored the necessity for institutional changes in sectors such as agriculture, humanitarian associations, public mental health, religious rights and penal institutions.

Nowadays, we live in an atmosphere of opportunism embedded in an environment under crisis. The academia's elitism and the extremism of bourgeois thought are major components of the synchronous climate. Searching ways of resistance, we can study historical examples from the Greek memory concerning the archaic hellenic feeling of freedom in respect to a pure respective conscience. Those perspectives have inspired a series of communities; from farmers' collectives to monastery sodalities, where the local character of the exchangeable economy and the internal duty for solidarity are recycled vital principles of the everyday life.

From the above paradigms, we can focus on locations referred to the open-air architectural scaffolds known as 'square-like' primordia. Within these, anarchist individuals were fighting with passion in order to defend a body of ethical values far away from conventional compromises of civil justice.<sup>1</sup> Throughout the history of social movements, we see a remarkable formation of green cooperatives that combatted sovereignty by integrating lessons of autonomy to the threshold of individuality.

Finally, in these types of rebellious neighbourhoods, human relationships could be re-determined by the spontaneous spirit of an innovative experimental scheme. Artists and scientists mixed with indigenous citizens and simple refugees can begin a zymosis towards a cultural revolution versus the ethical decadence of the fashionable subculture which is currently dominant in the cities. Hence, the present working model proposes an improvised merit-based system that can potentially immunise our civilisation, like a vaccine against the viral paracroussis and the solitude of the urban life.

Christos Kotakis

<sup>1</sup> *Medea*, the Ancient Greek play by Euripides.

# Christmas presence

## Richard Challinor on celebrating people, not things, this festive season

I like Christmas. I like the lights, I like the food, I like the drink, I like the family gatherings. But when I sit and think, try to see Christmas with outside eyes, it's bewildering. Christmas is a prism that refracts the failings of our current society, and the gains we have made.

I was always infuriated as a child when visiting Christians at our school (interestingly it was always Christians at our state school) would castigate us for not remembering the real meaning of Christmas. Who were they to tell us what the meaning was, to assume that this thing we now called Christmas had or should have had any relationship to another historical festival with the same name? But regardless, Christmas was and often still is a celebration from one religion, which is to say a hangover of our early ignorance and prejudice. Marx was correct to say "The demand to give up its illusion is the demand to give up the conditions that require it". We have not given up these conditions.

For many of us, Christmas involves buying things. Lots of things. Things we can't afford, things we don't need, things that slake our thirst so momentarily that it makes the Four Noble Truths of Buddhism seem almost exorbitantly evidenced. Aldous Huxley described a world in which human life is commercialised and trivialised, and Ray

Bradbury emphasised that this comes about not by external force, but by our own unthinking abliguration. How prescient these writings seem at Christmas.

My thinking is that celebration is a good thing, and one powerful reason why many habitual atheists feign religiosity. In the absence of religion, some other God is needed to ordain our celebrations. For most, the fear of death around the Winter Solstice is no longer pressing, despite the hard work of our rulers (fuel prices, squatters' rights, benefit cuts and so on). Gifts are now our God.

But underlying Christmas is a very worthwhile set of ideals – brother and sister hood, shared experience, vibrant public life, indeed many of the things elsewhere lacking in our so called democracy. We don't care for one another as we should, we live as Thatcher intended, atomised and greedy. And the longer we do this, the harder it is to think and do differently, to even imagine it can be done differently. We have come a long way from mass starvation during winter, from the daily grind of existence against the bodies of the working poor. But this distance has been covered unequally, and it has been covered individually.

So I say we should keep Christmas, keep celebrating it, keep enjoying it. But we must also change it, by little determined steps, from a commercial frenzy into a ever-expanding family gathering. As Alain de Botton has said, celebration is something to be sought, but the ideals and icons on which we affix our celebrations are ours to choose. Let us not choose religion or commercialism. Let us choose each other.



## INTERNATIONAL

### NEWS IN BRIEF

**ARGENTINA:** As police go on strike in Argentina's second largest city, Cordoba, the people have gone on a huge shopping spree, emptying every supermarket in the city. Despite there being massive unemployment and poverty across the city, the media and government have claimed the shopping spree has nothing to do with being poor, and everything to do with 'common criminality'.

**CAMBODIA:** Private security guards employed by 'Barrick Gold', aided by local police have killed at least five miners at the Porgera mine in Papua New Guinea. The shootings came after mine security confronted a group of 300 locals who they deemed to be 'illegal miners' and 'trespassers'. Barrick Gold – the world's largest producer of gold – has a long history of using violence, gang rape, and murder against their workers, and local people in Papua New Guinea

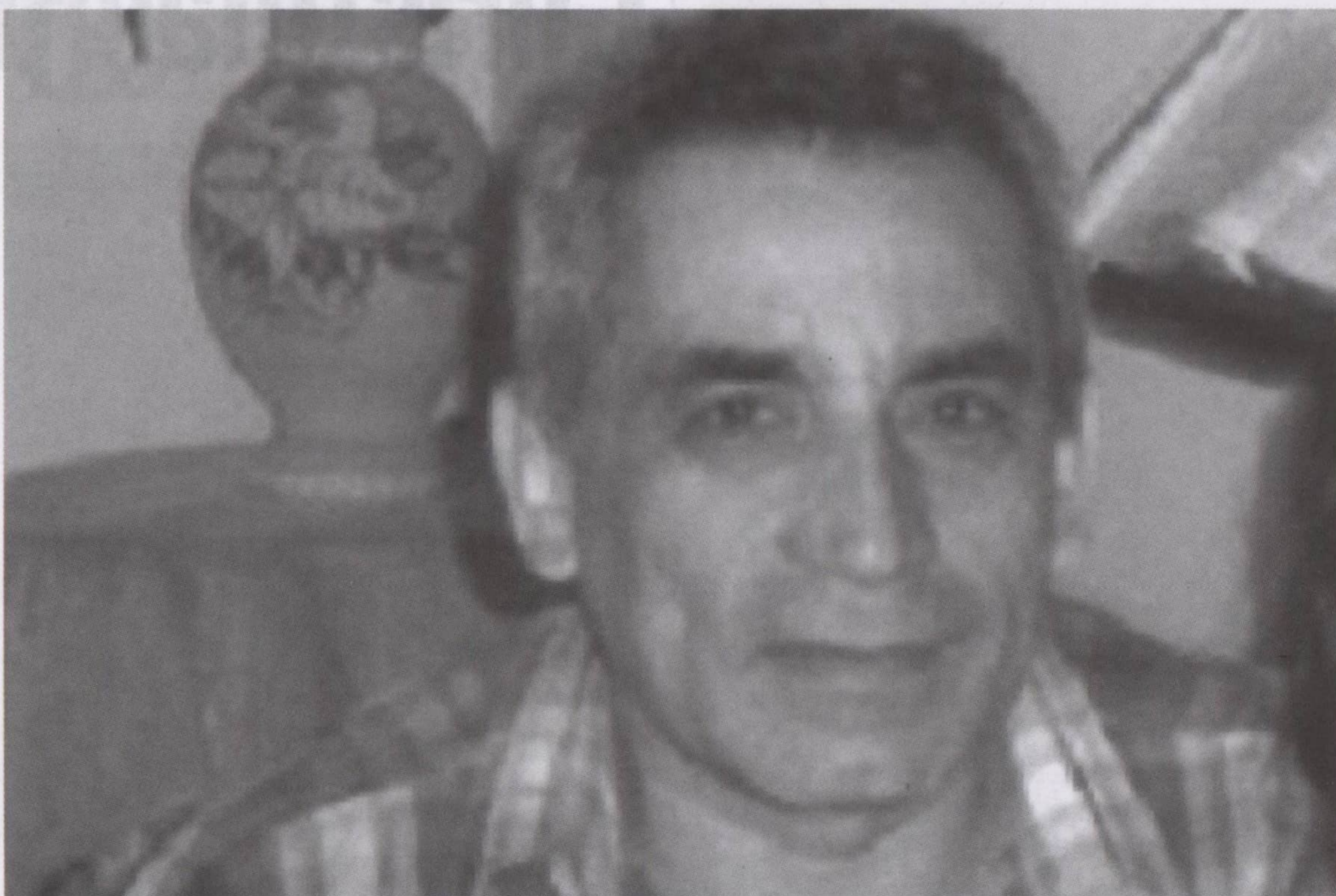
**GREECE:** Tens of thousands of Greeks have participated in marches through Athens to commemorate the fortieth anniversary of the student uprising against the US backed military junta. The blood stained flag that flew over the Athens Polytechnic on the night of 17th November 1973, was carried at the front of the march in memory of those who had been murdered. 'Bread, Education, Freedom' chanted the marchers, just as they had done 40 years ago.

**INDIA:** Following violent clashes over the decision to dismiss hundreds of unionised workers and replace them with unaffiliated workers, locals in the Odisha region of India have forced the closure of seven large open-cast coal mines, and two railway stations. A thousand local workers ransacked the management offices and fought running battles with workers who remain loyal to the bosses.

**ITALY:** Hundreds of protesters opposed to the construction of a high speed rail link have clashed with police during a visit to Rome by the French President, François Hollande. Protesters fought running battles with police as they tried to reach the French embassy where a meeting between Hollande and the Italian Prime Minister was due to take place. Opponents say that the \$35 billion rail project between France and Italy will take over a decade to complete, will cause massive environmental damage and will not serve any purpose.

**TURKEY:** Three hundred miners across two shifts at a mine in the Black Sea area of Zonguldak have barricaded themselves underground in protest at atrocious health and safety. Turkey has the worst mine safety record across all of Europe, with 2,554 miners losing their lives since 1991. They have vowed to continue their protest until the demands have been met.

### LENS CAP COLOMBIA



Striking Nestlé worker and trade union organiser Oscar Lopez was shot four times by multiple gunmen in a local bar. His trade union, Sinaltrainal, had been locked in a bitter dispute with Nestlé over union recognition and reported receiving several death threats via text message from a right-wing paramilitary group, Urabenos, the day before Lopez was murdered. The messages read: "We are going to chop you up" and "Death to all Communists".

## Cambodians march on PM's house

Protesting garment workers in Cambodia have clashed with police leaving scores injured. Workers employed at SL Garment processing – who make clothes for Nike, H&M and Gap – marched on the Prime Minister's house, demanding better pay and working conditions. They were met by heavily-armed police who were intent on violence, using live bullets and tear-gas to disperse the marchers. A woman selling rice at the side of the road was shot and killed by the indiscriminate shooting of the security forces.

A spokesperson for the Cambodian Apparel Workers Democratic Union said: "The crack-down conducted by police this morning against workers was very cruel and unacceptable. Workers were unarmed, why did the police use live ammunition to crack down on them?"

Many eyewitnesses and journalists report seeing the police rounding up and attacking

anyone and everyone in their path – including people not involved in the march, street sellers and praying Buddhist monks – who responded by pelting the police with bricks.

The Cambodian garment industry employs more than 500,000 people and is the largest sector in the country's economy, accounting for over 80% of GDP. Many of the factories are owned by foreign multinationals who threaten to leave the country when workers demand better wages.

The Prime Minister has said that protests may imperil the country's garment industry by encouraging companies to move their businesses to other counties, where the cost of labour is even cheaper. Hopefully garment workers throughout the region will start to link up their struggles. Solidarity with all those involved.

Luther Blissett

## Notes from the US

### Government

New research from the University of California, Berkeley, shows just how much employers who refuse to pay their workers a decent wage ends up costing the taxpayer. More than half of all low wage workers at fast 'food' restaurants, for instance, rely on government assistance to survive. This is double that of the overall workforce. So taxpayers have to subsidise the employers to the tune of nearly

US\$7 billion (£4,371 million) every year. That's a figure equal to more than the entire annual budget of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

### Vice

In Florida in mid-October 51-year-old prisoner, William Happ, was judicially murdered by the use of midazolam hydrochloride, an

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# Bulgarian fash attack

## Fascists in Bugaria are running nightly patrols targeting immigrants

In the Bulgarian capital, Sofia, groups of fascists in paramilitary uniforms are conducting what they describe as 'civil patrols'. The purpose of the patrols is to stop people in the street and then demand to see their identification or immigration documentation. Leading member of the far-right National Union Party, Boyan Rasate, has claimed that the city council and police force are well aware of the patrols and do not object to them.

The patrols came to light after fascists had posted stories online describing how they have been stopping people, shining torches in their faces, demanding to inspect their documents and making threats of violence if they did not comply. A local journalist reported: "Ten days ago, nationalist patrols began to pass through the capital centre. One of their leaders said they had received permission from the Ministry of Interior. This is very dangerous. There are such militias only in totalitarian countries – in Africa and Latin America – militias to walk down the streets and to ask people for their identity cards. I watch them as they stop foreigners and ask them for identity cards. Who are they and who gives them those rights? This is a very dangerous game."

Boyan Rasate and his party have been stoking up racial tensions over the last twelve months, holding rallies and marches, demanding that all refugees be deported and calling for a ban on the sale of land to non-Bulgarians.



There are over 9,000 refugees currently living in Bulgaria, with at least 70% originating from Syria. Many live in cramped and unsanitary conditions with little food or money. Violent attacks on refugees are increasing at an alarming rate. In the last week, a Roma family out walking were attacked by a group of neo-Nazis, a Nigerian immigrant was attacked on a bus, and a shop worker was stabbed by a group of boneheads carrying a banner that read 'Death to refugees'.

Racism is being fuelled by the national media who have published a series of inflammatory articles, and by a Sofia MP who describes immigrants as 'cannibals' and

'Islamic fundamentalists', and accused them of bringing crime and disease to Bulgaria.

Fascists are not just targeting immigrants – over the last year the various Bulgarian fascist groups have attacked 'pride' marches, and have attempted to attack and evict protesters from the recent university occupation in Sofia. Several of these groups have very recently amalgamated to form an overtly fascist party.

Earlier in November several hundred anti-fascists marched through the Bulgarian capital to a protest rally to highlight the rise of xenophobia and of the growing fascist movement in Bulgaria.

Luther Blissett

## Notes from the US

### ◀ page 8

experimental cocktail of drugs. This happened despite widespread concerns that the injection could subject him to severe pain and thus constitute 'cruel and unusual punishment' forbidden by the eighth amendment. The barbiturate, pentobarbital, is usually the poison of choice, but it's currently unavailable because its manufacturers have forbidden its use for executions. Observers reported that Happ appeared to continue to be conscious and suffering for longer than usual as he was murdered. Florida, by the way, makes more errors in placing inmates on death row than any other state.

Last January, 14-year-old Daisy Coleman was raped and dumped on her porch in sub-zero temperatures. Coleman's 13-year-old friend was also allegedly raped the same night. The events were videotaped by the apparent perpetrator's (Matthew Barnett) friends. Then Coleman's mother was sacked (her

boss admitted the case was a reason) and her children were routinely harassed and threatened. The family's house was burned down. Matthew Barnett is the grandson of a powerful local political figure. Charges were dropped.

### Economy

At the end of October the Economic Policy Institute published a startling report, *The Legislative Attack on American Wages and Labor Standards, 2011–2012*. It outlined the extent to which workers' rights, their livelihood even, is under attack. Some key data is that:

- four states passed laws restricting the minimum wage;
- four states abolished restrictions on child labour;
- sixteen states imposed new limits on benefits for the unemployed;

- many states passed laws which deprive workers of overtime rights;
- many states repealed laws or otherwise introduced restrictions in rights to sick leave;
- many states undermined workplace safety protections;
- many states have made it harder to sue one's employer for race or sex discrimination;
- legislation has been widely pursued which makes it harder for employees to recover unpaid wages.

The vast majority (93%) of employees in the private sector have no union contract.

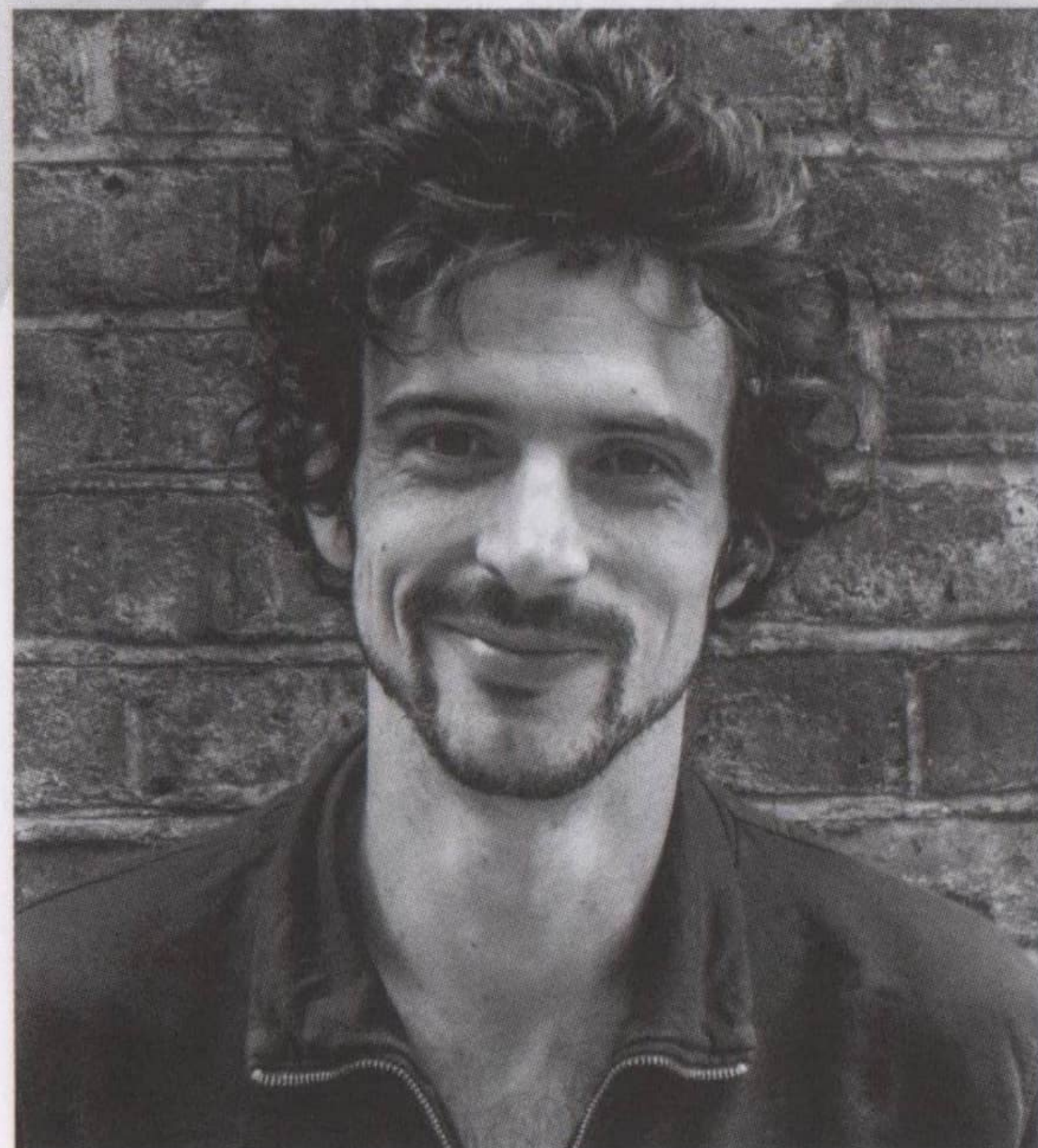
Louis Further

### References

- Economic Policy Institute: <http://www.epi.org>
- Institute on Medicine as a Profession: <http://www.imapny.org>
- Public Accountability Initiative: <http://public-accountability.org>

## ECONOMICS

## Once bitten...



## Brett Scott talks about the controversial online Bitcoin currency

Bitcoin is an internet 'cryptocurrency', which uses cryptography to keep transactions secure and prevent users from double-spending tokens. Many see Bitcoin as a positive, radical alternative to mainstream money.

Others, however, see it as just another financial system open to the same exploitation and greed as plain old filthy lucre. There are almost 12 million Bitcoin in existence today and the currency's value has risen from about 20p in 2011 to a recent all-time high of almost £600. Unsurprisingly, this means there is now a huge Bitcoin trading community, with many making enormous profits.

So, with Bitcoin even being discussed in the American Senate these days, is there any hope of clawing back its original underground, anti-government ethos... or has it gone too far? We asked campaigner, writer and Bitcoin specialist Brett Scott (*pictured above*) to tell us a bit about his involvement in the currency and where he feels it is going ideologically.

**Freedom:** How did you get started with Bitcoin?

**Brett Scott:** I dabbled in Bitcoin initially out of curiosity, but then I started selling my book for Bitcoin and started paying my interns with it too.

**How would you explain Bitcoin in one sentence to someone who had no idea what it was?**

It's an electronic currency that does not rely on a centralised oligopoly of banks to keep score of it, relying rather on a decentralised network of people to keep score of it.

**In what way does Bitcoin uphold anti-capitalist ideals in its role as a decentralised trading system?**

Bitcoin is just a new means of exchange, and there is no guarantee that it upholds anti-capitalist ideals. In fact, Bitcoin is often supported by right-wing anarcho-capitalists due to the apparent lack of government interference. What it does do though, is provide a counterpoint to the standard private banking system and offers opportunities to build separate economic structures outside of the dominant debt-fuelled money system.

**Do you worry that the emerging rafts of Bitcoin millionaires and the participation of city traders risk taking the whole thing away from its original ethos and turning bit coins into simply another imbalanced and corrupt banking system?**

Yes, the spirit of the Bitcoin community has definitely shifted from being one characterised by esoteric hackers and anarchic explorers, to being one dominated by conventional opportunists, get-rich-quick quacks and paranoid libertarians. Part of the spirit still remains though, and I still find it an interesting and dynamic experiment in alternative economy.

**What about the bit coin paupers? Bitcoins are still a high risk investment because of the volatility of the market – isn't this a bit like encouraging people to gamble (especially those who aren't as au fait with the system as others)?**

A centralised system is open to centralised abuse, and likewise a decentralised system is open to decentralised abuse. So yes, people are going to be abused and exploited along the way, and yes, there is an inherently speculative aspect inherent within Bitcoin's design, partly because people perceive it in a similar way to gold – as some kind of rare good that needs to be hoarded. On the other hand, you have to

weigh that up against the alternative, which is a less volatile system subject to domineering control by private banks.

**I've heard that, for the large part, the currency is held in just a few wallets – as far as I am aware, it's not common knowledge who the people in charge of these wallets are. Does this not fly in the face of the decentralisation idea too?**

There is nothing inherent to decentralisation that ensures equality of access – equality of access is a different design parameter that needs to be separately built into the system, but nobody has done this yet. There certainly is a Bitcoin elite, and they tend to be the ones who talk it up most.

**How do you feel the closure of Silk Road impacted on both the practical and PR aspects of Bitcoin?**

To some extent it's a convenient myth on the part of the authorities that the only thing Bitcoin is used for is to buy drugs. I've even paid part of my rent in Bitcoin.

**What do you see happening to Bitcoin in the future?**

I think Bitcoin is a valuable experiment in itself because it can be used to reveal to people a lot about how the dominant money system works. I don't see it wholesale replacing the overall money system, but I do see it staying on the scene and getting bigger. I think some of the most interesting potential for it is in developing countries where people actually have much more immediate practical need for currency alternatives.

Brett Scott is a campaigner and author of *The Heretic's Guide to Global Finance: Hacking the Future of Money* published by Pluto Press, £12.99.



# Time flies

## Nottingham's Sparrows' Nest anarchist library celebrates its fifth birthday

This December it will be five years since the opening of The Sparrows' Nest anarchist library and archive in Nottingham. It was established as a centre dedicated to bringing the rich tradition of anarchist thought and culture to a wider audience. We've already written elsewhere\* about our origins and influences. Here are some thoughts about books and other printed materials.

Anarchism historically has produced a vast amount of written text, comparing favourably with any political tradition. These range from the great theoretical treatises of its earliest activists, in the nineteenth century, which have been republished and responded to many times and in many languages, to zines and pamphlets published in the DIY style of the modern movement. The Sparrows' Nest aims to represent this rich tradition so that anarchism can be understood better as a dynamic and heroic historical tradition, but also as offering most of the best political theory and analysis ever written. Anarchists have always documented and critically reflected on their own tradition and activity – it is written to be improved on, and never set in stone.

As with all modern libraries, the Sparrows' Nest ponders the question of the value of publishing on paper in an age when anything can theoretically be accessed by a far wider audience on-line than in hard copy. E-books, and the myriad of devices on which they can be read, are transforming study and leisure. These don't come cheap, but the virtual library runs at a fraction of the cost of maintaining a physical collection, making millions of texts available to people who could not otherwise access them. Anarchist book-lovers/hoarders/collectors/curators and sellers, have various responses to this. For example, there are generalised educational concerns about the level at which the reader engages *critically* with material read on a screen, and evaluates where evidence comes from. Furthermore, the multi-million-dollar e-book industry is a long way from truly democratising knowledge by actually letting us have e-books for free!

We are not against digital media; just see below for how we produce it ourselves. But there are many positive reasons for choosing to sit down with hard-copy anarchist books. They produce collective meaning and a shared culture of their own. The book, published by radical houses operating on a shoestring, as cheaply as possible, is the very form in which anarchist authors historically have pictured their work being read. They picture them physically at the heart of revolutionary reading groups and private study and, above



Photo © Alan Lodge

all, 'owned' in a communist fashion, that is to say, shared freely between anarchists and people wanting to find out about anarchism. This practice not only takes us back to broader historical movements of radical pedagogy and the determined autodidacticism of self-managed workers' libraries, it also brings us closer to the various modern pop-up anarchist libraries, infoshops and mobile schools in counties like Indonesia. These initiatives collect and share physical books so that anarchist knowledge is accessible in spaces not served by the internet, never mind decent computers. What counts in both the historical and modern DIY library is the physical coming together around the text, and taking what is learned collectively onward and outward. Such projects in the Philippines spring to mind, where anarchists are acting on what they have read about mutual aid and self organisation, and are using their infoshops to mobilise help for people made homeless by the recent typhoon.

All this brings us back to the limited potential of e-publishing for anarchists and other interested readers trying to learn about our movement. To own a representative collection of e-books is as unrealistic for an independent library in the northern hemisphere as in the south. In fact, the only libraries that can do this are well funded national and academic libraries, and in these you are far more likely to find books about anarchism written by professional, often hostile 'experts', than by anarchists themselves. The Sparrows' Nest is concerned with making both anarchist-published and academic texts available to the general reader as well as the professional and student researcher. To do this realistically means assembling a good range of physical

books and continuing to rely on these. Whilst volunteer-run sites like LibCom and Kate Sharpley Library host an invaluable wealth of on-line classics, e-copies of current editions of anarchist texts and text books on anarchism are only available to students and academics.

A related reason for having physical libraries is their archiving activity. What are digital copies copies of, after all? At the Sparrows' Nest our major interest aside from building and curating our book collection is gradually cataloguing and digitally copying the thousands of one-off documents generated within the movement. For example, publications relating to past and present anarchist organisations, and low print-run zines and pamphlets of which only a few, if any, other copies survive. These we then make available via our website, in an ambitious programme that prioritises such documents and texts not otherwise available. Thousands more printed papers are already available for consultation, in our international collection of current papers and our alphabetically organised 'Public Archive'. These are already regularly consulted by academic and amateur researchers.

Indeed, what we hold could be the basis of many more books and PhD theses. Whether you are a funded enthusiast or the even nobler sort, why not contact us to discuss what use you could make of us? In another five years' time, we like to have a copy of *your* book on our shelves too!

The Sparrows' Nest  
[www.thesparrowsnest.org.uk](http://www.thesparrowsnest.org.uk)

\* In *KSL: Bulletin of the Kate Sharpley Library*, No. 76, October 2013, <http://www.katesharpleylibrary.net/7wm490>

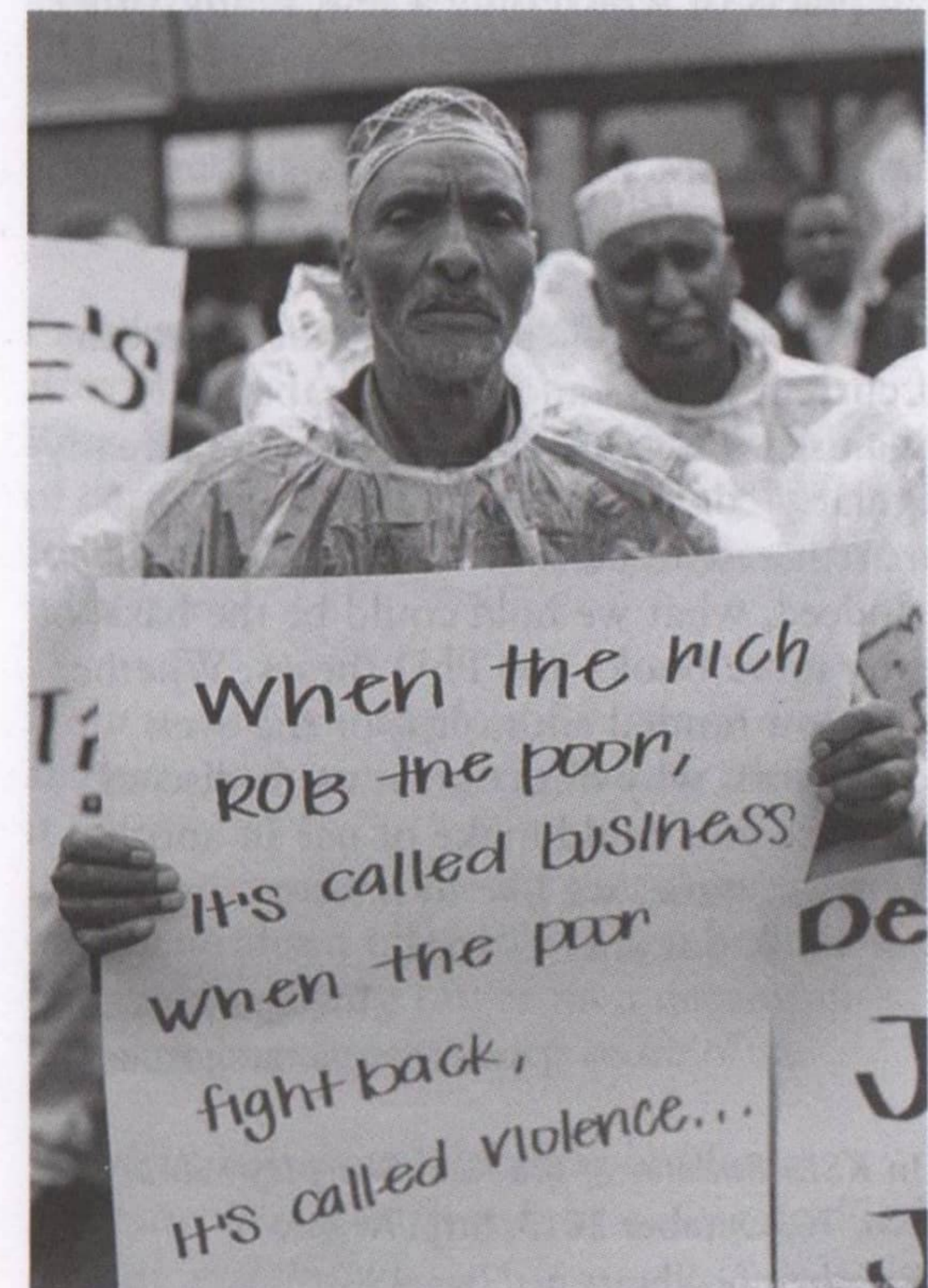
# ILL-GOTTEN GAINS

Tim Forster on our sick, unequal society

Studies show that individuals are happier within societies that are more equal. The UK has high rates of inequality, one of the consequences being the prevalence of mental illness and the use of anti-depressants. In a society marked by inequality, exploitation and environmental degradation people are struggling with unease and alienation.

Since the industrial revolution of the mid 1700s, capitalism has concentrated power in the hands of the owners of the means of production. Power and wealth have been and are accrued by an elite while the rest of us hope to pay our bills. This plus the commodification of the necessities of life – food, shelter, heating, etc. – means that the working class are forced to sell their labour, whether mental or physical, in order to survive above destitution. Within capitalism the wealth of the few and the exploitation of the many is linked: the worker spends her day adding value to the assets of the company and at the end of the day that work/ added value is taken by the company who then gives the worker a wage that is less than the value they have generated pocketing the difference. They pay enough to keep the workforce functional – unless they can get the government to subsidise those wages via Working Family Tax Credit, etc. – as they need their labour and thus each day the shareholder's/boss/company gets richer while the worker struggles on, hoping they might win the lottery or looking forward to the next weekend.

Capitalism is exploitative, oppressive, alienating and instrumentalist. The worker is alienated from their work, having to carry out



tasks assigned to them. The worker functions as an instrument, a means to someone else's ends. Twenty-first century work often demands all of the worker, physical and mental, leaving her with little to construct a meaningful life outside of work. In industrial work there was a chance to find meaning, community in unions, political/social clubs etc but often the modern worker is drained of all energies and goes home to watch television and get ready for tomorrow. As this goes on the only place of meaning in her life becomes work, the very place that incapacitates her for anything else.

Since the 1980s neoliberal capitalism has dominated UK politics. An ideology of free markets, small state provision (for the workers, though not for corporations), individualisation, privatisation and a continual dismantling of workers rights and protections, concessions gained since the Second World War. In short, class war waged by the rich to cite Atari Teenage Riot and David Harvey. Neoliberal capitalism and politics have reconfigured institutions (governments, schools, etc.), individuals and society into its own image. Brought up in a commodification environment that promotes work and individualised consumption as the highest goal people have been reduced to objects, women especially valued according to their physicality and make of handbag. Capitalism's most brazen trick is to try and pass itself off as natural or 'god ordained' in a bygone era, attempting to convince us that no other world is possible.

And over this society that is a material expression of capitalist interests exists the state: hierarchical, coercive, serving the interests of the political and corporate elite. The capitalist state is a capitalist construction which configures society to the interests of capital. Between 1945 and the 70s there was a respite from the state/corporate amalgam as unions and the labour party gained concessions for the working class but since the 1980s the state has reassumed its historic role of enforcing capitalist interests. Where there has been resistance, as in the miners' strike of 1980s, the coercive nature of the state has come to the fore, undisguised and brutal. The state's authority rests on the use of, or threat of, force. It is normally structured and bureaucratic but if it has to be more violent to achieve its ends it will be. The modern capitalist state is inherently hierarchical, coercive, patriarchal and militaristic.

Capitalism and the nation state system have been responsible for the misery and deaths of countless millions over the last 300 years. The state communist system proved little different to capitalism, perpetuating the same old patterns of hierarchy, instrumentalism, elitism and coercion. However throughout history there has been another way of organising society, economics and politics that has been glimpsed, sometimes poorly,



sometimes more fully explored. Anarchism. Anarchy is a word often used by the media to describe disorder, violence and chaos. Anarchism has been misrepresented by many people for various reasons. There have been violent anarchists who in the 1800s believed in 'propaganda by deed', the idea that the assassination of a leading industrialist or politician would stir the working class to revolution. They were wrong, but it did enable the state to represent anarchists as violent.

Anarchism is the belief that communities of people are capable of self-organisation for the common good and don't need to be told what to do by bosses of whatever kind and that in fact being socialised to look to a parental figure to always adjudicate or direct holds people back from maturity. In an anarchist community all people are equal there is no hierarchy, no patriarchy, no racism. All people take part in making decisions about those things that affect the community, the decision being reached by discussion that concludes when every one has agreed or is at least happy not to block the consensus.

The means of production are held by the community. There is no private ownership

Changes to the...

something better instead. Capitalism according to John Holloway is a verb, it is something we do rather than it existing independent of us. It will end when we stop doing it! Other anarchists think there would be a period of conflict, that the powerful are not going to allow the source of their wealth and power – the working class – to turn away and reconstruct society without a struggle. There is certainly nothing to be gained by the use of violence because 1. not enough people would be prepared to get involved; 2. there is no point taking on the capitalist state at its point of strength; 3. your means must be consistent with your aims; 4. if you believe it is acceptable to use violence to achieve your objective you have to cede the same right to your opponent.

The future could easily be even more authoritarian capitalism or environmental meltdown. If we want to avoid these two then the working class are going to have to decide to change our direction, to find ways of discussing and exploring how we can move towards a more equal, just and free tomorrow. The challenge for anarchists is how to facilitate this, a mass movement towards a just, equitable society.

- Atari Teenage Riot, 'Black Flags' on *Is this Hypereal?*, Digital Hardcore, 2010.
- Franco 'Bifo' Berardi, *The Soul at Work*, Semiotext(e) (2009).
- Alex Butterworth, *The World that Never Was. A true story of dreamers, schemers, anarchists and dreamers*, Bodley Head (2010).
- David Harvey, *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*, Oxford University Press (2005).
- John Holloway (2010), *Crack Capitalism*, Pluto Press (2010).
- Martin Thomas (editor), *Antonio Gramsci: Working-Class Revolutionary*, Workers' Liberty (2012).

of the means of production and people organise and work in co-operatives of equals. Obviously some people have certain skills and abilities and that would not be neglected but particular roles would not bestow special status on anyone. All valid work is of equal worth. Production would be primarily on the basis of need, consumption also, the maxim "from each according to their ability, to each according to their need" is appropriate here.

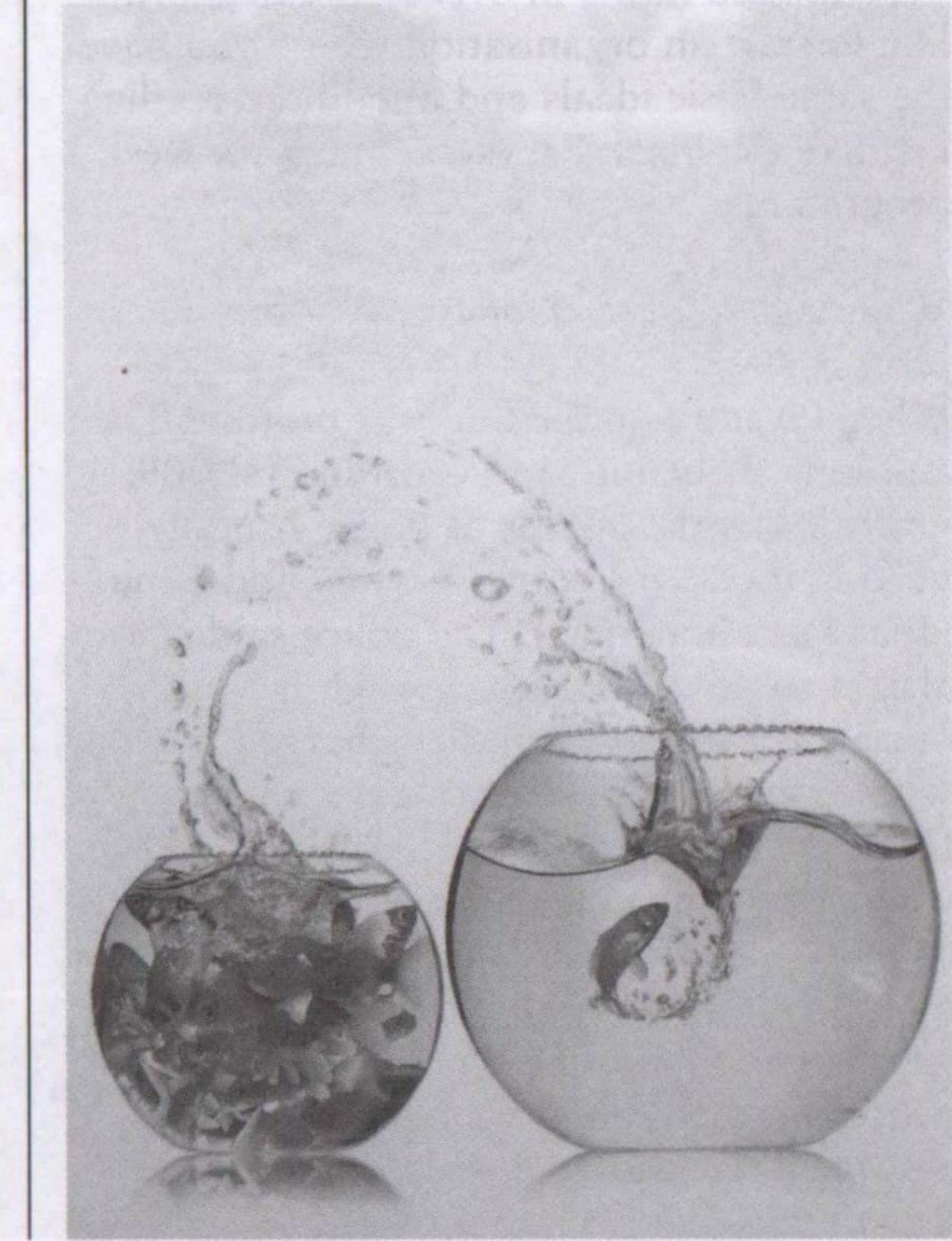
Because production would be organised on the basis of people's needs not profit there would be more leisure time. An anarchist community should be a place of creativity, arts, crafts and relationships. Communities would be voluntary associations of willing participants whose concern would be for the common good knowing that their own well being and the well being of others is intricately linked.

Lots of anarchists are federalists. Realising that autonomy is different from independence they favour local or regional councils made up of recallable representatives from different communities. These councils could resolve difficulties or coordinate actions to do with production, etc.

Syndicalist anarchists would see anarchism as applicable to the function-based, spread out world of industrial work as well as geographical communities. Over time people brought up in anarchism would be socialised into a different way of being, of co-operation and collaboration and of seeing people as equals to be worked with rather than as objects to be used.

Obviously production in an anarchist economy would use fewer natural resources and less energy due to holding many goods collectively and producing primarily on the basis of need. This would stop the rapid exhaustion of the earth's resources. In an anarchist community where things are held collectively, everyone's needs are met and status goods are irrelevant so crimes of appropriation would fall. However, in instances of violent crime a period of supervision or even exile may be appropriate. Disciplining action would have to be agreed by the community and aimed at rehabilitation.

So how do we get there from here? The classic anarchist answer is to begin "building the new in the shell of the old", to disregard the structures and powers that be and to do



## INTERVIEW

## Taking the rap

After mass arrests on the Tower Hamlets anti-EDL action, Louise Reynolds spoke to one of the arrestees, Eritrean rapper and writer Awate Suleiman from the People's Army

**Louise:** What got you into writing?

**Awate:** When I first came to this country from Jeddah, my parents didn't know what level children were at so they over-taught me. By 12, I was writing poetry and was published. I heard 50 Cent and thought "I wanna be a rapper". I used to copy him, smoked weed, carried a knife, called people certain words. At 15, I heard Mos Def's album *Black on Both Sides*, which changed my whole outlook. I started to pursue it properly.

I met the Poisonous Poets – Stylah, Lowkey, Reveal, Doc Brown, Therapist and Tony D. I started selling CDs, doing gigs, open mics, perfecting the craft. Releasing stuff, going on tour with Lowkey, with People's Army, opening up for people.

It's all about persistence. I once waited for Kanye West for seven hours, had a fight with his security on his way in, but I got his attention. He listened to me rap and later said I was his favourite rapper in the UK. I got a lot of press from it. If you're doing it on your own, you have to be really dedicated.

**What is the People's Army?**

People's Army can't be quantified, it's a self-label, there's no induction. It started off as a bunch of rappers who didn't rap about bad things being good. We started youth workshops, and every week were in the studio in Hackney, and had gigs up and down the country. It's become fragmented, as everyone's doing their own thing, but it's still a label you have, a group of people who said 'we are the same'.

I always rapped about the social context I lived in, and now I'm overtly political. I'd like to start an organisation where you have the same basic ideals and a required reading list, like the Black Panthers, like a six-week programme.

**When did you get involved in street protests?**

When I was 13, in the Iraq war protests. Then Palestine, Lebanon, and Gaza in 2008-09, where I saw the horror of police brutally beating the crap out of everyone under the Hyde Park underpass. The police said it was alright to go under there though it wasn't our agreed route. Then they charged at us with batons. People were on the ground, heads split open, unconscious, blood everywhere. It wasn't young, peak men, but people of all shapes, sizes and colours, and levels of ability and disability, children, elderly, they just battered everyone. We brought the people on the ground back into our ranks, and the police stopped, then did it again. Then I was like 'fuck the police'.



Growing up I always hated the BNP. In the same way I knew the Tories are bad, and the police are bad, you just learn that. Then the EDL were born, and I started going out on EDL protests.

**Were other kids you knew into antifascism?** No. You see an EDL march and maybe 10% are young people. But we don't have many young people in our ranks. If they are, it's because their parents are ex-SWP members, something like that.

People say 'the EDL say bad things, and the UAF say bad things, I don't think either should protest'. But one is fascism, and one is against fascism. One should be the neutral, positive, progressive stance, and one is the most disgusting ideology there is! Which, by the way, we live in. I think the nazis won World War Two. I don't give a fuck if Germany didn't win, fascism won. Because what is fascism? On a financial level, it's when a government decides corporations should get free labour, everything is privatised, and they put in legislation so that poor people work for free. That's what's going on right now. We live in a fascist country, and Theresa May is a disgusting piece of crap, scapegoating immigrants.

**What about the Tower Hamlets demo?** There were 286 people arrested under completely false pretences. I was one of them. It's was political arrest, for mass intelligence gathering.

Before, they'd kettle people, take your name, photograph and address before you could leave. We stopped that in the High

Court. So they decided, let's just fucking arrest them all, and get more than names, get DNA, fingerprints, and make them feel even worse than kettling did.

People think they've got bail conditions saying they can't protest against EDL or BNP, which wrong on every level. It's police bail, so it's only a suggestion. And that suggestion is pure evil because it's telling us not to fight against fascism.

**How can making music can contribute to the movement?**

Number one, it allows people to meet each other, and number two it allows me to go on stage which I love doing. It brings young people out. Everyone, up and down the country, can set up a gig. Just call up a venue and get local artists to come down. I'll come down. You could have a vibrant kind of culture, everywhere.

**Where do you see things in 10 years?**

I think realistically capitalism could be over by then. All it takes is for society to know what's going on, and they'll be at the Houses of Parliament and Buckingham Palace with guns, knives, burning sticks. That's all it takes.

Social media is the big thing, because they can't control the music industry and the media any more. Anyone can music and put it online, or make a video blog and just talk to camera. They can't take us down. All it takes is for everyone to be aware and once that happens, they cannot stop it.

Awate's blog is at [awatewillmakeyourlifebetter.com](http://awatewillmakeyourlifebetter.com)

# Changes to IEP scheme

## A visit to Jock Palfreeman

Members of Brighton Anarchist Black Cross managed to pay a visit to Jock Palfreeman in Sofia Central Prison recently. In addition to the usual foodstuffs that are always greatly needed by inmates in the Bulgarian prison system to supplement their poor institutional diet, the comrades took Jock a new pair of boots and some socks. Jock was in good spirits and sent his thanks to all who have been writing to him and sending him much needed reading material. Keep it up.

The comrades also visited one of Jock's fellow inmates, who was in solitary at the time of the visit. He filled them in about Jock's prison activism as part of his work with the Bulgarian Prisoners' Association. As well as teaching a number of the prisoners English, he has also taken it upon himself to act as prison 'listener', actively talking suicidal and depressed inmates out of potential self-harming incidents, and helping others in writing and presenting appeal materials.

Despite Jock's chances of freedom or transfer to an Australian prison remaining a distant dream, his activism remains his revenge (to quote Mark Barnsley) against the Bulgarian state that railroaded him. His 20-year stay in prison courtesy of the Bulgarian judicial system will not be wasted.

• *UPDATE: On 17th October, Jock and his 10 cellmates (three Iranians, six Iraqis and one Sudanese) were brutally assaulted with boots, batons and fists by around 50 guards. Following another series of altercations and a prolonged cell search as they tried to identify some infraction of prison rules to charge Jock with, the guards then tried to find one of around 100 of his fellow prisoners on his corridor who would be willing to 'snitch' on him. No one would. When finally allowed to return to his cell, he found that his personal belongings had been either trashed or confiscated. This is not the first attack against Jock for his unionism and solidarity with other prisoners and it will certainly not be the last.*

## On the Out zine

Bristol ABC has recently produced a new publication, *On the Out*, a collection of writings by ex-prisoners and their supporters on life after prison. The group hopes the zine will go some of the way to helping with the current dearth of prisoner support literature on post-prison life. The majority of prisoners in the UK only serve around 50-75% of their sentence in prison before being released. The remainder of their sentence will be spent on licence, a limbo-like state where you are neither in prison nor free. The prison system uses this as another tool of oppression, limiting people's freedoms. The zine collects several articles, interviews and discussions from former prisoners and their supporters about their experiences after prison and includes pieces on social control through licence conditions, tagging, the emotional affects of repression, supporting someone leaving prison and more.

<http://bristolabc.files.wordpress.com/2012/04/on-the-out-zine.pdf>

Despite what Chris Grayling would have us believe, the new changes to the Incentive and Earned Privileges (IEP) scheme that he has recently dreamed up are not a 'get tough' move. Instead this new reinforced IEP regime introduces a new default 'Entry' level that sits between Basic and Standard level. All new prisoners and any moving from Basic to Standard have to spend a 14-day assessment there. If they fail to meet its tough criteria, they move back to Basic. All Entry level prisoners must wear prison uniform, as well as having restrictions on things like access to the gym. More regular reviews at all levels have come in – merely a cost-cutting move aimed at saving hundreds of thousands of pounds a year.

These savings will be achieved by slashing the number of prisoners on Standard and Enhanced IEP levels, thereby cutting both the amount of pay the prison service has to fork out each week to prisoners and the time they spend outside of their cells on association. The latter will also lead to secondary savings because fewer prison staff are needed to supervise banged-up prisoners, thus saving on staff costs.

Currently only 2% of prisoners are on Basic level IEP, receiving £2.50 a week in 'pay'. Higher up the IEP ladder, prisoners 'earn' more depending on their level, the availability of work (and hence whether they are employed or not) and they type of job they have. Attendance of education and Offender Behaviour programmes also 'earn' IEP payments. Prisoners on the Basic level IEP rate also, as the name suggests, receive the minimum level of contact with their friends and family, links that are supposedly essential for the successful 'rehabilitation' of 'offenders'. The better behaved a prisoner is, the more

contact they are allowed with the outside world, therefore the limiting of visits, phone calls and mail for those on Basic IEP turns out to be something of a perverse 'incentive'.

Clearly this move towards Basic becoming the new Standard, together with the need to pass through the Entry level IEP hoop every time one is aiming to progress from Basic to Standard, will cause friction. And nowhere more so than in local prisons where there is a structural lack of prison work, other than in a limited number of Administrative Task jobs (cooking, cleaning and laundry). Already those held in these prisons spend an inordinate amount of time banged-up in their cells, sometimes with only daytime television programmes to help anaesthetise their boredom.

Now they face even more time locked into a 6ft x 10ft box, usually with at least one other prisoner (if not two) and cheek by jowl with an unscreened toilet or a pisspot covered with a towel. And they will have to do so without access to the opium of TV during workshop hours. Exactly how this is to be enforced will probably be up to individual prison governors, but already some prisons switch off power to their cells during the daytime, which means that prisoners banged up all day will not even be able to boil a kettle and make themselves a nice soothing cuppa.

Given all this, it came as absolutely no surprise that prisoners at HMP Maidstone and Rye Hill staged protests on the day after the new regulations come into force on 1st November. Even the Prison Officers Association admitted that the IEP changes were a major causal factor in those disturbances. No doubt more will follow as the new regime begins to bite.

Bra



## COMMENT

## ABOUT FREEDOM

## ANGEL ALLEY

So another jolly year comes to a close. Naturally this means the Anarchist Paradise is one year closer but, in case any Negatrons out there may not think it's been a great year for the radical transformation of society, we at *Freedom* may console ourselves that we were not completely burnt down and enough comrades think that the project of an anarchist paper and centre is worthwhile that they rallied around to keep us going.

Thanks for all your inquiries about our *Doctor Who* time-slip tribute of reversing the polarity of the October and September editions. It's a mundane story we won't bore you with, but hopefully we are now back on track and, atheism willing, looking to a year of the paper coming out on time – and do let us know if your September issue is still missing.

We hope to be seeing many Comrades at our Crimbo/Seasonal/Whatever party in the shop from 2pm on Saturday 21st December. If you can't make it, we send our thanks for all the support in 2013 and looking forward to a very revolutionary new year.

## SUBSCRIPTIONS

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## NEXT ISSUE DEADLINE

The next issue will be dated January 2014 and the last day to get copy to us for that issue will be **Thursday 12th December**. 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

There has been much talk in the media of Russell Brand's interview with Paxman, where he advocates not voting and says we need a revolution. To be honest, anyone reading this is probably already convinced about both of these ideas, but I wanted to look at both the reaction and why these ideas might resonate more at this time.

Firstly, much of the reaction has been the classic "play the man not the ball". Brand has been criticised for being rich, just like the people he criticises, and for not being serious and for being sexist. The difference between him and some of his more vociferous critics is that he hasn't always been rich, or privileged. But even if he was the richest, most sexist man in the world, would that mean his arguments about politicians being the same and Britain needing a revolution were negated? I think not.

But why do these ideas resonate a lot more now, than say five years ago? It's not because a celebrity advocated them. Collectively, our material conditions are getting worse. Not even the most blinkered optimist can see any way out of the long stagnation that affects almost everyone. The government claim there is a recovery and Labour fall into line, just criticising round the edges of the government's claim. But I don't see any recovery, just a flat-lining economy where bosses can do what they like, all the figures are fiddled and there is no alternative.

Some of the economic decline is structural – for centuries rich people in the UK plundered much of the rest of the world. Much of that wealth was spent here, and its circulation enriched others here. Now the rest of the world has got wise to Britain and even has a choice of plunderers, such as China, who may not attach as many strings to investing in say, Zimbabwe.

Some of the relative decline is actually more recent – Britain still makes a lot of things, but the companies that profit from it

are owned elsewhere. The most successful British companies these days tend to be ones dedicated to selling things or taking over privatised services.

Labour-supporting celebrities suggest that by voting we would stop some of the worse things. Their short-term memories betray their other activities. Can I remind them? Iraq. Afghanistan. Attacks on the disabled and claimants. NHS privatisation. Academies. Tuition fees. All things started by Labour. Why trust them? And Cameron stands by a gilded chair to tell a room full of parasites that austerity needs to be made permanent.

No one trusts the government's statistics anymore. Inflation might be 2.2%, but if it is they are calculating it wrong. Inflation based on necessities like food, housing and travel is much higher. The unemployment rate is apparently just over 7%. Again, we know this is untrue because loads of people have been kicked off benefits by Job Centre staff, aiming for targets that the government claim aren't there, another lie.

But people fought and died for democracy, bleat the apologists. But a system where the majority views on loads of things are always ignored if they clash with those of the elite cannot be called a democracy. A majority of people want almost everything privatised over the last 30 years to be renationalised, they are sick of being fleeced by spivs, conmen and other countries' nationalised power companies.

Faced with this, is it any wonder people disengage? I'd much rather people tackled the issues facing them, but sometimes we don't feel we can. The least we can do is not give our enemies the time of day.

The question of revolution is simple. If you desire social change – do you think it is possible in our current system, where political parties are bought and sold by big business and ignore any views outside their narrative? If not, revolution is the only game in town.



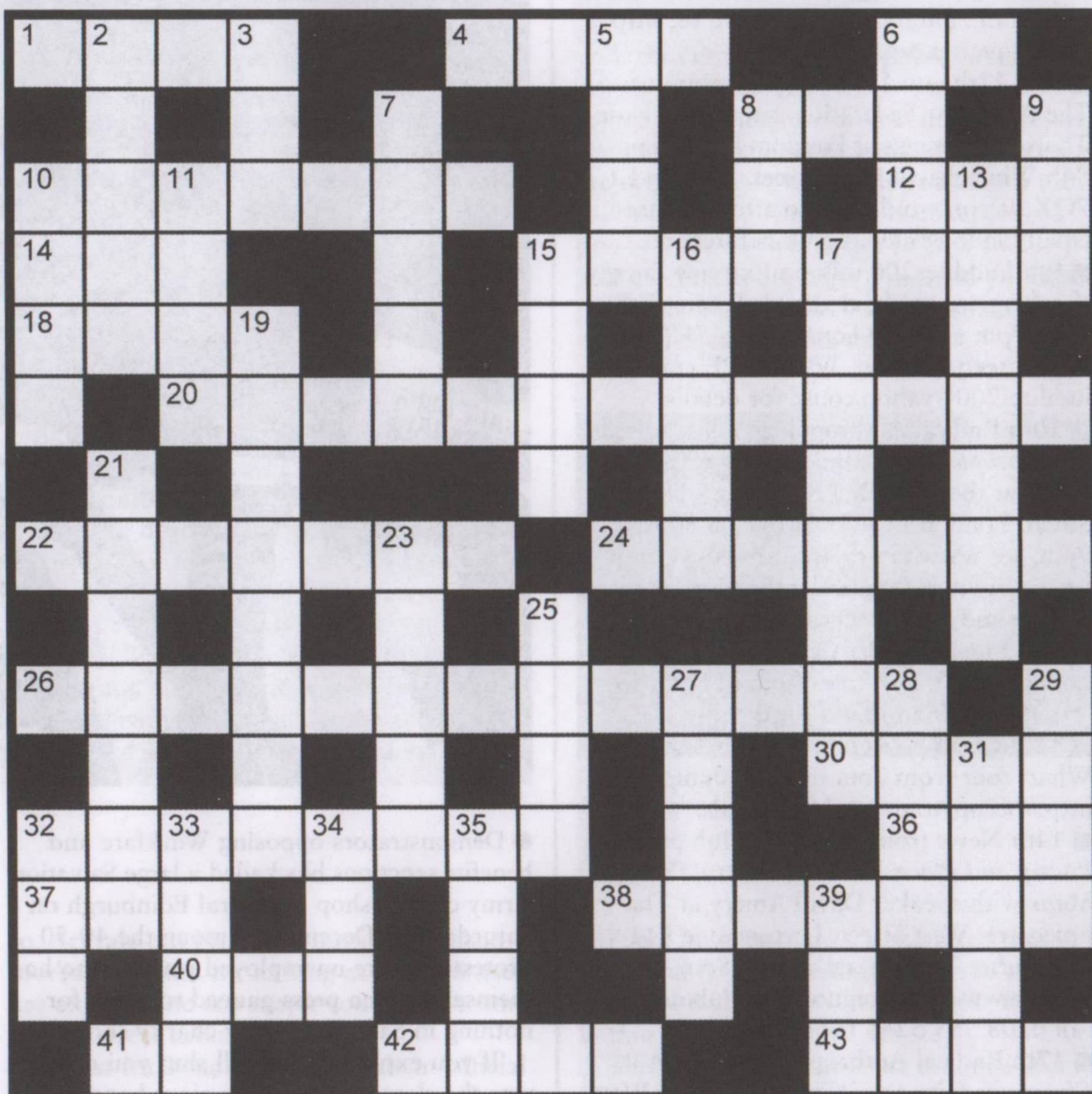
# Prize Crossword compiled by Bjarni Halfnelson

## Across

- 1/4/6/10 "Know-all got irritated by what you're reading" – that's Nelson Mandela's story! (4,4,2,7)  
 8 Commotion caused by a party (3)  
 10 See 1  
 12 Frozen water used to decorate Christmas cake? (3)  
 14 Sleep over without head nor tail on long fishy thing (3)  
 15 Flash change about, constrained by milk provider – we're likely to have problems with this at Christmas-time! (4-4)  
 18 A fool at your convenience, in short (1,1,1,1)  
 20 Sportingly enabling one to settle by agreement? – completely impossible! (3-10)  
 22 Return a good thrashing, hence economist who argued that human population growth would outstrip Earth's ability to provide (7)  
 24 Non-vegetarian snack frequently offered by politicians (4,3)  
 26 Watery place, right? Naturally back after church (it's a load of bombastic clap-trap!) – time for a document letting cops into your home! (6,7)  
 30 Stare stupidly, looking awkward in the middle of it (4)  
 32 Corruptly bent, died owing obligations (8)  
 36 Pull, in a manner of speaking, part of the foot (3)  
 37 Sounds like alternative means of propulsion (3)  
 38 I resort, rebelliously, to those who rise up against authority and property (7)  
 40 Chopper that did away with a lot of the nobility! (3)  
 41 Frank Sinatra's way – it belongs to me! (2)  
 42 Easy networking holds since sung every New Year by Scots everywhere (4)  
 43 Recall nymph spurned by Narcissus (4)

## Down

- 2 Badly gores monsters sometimes found in pantomimes (5)  
 3 Farage enjoys centrist position? Oh, wow! (3)  
 5 Seasonal availability united by hot rock (4)  
 6 Useless lavatory (and French gone) – useless! Not useful work, according to William Morris (4)



- 7 Described by Webster's dictionary as "human females who do housework"! (Won me over?! (5)  
 8 Tree remains after Guy Fawkes Night bonfire? (3)  
 9 Really fresh – the sort of year 2014 will be, come January (3)  
 10 A long way off, getting the point; but a worried feeling (4)  
 11 Panache of rousing finale, if removed (4)  
 13 Topical shake-up for once-productive source of winter heating (4,3)  
 15 Enclosure restricting freedom - even Heaven might get in a rage if you put a 27dn here! (4)

- 16 Otters returning? Not right! Have a fight! (3-2)  
 17 Knotted scarf (pointless) – it's Charlie's ambition to be something earth-shattering to protest against (8)  
 19 Strangely pot's complimentary, and costs nothing to send (unlike Christmas cards!) (4-4)  
 21 'Raven' at unusual Greek watering hole (7)  
 23 Doff headgear and haunt unsettlingly (5)  
 25 Part in opera, idea for what pigs might use 26ac for (4)  
 27 Throb inordinately holding bird (often on the cards!) (5)  
 28 Art gallery to visit between end of siesta and start of teatime (4)  
 29 Stretches out - seek entanglement? (4)  
 31 Value found in snow or thawing ice (5)  
 32 Pious? Afterthought gone, leaving note to make payment (1,1,1)  
 33 Returning three feet with horse-drawn cart (4)  
 34 Endless beer for endangered pollinator (3)  
 35 Swirl about inside red dyestuff (4)  
 39 Brickwork fastener (often an unwanted Christmas present!) (3)

Send your answers to 'Crossword', Freedom Press, 84b Whitechapel High Street, London E1 7QX or email them to [crossword@freedompress.org.uk](mailto:crossword@freedompress.org.uk) by Monday 10th February 2014, and the first correct answer out of the hat will win a special prize.

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## GETTING ACTIVE

### WHAT'S ON

#### DECEMBER

■ **3rd and 17th** Practical Squatting Evening at LARC, 62 Fieldgate Street, London E1 1ES from 7pm to 8pm, for more see <http://www.squatter.org.uk/>

■ **5th, 12th and 19th** 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** Luddites200 talk on Extreme Energy (fracking, tar sands, etc.) and climate change from 7pm at Fairly Square cafe, 51 Red Lion Street, London, WC1R 4PF, email [luddites200@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:luddites200@yahoo.co.uk) for details.

■ **10th** Radical Anthropology talks, *African forest peoples' polyphonic singing* with Ingrid Lewis at the May Day Rooms, 88 Fleet Street, London EC4 1DH from 6.30 to 9pm, see [www.radicalanthropologygroup.org](http://www.radicalanthropologygroup.org) or Twitter: @radicalanthro for details.

■ **10th and 24th** Practical Squatting Evening at 56a Infoshop, 56a Crampton Street, London SE17 3AE from 7pm to 8pm, see <http://www.56a.org.uk/> for details.

■ **12th** Occupy London Tours, Canary Wharf tour from 7pm until 8.30pm, see <http://occupytours.org/> for details.

■ **14th** News from Nowhere Club presents *Poetry and Place: Reading Poetry Through Maps* with speaker David Amery 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.

■ **17th** Radical Anthropology talks, *A Christmas fairy-tale: 'The Shoes That Were Danced to Pieces'* with Chris Knight at the May Day Rooms, 88 Fleet Street, London EC4 1DH from 6.30 to 9pm, see [www.radicalanthropologygroup.org](http://www.radicalanthropologygroup.org) or Twitter: @radicalanthro for details.

■ **20th** 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.

■ **21st** Freedom party from 2pm at Freedom Press Bookshop, 84b Whitechapel High Street, London E1 7QX.

#### JANUARY

■ **4th** Occupy London Tours, City of London tour from 2pm until 4pm, see <http://occupytours.org/> for details.

■ **9th, 16th, 23rd and 30th** 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.

■ **11th** Occupy London Tours, Mayfair tour from 2pm until 4pm, see <http://occupytours.org/> for details.

■ **13th** Luddites200 talk on The politics of alternative technology and workers' plans from 7pm at Fairly Square cafe, 51 Red Lion Street, London, WC1R 4PF, email [luddites200@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:luddites200@yahoo.co.uk) for details.



● Demonstrators opposing Workfare and benefits sanctions blockaded a large Salvation Army charity shop in central Edinburgh on Saturday 7th December. Among the 40-50 protestors were unemployed people who had themselves been press-ganged to work for nothing in Salvation Army charity shops.

'If you exploit us we will shut you down' was the clear message on a giant banner which demonstrators held right across the front entrance of the Earl Grey Street shop. The shop windows were plastered with posters proclaiming 'Salvation Army – stop using forced labour'. Despite several police attending and threatening arrests, the shop was blockaded for two hours. Meanwhile the Rhythms of Resistance samba band raised spirits, improvising new anti-Workfare beats.

The Salvation Army is almost certainly the main user of the Mandatory Work Activity scheme in Edinburgh and Britain-wide is one of the most prominent users of forced labour amongst the charity sector. Large numbers of unemployed people are being forced onto Mandatory Work Activity in Edinburgh by the Jobcentres, often in clear contradiction to the DWP's own guidance. Demo organisers **Edinburgh Coalition Against Poverty (ECAP)** are fighting several cases where unemployed people are resisting being sent on MWA. "If you being forced onto any workfare scheme, do get in touch to seek solidarity," say ECAP.

Edinburgh Coalition Against Poverty say: "We now intend to step up our activity against the Salvation Army to force them to withdraw from workfare. This supposedly charitable organisation is responsible for people being sanctioned and left penniless after they have been ordered to work for nothing in Salvation Army shops on the Mandatory Work Activity scheme. We call them the Starvation Army. They should follow the lead of other charities

like Oxfam and Shelter and boycott workfare."

The private company learndirect, who run Mandatory Work Activity in Edinburgh, have stated that they have very few charities willing to be involved in the MWA in Edinburgh due to the controversy caused by charities involvement in the Work Programme, when demonstrators occupied Edinburgh British Heart Foundation shops on several occasions. So if the Salvation Army can be pressurised to pull out, the whole MWA scheme in Edinburgh could be in real difficulty. "Our actions are having a real affect," say ECAP, "we can be encouraged to step things up and make workfare unworkable."

December's action was equally in opposition to the growing wave of benefits sanctions being imposed on claimants. "580,000 sanctions were imposed in the nine-month period up until June 2013 – that's over half a million people (thousands of them officially recognised as sick or disabled) denied even the pittance of benefit payment in the sixth richest country in the world," said Ethel MacDonald of ECAP. "This has got to be stopped."

The action organised by ECAP was also supported by other groups, including Black Triangle and the Industrial Workers of the World, and was part of the Britain-wide week of action against sanctions and workfare organised through the Boycott Workfare network. There were actions in many areas, plus on-line protests, and the preceding fortnight saw intensive leafleting of Edinburgh job centres including High Riggs, Leith, Musselburgh and Wester Hailes.

- Edinburgh Coalition Against Poverty [www.edinburghagainstopoverty.org.uk](http://www.edinburghagainstopoverty.org.uk), email [ecap@lists.riseup.net](mailto:ecap@lists.riseup.net)
- Boycott Workfare [www.boycottworkfare.org](http://www.boycottworkfare.org)

# Millionaires and workers' deaths

Stinking rich FIFA bureaucrat, Jerome Valcke, has demanded that ordinary Brazilians get behind and support next summer's World Cup, claiming that "It is the wrong time to be protesting. It is right to protest, but for me it is the wrong time. Because it is a time where Brazil should enjoy a unique time, a time they have not enjoyed since 1950. We are not asking them to support FIFA; we are asking them to support the World Cup."

Valcke is typical of FIFA hacks and Brazilian politicians who are absolutely clueless to the poverty that the Brazilian working class faces daily. They are being asked to support a world cup that they cannot afford to pay, that will price them out of being able to pay for tickets, that is taking financial priority over health and education, and that is resulting in the deaths of over stretched construction workers.

Football legend and one of the most loved men in Brazil (and millionaire), Pele, has disgracefully said "It is now time for people

to be quiet because this is a great moment for our country, it is good publicity and good for tourism". It is a great moment for the political classes, the rich, and building contractors, but for the Brazilian working class the benefits are much more mixed.

Despite rumours to contrary the Brazilian sports minister claims that all the stadiums will be finished and ready to hand over in January 2014. His smugness over the speed of their completion has come with a heavy cost.

At a stadium in Sao Paulo, two construction workers were killed when a crane collapsed and fell onto the vehicle they were sitting in. One of the dead men's daughters had told reporters that her father had said he was convinced that he would have a serious accident and die at work.

A local branch of the construction workers trade union claims there was an instance of whistleblowing hours before the accident, warning of serious health and safety issues

with the crane. Despite crippling work schedules, Odebrecht, the construction company running the project deny there are health and safety issues at the site. Observers are cynical about the investigation into the deaths, as the government is under lots of pressure for the world cup to be a success, and Odebrecht are huge donors to political parties during elections in Brazil, so absolutely no conflict of interests there!

Luther Blissett



## World cup racism

◀ page 24

any form of discrimination and racism which is enshrined in our various regulations amongst others is well known." It is a shame that an opposition to 'slavery' is not enshrined in FIFA's regulations, if it was then perhaps the situation in Qatar and their World Cup preparations may be different.

Brazilians are already furious and have accused FIFA of 'cultural terrorism' following their decision that the only organisations able to sell food in and around the World Cup stadiums will be those that have won 'official' bids, i.e., McDonalds and Coca Cola. This means that traditional African-Brazilian foods, such as 'Acaraje', will not be sold, and its vendors will face arrest if they attempt to do

so. Acaraje has been sold outside Brazilian football matches for as long as football itself has existed, and is a major source of income in poor areas around stadiums.

Whilst McDonalds are using their 'official provider' status to block sales of any other foods, Coca Cola are cynically jumping on the 'Acaraje' bandwagon and have put up billboard posters advertising Coca Cola in conjunction with Acaraje. It is safe to assume they haven't signed a contract with street traders, so football fans can expect to be able to buy 'Coca Cola Acaraje' at the matches. Coca Cola deny it is a cynical marketing ploy. Instead they claim that they are 'preserving Brazilian culture'.

Event organisers have announced that there will be a 2k exclusion zone around matches, and that anyone who sells food within that zone will be arrested.

This move is just the latest example of how FIFA and the world cup organisers are attempting to snuff out the culture and heritage of the host nation in order to ensure the World Cup has a sanitised and corporate identity, devoid of any regional influence, and to ensure that any opportunities or money generated by the event are firmly channelled into the pockets of politicians, FIFA, and the various corporate gangsters who have become parasites in the bellies of major sporting events.

Luther Blissett



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**FREEDOM** monthly ISSN 0016 0504

REVIEWS **ACTIVE****FICTION**

## Left in the Lurch

Sandra had called on Wednesday. Connie instantly agreed to come over and come Thursday was pleasantly surprised that the new line from New Cross actually made getting to Hackney easier. She got off the train and walked a few streets of Victorian terraces to where Sandra lived.

She rang the doorbell and Sandra came to the door, bags under her eyes, with a curly-headed two year old in her arms. They hugged and Connie smiled at the boy.

"Hello Carlo. I'm Connie, do you remember me?" she said. The boy didn't react.

"He's been like this ever since Kit went," said Sandra. They went in, Sandra put Carlo in a high chair and put the kettle on.

"I've no milk. Black or herbal?" she asked.

"Herbal's fine, I have too much caffeine anyway." Over tea, Sandra told her how she had discovered Kit had lied to her and how much he had lied, and that he had another relationship and family on the other side of London.

"You don't think he was undercover?" asked Connie.

"No," replied Sandra. "I've thought about it a lot, but when it comes down to it, he's just a bastard. And I'm not a big fish, either."

"What are you going to do?"

"That's a good question. I can't afford the rent on my income. I've got two options as far as I can see which are to go to Homeless Families or move back in with my Dad."

"Blimey." Connie was taken aback that Sandra would consider moving back to the Springfield Road Estate, a sprawling inter-war suburb in North Kent, after she'd spent ages trying to get away. Sandra smiled at her.

"I know. But I have to think about him." Carlo was smearing mashed banana over his face. "The Homeless Unit will put us in B&B or a hostel. My Dad's is isolated, but it has a garden and it will be good for my Dad as well as Carlo."

"Yeah, but what would it be like for you?" asked Connie.

"I'll live. The worse thing is my Dad never liked Kit. It'll just confirm him in his prejudices."

"I'm with your Dad on that one I'm afraid," said Connie. "What about squatting? Can you get into a co-op or something?"

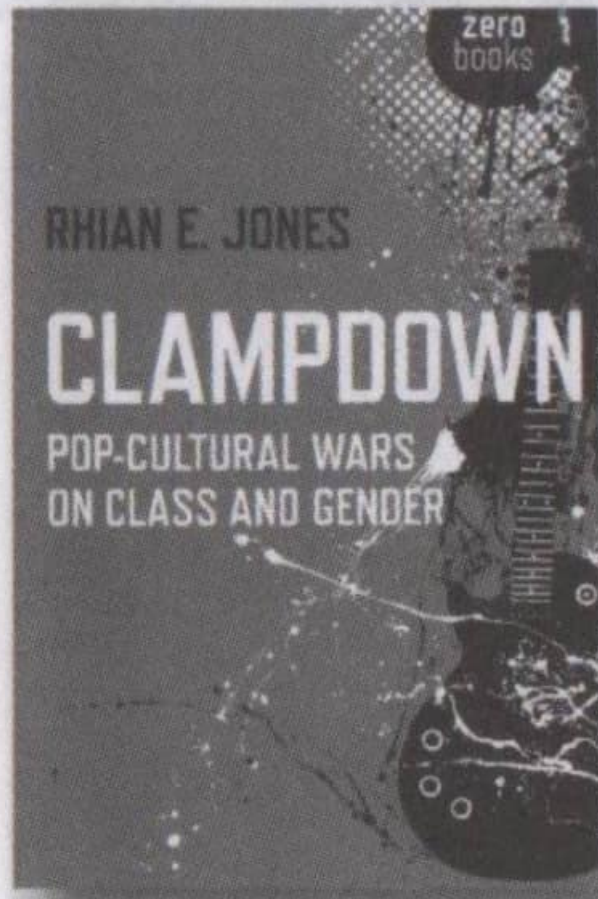
"I'm not squatting with Carlo. I've tried all the other options. Honestly."

"It sounds like you've made your mind up," said Connie.

"I guess so; I just needed to talk it through. My Dad offered straight away, said it's what Mum would've wanted."

Martin H.

To be continued...

**BOOK**

**Clampdown: Pop-cultural Wars on Class and Gender**  
by Rhian E. Jones,  
Zero Books

This refreshingly pungent polemic discusses the disappearance of dissident working-class voices in mass culture articulating resistance to the status quo. Early chapters convincingly chart changing UK media representations of the lower-classes since the 1980s. These focus on now-universal 'chav' mythologies and the demonisation of rough femininity, deployed to legitimise the withdrawal of welfare and related punitive neoliberal governance and justify austerity for everyone except elites. Clampdown then recapitulates these developments in the cultural terrain of pop music – or, at least, that fraction involving 'indie' guitar bands who progressively lost sight of post-punk's grass-roots DIY ethos. Bands that, in doing so, unfortunately yielded today's exceptionally anodyne corporate offerings exemplified by the execrable 'nu-folk' which, like most best-selling homegrown genres, is largely produced by comfortable children of the aforementioned elites.

Exploring this trajectory, Jones sets the 1990s unravelling of explicit Thatcherite class-war against sympathy for Lady Di mobilised by New Labour in class-blind nationalist sentimentality. So 'Cool Britannia' counterposed the exaggerated swagger of Oasis against pretentious hipsters like Blur, but artistic 'substance' (such as it was) for all of their ilk lay in rehashing 1960s styles with minimal echoes of punk's

raw anger to signify residual resonance with popular dissatisfaction. Throughout this postmodern masquerade implying political passivity and acceptance of the mainstream consensus, rebellious exceptions such as the Manic Street Preachers – and especially those expressing young women's perspectives, from the riot grrrl phenomenon to indie outfits like Shampoo and Kenickie – were condescended to, patronised, recuperated or sidelined irrespective of mass appeal or sales. Meanwhile, superficial alternatives amenable to prevailing hegemonies, from Britpop to Spice Girls, flooded markets with New Lads and Barbies with 'girl power', domesticating or ironising stances otherwise associated with threats to capitalist order.

A particular strength of the book is the incorporation of biographical reflections on the author's emotional investment since adolescence in both musical and intellectual journeys.\* But this is also a weakness, evidenced in even stronger final sections concerning the present conjuncture. These necessarily broaden the scope to encompass popular culture as a whole while revealing significant limitations in the thematic thrust of the foregoing analysis. After all, isolated provincial white teens glued to the radio reading the *NME* scarcely captures the scenes, subcultures and innovations of collective youth culture. Witness the arguably far deeper and potentially radical upheavals of hip-hop and techno mobilising millions who shunned the miserable grungy dirges favoured by student union tastemakers. Nevertheless, as a demonstration of how class composition and stratification – intrinsically riddled with gendered and (by omission, here) raced discriminations – is central to late-capitalism's social regulation, Clampdown is exemplary.

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

\* See also her excellent Velvet Coalmine blog.

**QUIZ ANSWERS**

1. She said she would get a public company to do their work. The threat backfired as the public sector workers refused to scab and she was criticised for the irony of trying to use a public company to deal with a private dispute.
2. The Ukraine government are issuing a coin in his honour. Details here: [http://www.bank.gov.ua/control/uk/currentmoney/cmcoin/details?coin\\_id=59](http://www.bank.gov.ua/control/uk/currentmoney/cmcoin/details?coin_id=59). Suffice to say



3. In 1885, there was the North West rebellion of Métis and Cree in Saskatchewan. The part-built railway quickly transported troops from the east to put it down and a grateful government subsidised its completion.
4. It is thought to be a corruption of 'Jack of Naples', a slang term for a monkey from around 1400. It acquired its meaning of upstart when applied to William de la Pole, First Duke of Suffolk. He was one of first nobles to rise from the merchant class and he used a collar and chain on his coat of arms, which was associated with monkey leashes. He became Admiral of England in 1447, but was associated with the loss of English possessions in France. In 1450, while on his way into exile, he was stopped and beheaded.

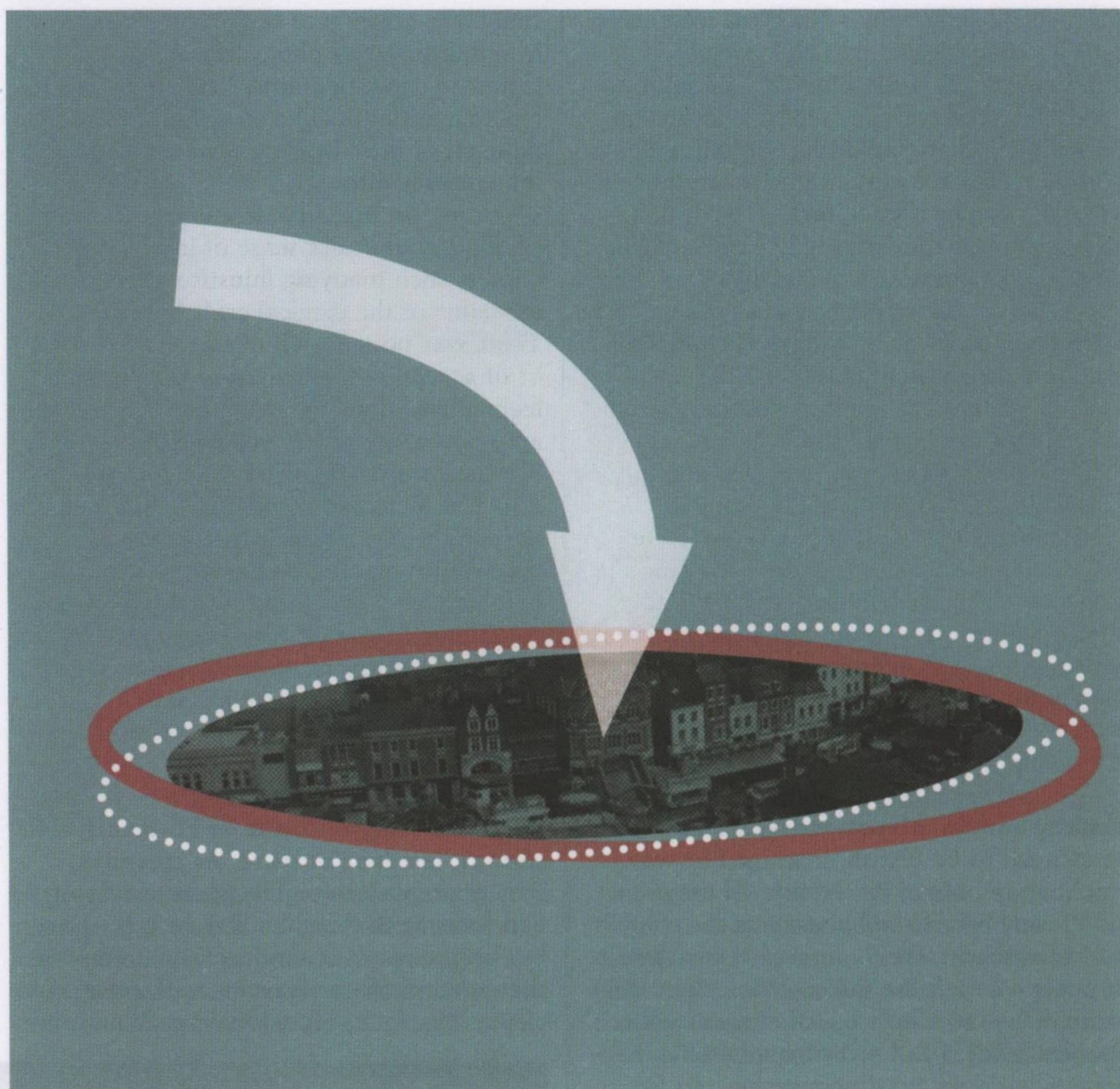
# Building blocks

John Payne reviews a new biography of late rebel architectural critic Ian Nairn

Ian Nairn crammed a lot into a short life. Born in 1931, he died in 1983, still a young man, but an irretrievable alcoholic. He lived life at full pelt – pilot, architectural critic, photographer, radio and television broadcaster. He was a passionate advocate of good buildings, and of public space between those buildings that encouraged people to enjoy the full life of a community. Above all, he believed that our lives grow and flourish around particular places and buildings and sights. The publisher has chosen wisely in using the inside covers of *Word in Place* to reproduce the famous ‘End of Southampton’ and ‘Beginning of Carlisle’ photos: needless to say, they look shockingly similar. Nairn’s point in a nutshell.

Did Nairn have a politics? Hard to tell, but as the editors put it, “Insofar as he had a politics, it was anarchist rather than anything else. For such a man to find himself denounced by the professions is... not any kind of ordeal; it’s a vindication.” Above all, Nairn was angry, and he had a target: buildings and what architects were doing to our towns and cities. Significantly, his first book, published in 1955, was called *Outrage*. Almost single-handedly, he coined and nudged into general usage the term ‘Subtopia’ to condemn suburban England with its tidy gardens, its soulless streets, its lack of community facilities.

Raymond Unwin, the architect of some of the best social housing this country has ever seen (for example at Letchworth Garden City) wrote that “architecture always reveals the life it clothes and reflects its ideals”. By the mid-twentieth century architecture revealed two separate but complementary strands. Firstly, a contempt for the public realm, both in terms of the quality of public housing and the pitiful allocation of public



spaces in towns and cities being rebuilt as the country recovered from World War II bombing. Secondly, the notion of the nuclear family shut away in its own box, bickering, isolated, but above all consuming to the benefit of a resurgent capitalism. The famous ‘little boxes’ of folk singer Pete Seeger’s 1960s hit record.

This celebration of the life and work of Ian Nairn (pictured left) consists of seven essays by journalists and critics with a particular interest in the issues about which Nairn felt so passionately. Each essay is preceded by a brief ‘preamble’ in which the authors adopt a very direct tone, the Nairn tone, you might say. I especially liked Jonathan Glancey’s description of Nairn as a “plump, unkempt and rather sweaty middle-aged Tony Hancock lookalike”. Nairn would have enjoyed that. One of his most famous articles (for *The Observer*, 1966) was called ‘Stop the Architects Now’. A pretty challenging title for a man trying to make a living out of writing about architecture. But it made people think, and that is what Nairn always aimed to do.

Why does all this matter? Because we live in and around buildings. Because cities belong to us. As Owen Hatherley writes: “His greatest book, *Nairn’s London*, was an impassioned cry to reign in thoughtless speculators, careless planners and compliant architects.” We pay

for them, whether through our taxes or through the products we buy.

If suburbia is Subtopia, what might Utopia look like? For men like Raymond Unwin, it meant decent houses – clean, bright and sanitary – for workers. Street layouts would encourage a sense of community, while a range of communal facilities such as “small laundries, baths, reading-rooms, and other such simple and easily managed co-operative efforts”. That from Unwin’s Fabian pamphlet but of course we all know where Fabianism took us – London overspill estates and New Towns with precious little in the way of play facilities for kids or recreational facilities for their parents.

Having lived and worked for some of my life in Roehampton, I am still irked by the Alton estates. It could have been lovely, but for many families it was hell. Started in the warm glow of post-war reconstruction, it became victim to 1950s Tory governments where the many principle of public housing was to keep the workers under control as cheaply as possible. Luxuries such as decent community centres, nurseries, health centres or craft workshops could wait.

More radically, Colin Ward has pointed us in the direction of the kind of buildings that ordinary people can build themselves, from sheds on allotment sites to the self-build

## THE ARTS

## THEY'RE SELLING POSTCARDS

The poetry community – the beast with many egos – was subjected to a right royal humiliation this week when 300 or so of its great and good were invited to Buckingham Palace for a champagne reception. Tuesday 19th November was the night poetry bowed its head. Maybe it's not such a big deal, a guild visiting a monarch? Next week it'll be the costermongers and the cordwainers. But as poetry is a part of public consciousness, this event registered on the literary Richter scale. To quote one poet who satirised the event, much "huffing and puffing" ensued, though not enough to blow the house down.

For some it was emotional. One poet, a Canadian, posted increasingly desperate blogs about how "sick at heart" he felt at not receiving an invitation. He even rang the Palace to check they hadn't sent the gold-embossed card to his previous address. He continued to post warmly pro-British, pro-monarchist blogs, perhaps hoping his self-abasement might elicit a late summons. He also compiled hubristic CVs reminding his readers of everything he'd done for contemporary British poetry. Though Canadian, he claimed to be British. It seemed he was cracking up online. By the time of the event he'd firmly established himself as the court fool in absentio. He claimed to know dozens of poets who felt the same as him. I cite this example to show how royalty messes with peoples heads. I feel sorry for any human being who looks up to monarchy, and for any Canadian who looks up to the British Empire. I felt ambivalently sorry for another English poet, an arch-royalist of mystical proportions, also uninvited.

Some poets, a tiny minority, publicly rejected their invitations. The *Morning Star* is planning an article about them. I look forward to reading it. I felt inordinately proud of a friend of mine who refused. A small step for an Englishman, a giant step for English poetry. Another less serious poet's refusal was unimportant; he may as well have gone. Some accepted in a spirit of fun, claiming to be Republicans but wishing to have a laugh, a network, free champers, a glance at the Rembrandts. The guests' exaggeratedly gracious manners, their

simpering acceptance of two hours of royal hospitality was as phony as their hosts' claims to superior status. Many poets were bitching about the Queen online before their moment of head-bowing nemesis, and immediately after.

For me, an Irishman, it was also emotional. I felt a Republican's sense of indignation to witness such toadying injustice, carried on in the name of the magical craft of poetry. There was no question of me being invited or of accepting the invitation, so I wasn't feeling hard done by or left out. My views are known, my poetry is anti-establishment. But the controversy itself wasn't exclusive. This was a circus I could participate in from outside the tent, a fascinating storm, an opportunity to air Republican views on Facebook to a British forum who have been conditioned from birth to worship their monarchy. It was more than a laughing matter. I couldn't help feeling stomach-churningly sincere, urgent as a zealot, an emotionally involved voyeur.

There are so many good reasons to turn down the Windsors' offer of hospitality. For starters, just look at them. As creatures, they're preposterous. The giant statues of lions outside Buckingham Palace imply power, but only serve to remind us how un-leonine the residents themselves are, with their elephantine ears, cootish bald gene and

equine females who champion horsemeat consumption. Interbreeding with the non-royal but beautiful Diana didn't help. The Saxon-Gothic-Cobras are beyond DNA help. (It would be graceless of me to criticise their physical appearances if we weren't forced to look at them everyday; but we are.)

Are you anti-war? One only has to think of their labyrinthine connections with the military-industrial complex.

Are you anti-hunt? One only has to think of the countless creatures they slaughter for sport.

Are you anti-greed? Let us try not to think of their mansions, art collections, jewellery, and bank balances.

Republicans don't hate royalty for the sake of it; we regard royalty as an instrument of social evil.

Defenders of the royals cite the Protestant work ethic and how hard-working the royals are. But what do they do for their £30m per annum (not including security costs)? They meet other people. Most people are not paid to meet other people. It's an unpaid part of living, sometimes a pleasure, sometimes a nightmare, never a job. For the Queen and her brood, however, it is one of the best paid jobs in the world. The Queen meets and meets and meets and meets and meets. The 'royal duties' are a social treadmill. So much so that the word 'meeting' ceases to be applicable. These are the shallowest, most



Photo © Max Reeves

## Review

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movement of the 1920s when men returning from the First World War, often traumatised by their experiences, built a wide variety of houses for themselves, often with land attached to feed their families. In doing so they were following a long tradition of rural squatting which Colin Ward described in his book *Cotters and Squatters* (also from Five Leaves). Squatting in urban areas has been an essential feature of how those who turn their back on the state have housed

themselves in more recent years, while co-operative 'self-build' is now a growing movement and even gets some official support (see <http://www.nasba.org.uk> for more details). Contrast to all this any television show you care to name about houses, in which this essential human need is metamorphosed into an adjunct of the corrupt and ineffectual housing market.

*Words in Place* does what Five Leaves social history books do best. They remind

us that many social problems recur through time, and that the solutions may not be exactly the ones proposed by governments. Sometimes we need to look no further than the end of our noses – what we are capable of if we can articulate our needs clearly and look beyond the market economy for answers.

Ian Nairn: *Words in Place* edited by Gillian Darley and David McKie, Five Leaves Publications, £10.99.

# OF THE HANDSHAKE

contrived, most short-lived, and most meaningless encounters a human being could experience. Nothing happens. No benefits are conferred. They are greetings not meetings, quantitative not qualitative interactions. Some are royally pawed, most are waved at. Ostensibly it is a reaching out, a gesture of goodwill, a touching of base by the pyramid-tip. It is PR, designed to win over the democratic will of the people. Nothing is as undemocratic as royalty and yet the Windsors care about opinion polls. The more people the royals paw and wave at, the more might vote for them if it ever came to a referendum. Republicans are a considerable 30% of the population. But the meeting and greeting is also business. The 'Kings Evil' has been commercialised. Why? Because the £30m they get for meeting people isn't enough.

It was genuinely painful to study the 1,000-odd photographs that were released online the day after the turkey-and-mango reception. The slideshow was temperature-lowering. Looking at it reminded me of certain horror movies where an innocent hero looks through the keyhole and sees all the villagers taking part in a grotesque cultic ceremony. One by one the poets sidle up to the 'Purple Mother', bow their subjective heads, shake her black begloved hand, swap a few sweet nothings, simper back at her iced smile, and shuffle off-lens. Invidious to see the safe establishment poets one loathes smarming thus, but distressing to see poets one admires doing so too. I was sad to see a gifted Irish poetess amid the throng. I could forgive a talented gay poet for whom 'Queen' is a multi-layered concept. He was one of only a dozen on the assembly-line that actually looked like poets.

The most obvious icon to be seen in these photos was the shopping-trolley beside the 'buy' button. The Queen was working, not meeting and greeting for 'visions of poesy', but pulling in money. Standing there shaking hands with hundreds of people was adding to the 17-Billion-Pound-Woman's personal assets. One poet who put a link to the images out on Facebook commented without irony: "Damn... I'm going have to buy a picture of myself shaking hands with the queen". A friend comments: "12 quid isn't bad for a picture with the queen". Another friend adds: "One for the wall that one!!!!". Here are the sleepwalkers. Needless to say, the poets themselves were not allowed to take photographs of the event; their cameras and phones had to stay in the cloakroom.

The corporate logo superimposed across the online snaps is bca. That stands for 'British Ceremonial Arts – By Appointment to Her Majesty'. If the thousand photos all sell one copy, that's about £10,000. Assuming that the poets, their extended families, as well as friends and fans might order copies, it could become a six figure sum. Even the mavericks will buy some for their auto-



Photo © Max Reeves

biographies and biographies. True, the royals will probably sell more photos when they open their house to the costermongers and cordwainers, but selling photos was the not-so-hidden agenda. The bca website is also selling photos of the 'Commonwealth Reception', the 'Queen Elizabeth Diamond Jubilee Trust Reception', the 'Youth, Education and the Commonwealth Reception', and the 'MPs and MEPs Reception' all of which took place at Buckingham Palace in October. The Queen – whose image is on every stamp, note, coin – is addicted to omnilocation and being the most photographed living woman must help her to self-replicate ad infinitum. She is also addicted to income, more a hologrammatic brand than a human being. Unlike Beckham, her sponsorship deals are covert.

The poets, in their subsequent blogs, have written individualistic accounts of their reasons for attendance, but none has admitted to the sheer herd instinct that corralled so many of them to SW1A. Did the few poets of genius present not realise that their bows were the subjection of poetry, an official sanction of the House of Windsor by the finest practitioners of the Queen's English? A deal is struck. Poetry endorses monarchy, monarchy co-opts poetry. Monarchy wishes to preserve itself and the courtly tradition of poetry. The poets wish to follow Shakespeare, to ascend to Anglo-Parnassus. When they follow the courtly route, like Ted Hughes and T.S. Eliot, they are affirming the British Establishment, imperialist, militarist, monarchist. They allow their genius to be co-opted so that the Establishment can say forever: "Eliot was with us, Hughes was with us; who are you to be against us?" The royals are not harmless *Spitting Image* puppets; they are powerful

plutocrats. They wish to, in the words of Hughes, "keep things like this". The ambitious poets are too concerned about their careers, the honours list, and a place in the literary canon to rock the boat. Even the already knighted Sir Geoffrey Hill turned up, clearly not wishing to offend the Queen by refusing, and joined the mock-democratic carousel; as well as ex-Laureate Andrew Motion who has become pilloried as 'the Prince Charles of English poetry.'

Shakespeare – the greatest poet in English, but also a serious Tudor propagandist – showed how profitable the deal could be, artistically and commercially. Edmund Spenser epitomised how it could all go pear-shaped. He wrote some of his epic homage to Elizabeth I, *The Faerie Queen* in a stolen Irish castle on stolen Irish land, a gift from the monarch. When Irish rebels burned him out of it, he came back to London a broken man, his child lost, his epic unfinished, and died within the year. He had "built on sand" as James Shapiro puts it.

The antidote is simple. Let's have a Republican poetry for a Republican country, a truth-telling art that is not interfered with by royalty. For Blake, princes were "fools... something else besides human life". He turned down opportunities at court because he valued his personal freedom too much, freedom to dress, think, speak as he wished, freedom from obsequiousness. It is worth remembering that his famous line about "mind-forg'd manacles" was revised. The original phrase was 'German forg'd links'. This is an allusion to the Hanoverian dynasty, the Georges, of whom the Queen is a direct descendant. Let us unfetter ourselves.

Niall McDevitt

SPORT

# World cup racism



## Racism and cultural terrorism at Brazil 2014

FIFA and other world cup organisers are being investigated in Brazil over claims of racism at the official World Cup draw in early December.

Despite being involved in every aspect of world cup publicity since the launch of

'Brazil 2014' over three years ago at an event in Johannesburg, many African-Brazilian individuals were dropped for the draw event – which had a world-wide audience – and replaced entirely by white individuals, who had previously had little or nothing to do with the event.

The state prosecutor for Sao Paulo has apparently received evidence to suggest that the changes were a deliberate decision. He has stated that he was “investigating several

complaints of racism against FIFA and the TV station hosting the draw event. Racism is a serious matter in Brazil. We need to find out if a crime was committed. We do not want the image of our people to be whitened or distorted.”

FIFA has denied any allegations of wrongdoing, claiming that, “FIFA’s stance against **page 19** ▶▶

## THE QUIZ

1. How did right wing Madrid mayor Ana Botella threaten striking privatised street cleaning workers?
2. As one of the most famous anarchist-communists in history, how has Nestor Makhno recently been dishonoured?
3. How did the Canadian Pacific Railway get built despite being nearly bankrupt in 1883?
4. Where does the term Jackanapes, meaning an impertinent or upstart person, come from? And what happened to the first person to be so-called?

Answers on page 20

The Anarchist Quiz Book by Martin Howard, illustrated by Paul Petard, is available for £5 post free.

