

WHO ARE SOUTH WALES ANARCHISTS?

South Wales Anarchists are a network of autonomous collectives who are against all forms of exploitation & bigotry. We engage in direct action against capitalism & government, spread information, & build resistance to create a world based on justice & freedom.



• Government & capitalism is chaos, pitting person against person, encouraging domination & exploitation to preserve inequality & privilege. Anarchism is order, delivering individual liberty & social equality through a system of voluntary cooperation without political, economic or social hierarchies.

Government & capitalism are not only undesirable, but also unnecessary. As anarchists we operate without hierarchy, co-operating on a basis of mutual aid & solidarity.

• The ruling class control & dominate all economic & political systems, through government & capitalism they use violence, & poverty to amass wealth & coerce everyone else into obedience.

Our enemy is the ruling class, embodied in institutions like the G8, WTO, states & corporations. We aim to confront their activities & defend personal freedoms.

• Parliaments cannot be reformed because representative systems are inherently undemocratic. Voting is not an expression of power, but an admission of powerlessness, since it just reaffirms the government's supposed legitimacy.

Whenever people resist, practice solidarity & organise without leaders, anarchism lives. We aim to strengthen these libertarian tendencies & help them however we can.

Check out: southwalesanarchists.org. Come to our fortnightly open meetings if you'd like to get involved. Contact: cardiffanarchists@riseup.net or gwentanarchists@yahoo.co.uk

Anarchism is a very diverse political theory with many different tendencies. Check out: anarchismfaq.org

Circulation: 8,000 - 4 times a year. **Distribution:** Willing to help? Get 15 copies delivered anywhere in south Wales to handout to friends & strangers. **Totally free.** **Funding:** We could really do with some! Please come to our benefit gigs, remember us in your will, or just give us some cash. Cheers.

Come across any corrupt politicians or councillors? Know of any bent coppers? Dodgy businessmen? Loan sharks? Any news of demonstrations or direct action you've taken part in? If you think Gagged would be interested, send the details to: cardiffanarchists@riseup.net Confidentiality assured.

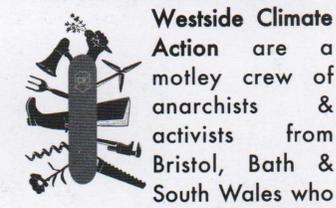
For more news like the kind you find in **GAGGED!**: indymedia.org, anarkismo.net, schnews.org.uk & libcom.org



No Borders South Wales is a collective of people, who organise against migration controls & for the freedom of movement for all. We work on a non-hierarchical, anti-authoritarian basis, using consensus decision making. Weekly meetings are on Thursdays at the Riverside Community Centre, Brunel Street, Cardiff at 7pm. noborderswales.org.uk



Cardiff Anarchist Black Cross is part of an international movement supporting the struggles of prisoners, & of anarchist & class struggle prisoners in particular. We believe in the total abolition of the prison system, not its reform. We are driven by solidarity & not charity. cardiffprisonersupport.tk



Westside Climate Action are a motley crew of anarchists & activists from Bristol, Bath & South Wales who organise a neighbourhood at the Camp for Climate Action as well as taking action all year round against the root causes of climate change. westsidedimateaction.wordpress.com

GAGGED!

SOUTH WALES ANARCHIST NEWSLETTER ★ #25 WINTER '08



these days belong to us all!

southwalesanarchists.org

"THESE DAYS BELONG TO ALL THE MARGINALISED, THE EXCLUDED, THE PEOPLE WITH THE DIFFICULT NAMES AND THE UNKNOWN STORIES..."

On Saturday 6th December at around 10pm two Greek policemen were on patrol in central Athens. They had an argument with some young people, during which one of the policemen pulled out his gun & shot 15 year-old Alexandros Grigoropoulos twice. He was later pronounced dead. Eye-witnesses report that the police officer had been swearing at Alexandros & showing his genitals, before shooting him. The murder has sparked angry riots throughout Greece. Hundreds of schools & universities are under occupation, radio & television stations have been hijacked. Banks & shopping malls, symbols of greed & corruption, have been attacked. The demonstrations are clearly about something more than the murder of an innocent young man. As an employees association in Agios Dimitrios, Athens stated: "His assassination was the straw that broke the camel's back". The international media have misrepresented the protesters as 'mindless thugs'. This is wrong. In the blink of an eye the Greek police snuffed out the life of a young man. Yet during two weeks of angry protests, the only thing that has been 'hurt' is the property of the rich & powerful. The thugs are the ones in uniform. The protesters include students, school children, workers, anarchists, migrants & the unemployed. People everywhere are waking up to the fact that governments do not care about them, but are willing to spend billions to prop up the very financial institutions which have caused so much damage to our lives. The ongoing demonstrations continue to be violently suppressed by the government who are using police brutality to attempt to control the uprising. Solidarity with Greek protesters is spreading like wildfire across the world. Demonstrations have taken place in Paris, Berlin, Melbourne, New York, St Petersburg, Madrid & throughout the UK including Cardiff. South Wales Anarchists support the protests & stand in solidarity with people everywhere who resist state violence & oppression. "Remember that it's always authority killing the people, it's always the powerful who kill the powerless" For independent, alternative news on the protests see: indymedia.org.uk

ID CARDS ARE HERE!

Biometric ID cards came into force for non-EEA students & spouses on 25th November. The UK Border Agency office at 31-33 Newport Road, Cardiff is one of only six registering centres in the country. No Borders South Wales protested there on the day ID cards came into force as part of a coordinated day of action outside every centre & also on the day the Cardiff office started the process of interrogation, photographing & fingerprinting. Both the protests were well attended, attracting well over 50 people each; we displayed banners, held placards, waved giant mock ID cards & distributed over 1000 leaflets. The public reaction was overwhelmingly supportive. These new ID cards are not only a repressive measure against non-EEA students & spouses, they are the first shot in an attack against everyone's liberty. This initial step by the UK authorities targets a largely voiceless migrant group, who have the least chance to complain & the most to lose. By using a cynical appeal to the worst kind of bigotry the government is following the example of repressive regimes throughout history. Immigration law already gives the Home Office powers it would like to exert over everybody. By resisting the repression of migrants, we defend the freedom of everyone!



ID cards are just one part of a wider plan to increase government regulation over all our lives. To reverse the waves of authoritarianism that currently dominate the political mainstream, we need to build a movement that is committed to universal freedom & rejects the legitimacy of state interference. It is up to everyone who cares about freedom & equality to organise to oppose these worrying trends

"ANTI-TERROR" STOP & SEARCH AT CARDIFF CENTRAL

The South Wales Echo has reported that armed cops are carrying out stop & searches under Section 44 of the terrorism act at Cardiff Central railway station. Section 44 of the Terrorism Act 2000 allows the coppers to stop & search anyone in a specific area. Before this law was introduced they could only stop & search individuals if they had "reasonable grounds" & certain criteria were met. This is no longer necessary, & in recent years we've seen these anti-terror powers used against anti-war, anti-climate change, & anti-capitalist protesters. Human Rights group Liberty still insist that, "the power to stop & search under anti-terrorism powers should only be used when there is evidence of a specific terrorist threat". But cops revealed the searches in Cardiff were not led by specific intelligence about a threat, & were instead a "routine" operation. Sergeant Alan Muggleton from British Transport Police said: "These operations are carried out as a matter of routine to make the railways as difficult a target for terrorist activity as possible. We hope that, as well as disrupting & deterring possible terrorist activity, it will also provide visible reassurance to the travelling public that the police are being vigilant for their safety." A spokesperson from British Transport Police underlined that this was not linked to any credible threat: "This is not intelligence-led & there is no reason to believe these areas are more at risk from terrorism than anywhere else. This is a routine operation the like of which British Transport Police carries out at various locations. It aims to disrupt & deter potential terrorist activity & we assure the public are being active in ensuring their safety." Just to translate from copese into English: "There's no specific terrorist threat in Cardiff, but we're going to patrol your streets with guns & search people's bags at random anyway, & there's nothing you can do about it!" We see the use of ever more draconian surveillance techniques as an invasion of our personal freedoms, & a blatant attempt to use an ill-defined yet seemingly ever-present "terrorist threat" as an excuse for the state to infringe on our everyday lives in increasingly invasive ways. The fact that they are done at random proves this. But even if you don't share this belief, anyone can see that sporadic random searches like this in different cities across the country are a singularly stupid way of trying to stop terrorism on the railways. Looking for terrorists at random in a crowd of commuters is at best like looking for a needle in a haystack, & at worst will end up with ignorant rozzers stopping disproportionately high numbers of young Asian men & further alienating this group (something the Islamic Human Rights Commission are clearly worried about). & if a terrorist wants to blow up a train they aren't going to try to do it in plain sight of armed police. They are far more likely to target a quiet secluded spot somewhere along the 1000s of miles of virtually unguarded track that lies outside the heavily policed metropolitan areas.



COPWATCH

Cardiff Cops "Bullied" Witness in Lynette White Case

A major witness in one of Wales's most notorious miscarriages of justice was "bullied" into lying by police, a court heard recently. Mark Grommek, a Cardiff man, initially said he knew nothing about the murder of prostitute Lynette White, who was stabbed more than 50 times on Valentine's Day, 1988. Later Grommek signed a statement which "he knew to be a tissue of lies" after what he called "bullying" by South Wales Police. His words led to three men being convicted of murder, although the conviction was later overturned.

The CPS is now reviewing the case again to see if it can bring charges against the cops involved, but how many more innocent people are in jail because of bully-boy tactics from Welsh rozzers?

I Spy...

Not content with spying on the public using CCTV & special anti-protest tactics, cops have started wasting public money by spying on their own officers!

South Wales Police wasted £100,000 keeping one of its own coppers under surveillance after it wrongly suspected he was faking post-traumatic stress disorder following a football riot. Eleven coppers were used to spy on Pc Mark Pugh, a dog handler, who said he'd feared for his life while policing a footie match. Pugh later became "severely depressed & even suicidal" claiming he couldn't work any more after being on the receiving end of some rough stuff at the hands of Cardiff City & Leeds United fans in 2002.

But the former rugby player was refused a full disability pension as South Wales Police suspected he was malingering. A special surveillance op was set up to keep watch over him at his home in Quakers Yard, near Merthyr. Eleven cops from two forces spied on him for months. Evidence gathered included footage of him watching rugby matches & putting the rubbish out! Dougie Woods, chief bean-counter for South Wales Police, tried to justify the expense: "As a publicly-funded organisation, the force has a duty to manage & reduce sickness levels. Sometimes, where there is concern about a person's prolonged sickness, we will investigate further."



LORD OF EXTORTION?

Who thinks this man is fit to be a councillor? Not Glenys Phillips, an 86 year-old disabled widow living in Ferndale, Rhondda, that's for sure. 'lord' Roberts of Trellech bought up the freehold property of her home for £6,350 three years ago without her knowledge & is now demanding up to £20,000 for the leasehold of the house she's been living in for 60 years. Mrs Phillips will just have to go on worrying about being evicted while the case is considered by the leasehold tribunal. That can take 18 months!

Julie Foster & others living in Peterstone Wentlooge, near Newport, may not be overjoyed to have Roberts 'lording' it over them either. Over the years Roberts has bought up 60 manorial titles, including that of Romney, which covers common land in & around Peterstone. Having paid £10,000 for the hereditary title at an auction, Roberts sent letters to residents, demanding sums of up to £45,000 in return for access to their homes across paths & verges - access they've enjoyed freely all their lives! The letter threatened litigation if villagers didn't cough up immediately. Housing officer Ruth Winstanley faced an £18,000 bill. "I was flabbergasted when I received the letter demanding I pay for the right to park my car in my own drive, I've never heard of such an outrageous thing in my life."

Julie Foster & her neighbours paid out £100,000 before the legal loophole was closed & Roberts handed a hefty bill for legal costs. A resident of Alstonefield, a village in the Peak District where Roberts tried a similar scam said:

"This is the 21st century & we feel trapped, prisoners on our own land."

The fishermen of West Wales certainly wouldn't consider Roberts fit to be their councillor after he tried to establish title to half the coastline of Pembrokeshire & exclusive fishing rights! Who's to say what fishermen would have been asked to pay? Fortunately, Roberts lost this case as well & earlier this year was handed another bill for hundreds of thousands of pounds, which may explain why he's now targeting vulnerable people like Mrs Phillips. Plaid Cymru, however, would be only too pleased to see Mr Roberts, dubbed the 'lord of extortion' by the press, in a position of authority. In fact, such is Plaid Cymru's faith in Mr Roberts' integrity & of his commitment to civic duty & social justice, that they backed him as the Plaid Cymru candidate in not one, but two council elections in St Athan in 2004 & Buttrills in the Vale of Glamorgan in 2008, where he finished 4th out of 6 candidates. Watch out for Mr Roberts at the next Welsh Assembly elections! A bright future as housing minister may be in the offing. Homeowners, check your leases now!



Lord Marcher of Trellech aka Mark Roberts aka Mark Andrew Tudor of Friar's Point, Barry Island; owner of Tactical Radio Hire, Trecader Court, Barry or would that be 11, Wayne Street, Trehafod?

'SHUT ITT!'

South Wales activists travelled to Brighton to take part in the 'Shut ITT' demonstration on 15th October 2008, which aimed to shut down the EDO MBM arms factory there. They joined 400 activists from around the country in this mass anti-militarist action.

EDO MBM Technology Ltd is owned by ITT, a US-based multinational arms dealer. They have contracts with the UK Ministry of 'Defence' & US arms giant Raytheon (see the article on St Athan) to supply the release mechanisms for the Paveway III guided bomb system. The Paveway bomb was the most commonly used munition in the 2003 'shock & awe' destruction of Baghdad & murder hundreds of thousands of innocent Iraqis. After four years of setbacks, Paveway IV is now in full production in the UK. EDO also makes components for tanks, helicopters & unmanned combat air vehicles. Research into the company has revealed direct links between its supply of Israeli F16 bomb release units, & war crimes committed by the Israeli military in the Occupied Territories.

Before the march moved off, police read out a 'Section 60' notice, used to enforce the removal of face coverings. A number of arrests were made at this early stage for failing to comply with the instruction & for obstructing police in their 'duty'. The 400-strong march then started on its way, with the aim of reaching the factory to protest. However, as the group approached the EDO factory, its progress was blocked by a large number of police. Attempts were made to break through police lines, only to be met with batons, pepper spray used at short range & cops in full riot gear. Half the protesters then took to an elevated wooded area, giving access to the rear of the factory. Along the way there were further skirmishes with cops & their dogs. Some of the police officers present, batons drawn, appeared to be provoking protesters. In spite of this repression, the back of the factory still got covered in red paint.

The protesters eventually managed to evade all police cordons & marched into the centre of Brighton. A substantial number of activists made a break into a park, the cops having lost control. A party on the beach followed after six hours of protest. There were 10 arrests, 4 houses searched & up to 20 protesters injured by police. see: smashedo.org.uk

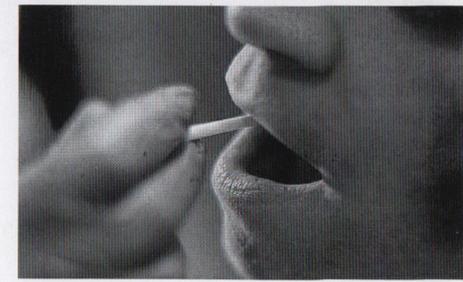


64,000 WELSH KIDS ON DNA DATABASE FOR LIFE

Plaid AM Bethan Jenkins has uncovered that 64,000 Welsh young people are now on the national DNA database - that's more than 1 in 5 people between the ages of 10 & 17! Are 1 in 5 of our kids criminals? Of course not. But Welsh cops have been on a DNA thieving-spree for the last 10 years, & have already doubled the number of people whose "genetic fingerprint" is being kept on record, irrespective of whether they've committed a crime.

Spurred on by a right-wing media which demonises young people as criminal hoodies, & aided by more than a decade of Blairite policies which have given the police unprecedented powers, the cops are now completely out of control. Those who agree with this biological identity theft say that it helps catch murderers & solve 'cold cases' - this just doesn't wash as an excuse to catalogue the DNA of children. The only reason for storing the DNA of so many innocent young people is the extension of our surveillance society, & normalising & extending state control over the lives of coming generations of adults. Last year there were more than 264,420 on the database overall; many are innocent & have never been charged with anything, but their sample will be kept for life. The annual number of samples taken by Welsh police forces was twice as high as in 2006-7 as it was a decade ago.

If you're interested in fighting back against Big Brother & the growing power of the police state come along to a meeting of the South Wales Anarchists, & we'll fight back together.



ST ATHAN SLAUGHTER SCHOOL PLANS UNRAVEL

Two years ago Westminster politicians, Ministry of Defence top brass & their cronies in big business were slapping each other on the back about a new military training academy in St Athan in the Vale of Glamorgan. In Wales first Minister Rhodri Morgan popped the champagne corks on the Senedd steps & the Welsh media crowed about a £14 billion contract & around 6,000 new 'high-quality' jobs. It's taken a while, but the plan is now unravelling as it becomes clear it'll be a complete failure.

South Wales anarchists have been saying this all along, of course. The deal would mean the privatisation of military training. The power to train soldiers, navy & airmen & women would be handed to a bunch of dodgy arms dealers who make up the Metrix Consortium; companies like Raytheon, who manufacture cluster bombs which kill thousands of civilians. We talked to the unions representing those who train the army & found out most of the instructors were against it, too. They didn't want to move to St Athan, & they didn't want to work for private companies.

Researchers looked at the jobs claims & found out that the 6,000 figure was pie in the sky - most of the 'new' jobs would be relocated from other parts of the UK & the small number left over for locals would be low-skilled service jobs such as cooking & cleaning up after trainees.

We went to the Vale & talked to residents & found out there'd been no proper consultation & that hardly anyone had any idea of the scale of the new academy. They had no idea that St Athan would be turned into a massive garrison town through which every new member of the UK's armed forces would pass.

Slowly, everyone else seems to be catching up with us! A string of setbacks has meant that the project looks in danger of going under. The lucrative 'phase 2' of the project was scrapped much to the annoyance of its supporters. Staff at the Open University, who are involved with the consortium of 'defence firms' behind the project, have started to complain about consorting with such scum. The scheme is running over budget with the price rising from £11bn to £12bn & senior MOD officials have joined opposition in the rank & file, one senior general describing it as 'Alice in Wonderland'. A top air force officer complained that allowing companies to profit from military training would lead to cost-cutting & would put UK forces in danger. Tory MP Mark Pritchard has said that moving training from RAF Cosford to St Athan 'would put frontline operations at risk' & others have questioned how realistic the plans are. &, most damaging, the MOD's senior defence training review board has voiced serious concerns about the viability of the plans, suggesting it is not affordable, & it poses 'intolerable' risks. This time, we actually quite like saying 'we told you so'!



COPWATCH

Cardboard Copouts!

The Vale of Glamorgan's bonkers bobbies have revealed the latest weapon in the fight against crime - life-sized cop-shaped cardboard cut-outs! The two-dimensional police officers are to be placed in the windows of businesses to deter criminals, & if successful, the scheme could be rolled out across South Wales.

So far Vale police has five cut-outs, which cost around £100 each to produce & will be put in petrol stations & supermarkets where shoplifting has been a problem in the past. A previous scheme in Derbyshire has not been very successful - the cardboard cops themselves were stolen! CCTV captured a man carrying one out of a Co-op store in Long Eaton after paying for his shopping at the till. The theft has not been solved. Welsh cop, Sergeant Matt Rowlands said: "We hope that, at a glance, thieves think the image is a real officer. We believe they will act as a deterrent & that will free up staff to deal with more serious crimes."

One rule for us...

A South Wales police officer arrested on suspicion of drugs offences in 2007 is still suspended on full pay. Two rozzers were arrested in September last year but it's already been decided not to press charges, & one of them is still getting his full pay-packet while putting his feet up at home. Top cop Stuart Anderson, head of the force's professional standards department, said: "The CPS has decided no criminal charges will be brought against either of the two officers. Any criminal or gross misconduct allegations against police officers are, as a matter of course, viewed very seriously & in this particular case a full & thorough investigation has been conducted by the South Wales Police professional standards department." We don't speak fluent Cop-ese but we think this translates as something like: "Don't you realise this is a police officer we're talking about here? The same rules don't apply to us, don't you know? I can confidently predict the whole thing will be swept under the carpet in a couple of months once the newspapers have lost interest."

