

A BRIEF HISTORY OF S.W.A

South Wales Anarchists grew out of the 2003 movement against the war in Iraq. A small group of individuals in Cardiff discovered a shared passion for direct action and a frustration at the passive and disempowering politics of the authoritarian left. We resolved to take matters into our own hands and for our opening action we occupied the Welsh Assembly - the first time it had been shut down by protesters. As Bush and Blair dragged us to war, our actions escalated from blocking roads to shutting down RAF Fairford and carrying out "weapons inspections" at local arms factories.

Initially we called ourselves Cardiff Anarchist Network (CAN) because we found different people had different priorities. We began to explore our affinities with other struggles for justice in the world. We adopted a total rejection of militarism, with direct action against arms fairs. We carried out actions in support of persecuted trade unionists in Colombia. We've attended anti-G8 demonstrations across Europe, taking an active role in the Dissent Network when the G8 came to Scotland and we were there on April 1, 2009 at the G20 protests. We threw our weight behind campaigns against ecological destruction which causes climate change, such as the Blackwood bypass and the LNG pipeline, and taking an active role in the creation of the Camp for Climate Action. At the centre of all of these struggles we recognised capitalism as the force that is destroying our world, and government as its enforcer. Over time new anarchist groups started in Gwent and the Rhondda, eventually regrouping with CAN under one banner: South Wales Anarchists. We refocused our energy on propaganda efforts, with our victorious "Vote Nobody" campaign during the 2007 Welsh assembly elections, Gagged! newsletter, and now the first Anarchist Bookfair in Cardiff. Yet on the ground we still come up with our own responses to repression - witness the inspiration that the Fitwatch campaign, partly born out of police harassment of South Wales activists, has brought to recent demonstrations.

Fundamentally, though, South Wales Anarchists are just a bunch of people who care enough about the injustices in this world to fight back. If that sounds like you, why not come and talk to us?

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.



South Wales Anarchists

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



No Borders South Wales
organising for freedom of movement and equality for all.
noborderswales.org.uk

Cardiff Anarchist Black Cross
supporting prisoners & of anarchist & class struggle prisoners in particular.
cardiffprisonersupport.tk

Other news:
libcom.org,
anarkismo.net,
schnews.org.uk,
wombles.org.uk,
indymedia.org.uk,
earthfirst.org.uk,
indymedia.org,
qintfos.ca



FITwatch
oppose the tactics of the police
FIT teams who harass protestors.
fitwatch.org.uk

Westside Climate Action
taking action against the root causes
of climate change.
westsideclimateaction.wordpress.com

GAGGED!

South Wales Anarchist Newsletter | #27 May '09 | Free

CARDIFF ANARCHIST BOOKFAIR

SATURDAY 23RD MAY 10AM - 6PM



AT CATHAYS COMMUNITY CENTRE,
36 CATHAYS TERRACE, CF24 4HX
SOUTHWALESANARCHISTS.ORG/BOOKFAIR

FREE
IN MORE WAYS
THAN ONE

ALSO IN THIS ISSUE: Mayday in Cardiff, War in the Vale, Police Violence and protest reports. **SOUTHWALESANARCHISTS.ORG**

CARDIFF ANARCHIST BOOKFAIR - AS MUCH LIKE A PARTY CONFERENCE AS A FULL SCALE RIOT IS TO A PEACE MARCH!

On 23rd May Cardiff will have its first anarchist bookfair. We'd really like all Gagged! readers to come along and bring your friends! As this issue is being printed only a few weeks before the bookfair, perhaps you're there right now and if so, welcome!

There's lots going on with a complete programme of talks and workshops that we encourage people to attend. However, many of the more important conversations happen away from these spaces; in the main hall, across stall tables or even in the pub down the road. We hope that connections (or re-connections) made between activists here will produce lots of new projects or give added impetus to existing ones.

Bookfairs stand as the anarchist movement's shop window and a main gathering space. This will be the first chance in many years to gauge the interest and popularity of the anarchist ideal in South Wales. Whatever the outcome of the day, it will represent a new chapter of anarchist activity in these parts. We hope you'll be part of that future.

ROOM 1

10.00 - 11.00 Building Links In Radical News.

A skill share on setting up and maintaining a local radical newsletter, and setting up a central resource directing people to their relevant local news source, on or off the net.

11.00 - 12.00 Who are South Wales Anarchists?

Your hosts for the day give you their take on anarchism, how it works in practice here in South Wales and how to get involved.

12.00 - 13.00 Cardiff Anarchist Black Cross

A workshop on why we should abolish prisons given by this new local group in conjunction with Communities of Resistance.

13.00- 14.00 Let 'em all in! - The politics of No Borders

No Borders South Wales will examine the human impact of migration control and will highlight the relevance of the No Borders position in terms of community solidarity, opposing social control and the payback of imperialism.

14.00 - 15.00 PPS-UK present a vision for a participatory society

What kind of institutions do we need for a more participatory society? This workshop goes beyond rhetoric to put forward concrete suggestions for more participatory institutions.

15.00 - 16.00 Towards a Popular Education Network for Wales.

If you're on the giving or receiving end of the education system, come and share your experiences and see how revolutionary ideas can move forward in the classroom and beyond. Featuring members of the Trapeze Collective and others.

16.00 - 17.00 Anarchism and Ireland.

On the 25th anniversary of the Workers' Solidarity Movement, two members give a short history of anarchism in Ireland and an overview of the movement today.

ROOM 2

10.00 - 11.00 How to get a computer for free and stay secret.

Does exactly what it says on the tin!

11.00 - 12.00 London Coalition Against Poverty.

LCAP brings together activists, advice workers and campaigning groups in order to tackle the causes and effects of poverty, merging advice work, direct action and libertarian organising. Come and hear about their "Direct Action Casework" approach.

12.00 - 13.00 Industrial Workers of the World.

The IWW is a union unlike any other. It is grassroots, democratic and militant, seeking to organise ALL workers in ALL industries in ALL countries. Now it's setting up in Wales.

13.00 - 14.00 Smash EDO.

Bob Nicholls gives the lowdown on the campaign against the Brighton-based arms manufacturer, whose "arms decommissioners" recently caused a quarter of a million pounds worth of damage to the EDO factory. Followed by an anti-militarism discussion.

14.00 - 15.00 Revolutionary Anarchism

A talk by anarchist documenter Nick Heath.

15.00 - 16.00 F@ck Greece - fight here!

Reports from the frontline of the recent uprising in Greece and what it means for people here.

16.00 - 17.00 FITwatch.

The Forward Intelligence Team (FIT) are cops who film and harass protestors at demos and actions. FITwatch are activists who turn the tables on them.

17.00 Open Mic

Weather permitting this will be outside, otherwise it'll be in the main hall. All anarchists welcome to spew forth!

19.00 - late. Post-Bookfair Party!

There will be an evening of entertainment and music just down the road in Cathays Liberal Club (3 minutes walk from the bookfair venue) with Spanner (Anarcho ska-punk), KilnAboy (Anarcho folk-punk), Tracey Curtis (Anarcho singer-songwriter) and Mab Jones (Anarcho poet). Entry will be five pounds and all the cash will go to paying for the bookfair!



The main hall will feature stalls from a whole host of groups and collectives selling books, magazines, DVDs, pamphlets, CDs, T-shirts and lots more! -

AK Press - Anarchist publishers & distro - akuk.com
Anarchist Federation - Anarcho-communist organisation - afed.org.uk

Autonomea - radical publishers - autonomea.org

Bath Activist Network - coalition of progressive activists in Bath - bathactivistnetwork.blogspot.com

Bristol Anarchist Black Cross - Prisoner solidarity group - bristolabc.wordpress.com

Bristol Antifa - Militant anti-fascism - antifa.org.uk

Class War - infamous anarchist group - londonclasswar.org

Communities of Resistance - Campaign against Prisons - co-re.org

Fitwatch - confronting the police who harass protesters - fitwatch.blogspot.com

Haven Books - Books to Prisoners - havendistribution.org.uk

Industrial Workers of the World - Syndicalist Trade Union - iww.org.uk

Kebele Social Centre - Bristol's Radical Social Centre - kebelecoop.org

Last Hours - Punk Rock and radical culture magazine - lasthours.org.uk

London Coalition Against Poverty - direct action casework in the fight for rights - lcap.org.uk

Mute Magazine - magazine exploring culture and politics after the net - metamute.org

Natterjack Press - radical book publishing and distribution collective - natterjackpress.co.uk

No Borders South Wales - Radical migration activists - noborderswales.org.uk

Project for A Participatory Society - network committed to progressive social change - ppasuk.org.uk

Schnews - Weekly direct action newsletter - schnews.org.uk

South Wales Anarchists - your hosts for the day - southwalesanarchists.org

South Wales Hunt Saboteurs - direct action against bloodsports - myspace.com/swansear

Swansea Palestine Solidarity - Support for Palestinians - swanseaactionforpalestine.blogspot.com

Undercurrents - non-profit company covering the counterculture - undercurrents.org

Voices of Resistance from Occupied London - anarchist publication covering the antagonistic social movement - occupiedlondon.org

Workers' Solidarity Movement - Anarchist organisation from Ireland - wsm.ie

News roundup..

Under the leadership of south Wales secretary, Clive Bennet (right) from Swansea, the BNP are on the march, gearing up for possible victory in the forthcoming European elections which will net them hundreds of thousands of pounds.

They've turned up in Newport, Swansea, Port Talbot and, more recently, in Abergavenny, peddling their racist lies. Rather than just hand out leaflets, South Wales Anarchists are committed to confronting and removing these scum from our streets. Join us...

UNITE Union Convenor Rob Williams was sacked on 28 April by the car manufacturer LINAMAR. Rob is well known in Swansea as a militant trade unionist. Over 100 workers walked off the assembly line in solidarity with Rob's action as he barricaded himself into his office. LINAMAR is a Canadian Multi-National Corporation who on their website describe themselves as 'the employer of choice', but are known to be virulently anti-union.

Rob has been very active in the campaign for the sacked Visteon car parts workers and has recently visited all three of their plants. His sacking is corporate revenge for his role in this struggle. The Visteon Unite convenors are demanding that Rob be reinstated and they, alongside many others, are calling on Unite joint general secretary Tony Woodley to back the immediate reinstatement of Rob. To contact Rob Williams:

robbo@redwills.freeseerve.co.uk

Following the ridiculous arrest of the 'Tesco two' from the Swansea Action for Palestine group, on suspicion of 'conspiring to commit racially aggravated criminal damage' (Gagged! 26), charges have only been dropped against Greg Wilkinson. D. Murphy is still due to go on trial on 6th July 2009. Hopefully the trial will highlight the unlawfulness of 'West Bank' goods being sold in the UK. For more information on the case, check out: swanseaactionforpalestine.blogspot.com

No Borders

South Wales held a demonstration outside the UK Border Agency at 31-33 Newport Road, Cardiff on Friday 17th April to coincide with a protest in Geneva against deportations to Iraq by the International Federation of Iraqi Refugees.

No Borders South Wales were again active on 29th April with a protest on Cardiff's Queen Street, against the mass deportation of Nigerians via an 'ethnic charter flight', which though prohibited under the European Declaration of Human Rights is lawful in the UK.

There is a number of public events, gigs and protests over the next two months in the lead up to the No Border Camp in Calais, including a benefit gig on tuesday 9th June in the Meze, Newport featuring Threat Manifesto, The Nukes, all the details: The Melophobes, The Vendettas and Clay Statues only £3. As ever all the details are at noborderswales.org.uk



PROTESTORS GO FREE

When police struggled to arrest a protester at a demonstration against the Israeli Ambassador's visit to the Welsh Assembly last June, three cops alleged assault. One said he'd been given a kick in the balls, another that he'd had his wrist scratched, a third that someone had pulled on his arm. Three people were arrested (Gagged! 26).

But what came out of the court case, as the CCTV showed, was that it was the protesters who had been assaulted. They had behaved, according to the District Judge, entirely lawfully. Despite this the three defendants were pushed and shoved across the road, one was swung around by her arm, another thrown to the floor.

Why? There were 'concerns' the officers said, but none of them could explain further. PC Cook said he 'feared a breach of the peace'. But he could not tell us why he feared such a thing. 'I had reasons,' he said, 'but I don't think I can tell you what they were.'

It was not enough to convince the District Judge who threw the case out because the police had not proved they were acting lawfully.

PC Cook's 'reasons' were based on an 'intelligence briefing' received by all officers that day. But despite repeated requests from the defence, the contents of this briefing were never revealed.

This is further evidence that the police keep secret files on protesters, and that they use this 'intelligence' (that even defence lawyers are not allowed to see) to justify assault and arrest. Other material that was disclosed shows that at least half a dozen others were identified at the protest and placed under surveillance, one of them having the movements of his car monitored after he'd left the protest.

Protesters are not criminals or terrorists, and should not be treated as such. It's about time the police came clean about what information they keep on their files and how they use it.



SMASHING THE KETTLE

One of the most important points to be made about the policing of the G20, other than the attempted cover up of the death of Ian Tomlinson, is the fact that heavy handed policing is not uncommon. Events such as the climate camp, the G8 summit protests and, more recently, the protests against the blockade and invasion of Gaza have all been met by brutality from the police, resulting in injuries to protesters.

Throughout the G20 demonstrations there were baton charges and aggravation by the police, who claimed that their policing was a response to the violence initiated by protesters. As many who attended would agree, this was not the case. After being penned into a kettle, without food, water or toilets, tempers are clearly going to rise. Even so, it was not the protesters who initiated the violence. Standing on Threadneedle Street in front of police lines, in a huge crush of people, we noticed the police starting to advance, though quite where they thought we'd go was anyone's guess. When they met with the slightest resistance, they drew batons and lashed out. This provoked a response from those in danger of being hit and ultimately turned a peaceful protest into the scenes witnessed later on.

On the other hand, one of the biggest successes for protesters that has not been reported was the effectiveness of group action. Soon after our arrival at the Bank of England, it was clear the police were trying to pen us in. A group of 20-30 protesters, wearing masks (to both conceal their identity and as a show of solidarity to make it difficult to apprehend specific people) formed a square block and walked quickly into police lines, in a non-violent manner, to assert their right to move freely. It worked to great effect. With the police not yet organised and caught unaware, 75% of the group made it out of the cordon before the police could reform. Despite the attempts by the police, those remaining managed to prevent any arrests being made.

This minor action shows the importance of working together and quick decision making in protests. If we as activists don't like the tactic of kettling, it is not up to us to wait for any authority to prevent it; we need to take matters into our own hands. Working as a group is extremely effective and using directly confrontational actions can produce excellent results, as shown by those who broke out of the block and didn't have to spend the day trapped in a cordon.



MAYDAY

More than 50 people gathered outside Cardiff central police station to protest against police violence this Mayday in the wake of the death of Ian Tomlinson, who died during the G20 demonstrations after being struck by a baton and pushed to the ground by a member of the territorial support group (TSG). The protest was a lively one, lasting about two hours, with music and singing throughout the demonstration. There was a mix of protesters from a cross section of the radical political scene in South Wales, with representations from all the local anarchist groups and Socialist parties, as well as campaigners for peace, social justice, human and animal rights.



WAR IN THE VALE

South Wales Anarchists attempted to disrupt this year's Aerolink Wales, a major aerospace and defence fair, held at The Vale Hotel and Spa near Hensol on 7th April.

While members of the Red Choir, the Campaign Against the Arms Trade, CND and Stop the War maintained a presence in a designated area at the front of the hotel, local anarchists approached the doors in order to gain access. However, they were prevented from doing so by police officers who described the group as 'hardcore activists' trying to 'storm' the building.

A police evidence gatherer filmed activists closely and became confrontational when protesters began to block him getting pictures. The officer was then instructed to put his camera away so as not to cause a scene! Erm, too late: the line of police at the entrance and the officers and police vehicles around the 4 Star facility had probably not gone unnoticed by its guests.

Leaflets were given to hotel guests and visitors, explaining that companies which supply the Israeli army, who killed an estimated 1500 people in recent attacks on Gaza, were showing off their wares and cutting deals in their hotel. Many were shocked and upset to learn what was happening in the hotel and made complaints to the manager. One guest took a number of leaflets back into the hotel to give out to other customers while another told us that when she asked hotel staff what the event was about, she was told they weren't allowed to tell her!

Despite being informed that we were trespassing and being asked to leave by a nervous hotel manager, apparently under instruction from the police, we continued to ensure that anyone going in or out of the hotel knew that profiteers from war were doing business in their hotel.

Meanwhile, as all police attention was focused at the front of the hotel, they totally missed posters and 'blood' covered dolls being left inside the hotel in protest against this Welsh Assembly supported arms fair. Doh! We think Aerolink 2010 may be actively looking for a new venue...



RAGE AGAINST WAR

South Wales Anarchists joined up to 2000 people from around the UK in Brighton on May 4th for the largest demonstration to date against Brighton based 'EDO/MBM' bomb component factory, organised by Smash EDO.

The MayDay Mayday Street Party against war, the arms trade and capitalism was a lively and colourful march that started at Brighton's sea front. It continued through the town and paid visits to a number of local branches of multi-national corporations, including McDonalds, RBS, HSBC and Lloyds which invest in ITT, the corporation which owns EDO.

Compared with previous EDO demos, policing was relatively hands-off initially, without the usual attempt by police to cordon every man, woman, child or dog in sight. However, batons and pepper spray were used on activists during the day as riot police attempted to control the march and activists successfully repelled mounted police a number of times. Of course, the police 'Forward Intelligence Teams' were present but were forced to retreat behind police lines as FIT- watching activists made their job of intrusively filming protesters more difficult.

It seemed that many activists had learnt from the G20 protests and refused to be drawn into long fights with the police. Activists instead found alternative routes and kept moving around the streets when unable to break through police lines quickly, outwitting the cops and leaving them stranded waiting for orders. At one point the cops themselves were 'kettled' (penned in) thanks to protesters' quick thinking. The demonstrators' refusal not to be kettled or subjected to violence by the police meant that officers were often surrounded and outflanked.

Towards the evening, as the march appeared to retire to the park by St. Peter's church and just as riot police had storm-trooped away, the party took to the streets again taking us all by surprise! The streets were again re-claimed by activists and local young people, running through the streets of Brighton, through the Pavilion and back towards the beach for more partying.

Many felt that the police were on the back-foot at this time since the G20 protests and due to the associated bad press officers received for their tactics. While the police may have been aware of the public eye upon them and tried to behave themselves a bit more on this occasion, the fact is that the police continue to protect private corporations who profit from war and death; meeting resistance to this with violence and repression. While slightly less violent and oppressive policing may be an improvement, better still would be no police at all and the complete freedom to shut down EDO and all corporations who are responsible for the continuation of the bloody war machine. More info: smashedo.org.uk

NO BORDER CAMP CALAIS

No Borders UK and activists in France are organising a No Border Camp in Calais on 23-29th June, to take action against the border controls there. Large numbers of migrants live in an illegal refugee camp known as 'the jungle' as they wait to make the dangerous journey across the channel to the UK. There is constant harassment from French police who use tear gas and violence on a daily basis. No Borders South Wales will be organising transport, get in touch if you'd like to travel with us. To find out more check out calaisnoborder.eu.org and come along to our free awareness raising event on Thursday 4th June in O'Neils, Trinity Street Cardiff - films, talks and music from Tracey Curtis and Cosmo.



COPWATCH

On 12 February 2009, as a police helicopter hovered overhead, four heavily armed cops raided the Grangetown home of jazz musician Victor Frederick, 63, (right) his partner, Andrea Heath and their 12 year-old daughter. Ms Heath described what happened:



"I heard some scuffling sound and shouting. When I opened the door there were four police officers armed with machine guns which had infra-red sights.

"The whole street had been cordoned off. I could see Victor in his underpants outside with police training guns on him. Other officers trained their guns on me. I was told I would be shot if I moved. It was absolutely terrifying.

"Our daughter was upstairs. She told me later that she had a camera and thought about taking pictures of the police activity and commotion. It's awful to think what might have happened if the police had seen a camera flash from the upstairs window and assumed it was a gun."

Mr Frederick was arrested under suspicion of possessing materials likely to be used for making explosives and hauled off to Rumney nick where he was held for 24 hours before being released without charge.

In a published letter to Barbara Wilding, South Wales chief cop, Plaid Cymru AM Leanne Wood wrote: "When [Mr Frederick] asked for [handcuffs] to be loosened, he tells me they were deliberately tightened to the extent that he was in extreme pain and circulation was cut off.

"He tells me that the police officers armed with machine guns appeared extremely nervous. They did not seem to have any background knowledge of why they were there. Other officers both in uniform and in plain clothes said they did not know what was going on... The family feels lucky and relieved that all three members are alive."

And just what suspicious material did the cops find in Mr Frederick's recording studio? A Mohammed Ali boxing video and a west Indian drink called mauby.

Mr Frederick received a hand-delivered letter from Superintendent Bob Tooby, Deputy Divisional Commander of C Division, offering the family an unreserved apology. Bob has also offered to repair the damage the cops did to the family's home.

South Wales police have reluctantly decided to launch an investigation into the incident, but, given that it will be carried out by the cops themselves, we're not expecting anyone to be brought to book for this appalling crime, which has left the family deeply traumatised.

Our advice to Mr Frederick? Sue Barbara Wilding and her thugs for every penny you can get! South Wales cops are out of control. We wonder how many other people have been terrorised by them and how many more will suffer at the hands of these people in "authority" who are meant to "serve" the community...