1886 - 2014

Freedom Is Dead.

Long Live Freedom!

The future of Freedom inside this final edition...
THE END OF FREEDOM?

ALTHOUGH THIS IS THE LAST PRINT EDITION OF FREEDOM, a newspaper with a significant legacy, it does not mean it is the end.

The reasons for closing the paper are more fully discussed in the ‘Transforming Freedom’ article across the page, and, needless to say, when the decision to close Freedom came the voting on the collective was overwhelmingly in favour of closure.

Of course this is not the end of Freedom’s news output, but instead the beginning of a new chapter in the next few weeks focus will be placed squarely our news website. This has been a long time coming, Freedom has undoubtedly lagged behind other anarchist groups in building and maintaining a web presence. It allows us to publish content that is more up to date, more frequent and more focused. An occasional free sheet will be produced, collating the best of our website, to be distributed at demonstrations, meetings and on the street.

Freedom was founded as a resource for the entirety of the anarchist movement, not tied to a particular organisation. As we navigate this change, we will need your help. We want to represent a broad range of anarchist news, opinions and discussions. The collective is a tool to be used by all anarchists, and although we say goodbye to part of our past in this issue, we are looking towards what we hope is a brighter future.

Freedom was founded as a resource for the entirety of the anarchist movement, as we migrate online this ideal is still in place.

Freedom Newspaper is also intrinsically linked, of course, with the Freedom Bookshop. Although we are the editors of the Newspaper, we are also both regular volunteers in the shop. The last 18 or so months have been quite a journey for the Bookshop. Since the firebombing that occurred on 01/02/2013, the rebuilding of the downstairs shop has been a gradual process and it is finally looking in great shape again! We would like to take this opportunity in our editorial to extend our thanks to all those who have helped us with the rebuilding effort. Your time, energy and enthusiasm has been a gift, and embodies the spirit that allows Freedom to continue to operate as space that provides safety and support to those who seek us out.

We have also been busy over the summer having moved upstairs. As a result we have a successful launch party for our new website, which included a rather popular anarcho-quiz with prizes! We also had a great barbecue to launch our sale, which is still going on (the sale not the barbecue unfortunately). On the horizon there’s a party to mark one hundred years on from us kicking Kropotkin OUT of Freedom (check out the piece on page 8 for more information) so make sure you get yourself down to Angel Alley and join in the fun.

THE IMPORTANCE OF AFEM

An absolutely essential part of anarchism is identifying and dismantling hierarchies of power. The pro-active discussion of the importance of feminism within anarchist movements is a vital ingredient of progress.

The conference offers a variety of sessions that focus on topics such as organising, disability and Anarcha-Feminism on an international scale, with sessions on Latin America and the Middle East, and is open to those who directly experience gender oppression. The events of last year’s Anarchist Bookfair show the need for pro-active discussion of the importance of feminism within anarchist movements.

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Politically this has produced a shift. Comrades got involved with Freedom who were already active in the anarchist milieu and whose positions weren’t to the “Freedom Group” but to anarchism in general. This produced a consequential shift to a “journal of anarchist socialism”, the subtitle of the very first issue of Freedom in 1886, and away from the evolutionary and liberal view Freedom had represented since the 1950s.

Since 2001 Freedom has been run by a collective while the building owning company are the Friends of the Friends of Freedom Press.

The results have been manifold: the shop has been moved downstairs, doubling turnover and rooms above let. All the activities of Black Flag and the City Action Network are now run by an Advisory Squatters. Corporatewatch, Haven Distribution and London Coalition against Poverty have shared an office with Softed and Afed. Perhaps more importantly Freedom is no longer a paper in the hands of people with private incomes. This means no more slick publishing anthologies of personal photo collections, or the shop being controlled by someone who can volunteer all the time because they’ve got a trust fund. As a building, it is a publishing house, radical meeting space, drop in legal advice centre and general anarcho-hang-out it has gone from strength to strength. But what about the Paper?

In the Anarchist Bookfair 2009 edition of Freedom the then editors flagged up their strategy for the future of the paper. The core of this was having Freedom as a non-sectarian organ distributed by all anarchists, national federations and by independent local and campaigning groups. The paper is now published forward as a pan-movement theoretical magazine- the hope being that selling copies at stalls and demos could be combined with local fliersheets. To sum up, the editorial said:

“Freedom to achieve its aims, the Anarchist Movement needs to distribute

TFPP

FROM ITS REVIVAL IN 1945 THRU TO THIS DEATH IN 2001 FREEDOM WAS IN EFFECT THE PERSONAL Fief OF VERNON RICHARDS.

“Vero” was certainly a controversial character in the anarchist movement but to his credit he left Freedom, inadvertently perhaps, in the control of the active anarchist movement. Since 2001 Freedom has been run by a collective of the then editors members while the building is owned in trust by different comrades by way of a holding company called Friends of Freedom Press.

Politically this has produced a shift. Comrades got involved with Freedom who were already active in the anarchist milieu and whose positions weren’t to the “Freedom Group” but to anarchism in general. This produced a consequential shift to a “journal of anarchist socialism”, the subtitle of the very first issue of Freedom in 1886, and away from the evolutionary and liberal view Freedom had represented since the 1950s.

With all praise to the few individuals who carried on selling the paper to the very end, this proved impossible. Leaving aside the practical problems of a newspaper that was never new (a consequence of the printing/offset process- more than shortage of good contributors) very few people wanted to distribute it. Anecedotally those comrades who subscribed were doing it largely because they felt they were “supporting” the paper- which was losing money at a rate of around £7,000 a year. Moving to a monthly in 2010 cut this to around £3,000 but this was a retrograde step to stave off the inevitable. Towards the end of 2011 it was clear that the paper couldn’t continue bar a miracle and we paid redundancy to our layout/admin person before we ran out of money.

Then on the 1st February 2012 we got firebombed! The Fash to the rescue! We were inundated by donations and offers of help and though it was a great strain we were able to come out over as an obvious defeat if the far right could claim they had shut it down. However there was one thing that people couldn’t help with after the fire: selling the paper. What’s more people on the Freedom Collective didn’t have the facility to find anyone in the movement. Although many people applied, only one turned out to be an anarchist! Short of becoming a radical media magazine and apply for arts council funding we decided to wrap up the print version and go online.

When the Freedom Collective decided to stop the print version of the paper many of us thought it would cause a shitstorm in our already troubled movement. We were considering a big meeting at the Bookfair to explain why we had given up the last print edition of Freedom newspaper in Britain and foregone £10,000 a year’s worth of free printing, courtesy of Aldgate Press. The Movement was defenestrated. Roughly 30 out of 225 paids up members replied and one person came to a monthly Freedom meeting to find out why.

The movement had voted with its feet, and it was not by shuffling them along to the next meeting. We didn’t sell papers. Never mind. Kropotkin might have started it but we fucking finished it!
ON THE 7TH OF OCTOBER 2014, UNDER THREAT OF PHYSICAL EVICTION FROM NEWHAM COUNCIL, I helped the last of four vacant Focus E15 mums to occupy the block and seal it up to prevent others in need from calling the flats their homes.

This is unacceptable at the best of times, and is factories and running them without bosses. It is being morally criminal at a time when community members shown in resistance to mining and fossil fuels everywhere. A non-Carpeters Estate alone has at least extraction by both Indigenous peoples and sets up four hundred unoccupied flats within its boundaries, and down the Americas, where communities are shunted and rotting, just as 80-86 Doran Walk will be kept their land and water from being poisoned by allowing yesterday’s eviction. While the mums – and a few community left 80-86 Doran Walk this morning and watched contracted security guards re-occupy the block and seal it up to prevent others in need from calling the flats their homes.

The Focus E15 mums have reminded us that unjust laws can’t stop us from coming together to meet our collective needs.

Some glimmers of hope in a sea of despondency!

Since squatting residential properties in England and Wales was criminalised in September 2012, we have unsurprisingly seen squatting significantly reduced in London, where much of it used to take place. It’s not clear where all the people have gone. Some are keeping their heads down and still squatting, including in residential properties if there’s no owner making accusations to the cops. Increasing numbers are squatting in larger groups in less suitable non-residential properties, and are being more easily guilt-tripped into allowing in more people evicted from nearby.

Since squatting residential properties in England and Wales was criminalised, we have seen squatting significantly reduced

Some have gone over to the other side, becoming “guardians” or anti-squatters as they’re known in Holland where it began. Of course those who were previously attracted to squatting because it was easy and didn’t require any political involvement would get the same thrill from being a guardian and paying less money than the extortionate London norm. Guardian companies are often not that good at securing places as they treat people badly enough that they’ll often leave. This often means the place can still be squatted.

Others of course have moved into the private sector, paying increasingly extortionate rent to the sort of landlords who support the Tory party and its policies, as planned. So, a victory for the state, with the threat of extending the criminalisation to non-residential properties ever in the background.

Social Housing Not Social Cleansing

However, it’s good that we can talk about some recent victories. ASS has always argued that occupying somewhere as a protest, rather than to live in, is not a criminal offence, and recently we have seen the old tactic re-used under these new conditions. Finally the best example of this has been the Focus E15 mums. Evicted from their hostel and fighting to stay in Newham, occupying a small block on the Carpenters Estate, run down by the council and surrounded by Olympic development and private tower blocks. The council’s dodgy attempts to set an interim Possession Order against the occupiers not only failed but gave them more publicity and put more pressure on the council to negotiate improved policies.

This was after housing campaigners in Southwark and Camden had got away with occupying houses being sold by the council. They didn’t last long but made their point. In one case people were arrested and charged but the charges thrown out of court. Of course in the old days they could have occupied properly and lived in these properties rather than just a temporary protest.

When we break laws like these, we often end up building the communities that help us weather the kinds of storms that invariably lie ahead. There’s very little that brings people together quite like constructively breaking a law that is obviously corrupt, ridiculous and/or morally bankrupt. In our disobedience, we remind ourselves what we are capable of achieving together, while gradually undermining the wider legions of ours or others’ lives... and we tend to make friends along the way!

A two-week squat is hardly the answer to the complex and multi-layered set of issues that have culminated in London’s current housing mess, but it does offer a set of tools that can be adapted and adopted in borough after borough, empty estate after empty estate. These tools can help us to address immediate needs, build local community, and make the case for new relationships to government, to the market, and to each other. This hint at a new kind of housing and a new kind of politics may have shown its early shoots in E15, but it’s well within the reach of the rest of us to help it grow in our own post codes.

The Focus E15 mums will keep up pressure for squatters’ rights, to make friends along the way! It’s not clear where all the people have gone. Some are keeping their heads down and still squatting, including in residential properties if there’s no owner making accusations to the cops. Increasing numbers are squatting in larger groups in less suitable non-residential properties, and are being more easily guilt-tripped into allowing in more people evicted from nearby.

Since squatting residential properties in England and Wales was criminalised, we have seen squatting significantly reduced

La Squatta Continua: The Year from Advisory Service for Squatters

Housing campaigners are forced once again to demand the populating and requisition of empty properties, and to do it themselves at least symbolically. This was the history of the squatting movement of the 60s and 70s, leading to a massive expansion of social housing, through co-ops and councils being encouraged to take empties from speculators etc.

A combination of networking, legal pressure and chutzpah still works!

Other good news came recently when Tower Hamlets council was forced to remove security guards who were keeping most of the inhabitants of a squat out, and keep one squatter in. A combination of legal threats, campaigning and occasionally enough people hanging around for someone to get over the 15-foot wall got the council to decide it wasn’t worth the hassle. There’s still plans to sue, and attempts are being made to learn how we could have dealt with this quicker, but clearly a combination of networking, legal pressure and chutzpah still works.

Stop the Criminalisation of Squatting Requisition All Empties

Advisory Service for Squatters / www.squatter.org.uk / 0203 216 0099
COPS OFF CAMPUS IN THE DOCK

OF A PEACEFUL OCCUPATION OF SENATE HOUSE
THE DAY BEFORE (on Wednesday 4th December 2013), the anti police Cops Off Campus demonstration, organised for the next day, might not have happened at all. As it was the callout paid off, and the protest saw the angriest and politically aware confrontations since the tuition fee mobilisations of 2010. A wider analysis of these protests still needs to be written: how they were organised, the dynamics of the march and how they were inevitably killed by Trotskyist groups like the Socialist Party. Presented here are excerpts of notes taken from the trial of 2 protesters who were among those mass arrested near Gower Street. Both defendants were acquitted.

CC appears in court charged with two counts of assault PC after mass-arrest at Cops Off Campus demo 5th Dec 2013. The case against his co-defendant, RB, also charged with assault PC, is thrown out at half-time for lack of evidence.

'Victim' No. 1: PC Smythe

'I felt his knee sweep across my thigh and groin. I have absolutely no doubt he was trying to knee me in the testicles.'

Under cross-examination:

Shown this photo: [headlock]
Smythe: 'I think that was completely unnecessary. I was pulled into a containment, I am dragged again to the ground. They damage my nose so I cannot breathe properly for 3-4 minutes.

Then Smythe smashes me down into a plate glass window. At no stage do any of these officers say 'Total Policing'. As well as not using the placard as a weapon. The placard was commissioned by me for protest anonymously. The atmosphere between it and his face and pushed it away. I was getting a message across, [picture here] Then it started raining, and I went to Costa Coffee.

Later I find the remainder of the protest up on Euston Road. It's a cat and mouse situation with the protest being chased by police down Euston Road towards the top of Gower Street. There are several lines of police there stopping people from going south. Outside Euston Square station, I see a police officer assaulting a man I now know to be CB. The man has a bicycle, long red hair and trainers. CB says something to the officer as he walks past, and gesticulates. The officer catches what he says and grabs CB. CB is 19 or 20 and very skinny. The officer is a massive guy. He probably has a stone for every year of CB's age. CB would not have been able to pull him to the floor. The officer pushes him to the ground.

I've been to many protests and this was easily the most violence I've seen at a protest. I've seen much more hostile crowds provoke less of a reaction from the police. But we've heard the reason for this violence already from the officers' evidence. The police believed there to be 'anarchist elements' at the protest. Remember how the City of London police had a campaign telling those people thought there was an assault going on. The police have portrayed them as a mob but I would call them concerned and brave citizens.

At this point I was in a state of fear and panic. I flipped off Inspector Harman's hat. Flicking his cap was a non-violent act which was intended to distract him from participating in the attack on CB. Then I was running away. I saw him coming at me with his fist raised. It's absolute nonsense to say that I struck him in the throat. It's possible that someone else did, but I was running away. It was like a war-zone, people screaming and crying. You just want to get out of there. Then I am grabbed from behind by two officers – I am grabbed in the face and they smash my head into a plate glass window. At no stage do any of these people say I am under arrest. I say, 'What the actual fuck are you doing?' The response is a punch in the face by a third officer. They damage my nose so I can't breathe properly for 3-4 weeks. As if that isn't enough, as they drag me into a containment, I am pushed again to the ground by a fourth officer and he stands over me, stamping on my legs. It was like a bar fight. That level of violence was completely unnecessary. I was pulled into a containment and later arrested to prevent breach of the peace. That containment was not already in place as you will see. When that incident happened, it was a bunch of bunch of riot cops running around. I was already the victim of an assault that day. Just as I would on the street if I saw a little kid being beaten up by a massive guy – doesn't matter if that massive guy is wearing a uniform. I would intervene. I was attempting to remove Harman from the area, essentially, because he seemed to be piling in to the assault on CB. There were lots of people there, because all those people thought there was an assault going on. The police have portrayed them as a mob but I would call them concerned and brave citizens.

At the other cordon in Russell Square police also had their batons drawn which was provocative at a protest against police violence. I was angry because I'd just been assaulted by an enormous man. There was a lot of adrenaline. I was not just shouting 'fuck the police'. I was shouting 'no justice, no peace, fuck the police'. I thought it was pretty ironical that the police were being violent at a protest against police violence. There's the chant 'Who killed Mark Duggan?' and I'm saying 'YOU killed Mark Duggan', which is true because the Metropolitan Police did kill Mark Duggan. So I was standing there, showing my placard to the police, getting my message across. [picture here] Then it started raining, and I went to Costa Coffee.

Then I am grabbed from behind by two officers – I am grabbed in the face and they smash my head into a plate glass window. At no stage do any of these people say I am under arrest. I say, 'What the actual fuck are you doing?' The response is a punch in the face by a third officer. They damage my nose so I can't breathe properly for 3-4 weeks. As if that isn't enough, as they drag me into a containment, I am pushed again to the ground by a fourth officer and he stands over me, stamping on my legs. It was like a bar fight. That level of violence was completely unnecessary. I was pulled into a containment and later arrested to prevent breach of the peace. That containment was not already in place as you will see. When that incident happened, it was a bunch of bunch of riot cops running around. I was already the victim of an assault that day. Just as I would on the street if I saw a little kid being beaten up by a massive guy – doesn't matter if that massive guy is wearing a uniform. I would intervene. I was attempting to remove Harman from the area, essentially, because he seemed to be piling in to the assault on CB. There were lots of people there, because all those people thought there was an assault going on. The police have portrayed them as a mob but I would call them concerned and brave citizens.
**Bitcoins and Coin Bytes**

**In our digital age, money is increasingly electronic in nature. Bank coins have all but disappeared, and notes and coins face stiff competition from chip-and-pin, contactless and pre-payment systems. In the online realm, payment solutions such as WorldPay and the ubiquitous PayPal have helped to drive the new cashless world of the retail web.**

Ever since the needs of the dominant economic class pushed beyond the limits of simple bartering, a monetary system has provided a means to abstract value to support commerce and exchange. Through the growth of capitalism, modern banking and financial systems developed to underpin trade, and bits of paper and small circles of metal changed hands within the expanding economy. Since it was first minted, money has remained a fiction, the operation of which depends on the shared acceptance by those using it of its transferability.

One recent development in the world of online currency that has attracted a great deal of media attention is the emergence of Bitcoins: a new attempt to create a digital monetary network outside government control.

The technology underpinning Bitcoins is complex. In essence, a Bitcoin is the encoding of a notional ‘value’ assigned to a newly mined virtual coin each time a computer programme completes an agreed protocol. The more times that the software completes the loop, the more Bitcoins are generated, and the greater the cumulative balance added to the ledger. Bitcoins have no intrinsic worth; but are an attempt to assign and encode a redeemable value.

Bitcoins are a new attempt to create a digital monetary network outside government control. Key to Bitcoin transfers is the sharing of an encrypted token which, when passed from payer to payee, is the verification of its transferability.

Bitcoins are distinguished by the anonymity and confidentiality of the transfer and its independence from any official channels of exchange. Peer-to-peer transactions are not easily auditable by any state agency. Unlike traditional and its independence from any official channels of exchange. Peer-to-peer the chain is going to want to transfer their Bitcoin stash into traditional currency. Transfer fees can be levied. Eventually one recipient in the mining community will get the virtual tokens, after the software completes the process.

The Bitcoin network is not immune to the dangers which confront normal monetary systems. The trading value of Bitcoins has fluctuated wildly, rising and plummeting without warning. Governments buy and sell currency on the monetary systems. The trading value of Bitcoins has fluctuated wildly, rising and plummeting without warning. Governments buy and sell currency on the international exchanges to try to keep the value of their national currency stable. The Bitcoin network exists in the Bitcoin system, so the currency settles wherever the market drives it to.

Several Bitcoin exchanges (virtual transfer hubs for the digital currency) have been taken offline following network and hardware failures. The exchanges have proven irresistible to hackers who enjoy disrupting new technologies and pirates have seized the opportunity. As a result, the operation of the Bitcoin network has remained flaky, and reliance on it something of a gamble. Given the growing effectiveness of state surveillance of the web, claims that Bitcoin transfers are untraceable also remain unproven.

Some radical free-marketers have promoted Bitcoins as a competitor to the state-regulated financial sector, and on the fringes of the online capitalist economy Bitcoins are being accepted for some transactions. So how has the global financial system responded to the Bitcoin breakthrough? To date, the scale of engagement through Bitcoins has remained infinitesimal when compared to the volumes circulating in the international money markets; so fat-cat bankers have not felt under undue pressure.

The US government has moved to shut down high profile black-market Bitcoin exchanges, including the Silk Road; while Chinese authorities have outlawed the currency. Yet many capitalists advocate absorbing a regulated Bitcoin system into the banking mainstream.

**The simple truth about Bitcoins is: it’s only money - as inherently ‘subversive’ as a book token.**

Bitcoins have obvious attractions for anyone wanting to transfer money securely and anonymously - be they members of a criminal conspiracy, thief fanatics, state agents, or international revolutionaries. However, the innovative technology which makes it possible should not be allowed to obscure the simple truth about Bitcoins: it’s only money. To that extent, a Bitcoin is as inherently ‘subversive’ as a book token.

The global system of monetary exchange will not face a genuine challenge from the actions of a tiny group of technologists, but only from the emergence of a mass movement which rejects outright the systems of alienation and profit.

**Rich Cross**

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**Pride and Nostalgia**

I recently went to see the film Pride, which is based on events in the mid 1980s when a group of Gay activists (LGSM) decided to raise money to help support the striking miners.

Despite encountering reluctance from the miners, they made contact with a small mining village in South Wales. The film explores the relational dynamics within the group, within the mining community and between the two communities and the wider mining community (generally) overcoming their prejudices, eventually reciprocating the solidarity shown to them by the miners and Gay community in London.

The film explores the dynamics within the group, within the mining community and between the two as the village and the wider mining community overcome their prejudice.

I went to see the film in Leicester Square, where at the end there was some kind of applause. A few weeks later I had a look on social media to see what other people thought of the film and one commenter had posted that it made them feel nostalgic for times that had been known. While in no way wanting to question this person’s experience or self-diagnosis I wonder if they were really experiencing ‘nostalgia’. Nostalgia is a looking back to something that ‘was’, it can easily be impotent. My own experience watching the film was that it evoked a sense of yearning; for community, for solidarity, for hope, for being able to live with a sense of purpose and in a way that makes a difference. These are the life experiences that we should all yearn for, what ‘Pride’ did so effectively remind us of that.

The film evoked a sense of yearning; for community, for solidarity, for hope, for being able to live in a way that makes a difference.

Mark Fisher in his book Ghosts of my Life (1) writes about how we can be ‘haunted’ by a sense of what was, but also of what could have been, of lost possibilities and futures (2). This sense of being haunted by, of alienation from and frustration with the lived present is so much something of many of our experience but it is not recognition that it has rekindled the desire to experiment the quality of communal, purposeful life, with all its ups and downs, represented in the film.

Each of us has to choose between replicating Bryan Adams (dreamful) song ‘Summer of ’69’ elevating the past as a ‘golden age’ or finding ways of transposing those feeling of hope and yearning that ‘Pride’ evoked into constructive action.

**Bibliography**


(2) http://www.zero-books.net/books/ghosts-my-life

Tim Forster
August saw London’s largest ever pro-Palestine demo, where an estimated 150000 people took to the streets to protest Israeli war crimes in Gaza.

Workers at the Ritzy Cinema took militant strike action for better pay and, in September, won!

Supporters of Calais Migrant Solidarity leave informative messages behind on a road sign after a solidarity action in September.

Anti-Fascists hold a dangerous gang member at bay at the annual ‘humiliate the fash’ day, otherwise known as March For England in April.

40,000 marched through London as part of the International People’s Climate March, timed to coincide with the World Leaders’ Climate Summit.

An effigy of Secretary of Justice Chris Grayling, only slightly less gross than the real thing, at a demonstration against proposed reforms to Legal Aid back in May.

The bin that shook the world. The media’s favourite image of the Cops Off Campus demo last December, where students protested the presence and heavy handed tactics of police at UK Universities.
A Radical Year

In Pictures

Special thanks to Guy Smallman for photography
**The Anarchist Federation**

The Anarchist Federation has been going 28 years... We experienced one of our most recent growths in 2010-11 at the height of the actions against fees and cuts. Even as one of the larger anarchist organisations in Britain we are still small in absolute numbers. We recognise the need to continue to look for practical unity in our movement wherever possible and to support initiatives, such as the next issue of Black Flag which will come out again this Bookfair after a yearlong gap. At the same time, we steadfastly continue to reject populism, electoralism and anti-organisational tendencies to instead promote a social and communist anarcho-syndicalism.

As we covered our take on the situation ‘at home’ in the last issue of Organise! magazine (issue 82, May 2014), we’ll use the opportunity offered to us by Freedom editors to update readers on what is going on in our international, the International of Anarchist Federations (IFed). The FA has been growing 28 years 11 months since its founding in 1886. The FA is a group of social anarchist federations with uniform ideas and structures between all of its member organisations. It has taken many years of membership of the FA to understand the effects of differences in levels of consensus required for decision making. A more obvious challenge is language. As the FA (and this surely applies to the whole of the anarchist movement in Britain) we know we don’t translate nearly enough material ourselves and so we benefit greatly from the efforts of comrades in other countries who handle the enduring privilege of English as a language of international communication with no complaint (the other main language of communication in IFA is Spanish). Currently the German speaking federation (FDa) has tasked the whole of IFA to understand our constitutional differences even better so we can work together most efficiently.

Important things are happening in Central Europe and the Balkans. Freedom readers will be familiar, even if they don’t know the details, about an uprising in Slovenia in 2012-13 which brought people on to the streets across the country (full story in Organise! 83). The FAO was instrumental in creating a strong libertarian current. Internationalism has strengthened in the region with the continuation of communications helped by successive anarchist bookfairs, the latest of these having taken place this year in Bosnia. As the joint statement read, “The need to confront nationalist ideology from a radical and anti-authoritarian perspective brought us together in Mostar on the 5th and 6th of September 2014, for the 8th Balkan Anarchist Bookfair. We came from Bosnia and Herzegowina, Croatia, Serbia, Slovenia, Albania, Romania, Greece and other countries outside the Balkan area. The true nature of nationalism is nowhere more obvious then in Mostar, a city divided in two, with the signs of wartime brutality still evident in the streets of the city. It is essential to realize that this division was not the cause of war, but the consequence of wars and nationalistic ideologies created by the ruling class.” Repression is also a constant feature for anarchists in the Balkans and central Europe, including Belarus where we supported comrades undertaking speaking tours in Western Europe and with practical solidarity, and previously we joined the support for the Belgrade 6 prisoners in Serbia.

Another important area for IFA is North Africa and the Middle East. Renewed communication started in Tunisia several years ago resulting from the ‘Arab Spring’. Anarchists are most recently experiencing repression in Egypt. Thanks to the FA’s outreach we now have much better connections into the region which means more direct solidarity is possible. Elsewhere, IFA has been quick to support emerging nationalisms in North Africa and Central Europe, including Belarus where we supported comrades undertaking speaking tours in Central Europe, including Belarus where we also a constant feature for anarchists in the Balkans and central Europe, including Belarus where we supported comrades undertaking speaking tours in Western Europe and with practical solidarity, and previously we joined the support for the Belgrade 6 prisoners in Serbia.

The IFA is a grouping of social anarchist federations with uniform ideas and structures between all of its member organisations. Face-to-face meeting is vital to IFA. We meet 2-3 times a year at formal delegate meetings (Commission de relations de l’Internationale des Fédérations anarchistes, CRIFA) and at bookfairs. This year we will welcome IFA comrades, amongst other international participants, at AFem 2014 as well as the London Bookfair.

Mike, IFA International Secretariat Coordinator & IFA contact.

www.afed.org.uk

**RICKING KROPOTKIN OUT OF FREEDOM**

One of the key concepts of anarchism is that of the “leadership of ideas” not individuals, however great their round for tea. After this the paper took an all out anti-war line and Kropotkin never wrote for it again. Tom Keell was the editor at the time and took the classic anarchist line that no war was worth fighting but the class war. He met Kropotkin in a café in Oxford St to sort the issue out, later recalling, “He evidently thought he could not write a pro-war article in view of my opposition, so we agreed he should do one on communal kitchens as he thought there would soon be a food shortage in the country”.

Freedom was put to this test in 1914 when Peter Kropotkin, lead writer for the paper since its founding in 1886 advocated supporting the Allies in the First World War.

However in the October issue Kropotkin did a cut and cut pro-war piece declaring “since 1871 Germany has been a standing menace to European progress” with Keell replying. The debate continued into the November issue and then with a final meeting between Keell and Kropotkin in Brighton, livened by Peter having brought a wounded army officer round for tea. After this the paper took an all out anti-war line and Kropotkin never wrote for it again.

To celebrate we’re having a party this year marking the 100th anniversary of the feeble fudged process that eventually showed “The Anarchist movement formally known as Prince” the door. Featuring a half price offer on all Freedom Press’ Kropotkin 2pm Saturday 22nd November in the shop. Anyone not banned or expelled welcome!

Andy Meinke

*The Anarchist Federation*
Haven Distribution aims to provide practical support to prisoners within the UK by:

- Purchasing educational literature for inmates who are currently attending courses whilst in prison;
- Providing dictionaries in English and other languages to inmates whose first language is not English;
- Providing large print dictionaries and books on improving reading and writing skills to inmates with dyslexia;

If you are a prisoner attending an educational course such as NVQ, Open University, A Level, etc., and would like help in purchasing specific course literature, we may be able to help. Haven Distribution will purchase books for prisoners’ courses to a maximum of £20 per person, per calendar year. We encourage prisoners to leave the books in the prison library once the course is finished so that other prisoners can use them. Haven also provides prisoners a free catalogue of donated books from publishers, and books that are bought cheaply from remainder bookshops. These books range from Social Sciences such as Philosophy and Criminology, to Black Interest and graphic novels.

If you would like an application form, please send a stamped self-addressed envelope to us at Haven Distribution, 27 Old Gloucester St, London, WC1N 3XX. Due to limited resources, Haven Distribution is unable to help with the purchase of books for general reading. Please speak to the prison librarian for more information about ordering non-educational books.

Identity, Race and Politics

While some framework of anti oppression work is clearly needed in light of institutional discrimination of people of colour and minorities, safer spaces policy and race become problematic when we allow white majority groups to categorise what is and isn’t racism. The left is grossly unprepared for the change of demographics in the United Kingdom; by 2050, the UK will be a majority people of colour country. How will the left respond to this?

It is undeniable that the left has a serious problem with race. There is a historical white washing of people of colour in the far left movement, and a very big problem with essentialising (and ignoring) Global South peoples, struggles and identities. Too, there is silence on issues that effect people of colour; how many Anarchist Black Cross groups wrote to figures such as Moazzam Begg, or Talha Ahsan? Or any POC political prisoners at all, given how much the prison industrial complex targets people of colour, and specifically black young men? Or how many anarchists support the work of Southall Black Sisters? There is a historical white washing of people of colour in the far left movement, and a very big problem with essentialising (and ignoring) Global South peoples, struggles and identities.

This is all reflective of our imperialist history that we teach children in school and subtle microaggressions in society, which unconsciously govern how we conduct ourselves as poc and as non-poc. The left does not operate in a vacuum, thus we are not immune to the United Kingdom’s post-colonial legacy, or its broken relationship with race. Anti-racist and anti-oppression work is grounded in somewhat idealist theories surrounding power, maintaining that it is innately ‘white privilege’ as a psychological attitude and de-facto position for “passing people”. I feel that this is not the case; racism is structural and it is mainly caused and perpetuated by the state and by capitalism. Consciousness-raising and circle-jerk leftie discussions (which for much of the time, leave out people of colour) will not change inherently racist structures.

No demographic of people are inherently homogenised, or the same. The fetishisation of intersectionality looks at ideas around sex, race, and sexuality as non-changing entities with certain ways of organising amongst themselves. No one person can, for example, claim to speak for all people of colour, all LGBT people. These self-elected representatives represent nothing more than social ideas of an ‘Other’ formed by a larger population, surrounding a group they do not know a whole lot about. This is one way in which the left unwittingly ends up tokenising people of colour, in order to add more legitimacy to their movement. Political opinions between people from the same background is essentially silenced as the white left picks the person who they agree with the most, because ‘x says this, and she is x too’.

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Given the hyper-capitalist, gendered and racialised setting of the politics of the United Kingdom, first with the internal colonisation of Celtic lands and then the expansion of Empire into Africa and Asia, amongst others, leaves serious holes in the politics of the left. Leftist movements will not be able to survive without realising the true effects of white supremacy and patriarchy, and its internal problematic relationship with race and identity.

While there are inherent flaws with the term person of colour, I have preferred to use this term over Sivanandan’s ‘politically Black’ term, for numerous reasons.

Yasmin Begg
One Door for All: Class War’s Campaign Against ‘Poor Doors’ in London

For three months now Class War have been organising weekly demonstrations outside a block of flats next to Aldgate East Station in London. The flats at One Commercial Street were developed by Redrow and contain a mix of luxury apartments and affordable housing for social housing tenants. In the phenomenon known as ‘Poor Doors’ the development creates social segregation between the people who can afford the luxury apartments and those that qualify for social housing.

The difference between the two sets of occupiers is stark. The poor door isn’t just a name: it literally exists, in this case down a dark alley to the side of the building. This door has, at times, been broken leaving the tenants with a lack of security and the lifts have also broken and not been repaired speedily. Meanwhile the rich door has a spacious foyer complete with concierge. Once inside the building it is impossible for someone living there to pass from the luxury side to the social housing area or vice versa.

‘Poor Doors’ create social segregation between people who can afford luxury apartments and those that qualify for social housing.

Of course it’s nothing new and these developments can be found in other parts of London, the rest of the UK and abroad. However, the position of this development, right on the edge of The City highlights the gentrification of the east end, acting as both a symbolic and a practical focus point. Property developers are always telling us it’s about ‘location’ so that’s why Class War are there, right at the heart right on the edge of The City.

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The protest grew modestly. The first few weeks were simply a matter of turning up and hoping we would have some form of impact. By the second week we were accompanied by some plain clothes cops who identified themselves when rich residents started to throw urine down from the luxury flats. For the next few weeks we then had a small police presence and then after seven weeks they stopped turning up. All that changed on 24th September when a small group of protesters occupied the rich foyer and occupied it. Naturally the police were called and this ensured a great turnout from local residents and passers-by who were interested and engaged on the issue. The result is a continued police presence for subsequent weeks.

People across the east end have seen their communities damaged and edged out as areas become gentrified.

Poor doors is an issue that people get and understand. At one of the demos I spoke to a local resident who told me that the alley with the poor doors offers zero security. They explained that life was exceedingly hard when the lift broke and repairs took weeks. People across the east end have seen gentrification and social cleansing cause a great deal of pain. They’ve seen their communities damaged as they’ve become ever more edged out by the inevitable swanky cafes, bars and restaurants that have sprung up as areas become gentrified. It’s impossible for many to stay involved in their communities as many goods and services become unaffordable.

Class War is taking the view that we can change the situation. We’ve been highlighting it every week because it doesn’t have to stay the same. Of course, this needs boots on the ground, week in and week out. By doing so we hope to build a movement up that can challenge the rich and the politicians that do their bidding. I should also point out that it’s exceedingly good fun. These protests are challenging the rich and powerful but in doing so we’re not talking about just standing with a banner or doing an A-B march. We like our protests to be lively and imaginative!

Come and join us at the Poor Doors demo, every Wednesday from 6pm at One Commercial Street. It is literally right next to Aldgate East station. We will also be planning a special one off demo at the same location on the evening of the London Anarchist Bookfair, Saturday 26th October.

J on Bigger

A Class Act

It’s the thin veneer that’s so insulting,
As if we should be grateful
That they feel the need to lie, at all.
Decisions have been taken,
Still, they are consulting their ‘key stakeholders’
The ones that fall between the quite unloved unlucky
And the unfortunate but undeserving poor.

They’ll play no real part in the big debate:
Why do the ‘haves’ need so much more to motivate them,
Whilst the ‘have-nots’, apparently, need so much less?
How did we get into our present, sorry state?
And can we trust the ones who say
That they’ll extract us from this mess?
There seems to me to be a fundamental, fatal, flaw,
A massive fault line in the master plan:
They want it both ways; want to get well
In the good times and the bad,
They want you with your head down, working for them,
The man
They want to stop you spotting you’ve been had,
Whilst those who want for nothing?
They want more.

So now we’ve government by clever knotting of the old school tie,
And they’ll do very nicely, thank you, out of boom or bust,
So ask yourself ‘what does this signify?’
A nasty accident or a betrayal of trust?
The fact is, this is something that we’ve seen before:
This is a class act, that’s what this is;
This is war.

[Grim Chip]
How are you organising the conference? Have you started? Are you or are you modelling its organisation on tried and tested methods such as the Anarchist Bookfair?

We are organising the conference in strands, with not. We have the official sessions/workshops/meetings to be held within each strand. Strands include international Anarchafeminism, Sexism with our movement, Workplace organisation, Control of our bodies, Ambivalence, Athletics, Capital, queer, and meet the women who are involved. 

We've had lots of discussions about what we wanted to involve in organising the conference, and who we wanted the conference to be open to and arrived at the current strands and policy after a lot of thought. We wanted to try making space for anarchists who are marginalised within the anarchist movement. We don't think that we were specifically trying to answer the ‘theoretical’ claim, often used by cis-men for example, that often frequently downplays issues of privilege or experience of oppression/Violence?

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How best can those interested in AFem support the conference?

Anyone who is interested in supporting the conference can share our website and fundraising campaign on any social media they use and print and put up our posters (available on the website) wherever they live.

Fundraising campaign: https://fundrazr.com/campaigns/AFem2014

Please get in touch for further information on our attendance policy, accessibility, childfree space, or if you would like to be involved in hosting a session.

Contact us: afem2014.wordpress.com afem@afed.org.uk twitter.com/AFem2014

Donate towards costs at: https://fundrazr.com/campaigns/2mmvd
FORWARD SLASH: “THE WEEKEND”

I want neon \ I want chrome
I want car headlights, streetlights, reflected in puddles
I want loud music, I want it louder/
I want fluorescent pink // I want inner city foxes and 3am
There’s a riot in my ribcage matches my feet pounding pavement

This city is mine.
I want anarchy I want a signal
I want last orders
I am the thing you never asked for but ended up with anyway
I am looking fine in this dress // I am unnecessary
I am looking for a fight; I am throwing out these heels
I am howling at the sea \ I am wading in, nude
I am the wood-chip roof / I am the smell of booze
I am the striped waltzers and the spotted teacups
I am 24-hr rolling news’ // I am double yellows
I am driftwood I am shingle beaches that cut your feet

And I will not let you forget easily.

[Charlotte Henson]