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THE

WESTCOUNTRY MUTINEER

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#3

Of the Southwest's
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December 2012

Palestine: Expect The U.N.Expected

NOVEMBER WAS A funny month to be a Palestinian, to put it mildly. Beginning with the assassination of the Palestinian Hamas Party military chief on the 14th, the latest Israeli offensive into Gaza started in brutal earnest, ending 162 lives until the following Wednesday's ceasefire. Near a quarter of those dead Palestinians were children. As the Gaza Strip is one of the most densely populated areas in the world, it would have been impossible for the Israeli bombs to avoid civilian slaughter, even if that was the intention.

Immediately following this butchery came the inevitable wave of protests, with hundreds of demos held globally against the attacks, and a 15,000-strong Stop The War Coalition march in London on the 24th. In the southwest, Bath saw 20 out in protest the same day, and daily vigils stood their ground in Bristol centre. Elsewhere in the U.K., companies dealing with illegal Israeli settlements or supplying the I.D.F. weapons were also struck that week, with direct action, occupations, noise demos, and phone/e-blockades of Barclays Bank, G4S and even the Israeli state-sponsored Batsheva dance troupe!

Palestinians in the West Bank also carried out solidarity demos, to be met with typical Israeli oppression. Demonstrators were shot dead in Nabi Saleh and in western Hebron. A baby in Qalandia refugee camp was also killed, by Israeli tear gas: maybe it was a terrorist or something?

Alongside these intensifications of the 65-year occupation, since Hamas were voted in back in 2006, the Israeli government has punished the people of Gaza to an unimaginably barbaric degree. Medical aid and food shipments are regularly stolen by border guards, alongside necessity building materials and machine repairs parts. As a result, children are malnourished, hospitals are overstretched, sewage stays untreated, and poverty flourishes.

And then, just as trigger-happy Israel was busy breaking the ceasefire, the U.N. General Assembly voted on Thursday 29th to approve Palestine's 'upgrade' to a sovereign 'non-member

Will the Tories cancel X-mas?



IN THIS ISSUE:

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* It's the end of the world as we know it... and we're not fine

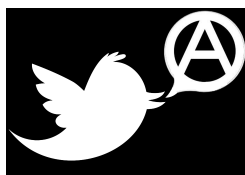
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observer state', 138 votes to nine. The jury is still out on what this bit of paperwork means in practice, but this does mean access to various international agencies, treaties and the ability to take Israel to the International Criminal Court in the Hague over its war crimes. Whether or not the change in status will bring actual change, it does offer some hope. And it's pissed off Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu no end!

Straight away, as well as America helpfully offering to punish those uppity Arabs by withholding U.S. financial support, Netanyahu and his ultra-right

friends responded by first of all withholding £75m in tax rebates to the cash-strapped Palestinian Authority; secondly, Ben the Builder has just announced new plans to build another 3,000 illegal homes, and to use development to cut off Palestine's planned new capital of East Jerusalem.

So, whilst the Israeli P.M. is embarrassing even long-term collaborators like his British and U.S. allies, Hamas (one half of Palestine's government) – just as murderous towards everyday civilians as the I.D.F. – are coming across smelling like roses, especially to their Muslim neighbours. You could say these are interesting times...



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Second Class Bullies Lead To First Class Strike

BRISTOL POSTIES HAVE voted for strike action over the Christmas period in response to a pattern of bullying delivered by their bosses. Issues started around a year ago, when managers introduced a new delivery system, making it nearly impossible for most posties to carry out their rounds in time. Despite the problems arising from management incompetence, the majority of posties in Bristol's southeast delivery office have repeatedly found themselves facing harassment when they cannot complete deliveries within the new time frame. Bob Gibson, a C.W.U. official representing post workers, highlighted that the problem is not just a local one, saying "Some of what I've been hearing from several areas around the country seems quite sinister in its application and can only be described as bullying, harassment and downright intimidation. This is a situation we cannot allow to continue". With the workers holding massive gate meetings in the run-up to and during the ballot, the 80% 'yes' vote for strike action didn't come as much surprise. We know it's always a pain in the arse to

have mail delayed, especially when it's yer X-mas edition of the Mutineer, but let's remember to put the blame where it belongs – scummy bosses (let's face it, we all know at least one) – and get behind our posties, who are not only fighting for their own right to be free of intimidation in the workplace, but for a postal service that works for us all.

And on Monday 10th, the strikers struck. It may have been freezing cold, but that did not deter the 40 posties who showed up outside the sorting office gates to show their anger at the bosses' poor decision-making. As a result of the picket, 200 management staff from the across the country were brought in as scab labour, to do a job that 100 are expected to do (no need to point out the obvious hypocrisy there). Members from the local I.W.W. branch and other activist organisations came in support, and delivered refreshments in solidarity.

This is only the beginning of what could potentially be an ongoing strike with another strike being held for this coming Monday and possibly continuing onto the new year. There is also a chance of this dispute going beyond the city of Bristol into the other regions of the westcountry.

Healthcare Hijack Receives Resistance!

AS PART OF the brutal government attack on our N.H.S., 20 health trust bosses across the southwest have met behind closed doors in an effort to slash spending. After shelling out £200,000 in taxpayers money to form a 'consortium', they have reached a decision. Will they be taking a hit from their pay? Will they be standing up to a bullying government hell-bent on destroying and flogging off our N.H.S. to the highest bidder? Nah, of course not! As usual, the savings will come straight out of the pockets of hard-working nurses and other healthcare workers. In a leaked document, the bosses' consortium is suggesting a range of far-ranging attacks on pay and conditions, the worst of which include whopping 15% pay cuts, reduced pay for unsociable hours, reduced sick pay and slashed holiday time for frontline staff. Not in a mood to take this lying down, healthcare workers across the west have been holding huge workplace protest meetings, with one hospital in Bristol seeing 250 workers turn up. The meetings led to a huge protest in Bristol, which saw 1,500 healthcare workers and supporters hold a noisy, colourful and well-received march under the banner 'unite the resistance' – a great slogan to show that the fight for the N.H.S., and workers' rights is all of our fight.

While rank and file workers on the demo were obviously up for a scrap, and pushing for action, it now remains to be seen if union bosses will get properly stuck in. While the unions have played an important role in protecting rights at work, T.U.C. bosses have shown themselves too willing to roll over and give up when confronted by a government determined to shaft us.

Think back to the pensions debacle – with millions of workers champing at the bit to get properly stuck in to the Con-Dems, the T.U.C. managed one day of token strike action before calling workers back into work and urging them to accept the same deal that was on the table before the strike! The T.U.C. bosses want us to bide our time and wait for a Labour government – who, despite their rhetoric, are still pledged to massive spending cuts – to sort it all out for us. Well, even if Labour had the guts to stand up for ordinary people (unlikely), health workers can't wait. The N.H.S. is being dismantled now, and to save it, workers, service users and the community who value the commitment and hard work of frontline staff will need to organise themselves, using tools that will beat back the bosses – wildcat strikes, direct action, protests and occupations – with the union chiefs when they'll fight, without 'em when they won't! But, if the huge, determined crowd at the demo can carry that energy back into their workplaces, it looks likely that the N.H.S. bosses will have a serious fight on their hands, and one they'll live to regret picking!

Anarchy vs. Chaos: A Review

ON SATURDAY 24TH November, Bath's Black And Red Federation (B.A.R.F) hosted a polite public discussion on anarchism at the Manvers Street Baptist Church, complete with tea and (vegan) cake. Anarchism has received a bad press over the centuries, with anarchists forced into stereotypes of either violent thugs or sandal-footed hippies – caricatures repeated by both the media and political establishment on one side, but also by self-proclaimed anarchists on the other. But many anarchists see it differently: the philosophy had become a relevant and mass movement of

Blood-Thirsty Toff In 'Also A Racist Bastard' Shocker!

WHO WOULD HAVE guessed that the same land-owning huckleberries that derive so much pleasure from the chasing and mauling of defenceless wildlife would also be out-and-out Victorian-style racists? Well, the stereotype of the landed rich as a shower of backwards, out-of-touch scum has once again been proved irrevocably correct by Lee Peters, huntsman for the Ross Harriers – a fox hunt operating in the northern extremities of the westcountry. As is the case at hunts all around the country, January of this year saw the harriers visited by their local hunt saboteurs – groups of wildlife enthusiasts who do heroic work sabotaging, monitoring and otherwise tampering with all manner of bloodsports, mainly foxhunts. Now, there has never been any love lost between hunts and saboteurs, and many a countryside outing has turned into a full-on scrap when both sides get to grips. On this occasion, Peters decided to uphold his hunt's fine tradition of almost indiscriminate violence by riding up to the sabs as soon as they appeared, booting and whipping their van, and yelling a series of foul-mouthed threats! Not content with this, he took a peek inside the van, presumably to see what them thar city folk are wearing nowadays. Inside, along with the other saboteurs was a black female, who was obviously too much for Peters to handle. He turned to the rest of the hunt and shouted "Look, they even brought a fucking wog!" The understandably-distressed saboteur reported Peters to the fuzz, who duly arrested him. The remorseless hunt-master and his mates staunchly denied any racist remarks, even cooking up obviously pre-agreed fake stories (the fact that the hunt fraternity rallied round to defend him speaks volumes about their attitudes to racial equality). However, a local resident, out gardening, heard the whole altercation and was able to give the court enough evidence to convict Peters, slapping him with several thousand pounds of fines and court costs. It remains to be seen whether the Ross Harriers will to the right thing for once, and sack this bigot. Judging by their hobby, though, we doubt it. Sabs are out every weekend throughout the westcountry. To get involved with your local group, check out this webpage: hsa.enviroweb.org.

hundreds of thousands of everyday people fighting for freedom in 1920s Ukraine and 1930s Spain, however briefly. Far from embracing destruction and chaos, anarchists say that 'Anarchism is Order!' On the day, 25 attended to hear three local speakers' presentations, examining the Peterloo Massacre and its repercussions, anarchism in the workplace and the links, if any, between anarchism and violence. The day then broke down into a wider discussion on the challenges facing anarchist organising today; all in all, a well-received and thoughtful day. Keep an eye out for the next one!

Yet Another Brick In The Wall!

An article in last month's mutineer, provoked much debate here at Mutineer H.Q. Below is a response to the article, agreed on by the team and written by an education worker member of the editorial collective:

IN MANY WAYS, the article 'Another brick in the wall' was dead right to lay into the state of the education system – especially Tory plans to drag us back to 'all or nothing' exams. Although coursework and vocation-based options will still exist, the Tories want to kick education back to the Victorian era – reflecting their own privileged, private school education – an approach that will benefit those who have spent their education being prepped for academic 'excellence', and disadvantage those who learn through doing, experiencing, questioning or prefer a more hands-on approach to learning. However, last month's article goes on to suggest that the best way for pupils to fight back against this is to skive indefinitely and 'teach themselves'. This conclusion draws an illogical solution from a decent analysis of the situation.

Encouraging pupils to truant school en masse will do nothing to reverse the education policies introduced by the Tories, and can in fact be dangerous to pupils and parents. For example, parents of persistent truants are routinely dragged to court and fined, putting the poorest families in society in even greater financial difficulties. While many teachers disagree with this approach, it is a reality that needs to be taken into consideration. Also, I work on a very tough estate with sky-high alcohol, drug, domestic violence and

neglect problems. For many of my kids, school is far more than a series of lessons. It is a safe space where they can interact positively with peers and adults and learn a variety of important social, emotional and vocational skills from each other as well as teachers. Many kids, especially those from challenging backgrounds, find interacting with each other in a positive way difficult, given the lives they have come from, so expecting them to magically teach each other the skills they need to lead full and happy lives if they started skiving together is wrong. I'm currently dealing with a group of persistent non-attenders in my school who have used their time away from education to replicate the violent and abusive behaviours of their parents – leading to the hospitalization of other young people, and the re-entry of my pupils into a legal system which seems hellbent on punishment over engagement or compassion.

I feel the article makes valid points about the direction of the education system, which most teachers would fully agree with, but ignores the hard work that thousands of teachers do every day providing emotional and social, and well as vocational and academic support, to pupils who, in their homes, have only known neglect and violence. Advocating taking them away from school, without suggesting any serious alternative, will only ensure that these conditions are replicated in the next generation. There is a quote that I keep on the wall in my classroom – 'Education is either a force for oppression or liberation'. Rather than turning our backs on education, let's work together – teachers, pupils and the community – to build an education system that empowers, respects and answers the needs of our young people.

knows this. That's why you won't see him raising corporation tax, or closing tax loopholes, or clamping down on offshore tax-havens.

With that in mind, up to 40 activists in Bristol shut down both the Broadmead Starbucks and Park Street one, meeting overwhelming approval from passers-by. And in Bath, a collection of 20 activists held a demo outside the High Street branch, alongside the monthly Bath FreeShop, handing out free fairtrade tea and coffee.

Outside of protests, though, one way that Starbucks workers can fight such attacks is to unionise, and take action. Starbucks, a company previously infamous for its union-busting, has now seen workers out on strike in Chile and New Zealand, and also unionising under the International Workers of the World (I.W.W.) in North America. Starbucks have clearly offered concessions in the hope of staving off disruption to their business, and the potential loss of profits that this represents. It also shows the power that protest groups can wield. Making big companies pay their tax won't stop the cuts, but a sustained wave of pickets, occupations and blockades – alongside strike action – just might.

Getting Starbucked

THE RECENT UPROAR surrounding Starbucks has once again pushed the issue of tax-dodging, and its relation to austerity, into the limelight. Starbucks is one of the largest coffee chains in the U.K., and the second largest café/restaurant chain in the world. Yet, in the last three years they've paid no corporation tax at all in the U.K., despite making sales of £3.1bn. And on Saturday December 8th, despite their sudden agreement to pay back £20m of their £400m debt, U.K. Uncut and friends hit them with a wave of 40 protests and occupations around the country. And their execs' new-found generosity to the tax man came with a hefty price tag – two days before they publicised the details of their 'gift', they also told over 7,000 staff how they're cutting paid lunch breaks, sick pay, maternity leave and a string of other work benefits.

But the only reason that companies like Starbucks are able to employ a workforce with such scroogery at all, is due to state support, in the form of working tax credits and housing benefit (benefits now also under threat, thanks to George Osborne). And we're not just talking Starbucks: other big names recently have been Vodafone, Amazon, and the Arcadia group. And Osborne

Upcoming Events

even though the world is to end on the 21st, death by planet Nibiru collision, we took the effort to optimistically print an events listing anyway

Bathampton Community Supported Agriculture
workdays: Wednesday mornings and Sundays, 11a.m.-4p.m., @ the end of Holcombe Lane, Bathampton, Bath

Kebele **bike workshop:** Wednesdays, 12.30-4.30p.m., Kebele Community Co-op, 14 Robertson Road, Easton, Bristol, BS5 6JY

vegan **brunch** & Kebele **Infoshop:** Saturdays, from 11a.m., @ Kebele Community Co-op, 14 Robertson Road, Easton, Bristol, BS5 6JY

Bath Stop The War Coalition **vigil:** Saturdays, 11.30a.m.-12.30, @ outside Bath Abbey, Bath

'famous' vegan Sunday **dinner:** Sundays, from 6.30p.m., @ Kebele Community Co-op, 14 Robertson Road, Easton, Bristol, BS5 6JY

pedal-powdered festive fundraiser **cinema** night: Tuesday 18th December, from 5.30p.m., @ the outdoor Big Top, The Tobacco Factory, Bristol, BS3 1TF; raising funds for educational film-makers Purple Field Productions; £5/£3 entry; e-mail carrielew82@hotmail.com

squatters/travellers **skillshop & workshare:** Thursday 20th December, 3p.m., @ Red & Black Umbrella, 57-58 Clifton St., Adamsdown, Cardiff, Wales, CF24 1LS

X-mas **Potluck:** Tuesday 25th December, @ Red & Black Umbrella, 57-58 Clifton St., Adamsdown, Cardiff, Wales, CF24 1LS

the 'famous' Bath **FreeShop:** Saturday 12th January, 12.30-3.30p.m., @ outside the Pump Rooms, Stall Street, Bath

'The Secret City' **talk & film:** Monday 14th January, 8p.m., Cube cinema, Bristol; www.permanentculturenow.com; £3/£4 entry

B.A.R.F. **benefit gig:** Thursday 17th January, more details t.b.c., Bath; e-mail bathactivistnet@yahoo.co.uk



Meets on the 2nd Monday of every month
8.00-9.00pm at The Bell public house, Walcot Street, Bath



Come along to discuss what YOU can do to help bring an end to animal cruelty

t: 07837 784715. e: bathanimalaction@yahoo.co.uk
Bath Animal Action is a non-violent action group

Work Program Exposed As The Con It Is

Work Program officially does more harm than good; only 3.6% of participants secured a steady job compared to a predicted 5.5% if the program had never existed.

The Work Program is one of five government 'workfare schemes' that force unemployed people to work usually menial jobs for no money. Benefit claimants are threatened with poverty and sanctions if they refuse to participate and given the vague promise of a 'real job' at the end of it. The statistics for the first year of the program shouldn't be surprising to anyone, least of all the government, whose own research predicted this outcome! Getting people to work for free during a time of high unemployment means the few jobs that would have been available to unemployed people are instead given to workfare placements. Sure, you get a bit of 'experience', but after your six months of unpaid work, will your employer really want start giving you a wage when they can just rely on the government to force more people to do the work for free?

Workfare isn't cheap either: the Guardian recently reported how it was costing more than the entire bill for Jobseekers Allowance. If you already have a job you can still be affected, as

the surplus of free temporary labour that workfare provides allows employers to cut down on staff overtime, give less work to those on flexible contracts, and drives down wages for everyone.

With all these bad points, why would the government start the scheme in the first place? Well one answer is rigging statistics; if someone is on a workfare scheme they are no longer 'unemployed', so the employment figures look a hell of a lot better. More than that, though, it's simply a con. The private agencies running the schemes get millions in taxpayers money, and whilst one or two have faced charges of fraud, it's far more widespread than a couple of bad apples. All the free labour for large companies is certainly saving some fat cats a lot of extra money to go towards their bonuses as well.

Of course all of this hasn't gone unnoticed. The scheme has been wildly unpopular and attracted massive negative press, and hundreds of demonstrations around the country. Boycott Workfare, SolFed, Afed and others have all played their part in forcing large companies out of the scheme with pickets and occupations, and we think its time to kick the scheme while its down and end workfare once and for all. Keep your eyes peeled for updates, and see you on the streets soon!

StrikeWatch

AS WELL AS our local posties' pickets, this month on StrikeWatch, we look back on a couple of firsts in industrial action, last month:

For the first time in 50 years, 500 Walmart workers in the U.S. carried out a 24-hour strike on 23rd November – the so-called 'Black Friday' shopping frenzy. Over 1,000 protests in 100 cities across 46 states, 1,000's of supporters, with some of the strongest demos seen in Paramount, California, and Hannover in Maryland. The employee group leading the strike – 'OUR Walmart' – was formed 18 months before, to fight the low wages, decaying work benefits and Walmart's infamous anti-union retaliation practices, which borders on the illegal (for what that's worth). Strikers leafleted, Christmas carolled, put on lightshows and mic-check flashmobs, and – in Paramount – blocked the odd road. Walmart C.E.O. 'Dollar' Bill Simon laughingly claimed that less than 50 'associates' took part nationally, but fooled no one. The workers, for their part, chanted in a Arnie-esque fashion: "We'll be back."

Back in the U.K., workers were out three days earlier, but this time at Amnesty International. Hundreds of picketers were out for the second time in two months, supported by the union Unite, up in arms about the human rights charity's shift away from research and meaningful casework, and towards marketing-themed branding and flashy stunts. Of course, the management's intended changes will also involve £2.5m in cuts, and losses of up to 40

jobs. A.I.U.K.'s internal divide has been bitterly widening over the last 20 years, with one senior director quitting in disgust over the treatment of their own staff (who agreed to a voluntary pay freeze, despite a steady 2% annual growth in income), with the workforce calling for director Kate Allen's resignation, and issuing a vote of no-confidence in the rest of the leaders. A senior leadership that isn't opposed to a bit of corruption, by the way – compared to the seven people earning more than £60,000 in 2007, this has swollen to 36 people netting big cash last year, and two former execs got a £800,000 golden handshake to see them off, back in 2009. Meanwhile, Amnesty local groups and members are calling for an extraordinary general meeting to set it all straight.

GROUPS AND CONTACTS

Anarchist Federation (U.K.): e-mail
info@afed.org.uk

Bath Animal Action: e-mail
bathanimalaction@yahoo.co.uk

Bath Anti-Cuts Alliance: e-mail
bathagaincuts@yahoo.co.uk

Bath People's Assembly: e-mail
info@bathpeoplesassembly.org

Black And Red Federation/B.A.R.F.: e-mail
bathactivistnet@yahoo.co.uk

Bristol Anarchist Federation: e-mail
bristol@afed.org.uk

Bristol Animal Rights Collective: e-mail
barc@hotmail.co.uk

Bristol And District Anti-Cuts Alliance: e-mail
admin@bristolanticutsalliance.org.uk

Bristol I.W.W.: e-mail
bristolwww@riseup.net

Bristol Solidarity Federation: e-mail
bristolsolfed@gmail.com

Frack Free Somerset: e-mail
info@frackfreesomerset.org

Hunt Saboteurs Association: e-mail
contact@huntsabs.org.uk

Portsmouth Anarchists: e-mail
portsmouth.anarchists@googlemail.com

Swindon Anarchists: e-mail
swindonanarchists@riseup.net

Wessex Solidarity: e-mail
wessexsolidarity@gmail.com

There are dozens of anti-cuts groups around the west, so get in touch to find your local group. And if you would like your group included, drop us an e-mail at mutineerpress@riseup.net.



WHAT WE BELIEVE

Here at The Westcountry Mutineer, it's not all about cider and muck-flinging. There are a few important principles that guide the paper – we see society as being divided into two basic classes, workers and bosses. We believe that the luxury and wealth of the bosses is only gained through the exploitation of the workers, and that workers should be entitled to the full value of what they produce. Politicians of whatever party only serve to protect the interests of their mates in big business. We believe that the ordinary people should, and have the ability to, abolish oppressive institutions such as government and capitalism and run society on its own, without the interference of bosses, politicians or any other self-appointed 'leaders'. We struggle for a world in which communities are run by the residents, and workplaces run by the workers – a world without exploitation or class systems in which resources are produced and shared equally and responsibly, not hoarded by a greedy few. Sound good to you?

If yes, then baby, you're an anarchist!

Frack You, Hippy!

WITH THE NEWS that hydraulic fracturing ('fracking' - pumping a chemical/water cocktail into shale rock at huge pressure, to release gas) is to take place in Keynsham, Frack Free Somerset - a coalition of groups opposed to fracking in the region - have been touring town and city centres to show off their street theatre am dram, and on both the 10th November and 1st December (the national day of action, alongside other groups in Wales, Sussex and Lancashire), they took centre stage in central Bath: The Big Rig Revolt!

Yo! Bum Rush The Show

SO IT WAS a Wednesday and the National Union of Students were marching again to protest about the fee hikes and the scrapping of E.M.A.; just another N.U.S. demo in London, not much to it, right? Wrong. It was actually one of the worst demonstrations that has ever been organised. Liam Burns and his group of geniuses decided that the march itself should take the route that the Chartist movement used before, but with one tiny exception: they should march in the opposite direction and have a rally in Kennington Park - because that would really show the Tories the brilliance of student movement. And of course we cannot forget to mention their excellent negotiation skills with the Met which resulted in a Section 12 being implemented by the police throughout the day.

Despite attempts by students to encourage fellow demonstrators to stay at Parliament to vent their anger at a more convenient location, the N.U.S. bureaucrats had their say and all attempts to have a more geographically-effective march were called off. To make things even more cheerful, the weather was incredibly shite. So after a wet, windy and miserable march, the remaining student demonstrators finally made their way to Kennington Park, where they faced the option of either listening to the delightful rants of reformist academics talk about how brilliantly effective marching away from central London in shit weather is, or to head to the nearest pub: most demonstrators at this point took the latter.

The bureaucrats leading the march to an out of the way corner is the perfect example of how it has carried out its mission to kill the enthusiasm and effectiveness of rank and file students. Two years ago, the student movement occupied dozens of universities and colleges, smashed the Tory H.Q. at Millbank and took part in dozens of effective, loud and confrontational demos, involving hundreds of thousands across the country, and giving the anti-cuts movement a much needed kick up the arse, without the N.U.S. leadership. Since then, the leadership, terrified of losing control, and even more terrified of losing the overpaid jobs as Labour lackeys and T.U.C. bureaucrats that await ex-N.U.S. scab presidents, has

Mother(Earth)fuckers UK Methane have submitted their planning application to undertake fracking in Keynsham, in order to extract trapped methane gas. There is much hot air surrounding the process, with evidence pointing again and again at contamination of groundwater in fracked-up areas, but there are also links to air pollution, food source poisoning and even the odd earthquake in Lancashire.

Frack Free Somerset's daring play involved a mock fracking rig and the 20-strong cast delivering a 5-star performance in their portrayal of 'Frack the World Inc.' employees, a fictitious

done its best to destroy any energy: distancing itself from direct action and occupations, putting no money or time into organising demos and funnelling dissent into useless gestures. In order for union bigwigs to be able to sit at the bosses table, they need to show that they can reign in their members when they go 'too far' and to collaborate with the filth to stop any other alternative or more effective movements from gaining the upper ground. It is this, not the scrapping of fees that has been the task of the N.U.S. leadership.

But not everyone at the rally was happy with how the day went, and approximately half the crowd decided to remind Liam Burns of their feelings, by yelling "N.U.S. shame on you, where the fuck have you brought us to?" and demanding a general strike. Some demonstrators thoughtfully noted how Mr Burns looked a little hungry, and decided to launch whatever food goods they could find, including a satsuma, although there has been much debate around whether or not it as a tangerine. The final account included tomatoes, eggs, two broccolis and one half-eaten squash. None of the items managed to reach Liam, as he later tweeted: "I can confirm no hits. Like Neo I am..." Well, being able to enter bullet time, and dodge incoming culinary bombardment is admittedly important in an N.U.S. president, but he foolishly goaded the upset demonstrators to come closer, to which they willingly obliged; protesters broke past the barricade and security to take the stage. At this moment Liam had already (like a true Bond villain) made a dramatic exit to his secret lair, leaving the rally in a similar state to the leadership itself: an absolute shambles. This shows the feeling among students is they recognise the flaws of the N.U.S. and are ready to throw it off, with the potential for a more sustainable version of the grassroots movement of late 2010.



company, proclaiming the safety of their drinking water, while pumping 'toxic chemicals' into drinking cups via a tube. Members of the public unsurprisingly refused a sip.

But back to real life: with news that recommencement of fracking in Lancashire has just received approval on the 13th of this month, campaigners are calling on the public to object to the planning application, details of which can be found at: <http://www.frackfreesomerset.org/what-you-can-do/keynsham-action-alert/planningobjections/>

HELP RAKE THE MUCK!

Have you sniffed out a local scandal, got a bit of juicy news, or just need to publicise an event or demo?

Contributions/anonymous tip-offs (no more than 350 words) to mutineerpress@riseup.net. E-mail that same address for a lengthy and boring 'Guide for Contributors'.

Alternatively, if you fancy distributing the Mutineer in your area, drop us an e-mail, giving us your address, and letting us know how many copies you think you can shift each month and we'll get them sent out to you, along with any stickers/posters/incendiary devices we have hanging around.

Solidarity Appeal

IN ISSUE #2, we reported on the case of a young antifascist who - as a result of a biased legal system and false testimony from the cops - has been found guilty of several offences relating to July's massive anti-E.D.L. protest in Bristol.

The demo was successful in marginalising the racist group who had openly threatened to attack various multicultural, political and social 'targets' in the city. The activist has avoided jail (previously hinted at by the judge), but has been landed with community service and a fine. Combining his fine with legal costs, he has been left footing a bill of over £1,000. It is vital that we all stand together against fascist thugs like the E.D.L. (and their wigged friends?) and help out those who've found themselves on the sharp end of the law for standing up for their communities. Various groups are organising a whip-round to pay off this fine. If you, your group, or your union branch could donate - no matter how much - please send a cheque made out to Anarchist Federation to Bristol Afed, c/o Kebele Community Co-op, 14 Robertson Road, Easton, Bristol, BS5 6JY.



Abort 67 Target Pro-choice Universities

ABORT 67 ARE an anti-choice group infamous for their tactic of using large images of aborted fetuses to upset and anger passers by, or as they put it 'show the truth about abortion'. The group take these graphic images out of context in an attempt to turn people against abortion, and shame women who have had procedures. On the 9th November, Abort 67 came to the University of Bristol, armed with large banners and posters. The university was not a random target; it was targeted as the students' union has a clear pro-choice policy. The university, along with others around the country, including Sussex and Nottingham, have been targeted as part of an anti-choice university tour. At Bristol we were not warned of Abort 67's planned visit but managed to throw a quick counter-protest together in order to obscure most of the posters. We created make-shift banners to block Abort 67's graphic images, including one that had previously been used to advertise student elections. Ninety

independent complaints from students were lodged with the police so it is clear that the group are not welcome. Many staff members and students came over to thank us for showing opposition to Abort 67's disgusting tactics. Distressingly, I saw many young women visibly upset by the images, clutching each other as they walked or shielding their eyes with folders. For Abort 67 this pain is seen as necessary to further their cause, but I was shocked to hear that their ultimate aim was not to make abortion illegal but 'unthinkable'. The group wants to do this through shaming, intimidation and brainwashing both women and men.

Members of Abort 67 continually attempted to engage us in conversation, which inevitably went round in circles. I told one member that the images were taken out of their medical context; a heart operation would look disgusting if you blew up the image on a massive poster, but that doesn't mean the operation is wrong. She said that this was different as it was not a 'life', when I replied that the image she was showing

was not actually a human life yet she said if that was so I shouldn't be upset by it! A male member of the group told one of our female union officers that having sex was a 'sin' and would result in catching S.T.I.s.

The group returned to the University on the 23rd November and claim that they want to make their visits a regular event. We must stop this from happening by continuing to obstruct their demonstrations. Students must not fear being confronted by this divisive and misogynistic group, that claim having an abortion is the most selfish thing a woman can do. Abortions are a legal right in this country and women have the right to have control over their own bodies without fear of intimidation.



Dodgy Dave In Direct Action Defeat

HAVE YOU EVER worried that protesting doesn't change anything? Well, stop – you're wrong. 'And who says so?', you ask. None other than our very own darling government!

Last month, the government blocked the release of a list of companies involved in workfare, admitting that protests and direct action have left the unpopular scheme in tatters. Since its creation, the scheme has met with fierce resistance with dozens of exposed companies (like the British Heart Foundation and Holland & Barrett) being forced to pull out through a high profile campaign of protest. The scheme was appealing to bosses when it was a dirty little secret, but it turns out that they hate being exposed as free labour profiteers, and tend to drop out when exposed to the light of day.

So, enter every big-businessman's bezzie mate: David 'Call me Dave if yer rich' Cameron. Working with the D.W.P., he has blocked calls to reveal a list of workfare providers. Leaked documents from government lawyers state that "Previous targeted campaigns had

resulted in the withdrawal of providers from workfare", effectively citing mass public disapproval as the main reason for hiding the list. However, with more and more employees and people pushed onto the forced-labour scheme and happy to whistleblow, it won't be long before more big names start falling.

The most important thing about the documents isn't the length to which governments will go to protect big business, or the contempt for democracy shown by suppressing information from the public – we all knew this went on. What makes this crucial is that the government have admitted – in a document meant for their eyes only – that they are scared of action as it can and does get results. With the government admitting their fear of popular discontent, just think what we could achieve if we pushed a little harder...

So, on that happy note, ask yourself this: what better time than now to get on boycottworkfare.org, round up a bunch of yer mates and get stuck into the fight against this redundancy-making, crumbling scheme that puts yet more of our taxes in the pockets of the rich?

Ancient History

WELCOME TO THE first column on westcountry radical history. Radical history for us involves reclaiming our story, uncovering hidden narratives, challenging established narratives, and encouraging new historians from the working class, to read, write and give talks on our story.

We are not particularly interested in John Cabot. But we are interested in seafarers, press gangs, slavery and pirates. For example, were all pirates murderous villains, led by vicious psychopaths only interested in plunder and rape? Not necessarily: most pirate ships were very multicultural affairs, who elected the captains and had

democratic structures on board. Discipline was easier than the Royal Navy, and unpopular captains could be deselected if they were unfair and did not secure enough booty. Some pirate ships directly attacked slave ships. On capture most of the crew were thrown overboard, whilst the slaves were freed. They were given the choice of taking the ship back to Africa with them, or joining the pirates. Many pirates had been known as privateers, when Britain was at war with Spain and France, it was accepted by the British government, when ships were attacked. At times these ships carried massive amounts of gold the Spanish had stolen from the Incas and Aztecs. When friendly diplomatic relations were restored, these

attacks were now declared the actions of pirates.

You don't read this in the mainstream history books. But this our story. As it would have been the likes of us who, whilst walking home from the pub late at night, would have been attacked by a press gang. Ripped from family and friends, we would wake at sea, and be forced to live under a brutal regime of discipline, where life was cheap. One means of escape would have been jumping ship at some foreign port, and entering the service of a pirate ship. Years later, whilst attacking an English clipper carrying sugar back to England from the slave plantations, we are captured. Eventually we are taken back home, to be hung by the neck, or further slavery by being transported to the colonies under the penal code.

There are millions of stories like this, and in this column in future editions we are going to tell them. In the next issue: collective bargaining by riot, in a Kingswood style.

*If you have any stories or suggestions send them into the West Country Mutineer
Love and Rage
Bristol Radical Group*

Theory Corner: But Don't We Need Prisons?

In recent weeks, Tory bluster about tougher sentences for offenders has been on a steep rise, possibly as a populist smokescreen to divert attention from their disastrous economic policies. However, there is no evidence that tougher punishments are any deterrent for 'criminals' – in fact evidence consistently shows that the opposite is true. Anarchists make a very different argument, for a society without prison as we know it and with an emphasis on rehabilitation above punishment.

ONE OF THE things that many people find hardest to accept about anarchist ideas is our rejection of prisons. This is a scary thought, so what would society look like without prisons as we know them?

Well, first of all, we should look at society as it is at the moment, and the current prison population. The vast majority of people in prison are there because of the rotten system that we live in – from people that have had to steal to feed their families, ran up unpayable debts, or got addicted to drugs or alcohol because of the powerless, penniless surroundings they find themselves in. Even a lot of violent crime only happens because people who feel powerless in their workplace, Jobcentre or community end up

snapping and taking out their frustration on someone who doesn't deserve it. And that's not even mentioning all the new non-crimes recent governments have concocted, like squatting or "interfering with a contractual relationship"(?), or anti-terrorist laws banging people up for going on protests or maintaining a website. We live in a society where people end up inside for nicking a pair of trainers, yet big businesses dodge tax, trash the environment, run sweatshops and provide weapons to fuel brutal conflicts all under the protection, and encouragement, of the law. This is modern 'justice' – harsh penalties for petty crimes committed by the poor, while the rich are rewarded for acts of disgusting oppression and exploitation.

Anarchists reject this twisted logic. We believe that most 'crimes' are caused by the unfair, unequal society that we live in. In a fair world where everyone has equal access to opportunities and resources, and feels like a valued and important member of their community, the majority of modern crime just would not happen.

Of course, this doesn't explain how we would deal with the proper wrong'uns – the remaining tiny percent who want to rape, harm and kill – but do today's laws or prisons deter these people? Looking at crime statistics, the answer seems to be 'no'.

We don't believe that some people are safe to walk the streets and cause more harm and distress to their victims, or potential victims, but we place far more importance on education and rehabilitation over punishment. Look at the sky-high re-offending rates – does the current 'justice' system work for either the victim or the offender?

We also reject the idea that some wigged-up bastard in a court room is capable of giving a fair judgement. Let's not forget that today's laws were dreamt up by the rich and powerful, mainly for the protection of them and their wealth and that judges work for the most violent organisation going – the state. It is not laws, or punishments, that prevent crimes such as rape and murder, it is that fact that most of us have reached a consensus that such actions are wrong. We believe that problems affecting a community need to be solved directly by that community. For example, a woman who has killed her abusive husband in self-defence will probably still do time today, whereas her neighbours and community would be far better placed to decide whether an actual crime has been committed.

So, when we say 'no prisons', we don't mean 'no justice', we just don't trust the government to decide what is right and what's not – as with everything else, the justice system would work better if we ran it ourselves!

Stating The Obvious

A DEFIANT YET modest group of eight activists from Bath Anti-Cuts Alliance, Occupy Bath and B.A.R.F. anarchists, were all out in 'force' on the freezing night of Wednesday 5th December, leafleting with blue-tinged fingers, and bemoaning George Osborne's mopey Autumn Statement. A statement that basically stated: "Yes, the evil Con-Dem austerity package has failed to turn around the economy's nosedive" and "Yes, we're gonna do at least another six years of the same, and feign surprise

when it turns out it didn't work". As well as the recent years of frozen wages, 'Workfare' neo-slavery and dismantled public services, the new plan similarly attacks benefits, pensions and teachers' unions. Meanwhile, the Sunday Times Rich List reported that the wealthiest 1,000 UK citizens have seen their fortunes increase by over £18 billion over the past year, to more than £414 billion – over a third of the national debt. Without meaning to state the obvious, but perhaps it's about time for a bit of old-fashioned wealth redistribution?

No Grasses On Our Turf

IT'S EASY TO have political beliefs, but so much harder to maintain those beliefs in the face of violence and intimidation. Which is why we're straying from the sandy shores of the westcountry to bring news of three imprisoned anarchists from Oregon, U.S.A.

Way back in August, anarchists Matthew Duran, Katherine Olejnik and Leah-Lynne Plant had their doors kicked in by armed police, all of their personal possessions seized as 'evidence', and the three were then locked up. Police reports parroted by the media claimed that all three were being held in relation to (a minor) vandalism of banks that had occurred during this year's Seattle Mayday parade.

Despite being able to prove that they were not at the protest, all were ordered to return to court in order to provide names and information that may lead to arrests for the vandalism. During the

course of their defence, lawyers working for the anarchists found that the arrest warrants had been signed off in March – before the vandalism at the centre of the investigation had even occurred. The arrests were nothing more than part of an evidence-gathering mission against a vibrant American anarchist movement. Back in court, all three anarchists refused to testify or provide any names or information. As per American law, the judge then applied to strip the defendants of their right to silence, which was duly granted.

All three still refused to talk and now, all but one are starting lengthy prison sentences for the 'crime' of refusing to grass on people who may or may not have committed minor crimes at an event which none of the defendants were actually at. Since the trials ended, a fourth anarchist, Matt Pfeiffer has been called before a grand jury. He is also refusing to co-operate and is due to be imprisoned soon.

Across America, acts of solidarity, from

Quote Of The Month

SOMETIMES – NOT OFTEN, mind – we here at Mutineer H.Q. feel the need to tip our hats to someone in a position of authority. This month, we doff our caps to Jon Gnarr, the awesomely-named mayor of Reykjavik, Iceland, who has been spotted modelling a daring dress and pink balaclava, in solidarity with imprisoned Russian punks Pussy Riot. When asked to address a gay pride rally in Paris, like all good speeches, Gnarr's was brief and to the point. Taking aim at gay-bashers, he said "Homophobia isn't a phobia. Homophobics aren't scared, they're just assholes!" Couldn't have put it better ourselves!

protests to sabotage of court-houses and cop-shops, have been intensifying and the prisoners have reported receiving hundreds of books and letters of support (which you can add to by checking out nopoliticalrepression.wordpress.com).

Here at the Mutineer, we want to raise our hats in salute to four people who took their politics beyond a game or lifestyle choice. When faced with a real test of their beliefs, they lived up to the thousands of anarchists before them who have faced imprisonment and repression simply for holding the dangerous belief that we can, and should, create a world free of injustice, inequality and tyranny.



Last Orders At The Bell?

DARK DAYS FOR Bathonians last month, with the announcement of the impending sale of Walcot Street's Bell Inn. For those not in the know, the Bell has long been one of the city's most distinctive waterholes, with a reputation for real ale, almost nightly live music and independent spirit. The foil-hatted amongst you can almost be forgiven for thinking that some sinister Illuminanesque conspiracy has been targeting the city over the last decade or so, with closures of real pubs like the Hat and Feather, the Porter Butt and the Longacre (even Moles' future is looking shaky), the expansion of boarded-up

wasteland along the London Road, and increased gentrification (yes, this is Bath we're talking about). Walcot Street, the so-called 'Artisan Quarter', whatever that means, has been hit hardest, with the loss of Doolallys cafe and the sabotage of Walcot Nation Day festival, an annual fest of true weirdness.

Maybe the Bell's motley crue of dedicated boozers and misfits can save the pub, though, and buy it up themselves; providing they can cough up the £925,000. But failing that, this might well be the pub's final death knell. Well, we've always thought it high time the city had another gastro-pub.

Groundhog Day, Occupy Bath-Style

NOVEMBER 16TH-18TH saw the return of Bathonian regulars Occupy Bath, for their anniversary weekend trip down memory lane. Barred by the Council from their old haunt in Queen Square, campers made a last minute detour to upmarket Royal Crescent, to dirty the stuffy elegance with their tents and banners and ghostly cookfires. After a swift set-up, and hot nosh (care of Bath Food Not Bombs), they resumed the old General Assembly meeting format – open, consensus-based discussions where all present get to air their views and decide camp policy. A year on, this camp was more firmly focused on the government austerity program, as well as Britain's corrupt economic system. As well as bathing in the glare of the B.B.C.

and Bath Chronicle's media spotlight, the campers found themselves also dazzled by the flash of busloads of tourist cameras, who must have thought they'd encountered some post-apocalyptic human zoo – and maybe they had. The next day, it was all out to hassle Starbucks on their tax evasion, complete with banner, megaphone and minor security guard scuffles. And then come the Sunday they packed up and went their separate ways, rather than outstaying their welcome for weeks on end, like last time! But unlike many of the Occupy cells, the Bath group are still very much active, particularly in the form of their brainchild Bath People's Assembly, which meets every month at the Friends Meeting House – and maybe you should do, too?



President:
Adriano Gentilcore

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Tower Power

BACK ON NOVEMBER 5th, the last of the 17 climate change campaigners climbed down from their moral high ground, atop the middle coolant tower of E.D.F. 's new West Burton B gas turbine station. After a week-long protest camp, the chimney sweeps abseiled down into the loving arms of Nottinghamshire police, and have been bailed on 'suspicion' of aggravated trespass, alongside five others. Whilst up in the clouds, they used their 300ft-high platform to carry a range of amenities like solar panels, a portable toilet and a rope walkway between the towers, flown-up ingeniously by kite!

The whole stunt was designed to spark off debate on carbon emissions – the modern environmentalist's favourite sticking point – and mock the recent 'coalition' row on wind farms: LibDems want all power to come from green sources by 2030, but Tories don't want to force any more wind farms on communities – not nuclear, or fossil fuel stations, mind; the plebs can bloody well have them and enjoy it!

Despite more immediate concerns like debts and work stress, it's a fair bet that most decent people are concerned about climate change, and hope for greener and more efficient energy. As a country, the U.K. is falling far behind the rest of Europe – Germany gets 25% of its electricity from renewables, Spain is on 33%, and we're floundering on 9%, despite having some of the best wind resources in the world. Meanwhile, natural disasters like Hurricane Sandy have more than doubled in frequency since 1980, as a result of climate change – and will only get worse unless we can shift away from dirty fuel.

The group's main spokesperson, Ewa Jasiewicz, had this to say: "This was the first time activists have managed to successfully shut down a power station, and the longest occupation of a power station the U.K. has ever seen. We got our message out about how reckless and ridiculous George Osborne's proposed 'dash for gas' is out to thousands of people. I'm proud of what we've achieved – but it's only the start of the battle for our energy future."

Before they came down, they tweeted out a whole gallery of beautiful photos of dawn and sunset from on high. If you have a camera, budding photographer aspirations, and a beef with your local power plant, then maybe this is a job opportunity for you!