

RESISTANCE

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And more!

A Community Victory



Years of hard work by campaign groups in Brixton paid off in early April when Brixton market was given grade II listed status. This makes it almost impossible for developers to demolish the market buildings and stops this essential community asset disappearing under a flood of chain stores and luxury flats.

The listing is the result of years of campaign work by the Friends of Brixton Market. In 2007, the market was bought by London and Associated Properties who proposed demolition and replacement with luxury flats and a mall space. The market, which has been the

beating heart of London's Afro-Caribbean community for many decades, would have become just another bland cash cow for a faceless development company. The community mobilised immediately to defend the market and were able, with a little help from the credit crunch, to delay any works and fight for a way to protect the space.

What they feared was what has happened elsewhere in London and across the country when public spaces like the market are redeveloped. Gentrification,

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Postal Wildcat in Liverpool

Close to 100 workers at Liverpool's new main post delivery centre walked off the job on Friday 23rd April. The unofficial 24-hour strike was triggered by management's refusal to honour a redundancy agreement, and was part of an ongoing dispute triggered by the move from Coperas Hill sorting office, which is due to close, to the new Brunswick Dock mail centre. The action affected deliveries in the Liverpool 1, 2 and 3 postal districts, where many city centre businesses are based. Communication Workers Union branch sec-

retary Mark Walsh said: "The area where PO box letters are stored is too cramped and we have said for a while that the new building is not fit for purpose... We have only been in the building a

couple of weeks and have had constant problems. The straw that broke the camel's back was that the management withdrew four redundancies that had been agreed as part of a number of

changes... There have been umpteen issues." The workers returned to work at 6:30 on Saturday 24th after Royal Mail entered into negotiations with the union.



BNP not welcome in Croydon

The far-right British National Party were met with fierce opposition when they staged a provocative protest outside the headquarters of the UK Border Agency in the run-up to the general election. The PCS union, who represent staff working in the building, called a counter-protest that was attended by Border Agency workers and anti-fascists, including a group of about 20 masked and hooded militants who charged the police line separat-

ing them from the BNP. One man was able to break through the line before being wrestled to the ground. Mark Serwotka, general secretary of the PCS union, was quick to stress to reporters that the militant anti-fascists had no connection to the official demonstration. BNP leader Nick Griffin was not present on the day, and London BNP organiser Robert Bailey, when questioned as to Mr Griffin's absence, replied: "You will have to ask him."



Local campaigns building national links

On the 27th of March, community campaigners from across the country came together in Nottingham for the launch of the Community Action Network, a network which aims to support the development of grassroots community and solidarity organisation and networking everywhere. Groups represented included Pleasley Hill Peoples Network, Hackney Solidarity Network, Blackbird Leys Community Centre, Hereford Solidarity League, Cambridge Class War, Nottingham Anarchist Federation, London Coalition Against Poverty, Haringey Solidarity Group and Lewisham Community Action, among others.

The gathering was intended to share information, local experiences and views about some of the key issues affecting our communities, to establish better

links and communication channels among radical, community-orientated local groups and individuals, and to promote the interests of people rather than of governments and corporations. In addition, a specific sub-group of the network was set up to look at issues around housing, and the network will host a meeting at the London Anarchist Bookfair in October, as well as another gathering in 2011.

The gathering included a series of reports from local groups, which included Hereford Solidarity League's campaigning to defend schools and swimming pools, resistance to gentrification in Mansfield, and the creation of the Radical London network linking local groups across London. Elsewhere, Cambridge has seen the launch of an Unemployed

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On the Front Line

Workplace Roundup



Sacked French workers threaten to go out with a bang

Laid-off employees of Sodimatex, a car parts manufacturer, threatened to blow up their factory unless their redundancy payout was improved. When offered a lump sum of 15,000 euros, considerably less than the 21,000 euros that was paid to the workers at another Sodimatex plant that closed in 2006, they responded by piling wooden pallets around a 5-metre-long gas tank and making petrol bombs. Around 40 workers stayed overnight at the plant on Thursday 1st April, sleeping on newly produced carpets. Unsurprisingly, the company quickly re-opened negotiations, while a union representative warned that the workers were only prepared to “unplug the detonator” and would be willing to return to militant action if there were “no positive advances”.

If Carlsberg made strikes...

200 Carlsberg warehouse employees walked off the job on April 8 in a spontaneous protest against having their free beer rations cut, and having new limitations placed on when they can drink it. 50 truck drivers followed in sympathy, despite the fact that their free beer ration was unchanged (readers may be relieved to know that Carlsberg trucks are fitted with alcohol ignition locks to prevent drunk-driving). The wildcat action came to an end after a few days when the company agreed to meet with union representatives, as stocks of lager throughout Copenhagen were rapidly depleted by the union's action.

Foul! Spanish Footballers Threaten to Strike

At the start of April, the Spanish Footballers' Association



(AFE) warned that they were prepared to call industrial action over the 6.7 million euros owed to players by the Spanish Football Federation. The threat quickly panicked their bosses, who have now agreed to a settlement where a quarter of the wage bill will be paid by money from football pools, with the rest coming directly from the Football Federation over a period of five years.

Justice for Jarvis

Close to 200 ex-employees of the rail company Jarvis, which collapsed in March, marched through York on the 14th of April, calling for Network Rail to sign contracts with other engineering companies to take on the work Jarvis was supposed

to be doing, and demanding that former Jarvis staff should be transferred to these companies with no loss of terms or conditions. They have now formed an action committee, who held their first meeting in Doncaster in late April, and at time of going to press it seems possible that Network Rail will agree to rehire the laid-off workers on their former terms and conditions.

RMT Workers protest

RMT railway workers protested outside the Scottish Parliament on 15th April, calling for the retention of guards on the Airdrie-Bathgate line, and for an end to the practice of compensating train operators for strike action using public funds.

“All in this together”?

A report into boardroom pay from Income Data Services has found that NHS executives in England awarded themselves average pay rises of 6.9% in 2008-9. At the same time, other staff, such as nurses, received less than 3%. Similarly, in Scotland, a recent review of NHS managers' salary, conducted by NHS managers, unsurprisingly said that they should be paid more. Meanwhile, staff at St. George's Hospital in London and East Kent were balloting for strike action over the low pay of cleaning staff, who play a vital role in stopping the

spread of disease.

Local government chiefs in Scotland have made a lot of noise about their not taking a pay rise this year. When you consider that their pay has rocketed in the last 10 years, with most on 6-figure salaries, that might not seem as generous.

This goes across all industries: there's always enough money to pay salary demands at the top, why not for us? Remember that the next time you hear your boss plead poverty. Maybe they could ignore you alone, but not all your colleagues as well.



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Workers Union and an attempt by the police to close down the Strawberry Fair, an annual free festival which local people are determined will go ahead. In Lewisham, campaigning is going on to oppose the BNP, support migrant tube cleaners and stop school closures, and Haringey Solidarity Group has seen steady growth, with activity including regular film nights and work within the Haringey Federation of Residents Associations, Sustainable Haringey and Haringey Friends of Parks Forum. The day saw thought-provoking discussions of strategy and the difficulties of interacting with local councils and residents groups, and participants left feeling ambitious and encouraged. The cuts coming after the election will hit us in our communities as hard as in our workplaces, if not harder, but there are a lot of dedicated people patiently building up the structures and organisations we need to fight back.



Curse of ‘council bastard of the year’ strikes glasgow council leader

It's not all bad news in Resistance. Steven Purcell, Labour Party politician, leader of Glasgow City Council and one of our “Bastards of the Year 2009”, has been forced to resign in disgrace and his political career is over.

Purcell hired a PR agency to handle the announcement of his departure at the beginning of March. His “tragic personal breakdown” has since proven much more interesting.

Purcell had been questioned by drugs police in the City Chambers in the course of an investigation of cocaine & organised crime. No action was taken and this was kept secret for more than 10 months, despite (or because of) Purcell's weekly lunches with a group including the editors of the Sun and the Glasgow Herald.

The scandal has shone a small amount of light on the cronyism at the heart of Glasgow council, a virtual one-

party state. One of Purcell's schemes was the creation of “Aleos” by hiving off departments to semi-private bodies outside of public scrutiny. One of these, City Building, has seen executive salaries double in a year and councillors paid to sit on boards doing overseeing that's their job as councillors. Calls for an investigation into a contract awarded to a prominent

Labour/business figure have been resisted.

There's more to be uncovered. Senior Labour & business figures have issued stern denials of wrongdoing. There'll be a new head in place, hydra-like, early in May. Nothing will change on its own. But for now, this is one bastard who's had his comeuppance.



Brixton market saved

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a rise in rents and property prices that forces out lower paid or unemployed locals in favour of much more profitable wealthy incomers, destroys communities. The people themselves are forced out and the public spaces that they use are destroyed in favour of more expensive private homes and chain stores. People in Brixton knew this and fought hard to prevent it.

The Friends of Brixton Market lobbied tirelessly and have pursued every legal avenue to save the market, but this is not what's most important about this victory. None of this would have been possible without a much larger mobilisation of local people around something that was important to them. The listing by the government saves the buildings, but it was the

mobilisation of the community to protect something which is theirs, whoever's name happens to be on the deeds, that forced them into it. In the wake of this election and economic crisis, we'll all be facing bitter struggles if we want to hang on to what's ours, and we could learn a lot from the people of Brixton.

Battling BP in Brighton

On Thursday the 15th of April activists in Brighton occupied the roof of a BP garage for over 9 hours, forcing it to close for most of the day. The action was taken in solidarity with recent struggles of BP workers and their communities in Colombia, a country notorious for the murder and violent repression of trade unionists.

In January, a trade union branch in the region of Casanare, which was formed only last year, organized the first industrial action in the area for over 18 years.

On the 15th of February, the day before negotiations were due to start, the picket line was viciously attacked with tear-gas by the ESMAD, a special police force notorious for anti-worker violence. Three workers were hospitalized and many children who were merely passing by on their way to school suffered from contamination with the gas.

A week later, on February 23rd, the striking workers had to chain themselves to the gates at the Tauramena Central Processing Facility to stop scabs forcing their way through the picket line, and on the 27th of March two masked gunmen on motorbikes opened fire on two union officials, killing their bodyguard.

The strike has widespread community support through an organization called the Movement of Dignity for Casanare, which organized a mass demonstration on the 7th of March,



targeting BP for a whole host of grievances, including the contamination of local water supply and the destruction of the natural environment.

The action in Brighton was also intended to pressure BP's shareholders, whose Annual General Meeting was being held that same day in London, not to invest in the incredibly destructive Tar Sands extraction project in Canada, where multinational corporations backed by the state are clearing vast areas of natural forest (the Tar Sands region is the size of England), destroying whole eco-systems in one fell swoop. The extraction process is so energy intensive that one barrel of oil is burnt up for every 2 produced. This process is also poisoning the water supply for the local communities who are already amongst the most marginalized and impoverished in Canada, being mainly indigenous

people. Despite the supposed difference between a 'First World' country like Canada and a 'Third World' one like Colombia, the situation with the Tar Sands is markedly similar to that of Casanare and many other regions of Latin America.

BP's website and adverts try to project an image of social and environmental responsibility. They deny that they have anything to do with the repression of the workers in Casanare, and try to deflect attention away from their inherently ecologically destructive business with implausible greenwashing. Actions like the one in Brighton are one way of counteracting this corporate propaganda, and of showing that our struggling brothers and sisters in other parts of the world that they are not alone, for it is in the interest of all working class people to bring down these oppressive and destructive institutions.

Goodbye to all SATs?

The National Association of Head Teachers (NAHT) have joined with the National Union of Teachers (NUT) in promising industrial action against Sats, the controversial system of tests which are used to rank both schools and children from a young age. The unions said Sats in their current form "disrupt the learning process for children in Year 6 (aged 10 and 11), and are misused to compile meaningless league tables which only serve to humiliate and demean children, their teachers and their communities". They said they supported a system of assessment that "highlights what children can do rather than focusing on failure". Rather than stopping teaching altogether, teachers will simply refuse to participate in the tests, and use the time to explore more creative forms of learning instead. Christine Blower, general secretary of the NUT, said: "Not only are we boycotting Sats, but we are saying to schools that this is finally the opportunity to do the exciting things you always really wanted to be doing in the classroom. We can make sure Sats week is a really brilliant week, a creative week, which is what we would want every single week of the year to be."

Beyond Voting

Have you had enough of the posing of politicians in the run-up to the general election?

Do you think that this election is going to make any real difference to the economic and social crisis that's hitting us? Can anything be done to defend our interests as working class people and fight for a better life for us all?

At time of going to press, we can't say whether Labour or the Conservatives will have won power, or whether we'll end up with a hung parliament and the Liberal Democrats calling the shots, but they all have the same agenda - the imposition of huge public spending cuts in a desperate bid to preserve the UK's credit rating, thus saving sterling from the attentions of the currency speculators, and ultimately fending off a visit from the International Monetary Fund.

The only issue up for debate is when the cuts that are already underway will be escalated. The stark reality is that external events will dictate when this happens and whoever forms the government will have

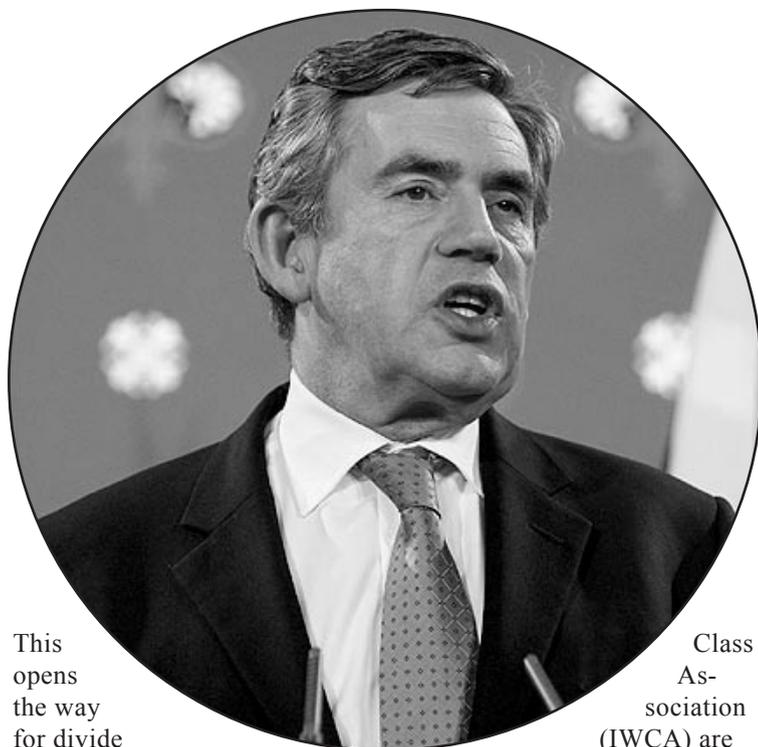
little choice but to comply. All the contestants privately acknowledge that, should they gain power, they are likely to go down as one of the most unpopular administrations in history as they will have no choice but to swing the axe. The vast majority of the public realise this is the case, hence their response ranging from a distinct lack of enthusiasm to outright cynicism about the election campaign.

Whatever the political landscape looks like after the election, it will be ordinary working class people bearing the brunt as services are cut and jobs are axed. In addition, there is the elephant in the sitting room in the form of another banking crisis that a growing number of experts are predicting - should this occur, then effectively, all bets are off!

What can we, as ordinary people, do in the face of what looks to be a bleak future?

There is a stark choice - we struggle as individuals to deal with the consequences of the crisis or act collectively to defend our interests and our communities. Modern society

is becoming ever more fragmented and atomised with an emphasis on consumption as opposed to community. As a result, the response to any crisis becomes more individualised - and that's how the powers that be like it!



This opens the way for divide and rule as different sections of the community are played off against each other. There are plenty of people trying to stir up division, from the likes of the British National Party and the English Defence League on the one hand through to religious fundamentalists such as Islam 4 UK, Hizib ut-Tahrir and the Christian Party on the other - they need to be faced off and told they have no place in our communities.

We have to regain a sense of solidarity that will get all of us through what will be difficult and challenging times. Acting collectively opens the way to face off the crisis and to unite our communities. The cuts that will come are going to leave massive holes in terms of provision - it is going to be up to us to step up to the plate to ensure that we take over whatever we can in creative and innovative ways. You may well ask, what can be done on a practical level in this kind of situation - well, there are a lot of examples to inspire us.

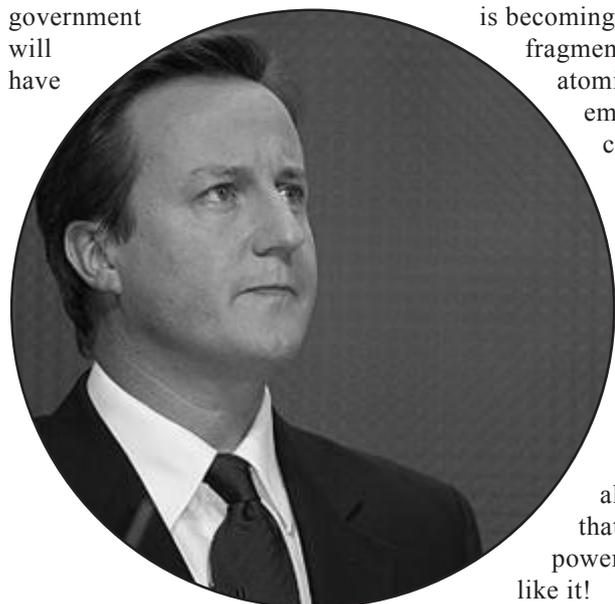
The Independent Working

Class Association (IWCA) are a group trying to

organise community responses from below in under-privileged areas, such as in Blackbird Leys, an estate to the east of Oxford. In their relatively short history, they have organised a Saturday morning Children's Cinema Club, a SATs booster course for school children and numerous community away-days in the estate, as well as a community football tournament.

Currently, there is a wave of resistance to evictions from foreclosed homes across the USA that shows how communities can mobilise to fight the consequences of an economic crisis that impacts on the working class, such as in Philadelphia where the Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now (ACORN) and other community organizations helped to pressure the city council to order the county sheriff to halt foreclosure auctions. Craig Robbins, who directs ACORN's foreclosure campaign said: "We're look

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Staff and Students Protest Cuts at Glasgow University

At noon on April 14th, about 200 members of the University and College Union (UCU) at Glasgow University, students and members of other campus unions Unison and Unite came together to protest the meeting of the University Court under Principal Anton Muscatelli, which met to discuss the “restructuring” planned for next academic year. The University, which announced restructuring without consulting the student body in any way and has not held any public meetings whatsoever about the potential impact of its plans, had previously made assurances that no jobs would be lost, but they are now targeting 25 posts in the education department and at least 60 others across the university, particularly in the Arts and Humanities, Veterinary Medicine, and Biomedical and Life Sciences departments. The University is also proposing the closure of GUARD, the Glasgow University Archaeological Research Division, with a loss of some 30 jobs, because it is not meeting profit targets. The meeting of the court was not publicised and was held during Easter holidays, but the Anti-Cuts Network at the University found out and some students were still able to attend the demonstration. Principal Muscatelli is receiving a total salary package of £283,000 for the year 2009-2010.

Anarcha-feminist weekend in Manchester

On the 10th and 11th April, the Anarchist Federation Women’s Caucus and Manchester Anarcha-feminist Kolectiv hosted a weekend conference in the University of Manchester’s student union, attended by around 200 people.

The event had workshops ranging from self-defence to creative writing, including anarcha-feminist perspectives on topics from asylum and anti-war campaigns to Palestine and prisons. Speakers included representatives from the Yarl’s Wood detention centre and Stop the Traffick, and the performance space provided entertainment from the Granarchist and Hope University’s community theatre group. Liverpool’s News from Nowhere provided a bookstall alongside various anarchist and feminist campaign organisations, and a free crèche was provided while workshops were running.

The weekend began with an

Anarcha-feminism 101 session, in which the organisers spoke of the history of feminism within anarchism, and noted how – despite a long tradition of women’s activism within the movement – both attitudes towards feminism and practical necessities (such as crèche provision and safe meeting spaces) have lapsed in recent years. They spoke of a need for feminism to be put back on the anarchist agenda, and the discussion that followed highlighted the need for people of all genders to actively challenge informal cultures of sexism within the movement.

Throughout the varied workshops, the common factor participants noted in their feedback was how open and positive discussions had been, with a real willingness to listen and communicate, even on contentious and divided issues. The weekend brought a much needed space for anarcha-feminists to meet, talk,



learn and organise, and another is planned for 2011. In the meantime, the organisers are in the process of archiving feedback and workshop notes from the event, which will be made into the basis for a wiki and e-mail list to continue discussion. For more information or to join the mailing list for the next event, please e-mail anarchafeminist@af-north.org.

Beyond Voting

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–ing to throw a wrench in the foreclosure machinery,” adding that ACORN are planning to organise “rapid defence teams” ready to turn out crowds on short notice to prevent evictions.

We face a period where the interests of working class people will be brutally sacrificed to appease the interests of the economy. However, as we can see from the examples above, it is possible to fight back. The crisis will not go away - we have no choice but to unite and resist if our communities are to survive. Resisting will make us stronger and opens the way for a better future...

SHEFFIELD'S FIRST ANARCHIST BOOKFAIR!

Saturday 22nd May, 10:00 - 16:00
Corporation Night Club

Talks
Stalls
Meetings
Cheap Vegan Food

www.bookfair.org.uk

New AF Pamphlet

Introduction to Anarchist Communism

Anarchist Federation



New from the Anarchist Federation: Introduction to Anarchist Communism

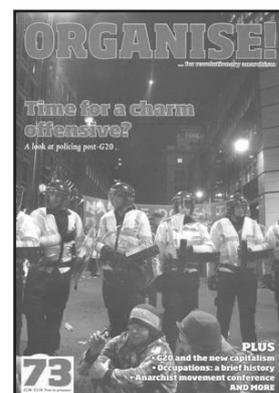
In this brand new pamphlet we lay out what's fundamentally wrong with the world we live in, how we can fight to improve our lives in the here and now, and what kind of world we should struggle to build.

£2 print copy, available from our website - alternatively write to us at the address below.

Full text and digital edition available for free online, go to www.afed.org.uk

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Organise! is the Anarchist Federation's theoretical and historical magazine. It is published in order to develop anarchist communist ideas. It aims to give a clear anarchist viewpoint on contemporary issues, and initiate debates on areas not normally covered in agitational journals. You can order or subscribe online at www.afed.org.uk, or get in touch with your local AF group for a copy.



ANARCHIST FEDERATION

The Anarchist Federation is an organisation of class struggle anarchists (based in Britain and Ireland, but with many contacts overseas) which aims to abolish Capitalism and all oppression to create a free and equal society. This is Anarchist Communism.

We see today's society as being divided into two main opposing classes: the ruling class which controls all the power and wealth, and the working class which the rulers exploit to maintain this. By racism, sexism and other forms of oppression, as well as war and environmental destruction the rulers weaken and divide us. Only the direct action of working class people can defeat these attacks and ultimately overthrow capitalism.

As the capitalist system rules the whole world it's destruction must be complete and world wide. We reject attempts to reform it such as working through parliament and national liberation movements (like the IRA) as they fail to challenge capitalism itself. Unions also work as a part of the capitalist system, so although workers struggle within them, they will be unable to bring about capitalism's destruction unless they go beyond these limits.

Organisation is vital if we're to beat the bosses, so we work for a united anarchist movement and are affiliated to the International of Anarchist Federations.

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