

Scottish Socialist VOICE



INSIDE THIS
ISSUE

Page 5
Stock Market
madness and
crash and burn
Capitalism
Page 8
Hetherington
occupation ends
in victory!

£1 ISSUE 379 19TH AUGUST - 1ST SEPTEMBER 2011

A SCOTTISH SOCIALIST PARTY PUBLICATION

ENGLAND'S BURNING



Who's really to blame?

See pages 2, 6&7

A RIOT OF HYPOCRISY

by Ken Ferguson

LETS be clear.

If last week's looting was, as well heeled ministers say, "criminality pure and simple" then the disturbances are just the tip of the iceberg.

Amidst the tough talk about water cannon, plastic bullets and production line justice from panicking politicians was a determination not to discuss the reality of greed and grab at the heart of the governing Westminster consensus.

Of course rioting and looting are illegal and cause damage, fear and in this case death but it must also be remembered that it was the police shooting of a young black man that lit the fuse.

But if the riots were driven by a blind fury of mainly dispossessed youth the authoritarian overdrive of the politicians who exist to defend today's stunningly unequal set up was chilling.

Hauled back from their Tuscan villas and Breton beaches the serried ranks of expenses fuelled MPs queued up to condemn young people in terms that came close to the "lesser breeds" racism of the imperial past.

As they spoke it emerged that the parliamentary authorities had agreed that they would be compensated for their lost time in the sun by having their air fares back to the beach paid by the public purse.

These democrats applauded the jailing of those who looted a TV or in one case some bottled water while conveniently forgetting that when they wanted such things they consulted the infamous John Lewis list and charges



the taxpayer for it.

As the sound bite war escalated and the "throw away the key" rhetoric boomed even the cops looked queasy and bluntly contradicted the Cameron fable that Condem ministers stopped the riots.

What was striking was the desperate drive to avoid any serious discussion about why - other than a simple desire to get free stuff - the riots happened.

One unexpected attempt to break this approach came in, of all places, the Daily Mail which wrote:

"Many of these kids are less than two miles away from people who get multimillion pound bonuses for catastrophic failure and live in a culture where the material excess of people who are famous for nothing is rammed relentlessly into their faces by middle-brow tabloid newspapers."

"And of course later today the looters will be condemned in Parliament by people who stole money by accident."

And this is surely the heart of the matter.

The young people who

took to the streets may not be Bolsheviks but, more than any previous generation they are presented with the images of the life styles and greed of the rich.

In contrast they are offered, at best, a debt laden higher education system, dead end unskilled work or a stigmatised meagre welfare benefit existence.

Parallel to this runs the 24/7 "must have" advertising pressure for everything from cars and consumer electronics to shoes and shampoos to transform your life "because you're worth it."

Across England they drew their own conclusions and took the advertisers at their word and helped themselves.

However as the establishment roundly condemned the looting by angry youths they remained silent on the crimes of the rich and powerful.

So the fact that the infamous Fred Goodwin who wrecked RBS now collects a pension of £14,000 a week is not worthy of comment or the fact that entire nations face ruin to pay the speculators bills is business as usual.

For over 30 years now we have lived in a society hallmarked by greedy individualism in which the so called "entrepreneurs" were the new priesthood and their doings worshipped with fawning TV programmes, acres of newsprint and servility from MPs.

Indeed only days before the Murdoch phone hacking scandal shot to global headlines party leaders both Tory and Labour were bowing the knee to Murdoch over Moët Chandon at his summer party in London.

Revolt as all these things are Socialists need to spell out that while the Lord Sugars, Rupert Murdochs and Brian Soutars are the rash which shows the disease the underlying sickness is in the system itself.

The free market dog-eat-dog world of neo-liberal free market economics is designed to further enrich the already rich and keep the rest of us in our place.

As it de-industrialises large parts of the US and Europe it feeds the industrial gulags of China and elsewhere with demands for fashionable consumer goods from trainers to I pads .

It is a planet trashing, people destroying perversion of the vast storehouse of human ingenuity, knowledge and creativity whose existence, properly harnessed, can provide peace and plenty for all.

Slaying that dragon and opening the road to a different future is the only long term answer to the outrage at the inequality hunger and war which is the reality of today's greed driven set up.

LEGAL FIGHT TO SUPPORT PALESTINE

by Mick Napier, *Scottish Palestine Solidarity Campaign*

CUPAR Sheriff Court is the venue for the next round in the fight over whether criticism of the State of Israel is to be muzzled by criminalising it as 'racist'.

Next Monday and Tuesday (22 & 23 August) will see two University of St Andrews students on trial on charges of 'racially aggravated conduct' for insulting an Israeli flag.

The two students, not remotely racist, were angered when they saw an Israeli flag on the wall of a friend's room in the university student halls they all shared. They denounced the crimes of the State of Israel, calling it criminal and apartheid, and compared Israel's actions in Gaza to Nazi war crimes.

Having had a few pints beforehand the encounter, one of the two supplemented their verbal political critique of Israeli apartheid and mass murder by symbolically rubbing his crotch and then doing the same to the Israeli flag.

The students, however, are not charged with conduct in bad taste, or contempt for the symbol of a state, but with 'racially aggravated conduct'.

If showing contempt for a



state flag is successfully designated as racism by the Cupar Sheriff, the significance is clear to all. We have, however, an important legal precedent from a Scottish court, which ruled last year that hostility to the crimes of Israel is not be confused with any species of racism.

On that occasion, an Edinburgh Sheriff ruled that pro-Palestinian protesters' comments "were clearly directed at the State of Israel, the Israeli Army, and Israeli Army musicians", and not targeted at "citizens of Israel" per se.

In that case, where I was one of the five in the dock Sheriff Scott satirised the Procurator Fiscal's arguments, which he said would muzzle criticism of Israel, and would have implications for freedom

of expression generally:

"if persons on a public march designed to protest against and publicise alleged crimes committed by a state and its army are afraid to name that state for fear of being charged with racially aggravated behaviour, it would render worthless their Article 10(1) rights. Presumably their placards would have to read, 'Genocide in an unspecified state in the Middle East'; 'Boycott an unspecified state in the Middle East' etc."

Significantly, the charges on the earlier case were changed to 'racially aggravated conduct' shortly after then Prime Minister Gordon Brown officially signed Britain up to a declaration which specified that campaigning for BDS (boycott, divestment and sanctions) against Israel was

'anti-Semitic' and called on UK police forces to accept this point of view.

Brown, a militant supporter of Israel who is still slouching around his constituency in another part of Fife, thus signalled to prosecutors across the UK his support for seemingly absurd and hopeless prosecutions such as the Edinburgh and Cupar cases.

That is why supporters of human rights should turn up at Cupar Sheriff Court next Monday at 9.00am to show their support for the two anti-racist students in the dock.

As pressure mounts on Israel to obey international law and stop settlement building in occupied Palestine, to comply with the dozens of UN resolutions concerning its treatment of the Palestinians, to end its acts of piracy and the killing of peace activists bringing food and medicines to the besieged people of Gaza, and as pressure builds on governments, councils, companies and universities to boycott Israel until it obeys the law, so Israel and its allies resort to a last line of defence and claim criticism of its actions are racist.

Criticising the actions of the Israeli state against the Palestinians is a moral obligation, not a crime.

PRESSURE BUILDS TO BAN RACIST SDL MARCH

by *Voice Reporter*

OPPOSITION to plans by the racist Scottish Defence League to stage a March in Edinburgh next month to coincide with the 10th Anniversary of the

9/11 atrocity are facing growing opposition.

A broad coalition of forces including First Minister Alex Salmond, Trade Unions and civic society have mobilised to condemn the racist's plans.

They are due to be

considered by Edinburgh City Council's Licensing Sub Committee on 19 August 2011 as the Voice goes to press.

The council is coming under intense pressure to refuse permission for the march

which is understood to also involve both the SDL and their fellow racists from the demonstrably violent EDL.

SSP national spokesman Colin Fox backed the call for the march to be banned saying:

"The racist views of the SDL and their English sidekicks from the EDL are repugnant to the vast majority of people in Scotland and have no places on the streets of Edinburgh or any other Scottish community."

NUKE TEST VETERANS WIN RARE REPRIEVE

by Roz Paterson

“I think we were part of an experiment, and it’s still going carrying on – seeing what happens when we die and what happens to our children.”

So says George Baulch, one of the 1011 veterans of the British nuclear tests carried out in the 1950s, and currently engaged in a lengthy, perhaps too lengthy, lawsuit against the Ministry of Defence.

Last month, they won a rare reprieve – they were allowed to appeal to the Supreme Court, though legal experts still rate their chances as almost negligible and, for those terminally ill or already dead, it is all coming tragically late in the day.

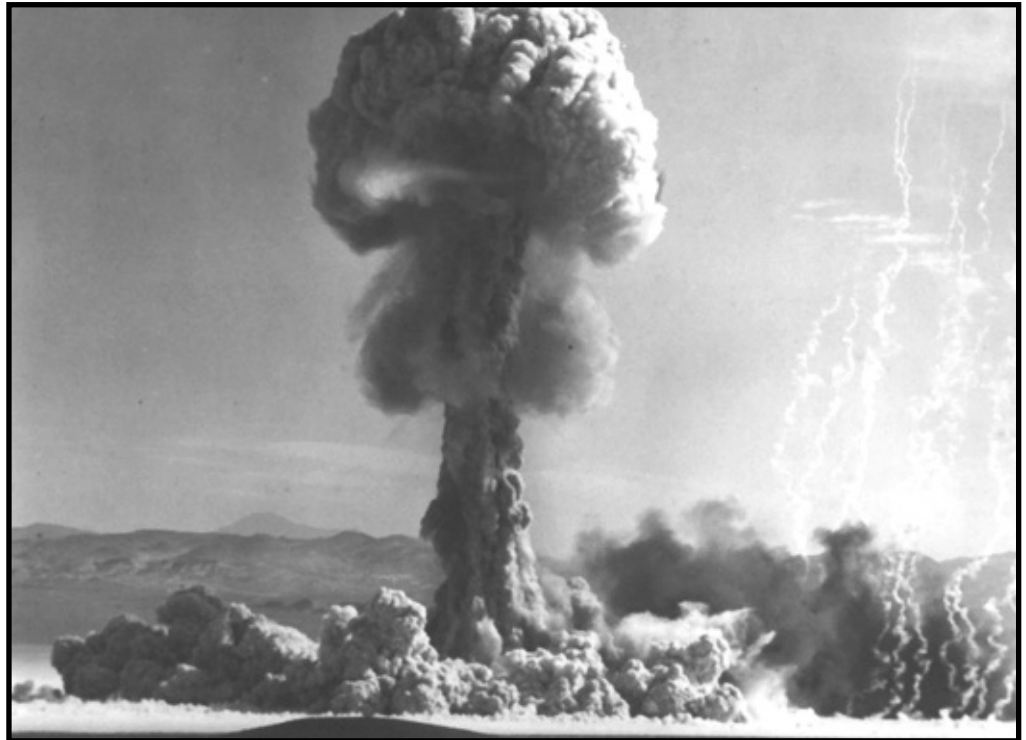
Reel back nearly 60 years, and it was a different story.

The young soldiers who set out for Christmas Island couldn’t believe their luck. A sojourn on an idyllic island in the South Pacific, with nothing more strenuous on the agenda than fishing and playing games sounded like a real tonic after the grim post-war years.

Too idyllic? Now they think so.

The holiday was disrupted only a few times when, instead of idling in the sun, they were instructed to wear long sleeves and trousers, and take themselves to the beach to witness the detonation of one of the army’s latest gadgets for annihilating people in a heartbeat.

“It was,” remembers George, standing on the deck of HMS Warrior in protective clothing that wouldn’t have shielded him from the ravages of a firework, “an amazing sight, a cauldron of fire – like seeing a mini sun



being born.”

Putting his hands up to cover his face he saw the bones revealed “like an X-ray”.

It was a day he would never forget, but not simply because of the brilliance of the blast.

His daughter was born with severe learning difficulties and died, of unexplained causes, in her 30s.

He believes the bomb was to blame, that the radiation to which these unsuspecting young men were exposed, damaged his health and his DNA.

Dougie Hearn, a naval cook and nuclear test veteran, suffered diabetes and mysterious growths later in life. Far worse, his 13 year old daughter died of cancer.

He makes a similar connection. As does Ken McGinley, who witnessed five tests, two of them involving bombs of the same type as those dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

Only 19 when he was sent to Christmas Island, Ken was

invalided out of the army aged only 21 and went on to suffer a lifetime of chronic, sometimes acute, ill-health. Furthermore, he was unable to have children.

In 1962, following an operation to have part of his stomach removed, his doctor said, “You’ll always regret going to Christmas Island.”

This doctor knew, it seems, yet the MoD insists there is no link between the massive doses of radiation imposed on these men, and the cancers and growths and birth defects visited upon them and their families in later life.

But then, they would, wouldn’t they?

The military has a long history of dubious ethics regarding human experimentation, and they have always stonewalled any attempt at elucidation.

The US, for instance, had only recently conducted tests using mustard gas on some 60,000 American troops, so as to prepare for chemical warfare.

These atom tests were in the 1940s, and these troops, who had little idea of the pain, humiliation and lifelong trauma they would suffer as a result, ‘volunteered’ because they were conned, or coerced, into thinking it their patriotic duty.

Perhaps a similar pressure was applied to the UK servicemen drafted into Porton Down research centre during the 1950s, again to test the poisons and gases they hoped one day to deploy on the enemy, whoever that might turn out to be.

The death, in 1953, of a young man called Ronald Maddison, a healthy 23 year old who suddenly dropped dead after taking part in one of these human experiments, earned the project fleeing notoriety, but even today the information is scant and the MoD unforthcoming.

The nuclear test veterans, or their widows and children, will fight till they drop. The MoD, as ever, intends to wait until they drop, and then close the file, forever.

CRASH AND BURN CAPITALISM

Stock market gyrations point to double dip recession and further pension cuts

by Ralph Blake

THE global stock market roller coaster ride over the last few weeks which has seen the UK stock market fall by 13 per cent from its May 2011 peak tells us one thing: the world economy is heading for a recession, in effect a double dip one that has its roots in August 2007's crisis of credit the so called "credit crunch".

Stock markets discount the future and they can now only see falling company earnings and dividends.

The stock market has to be re-rated to bring it into line with these new expectations.

This means that investors or rather the organisations that manage investments – over 60 per cent of the world's stock and bonds markets are held by us indirectly through our pensions and insurance funds – will sell some of their stock holdings and switch it to assets that offer a less risky and a more guaranteed return.

Over the last week the Financial Times estimates that \$50 billion of stocks have been sold globally and put into safer money market funds – similar to bank deposit accounts.

This was more money than was moved out of stocks during the height of the Lehman's financial crisis in September 2008.

Two things have shifted perceptions for the outlook of the global economy.

The first has been a raft of economic data from across the world that shows that economies have stagnated in the second three months of 2011 with even some shrinkage in Asia.



Second, the Euro and US debt crisis has dented consumer and business confidence.

Recent surveys from Europe to the US show that confidence in the economy has slumped to even levels below that measured during the height of the last financial crisis.

The fear is of systemic risk in the financial system which could be triggered by banks' exposure to countries public debt woes.

Systemic risk is where for example you have three banks A, B and C.

If bank A fails, bank B may make big losses on transactions it has with bank A which could lead to bank B failing.

Bank C has transactions with bank A and B and takes big losses and fails.

In the real world instead of three banks you have tens of banks and tens of countries!

All this would lead to a contraction of credit and a deeper recession.

This is a re-run of the last financial crisis with the difference being that the weaker speculative banks

and financial institutions have been taken out and government and central banks now better understand the web of inter-connect complex transactions in the financial system.

They know what interventions to make and where and this time they are willing to make the intervention quickly to avert a financial meltdown on the scale of Lehman's.

But it does not mean that a deep recession can be averted.

Such a recession will see governments' debt and deficit targets being blown away.

The clamour from the likes of the UK coalition government and other governments will be for more cuts which will of course only deepen the recession as we have seen in countries like Greece, Ireland and Portugal.

Our pensions will be worth less too and the gap between the value of public pension funds (assets) and value of their future liabilities will widen.

This gap in the UK was

estimated prior to the latest stock market fall to be £1000 billion.

The gap has appeared because over the last 11 and half years the UK stock market has fallen 45 per cent in real terms when the forecast was for 10 per cent a year growth.

This is the real reason for the attacks on public pensions' funds which will only intensify after this latest stock market fall.

Ten years ago over half our pot pension funds were made up of UK stocks.

There is an alternative to all this insanity.

A collective agreement by global governments on a debt default programme that minimises the damage done to the financial and economic system;

Rather than own the banks but not control them and give them vast amounts of money to cover losses and lend to speculators (quantitative easing), take control of them and make direct investment through them to finance huge social projects that would benefit the public and private sectors creating jobs.

Taxing the world's wealthy who have seen a huge transfer of wealth to them over the last 30 years from the bottom 50 per cent of society.

Collectively as society provide for people's retirement instated of letting public pension funds and individuals bear the risk and cost of failing stock markets.

This is the rationale alternative to the boom, bust, crash and burn that currently lies in store for all of us.

RIOTS SHOW RAGE AT THE SYSTEM

by Liam Turbett

THESE were the riots that seemingly everyone, from Nick Clegg to young service-users in Hackney, saw coming.

It was the Deputy Prime Minister himself who warned in the run-up to the May 2010 election that ‘slash and burn economics’, under a Tory government with no mandate, would create a ‘very serious risk’ of rioting in the streets.

And just weeks ago, following Haringey council’s decision to close eight of its 13 youth clubs, local young people told *The Guardian* newspaper that the cuts would ‘fuel violence’ and lead to ‘riots’.

In the end, and as so often, it would prove to be the police shooting of a local man that was the catalyst for four nights of rioting across English towns and cities.

Following the riots, the establishment have gone on the offensive.

Magistrates have been working through the night to process thousands of alleged rioters, with customary sentencing procedures thrown out in favour of draconian jail sentences for the most minor of crimes.

Politicians and the media have swept up a ‘moral crusade’ of class hatred and victimisation towards a perceived criminal, virtually sub-human underclass of thugs and ‘feral youth’.

And the police have revelled in this rediscovered role as the upholders of all that’s good and decent, a gift to them in the face of imminent massive spending cuts.

Meanwhile, the far-right are trying to exploit the situation for their own ends,



attempting to emerge as a para-state defender of white working class communities against the ‘mob’ of rioters and looters.

The riots erupted in rage at the police following the shooting of alleged gangster Mark Duggan on Thursday 5 August in North London.

When, two days later, a peaceful picket organised by family and friends was met with, at first silence, and later batons, it proved to be the spark that set off an explosion of social unrest on a scale that hasn’t been seen in the UK for decades.

With the police forced to retreat from whole areas of London, mass looting soon took hold – and the scenes of people making off with valuable consumer goods would be enough to lead to copycat scenes in other English towns and cities over the following nights.

For the establishment, there can be no explanation for this apart than ‘sheer criminality’. To explain otherwise would involve questions of poverty, service cuts, sky-high youth unemployment and all the contradictions of a corrupt

and broken system, which for a ruling class that is wealthier and more distant and cut-off from reality than ever before, are unfathomable.

Commentators and journalists from all ends of the political spectrum have queued up to offer their analysis on how the riots were able to happen and spread so fast: from the Blackberry mobile messaging service and ‘black culture’ to video games, single parents and the breakdown of traditional values. And while consumer culture and organised gangs no doubt played a role in the wide scale looting, they do not explain it.

Martin Luther King famously said that riots are the ‘voices of the unheard’. In the few cases where ‘rioters’ and ‘looters’ have been given airtime by the mass media, they have displayed a startlingly clear perspective: if the rich and powerful can get away with looting and lawbreaking, what’s wrong with taking the chance to steal some new trainers, electrical goods or clothes?

The rioting of the kind we’ve seen recently is, clearly, not an effective means to change society.

The riots will have no lasting positive impact on the lives of those involved or their communities, and will simply give extra impetus to the right in their craving for ‘law and order’, as we’re now seeing in the rush to jail as many alleged rioters as possible.

But the riots have shown the simmering discontent and rage at the system which exists in deprived communities the length and breadth of austerity Britain.

While Alex Salmond has been keen to emphasise that the riots are a purely ‘English’ phenomenon, Scottish towns and cities are suffering from the very same factors which led to the riots in England.

The rage and hopelessness that millions of working class young people across the country are feeling needs to be channelled effectively – the question remains of whether the labour movement and radical left are up to the challenge.

LABOUR AND THE RIOTS

by John McAllion

TOWARDS the end of an extraordinary week in which rioting, looting and lawlessness had rocked cities across England, the House of Commons met in emergency session.

Parliament is recalled during a recess only at moments of great crisis such as the Omagh bombing, 9/11 or the build up to the Iraq war.

So the spectacle of Ministers and MP's scurrying back from their various holiday destinations served to ratchet up what was already a national mood of alarm and fear.

Yet the recall of Parliament served no practical purpose. No emergency legislation was enacted. A motion of no confidence in the Government was not tabled. There was not even a motion for debate or a vote called.

The MPs simply sounded off on the theme of public disorder for more than 8 hours. Then, without a vote, they resolved to adjourn until September.

Their reaction to the widespread breakdown of public order was full of sound and fury but ultimately signified nothing.

Except that we learned a lot about the state of Her Majesty's Official Opposition from this extraordinary day's events.

In normal times, the Prime Minister and the Government of the day control the political agenda. They dictate the Commons' agenda. They wield executive power. They control the powerful civil service. They hold the national purse strings. They have the support of a vast Government propaganda machine. For these reasons, being Leader of the Opposition is often referred to as the hardest job in British politics.

But these were far from normal times. The Coalition



MILIBAND: out in London supporting the Tories

Government was already in deep political trouble. Their economic strategy had brought the economy to the brink of a double dip recession. Their savage public spending cuts had sparked widespread resistance across the public sector. The unions were in revolt against pension reform. Defence cuts had alienated the armed forces.

The phone hacking scandal was lapping around the door of No 10 Downing St. And now Cameron & co had failed to maintain public order. Cities across England were on fire. The police had lost control of the streets.

As Parliament gathered to listen to the Prime Minister's statement, Cameron could scarcely have been in a weaker political position. His Deputy Prime Minister, having ventured on to the streets after the

riots, had to be rescued by minders from angry onlookers. His fellow Tory and Mayor of London, Boris Johnson, was openly heckled by angry Londoners in Clapham.

Cameron himself only appeared publicly in carefully stage managed appearances where the general public were kept well away. By contrast, Miliband appeared to receive a warm welcome as he went

walkabout on the streets of Peckham.

The stage could not have been better set for any Leader of the Opposition. He appeared to have the Government at his mercy. One good Commons performance from him and a hugely unpopular Government could have been holed below the water line.

Instead, Miliband chose not to take on an unpopular Government but to stand "shoulder to shoulder" with Cameron's Tories against the violence and the vandalism on the streets.

There were "no excuses" and "no justification" for the disorder. He wanted the guilty to receive the "tough" and "swift" sentences their actions deserved.

This was no time to worry over due judicial process or legal and human rights. A mightily relieved Cameron was quick to thank Miliband for his "constructive approach".

Miliband also received the enthusiastic support of his own backbenches. To a man and woman they howled for more police on the streets.

Hazel Blears worried that the police did not have enough riot gear. Jack Straw called on Cameron to reverse the soft sentencing policy of the Tory Justice Secretary.

Other Labour MPs called for

more prison places, even more CCTV coverage of citizens and for a crackdown on the freedom of the internet.

As the one-time People's Party bayed for blood, real people were being hauled before magistrates' courts to receive summary justice. One youth received a 6 month jail sentence for stealing a bottle of water. Two apprentice locksmiths charged with setting a rubbish bin on fire with a lighted cigarette were told that they were facing a charge of aggravated arson that carried a potential life sentence. Yet another man was remanded in custody for receiving a stolen Vivienne Westwood T shirt.

Justice was forgotten as the state went all out for revenge.

Later on Miliband would seek to distance his party from the Government by calling for an independent commission of inquiry into the complex causes that had contributed to the outbreak of rioting.

But the damage had already been done.

At the moment of crisis the root causes of disorder had been safely passed over by the political establishment.

The key relationship between poverty, gang locations and violent crime ignored. The doubling since 1997, especially in inner London, of households where no-one had ever worked overlooked.

The fact forgotten that in this still wealthy country nearly 1 in 5 of the people still lived in low-income households conveniently forgotten.

The threat to political order had been reversed. The political establishment had been secured. Market capitalism survived to inflict even more damage on workers in the future.

Labour, like the Tories and the Liberals, had done what was expected of it.

HETHERINGTON OCCUPATION ENDS IN VICTORY

*by Liam McCombes,
Glasgow University student
and Free Hetherington
participant*

THE Free Hetherington occupation at Glasgow University is ending with a victory, after 7 months of protest. After the university management were forced into giving solid concessions and agreements, the occupation will end on 31 August.

Students and staff at the university, supported by students from other universities and members of the local community, began the occupation on the 1st of February.

Taking place in the former postgraduate club of the university, which had been forced to close, the occupation demanded that the club be re-opened, and that the university management cancel their plans for huge course cuts that were due to take place that year.

When the list of courses cuts was announced, the student body was shocked. Courses such as Modern Languages, Nursing, Archeology and many others were due to be axed.

A mass campaign began at the University, involving the Glasgow University Anti-Cuts Action Network, the Free Hetherington occupation, the Student Representative Council, the University and Colleges Union, and many groups from the individual departments facing cuts.

Glasgow University principal Anton Muscatelli was criticised by Alex Salmond. A march called at the university protesting the cuts had over 3000 students and others attending to show their outrage.

When the university management brought police in to violently evict the occupation, this resulted in a huge backfire and more



humiliation for the discredited management group.

Dozens of police officers, a dog unit, and a police helicopter were deployed to remove what was an entirely peaceful protest. One occupier received a concussion and was taken to hospital. Hundreds of students, both supporters of the occupation and onlookers angry at what had happened, marched to the university's main building to stage another occupation as soon as the last students were removed from the first.

Management were forced into giving the Hetherington back in return for the students leaving the main building. The police and university management were widely criticised for the heavy-handed actions of the day, and support for the occupation soared.

Due to the huge pressure from both students and staff at the university and from Scotland as a whole, management were forced to step back on a majority of the proposed cuts, with only the

Slavonic Studies degree and the Liberal Arts degree at the university's Chrichton campus in Dumfries being cut.

It is important that activists don't forget these – and there are currently campaigns still being run in order to save these important subject areas – but managing to save so many courses was a huge success for all the campaigns, and for the anti-cuts movement in general.

Although before the eviction discussions with the university management lead to no-where, because of the strength of the protest they were forced to again meet with students and this time conceded on a number of important issues.

The occupation received a written agreement that no more courses would be cut, and that a new postgraduate space would be opened.

They promised that no students involved in the occupation would be subject to university disciplinary procedures because of taking part, and that the university would not volunteer any

information on students to the police.

They also agreed to hold an open mass meeting with principal Muscatelli, so students can hold him to account over his mis-management.

This agreement marks a huge success, and shows that when enough resistance is offered to cuts, victories can be won. However, the campaign at Glasgow University is far from over.

University management must be held to their promises, and know that they will not be able to go back on them easily.

The campaigns against the course cuts that look still to happen continue, including a legal challenge over the legitimacy of the decision making process involved in slashing the courses.

The victory must be built on, and used to strengthen the anti-cuts movement, rather than be seen as the end for it.

It also shows the importance of building genuinely mass movements. Most of the students involved in the occupation weren't members of any left political party, and those that were managed for the most part to overcome the sectarian squabbles that usually drain such campaigns.

By not just relying on the traditional left, but still being willing to use radical tactics when appropriate, the occupation was able to be both extremely successful and have a broad appeal amongst students of almost all political persuasions.

As the anti-cuts struggle grows, we need to focus on building mass campaigns, like the one at Glasgow University, capable of winning genuine victories and protecting from assaults on our standards of living, education, jobs and public services.

THE WIT AND WISDOM OF JELLO BIAFRA

Jello Biara & The Guantanamo School Of Medicine, Glasgow ABC2, 9 August 2011

by Simon Whittle

BURSTING onto stage in a sweaty, sold-out ABC2, Dead Kennedys brainchild Jello Biafra sports a mad scientist's blood-soaked white coat as he jerks his way through the tale of George W Bush's presidency in *The Terror Of Tiny Town*. "Lost the vote, but God elected me," the song begins. "I'm never wrong cos He speaks through me."

Then it's straight into the breakneck *John Dillinger* and then into a lecture: "This song has to be dedicated to your friend and mine, David Cameron. The twit from hell goes on and on about how you're gonna have to live in more and more poverty for the next 40 years, we've gotta cut national health, cut aid for poor people..."

"Isn't there a figure that got exposed by a group called UK Uncut, showing £7billion of cuts while Vodafone owed £6billion of taxes? And what did they do? They started blockading Vodafone offices. Direct action without the kind of violence that's burning down the wrong buildings in London and other places.

"We don't know the [Dead Kennedys] *Riot* song - 'Tomorrow you're homeless / tonight it's a blast' - but that's what happens, that's what's going on. So, so-far so-good here [in Scotland] and that's a good thing.

"But in the meantime, all these countries like France, Germany, Spain and America - I saw an article in an American publication called *The Nation* that showed that the amount of money they're in the red for is almost identical to the amount



PHOTO: Simon Whittle

of money that rich people used to pay in taxes before they got let off the hook.

"In other words, the money isn't gone, it's been fucking stolen - and it's time to take it back!"

Just when you think Jello will lead the audience outside to take Buchanan Galleries, non-violently, he introduces *New Feudalism* which is "about corporate dictatorship". These new songs are like a beefed-up version of the Dead Kennedys - and how better to describe DK's brand of punk than 'spy music on meth'?

It's been 25 years since the Dead Kennedys broke up to a background of an artwork and lyrical obscenity trial with Tipper Gore's Parents Music Resource Center (whose great idea it was to put those parental guidance warning stickers on music that makes kids want those records even

more) and an in-band legal wrangle and trial over an accounting error at DK's Alternative Tentacles label. He fought off the PMRC but lost his band.

Since then, apart from standing for office for the US Green Party, Jello has worked with countless other bands, as well as concentrating on spoken-word tours and albums, without putting a band of his own together - until he was inspired by Iggy Pop's 60th birthday gig. So he set out to form his own unit in time for his own 50th birthday bash.

Jello Biafra and the Axis Of Merry Evildoers were later renamed, and an album *The Audacity Of Hype* (poking fun at Barak Obama's *The Audacity Of Hope* book) surfaced.

Back to the ABC, the DK classic *California Uber Alles* has a new speech in the slow, mid-section: "So whaddaya

think of Obama now, huh? Hope? Shame! For the same old fucked up corporate game. It makes me sad, and it makes me mad.

"Of all Obama's failures, including the Cameron-style cuts that I hope do not lead to Tottenham in America, the worst of all is this one..."

"Why aren't the war criminals from the George Bush regime in prison? You let war criminals off the hook, they come back and do it again. And again, and again. I'm not as afraid of Bush, or Cheney or Rumsfeld, as the people who worked for them."

Biafra dedicates DK's *Police Truck* to the victims of the English riots, "not the rioters - if you're gonna do that, at least go after Beverley Hills and not the neighbourhood with people living right above the store," adding that it was a police shooting that started it all.

Introducing *Three Strikes*, Jello reaffirms: "They shouldn't be burning down Mom and Pop's stores, they should be going after private fucking prisons. If they ever try to put one up around here, you know what to do - without violence."

Controversially, the Guantanamo School Of Medicine's tour was scheduled to finish in Tel Aviv, and the band also intended to travel to the West Bank, but Jello finally bowed to pressure and cancelled. In a statement he said: "I am going to Israel and Palestine to check things out myself and may yet conclude that playing for people in the belly of the beast was the right thing to do in the first place."

■ *Enhanced Methods Of Questioning* EP is out now on Alternative Tentacles CD

ANTI-BLACKLIST RESULT

by Allan Armstrong

BRIAN Higgins has achieved a major breakthrough in his campaign against the illegal blacklisting of trade unionists.

Brian, originally from Glasgow, now secretary of Northampton branch of UCATT (the building workers union), recently led a delegation of trade unionists from the Blacklist Support Group to Brussels to hold private talks with László Andor, European Union Commissioner with responsibility for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion, to discuss potential EU wide legislation to outlaw blacklisting.

Commissioner Andor was presented with documentary evidence in the form secret blacklist files kept about trade unionists in the UK construction industry.

The files were compiled by the Consulting Association and provide damning evidence that



Blacklisted safety reps meet EU Commissioner Andors

major multi-national building firms systematically dismissed and victimised workers who raised concerns about health & safety issues or unpaid wages.

The largest blacklist file in the country relates to Brian Higgins (49 pages).

The secret files contain appalling levels of personal intrusion with sensitive information including; names, addresses, national insurance number, work history, medical history, press-cuttings, union meetings attended, speeches made, political affiliations.

Many entries on the blacklist files are supplied by senior Industrial Relations managers from major construction firms relating to when an individual had spoken to their site managers about safety breaches such as asbestos or poor toilet facilities.

The information in the blacklist files was circulated amongst multi-national building firms and used to deny workers employment on major construction projects.

For many blacklisted workers this resulted in

repeated sackings and long-term unemployment merely because they had raised concerns about safety on building sites.

Brian added, "We have been victimised by these firms just because we have stood up for safety issues; a cabin to dry wet clothes, asbestos, holiday pay.

"For many of us this conspiracy has meant years on the dole and family strains. But we are not just fighting for ourselves.

"This evil practice is almost certainly taking place in other industries and across Europe.

"I refuse to stop campaigning for the trade union rights on safety, working conditions and wages the blacklist is meant to prevent us doing.

"Now we're taking the fight to Europe on behalf of workers here and the likes of Poland, Spain, Ireland and Greece. In fact anywhere blacklisting is going on."

Scottish Socialist Voice Subscriptions

**Fill in this form and send to: Scottish Socialist Voice,
Suite 370, 93 Hope St, Glasgow, G2 6LD Or telephone us:
0141 221 7333**

*Cheques and postal orders should be made payable to
Scottish Socialist Voice*

Name.....

Address.....

Phones.....

email.....

I've enclosed: n £5 for 5 issues n £10 for 10 issues n £20 for 20 issues

Solidarity rate: n £6 for 5 issues n £12 for 10 issues n £24 for 20 issues

The Wee Red Bookshop

**Books, t-shirts,
ideas to change the
world!**

**All at very reasonable
prices!**

**137 London Road,
Glasgow**

Phone 0141 221 7470 for opening info,
or if you can donate books,
we can arrange for them to
be picked up.

REID FOUNDATION LAUNCH "POSITIVE STEP"

by Bill Bonnar

THE establishment of the Jimmy Reid Foundation is one of the most welcome developments on the Left for some time. The founding of a left wing think tank in Scotland borrows from a strong left intellectual tradition of which Jimmy Reid himself was a product.

It also mirrors similar developments currently underway in England. Of course the Right have had think tanks for years although given the intellectual poverty of so much right wing thinking they have probably needed them more.

That capitalism is on profound crisis is beyond debate in fact it could be argued that the system has entered a phase of general crisis which can only be resolved by a fundamental restructuring. This restructuring will either be carried out in the interests of the capitalists through a dramatic reduction on the living standards and rights of the working class or in the interests of the working class through a defeat for capitalism.

This crisis in the system is impacting in all aspects of society as witnessed by the recent riots on the streets of England.

The struggle against capitalism needs to be fought at all levels including the levels of ideas. The Italian socialist, Antonio Gramsci, argued that capitalism ruled, in part, because the ideas and values of capitalism had become the common sense ideas of the age readily accepted by millions.

For socialism to succeed, the ideas of socialism needed to achieve the same.

In Scotland, the



establishment of the Jimmy Reid Foundation is a positive step in the right directions. Of course, there will be discussions on the Left as how to best advance the ideas of socialism and that discussion will include different views of on some of the basic aims of the new foundation.

One criticism will centre on its very generous definition of the term Left.

For the Foundation, the Left in Scotland seems to embrace everyone to the Left of the Conservative Party. This means that the Labour Party, SNP and Liberal Democrats are regarded as being on the Left and also means that the new Foundation is essentially social democratic rather than socialist in its orientation.

For socialists, this raises the question; do we need a specifically socialist think tank to fuel the ideas for a Scottish Socialist Republic; a kind of Centre for Socialist Studies.

At the same time what are the objectives of the Jimmy Reid Foundations? It is to 'generate ideas, debate and discussion'. Which begs the question, what will be the end product?

One of the best achievements of the Scottish Socialist party in its earlier years was the framing of specific Left policies on a number of issues such as The

Service Tax, Free School Meals and Prescription Charges.

What made these different from what the Left usually produces was that they were real policies; well thought out, fully- costed, written in an easily accessible style and with practical proposals for their

implementation.

Socialist ideas transformed into the 'common sense of the age'. This in contrast with what usually goes for socialist policies which are often more aspirational in nature.

Again, one of the key roles of a Centre for Socialist Studies would be the production of these kinds of policies on everything from the Health Service to Housing, from the Banking Sector to Child Care. The Centre would be independent of any specific party and see its role as helping to shape the ideas and policies necessary to rebuild the socialist movement in Scotland and paint a picture of what a future socialist society would actually look like.

To give an example. If someone asked what the socialist policy on the banks would be the answer would be along the lines of, 'bring the banks under public ownership and democratic control'.

The problem is that this is not a policy it is an aspiration.

A policy would answer specific questions. Would we amalgamate all banks under state control? What would the impact be on jobs in the banking sector? Would this amalgamation include building societies? Would we create a new state bank to compete and eventually replace the private banking sector? Would the government simply take over the banks and would it pay compensation? How much would this cost? What kind of legislation would these moves require? Would the new bank be independent or would it be an arm of government and what do we mean by 'under democratic control'.

The list could go on. However, unless the Left can answer these kind of questions it doesn't really have a policy on the banks.

This is where a Centre for Socialist studies would come in. It would identify socialists who work in and/or are experts in the banking sector and ask them to develop the draft of a socialist policy on banking which answers the kind of questions outlined above.

The Centre would then take this document, re-write it in an accessible form and publish it. The same process would be repeated in every area of policy. The aim would be to publish a kind of Manifesto for a Socialist Scotland, updated regularly and accessible to everyone.

Of course none of this is in opposition to the Jimmy Reid Foundation but rather a distinctive contribution to a wider process of socialist renewal in Scotland and one which Jimmy himself would have welcomed.

A Centre for Socialist Studies! Watch this space.

PEOPLE FIRST ON OCTOBER 1ST



by Voice Reporter

THE Scottish Trades Union Congress alongside a number of faith, equality, anti-poverty and campaign organisations has called a People First march and rally on 1st October 2011.

The march is planned to go from Glasgow Green to

Kelvingrove Park where thousands are expected to assemble to hear speeches and music .

They will then be able to attend a range of fringe events held in places of worship, student unions, public buildings and hotels in the vicinity of the park.

The event will also feature

a specific initiative to raise funds for the Disasters Emergency Committee appeal created to help those hit by famine in Africa.

Sponsoring and supporting organisations for the event will be very diverse, but have in common the aim of working together on a non-partisan basis to:

- challenge poverty levels and campaign for redistribution of wealth across Scotland and the UK;
- campaign to protect those hardest hit by service and benefit cuts; and;
- help to build and reconnect Scotland's communities.



Join the Scottish Socialist Party

Fill in this form and send to: SSP, Suite 370, 4th Floor, 93 Hope St, Glasgow, G2 6LD

Or see our website:

scottishsocialistparty.org

Or telephone us:

0141 221 7470

- I would like to join the Scottish Socialist Party
- I would also like to join Scottish Socialist Youth
- I would like more information on the Scottish Socialist Party

Name.....

Address.....

Phones.....

email.....