

Back-page Listings



Events & Shout-outs local cool stuff & when/where it is happening. Got an event, meeting or demo? Let us know!



Colchester Food Not Bombs

Food Not Bombs Colchester is looking to re-launch this Summer!

FNB saves food that would otherwise go to waste and uses it to feed the hungry and spread a message of Radical Social Change. See www.foodnotbombs.net/ for more about the FNB movement or email colchestercoop@gmail.com for more local info.

Red n Black Drinks Club!

Last Sunday of the Month @ a Pub in Colchester

Have a drink and talk radical politics in a relaxed, slightly boozy atmosphere. Pubs will rotate until we find a cosy regular. Email rednblack@gmx.co.uk for details and meeting place.

Zero Carbon Britain Day

July 16th, Nation Wide

A day of creative action and partying to promote the goal of a zero carbon Britain by 2030. See www.campaigncc.org/zcbd for info and actions



Colchester Against The Cuts Stall

Saturday 12:00 – 2:00pm Eld Lane

Come get the latest news from your local anti-cuts campaign & and learn what's happening to our vital services.



Transition Town Wivenhoe

Every Sunday 3:00pm @ The Station Master's House

Just turn up and join in! Using a bit of permaculture gardening for the future!

Email:

hello-food@transitionwivenhoe.org.uk for more info.

Spectre Review Meeting

15th of each month

Come get involved with the paper and let us know what you think! Email us for details and location.

The Spuds Don't Work - anti-GM action

12:00 July 23rd, The Forum, Millennium Plain, Norwich
See www.stopgm.org.uk for more info.

Culture Zone – Art is Resistance!

Earlier this month, the anti-globalisation Latin roots musical sensation that is Peyoti For President hit Tin Pan Alley in Colchester with a storming performance. We caught up with Pietro and Luis after their set to talk music, politics and world events. See the blog for the whole thing, but here's a taster:

Your lyrics contain a lot of talk about anti-globalisation, about politicians lying. At a time like this when the world is supposed to be in economic crisis, do people respond better to it than they did before?

I think people are getting increasingly pissed off and desperate, they've started using methods they wouldn't have used a few years ago. I think there's definitely a movement in that direction. You can see it with all the marches now: if you take away their voice, what else are they going to do?

A lot of demonstrations are spreading all over Europe. What do you think of them, how do they compare, what do you think about the tactics and what people are doing? I think in Greece and Spain, where I've noticed it the most in Europe, it's far

more ... you know... In England we go out and demonstrate and then go home for tea. A lot of people don't feel like their life or even their future depends on it, whereas in Greece and in Spain what we've seen it's really getting desperate. People are almost willing to get shot if they have to. I'm not sure if things will change or improve... I think we need to get more out there in England, restrain the violence and use people power. We need to reclaim the streets!

if you could summarise for us what Peyoti for President is about, the whole ethos of the band. What would you say it's about?

There's this famous expression that no issue can be solved from the same level of consciousness that created it... I really do think that we need to be aware of that. It's not just fighting something, it's creating something that is better. We need to open our eyes and fill in a new future, in the same way that a new future was made from slavery.

Read the whole thing @ www.network23.org/thespectre

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The Spectre will return next month!

Send submissions to: TheSpectre@hush.com

And check out network23.org/thespectre for more more!

Issue 2 July 2011

Free/Donation

June 30th Strike- A critical Look

Letter from the editors,

Welcome to the second issue of The Spectre.

This month has been a very vibrant and active one, not only for the widely supported democratic movements in Greece and Spain, but also for the local and national Trade Unions, which have called for a day of action all around England. Therefore for this issue we have included a topical theme on these uprisings and general strikes in Europe.

For this issue's headline we have published a special account of the June 30th strike involving thousands of workers across the country, and a critique on the actions to help improve and empower the movement with a real action such as the successful 48-hour General Strike in Greece. Also, included in this issue is the second part of the democratic 15-M movement in Spain as well as an analysis on how riots begin within peaceful demonstrations in Athens. Furthermore, this edition comprises a resonating article on the racist and perverted notice eviction of the largest Gypsy Community in the UK, at Dale Farm, which is being threatened by the Basildon City Council. Finally, one of our editors is in Palestine for a month and will be blogging about the Israeli military occupation and its daily effects on the lives of Palestinians. Remember, you can follow this story in addition to checking updates on current events on "The Spectre" blog.

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June 30th Strike – A Critical Look

June 30th saw what was the largest industrial action the UK has seen in a long time. The government's plans to mess with public sector worker's pensions was the spark that drove unions already angry with the brutal cuts to action. With 4 unions co-ordinating strike action, 300,000 marching in support in London, 11,000 schools closed and rallies took place all over the nation"

the numbers look impressive. For many people, this was their first experience of strike action, and we can only hope that it won't be their last.

What made the day more interesting were the various solidarity actions taking place at picket lines and rallies across the country – in London UkUncut activists provided a 'Big Society Breakfast', bringing breakfasts to workers on picket lines, a Critical Mass bike ride took place, shutting down traffic in the city and bringing their sound systems along with them. In Nottingham, the locks on Jobcentre Plus and Atos Origin were super-glued shut and pickets went up at courts, jobcentres and schools. Actions in Cardiff included Busk Against the Cuts, a Food Not Bombs stall and various UK Uncut actions involving occupations of BHS, Vodafone and Miss Selfridge. Colchester had a solidarity rally outside the town hall with some 150-200 people in attendance.

However, it's important not to get carried away and think that a high turnout and

many support rallies make a day successful. While some places saw inventive actions like occupations and, in one place, the chance to pelt (a cardboard cut-out) Cameron with wet sponges, many saw little more than a few short-lived pickets. While the strike might have involved some 800,000 people, it only lasted one day and was no way near the idea of a 'general strike' that had been so ecclesiastically put about by various leftist groups. In Greece, when a general strike is called, we see thousands on the streets resisting authority and fighting for what they believe in well into the night. Here, the main demonstration consisted of an A-B march and sod all else. Many rallies (Colchester included) were simply a half hour or so of speeches before everyone went home. It hardly seems like the government is going to be taken down this way, does it? If big business and their cronies in Westminster are able to carry on acting the way they want to, they're not going to stop. We need to make it impossible for them to carry on!

None of this should be taken as a dismissal of the importance of what happened on June 30th or as a suggestion that industrial action doesn't work – but it's important to look critically at the events to make sure we don't get complacent and stale in our tactics. The fact we had so many people co-ordinating strike action together and making links between this and the wider anti-cuts and anti-capitalist struggle was great. If this can lead on to an escalation of action and a new wave of industrial action, then maybe, just maybe, we can really step up the fight!

" it's important to look critically at events to make sure we don't get complacent and stale in our tactics "

Get involved! TheSpectre@hush.com



Cops pelt crowds protesting against government austerity measures with tear-gas in Athens. They justify this heavy-handed treatment by saying 'the anarchists started it!'

Riots in Athens, how do they work?

The situation in Greece is rapidly escalating in a the Greek to follow the German and reasons are debt, created corruption and a huge public sector have brought Greece to the brink of bankruptcy. The media, riding on the train, present daily images of chaos and urban warfare in the streets of Athens adding to the lack of credibility that Greece has. The ideas that Greeks are rioting just to riot and that every day the center of Athens looks like a war-zone have been cultivated. The Greek riots are indeed very intense and a lot of violence is taking place in the streets, leading to the question, "are the Greeks more prone to riot"? Not much has been said

"what makes Greek demonstrations so explosive?"

about what is actually happening in each protest and how it turns into a riot. So, what makes the Greek demonstrations so explosive and what are their effects on the situation?

To begin with, not every protest turns into a riot, the likes of which are shown in the major channels. The current protests are peaceful in their nature. Demonstrators have occupied Syntagma Square (the most prominent square in the center of Athens) and are performing daily demonstrations to voice their disagreement over the course that the Greek politicians have chosen. What creates all those scenes is a combination of different factors, stemming from the decades long oppressed feelings of the Greek society. More than twenty years of corrupt, kleptocratic governments, where mediocrities -at best- would assume key positions and take patron clientism to new heights, has given birth to a wave of dissent, personified partly, in the anarchist movement of Greece. Anti-establishment groups have long existed, however the events of the past four years have caused an increase in the number of those groups. They enter protests, usually blending with the crowd, and on the opportune moment, break away from it, and start

Dale Farm – Imminent Eviction!

The inhabitants of Dale farm are facing eviction any day now. Entire families will be uprooted with no place to go. Families that have been living there for years are being threatened with imminent removal just of because they are Travellers, and of course the official reasoning provided is the refusal by Basildon District Council to grant planning permission as the area is officially part of the green belt. Despite the fact that the Council gave planning permission for the site to be used as a scrapyard for years before the land was legally bought by the Travellers currently settled there.

"Basildon Council is squandering millions on evicting families..."

Dale Farm is home to the largest gypsy and Traveller community in the UK. Part of the site has been occupied for decades by Travellers who managed to obtain planning permission, while the section of the site threatened by eviction has had people living on it for about a decade with legal title to the land, but a refusal by the Council to grant planning permission on dubious grounds. The eviction would affect approximately 90 families, who would be left without suitable alternative accommodation. Council houses in the form of flats and other brick-and-mortar housing have been suggested, but this demonstrates a complete lack of understanding and sensitivity on behalf of the Council in regard to the needs of Travellers and the importance of the nomadic lifestyle to the Traveller community.

To make matters worse the Council have employed none other than Constant and Co. to carry out the eviction. This company is notorious for torching caravans and its especially violent eviction of gypsy and Traveller sites, including the events at Hovefields Drive less than a year ago, where violent tactics resulted in pregnant women being left without a roof over their heads when no alternative accommodation was provided. This last eviction cost an estimated £150.000. In a time where people are losing jobs, libraries are being shut and services are being cut, this is simply disgusting. The upcoming eviction in Dale Farm will cost the taxpayer approximately £9.5million. Rather than providing services for the people in the local area, the Council has chosen to squander money on evicting families including many children on the basis of a legal technicality, also known as racism.

It is clear hat this eviction is motivated by nothing else than clear, blatant prejudice and racism on behalf on Basildon District Council. All the Travellers are requesting is a site to legally settle their community and live in peace without harassment and eviction notices. The Dale Farm residents have been nervously awaiting their 28 day eviction notice which might be served any day now. People are needed to resist this from taking place: legal observers are necessary and many have pledged on facebook to spend a night at Dale Farm once the eviction notice is served. For more information and to get involved go to <http://dalefarm.wordpress.com>.

UPDATE – Dale Farm received it's eviction notice just before we went to press – July 4th. Eviction is set to take place on August 31st Support will be needed to resist the violent removal of families. See the above link for info on Camp Constant.

attacking the police or public buildings with Molotov cocktails, stones and other objects, causing havoc and allowing the police to retaliate with tear-gasses, flash bangs and other means of "containment", leading to the images of urban guerilla fights in the media.

" police over-extend their authority, throw tear-gas on crowds and beat demonstrators "

The other actor that is escalating violence in the streets is of course the police. Because of the years of public mismanagement, Greece has a very big police force, comprising majorly of poorly educated nationalists. Therefore, a big share of the police is made up of people who are not fit to carry weapons and exercise authority on anyone. By taking

the opportunity that the anarchist groups offer to them, the police respond by over-extending their authority, throwing tear-gasses on peaceful crowds and beating on demonstrators who have little or no relation with the groups causing havoc. A simple search in YouTube will uncover hundreds of videos of police brutality on demonstrators who are by no means aggressive or pose any threat to them. It should also be noted, that there are many occasions where members of the police, in civilian clothing, join the anarchists and throw objects to the police in order to justify further violence and the forced breaking up of the crowds by tear-gasses.

Being an eyewitness of the protests in the centre of Athens offers a very different perspective than that of the media. Greeks do not riot, just to riot. The protests have a purpose and demands and contrary to the neo-conservative view that they are pointless, they are still a very valid form of pressure towards the governing body. (It is no coincidence that the Government actually collapsed during the protest of 15th of July in Athens and moved to a full restructuring of the governmental body by the ruling party). However, the sad reality is, that a country with such bright prospects in the mid 70's, after the junta, for becoming a stable, well functioning economy, to end up in the IMF thirty years later, has created a lot of bottled anger and discontent to many different groups. Even though many benefited from that corruption and mismanagement, up to a point, every Greek has come

" every Greek has come face to face with that feeling of a "dead-end" that is post-dictatorship Greece "

face to face with that feeling of a "dead-end" that is post-dictatorship Greece. The point came where the rug was "overflowing with garbage and no more could be swept under", hence, the reaction. So, are the Greeks more prone to rioting? Perhaps, however, there is much more to what the media is showing in Athens, as despite the chaos and frustration that the Greek society is experiencing, I still witnessed roughly 400 protesters gathering after the police and anarchists fled, to collectively clean the street of any garbage and wash every inch of the square from chemicals using fountain water and plastic bottles for hours. Of course the media had no interest in covering that, it doesn't really "sell" as much as chaos in the streets after all. Ioannis Antypas

See The Spectre Blog for an extended version of this article plus debate & discussion from the editors and readers!

Democracia Real Ya! 15M Keeps Moving

Who composes the 15-M movement?

Mainly young people, under the age of 30, those of which had suffered the economic crisis the most. But the movement involves a highly heterogeneous group from a wide range of backgrounds including pensioners, teachers, academics, firemen, etc, whom share a common belief that a new world is possible.

What are they tired of?

Citizens are tired of the growing unemployment in the country (5 million), a staggering unemployment rate of 43.5% under the age of 25, a growing discontent with corrupt politicians holding office in Government, the bipartidism (PP, the Popular Party and PSOE,

socialist workers party), the political privileges and the politicians incompetence as leaders. The lack of credibility and legitimacy of the Government, of corrupt businessmen, the tax evasion of high class elites, bankers and government leaders, the lack of representation, the attacks on the public sector, the treatment of citizens as if they were merchandise. People are tired of the lack of democracy in the country, the lust and accumulation of power in a few hands of elites that dictate government policies...

What do they ask for?

The Manifesto and propositions of the 15-M movement can be found online: <http://www.democraciarealya.es> Among them, a claim to replace the electoral system for one that is based on proportional representation, the condemnation and replacement of corrupt politicians currently holding office, the placement of a Tobin tax to control international monetary transactions, a law to forbid the creation of new havens, the promotion of the protection of social rights, civil liberties and encouragement of political participation. The proposals in the financial sector include the prohibition of any type of financial bailout to near bankrupt companies, the nationalisation of financial entities that are in financial difficulties, the creation of a public bank, the return of social benefits, sanctions to bad praxis in banks or the increase of taxes.

How do they work?

Citizens form proposals based on consensus in general assemblies in a non-hierarchical manner. Out of these assemblies commissions and sub-commissions are formed. These gather together to regulate the camping sites, form focus groups on communication, respect, ecology, ideology, action and infrastructure, among many others. Furthermore, workshops, movies, discussions, debates and classes are held to promote participation and entertainment, which encourage reflection and political, social and economic consciousness.

The 15-M are a non-violent movement, which encourages demonstrations, occupations and the organisation of focus groups involving direct action. The most recent one being the blockade of local politicians on their way to Congress and the successful prevention of house evictions.

In the last few weeks, the 15-M movement has transferred their energies from the camping sites to the neighbourhoods, though General Assemblies still take place. The movement remains reformist, the issue is to revolutionise it and radicalise it, which may take place in the following months once students from schools, universities and workers in trade unions unite with the movement to strengthen it.

The emancipatory potential of the movement remains intact, although the big questions still remain unanswered, those being on how to form a fair and equal society, what kind of new and alternative political organisations, institutions and economic modes can we form to the capitalist system? We must remember that after an act of indignation and anger, proceeds reflection and the creation of new ideas, those needing then to be translated into reality in order for them to be truly revolutionary. The tools and the potential are there, we have to make use of them.

Note. On the 15th of October a new European and Worldwide demonstration will be held to widen the movement and to invite people to reflect, discuss and think about alternatives to the status quo. Don't miss out!

Until Next Time...

Check out The Spectre blog (network23.org/thespectre) for more news, up-to date stories, radical art/culture and more ranting. This month, check out the rest of our interview with the excellent Peyoti For President (see back page), updates from Palestine and local news like the shamming of rich-boy Lord Hanningfield. Keep your reports coming in! **Deadline for next issue is July 31st**