



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

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.

Save Abbots Activity Centre! - March on Town Hall October 19th, 5pm meeting at Lion Walk

Abbots Activity Centre provides a valuable service to many elderly folks in Colchester, organising day trips and things to do as well as providing a space for them to meet. Despite the centre's user having marched to save it before, it looks like it could become another victim of spending cuts. Don't let that happen!

Protest the 'Welfare to Work' conference October 19th, 1pm Business Design Centre, Upper Street, Islington

This year's [Welfare to Work Conference](#) will bring together politicians and private companies making millions from the welfare to work industry. The agenda reads like a who's who of welfare abolition.

"Welfare to Work" means people forced to do unpaid work for multi-million pound companies. People risk losing the meagre £67 a week Jobseeker's Allowance if they do not work for such companies without pay.

This is a convention for those promoting the idea of an unpaid workforce, whilst making millions from it. Join us as we make sure the conference doesn't go as smoothly as planned! See [www.boycottworkfare.org](#)

Like What You See?

Then get involved! The Spectre accepts submissions every month, from short essays to creative writing, local news to reports from demos. If you want to get even more involved, email us and come to one of our review meetings (see above). We're always looking for more hands on deck!

Until Next Time...

Check out our blog ([network23.org/thespectre](#)) for...

- Full versions of this month's articles
- 'Capitalism & Culture' – a short essay
- A look at Libya's NTC and who they are

© The Spectre is CopyLeft – feel free to print, change and copy it as you like – as long as it stays free!

London Anarchist Bookfair

October 20th, 10am – 7pm, Queen Mary University of London

Now in it's 26th year, the UK's largest annual anarchist event. With stalls, talks, discussions, films and more, this is a perfect event for anyone wanting to know more about anarchism today or who wants to see the breadth of the anarchist movement in the UK. For info, see [www.anarchistbookfair.org.uk](#)

Defend Welfare Gathering

October 23rd, 11am-5pm Somers Town Community Centre, London

(5 minutes walk from Kings Cross station)

Join us for a meeting with like-minded people to share ideas and strategise to stop the government's attacks on welfare. We plan to run the day with lots of discussion and chances to share ideas and information in workshops and an open space session where we can set the agenda on the day. Please contact welfareactionhackeny@gmail.com if you are attending or for more info/suggestions



THE SPECTRE

ALTERNATIVE INDEPENDENT RADICAL NEWS

Issue 5 October 2011

Free/Donation

Cuts Wars: The Union Strikes Back!

From The Editors...

Seeing as how this month's paper come out just in time for the University of Essex Fresher's Fair (hello to you if you're a fresher who's just got their hands on a copy of The Spectre, hope you like it!) we've given over some space to a few groups in the local area who campaign for things we think everyone should support. There's a pretty wide range, from environmental issues to food politics to international human rights – proof that Colchester has more radical activity going on than people think!

Of course, we've still left room for our usual mix of radical reporting from across movements, counties and countries, as well as our radical events listing on the back page so open up and have a read! Remember, we're always on the lookout for more writers and we run our paper on a democratic basis – if you want to get involved come along to our review meeting (see back page for details).

P.S. Head down to Tin Pan Alley on the 20th for our first fundraiser gig!

Inside:

p. 2: Chilean Students v.s "Economic Rationalism" - how students in Chile are resisting privatization of their education
Against the Death Dealers – a report back from the anti-DSEi arms fair demo

p. 3: Meet The Locals – a round up of local campaign groups

Back-page: Radical events

N30 – Time To Strike!

Last month, the TUC finally pulled it's collective finger out and announced that November 30th will be a 'day of action' against the government's public sector cuts. With Unison, the GMB and the Fire Brigades' Union having

already agreed on collective action and at least 6 other unions balloting to strike, this could be massive. Strike action is all too often ignored by the state, criticised by the press and rendered useless by a lack of solidarity & low turnouts – but this time it's hoped that sheer numbers will make this a strike to remember, with claims that this could be the single biggest case of industrial action since the 1926 general strike flying around left right and centre. Possibly taking a cue from the inventiveness of social struggles worldwide right now (from our own student movement to the wave of occupation kicked off by Occupy Wall Street), the TUC have broken with the tradition of announcing a one off A-B march and snooze-fest of speeches from the usual suspects and have promised a series of "meetings, rallies and joint events with community groups and service users". Of course, we can't just leave it up to union officials organise for us and already autonomous groups have got the ball rolling with the N30 Strike Initiative (look up N30 on twitter/facebook for more or see [www.n30strike.org](#)), which is looking to engage those not



Strike back with visual puns!

directly involved in the unions across the country in order to generalise the strike and make the day of action effective and exciting. They're already calling for "rank and file union members, students, precarious workers and unemployed" to organise and support early morning pickets, direct actions, occupations and demonstrations. It's clear that this day of action is going

"this will be a day for everyone who opposes the cuts to get active"

to be about more than just unions and public sector pensions already – this will be a day for everyone who opposes the cuts to get active and show some real resistance. It's up to us to make sure that, unlike the J30 strike earlier this year, this doesn't peter out and is the spark that keeps the movement burning, not just a flash in the pan. It will be vitally important that we get organised before the day and make sure that we take this opportunity to have a lively, dynamic day that above all, can't be ignored! *Are you organising in the run up to the strike? Or would you like to get involved in organising? Get in touch!*

The Spectre will return next month!
Send submissions to: TheSpectre@hush.com

And check out [network23.org/thespectre](#) for more!

Get involved! TheSpectre@hush.com

Chilean Students v.s “Economic Rationalism”

The origins of the Chilean uprising are uncomplicated to trace back. It all began in 2006 by “la revolución de los pingüinos” (the revolution of the penguins; secondary school students). Students from secondary schools rose up against the alarming privatization of education and against the logic of economic rationalism; profits before people.

The “penguins” paved the way and influenced the subsequent social mobilizations. Next to react were the university students, under the Confech (student’s union), who applied civil disobedience tactics and challenged the lucrative state of Piñera. University students gained support and managed to mobilise large parts of the Chilean population; coordinating general strikes, organising occupations, standing in solidarity with the Mapuche people and protesting with various ecological groups. One of the

“ These social mobilizations demonstrate the failure of the neoliberal ‘Chilean Model’ ”

killed children (among them a student named Manuel Gutiérrez, age 16) and arrested 1000 peaceful demonstrators.

These social mobilizations demonstrate the failure of the “Chilean model”, a neoliberal system imposed after the coup d’état by Pinochet’s juggernaut regime and modelled by the “Chicago boys”-Milton Friedman et al. The “Chilean model” facilitated the privatization of social services. For instance, in education, where in “public” universities, students pay over 20,000 Euros to acquire a degree. In private universities (where 80% of the universities students are studying due to the low intake of students in public universities) the prices rocket up to 60,000 Euros. This lucrative use of education benefited large corporations and the banks that pocketed the debts and its



Chilean Students are campaign against privatization

interest on behalf of the university student’s budget, much the same way it is done in England. The social mobilizations reveal the social discontent with the current institutionalization of the economic model and its protection by the current political and economic elites. Referring strictly to the “quality and equity law”, which was voted in favour by the government without consulting the population. Therefore, the social mobilizations have proposed a political system that fosters a form of direct democracy, referendums to inquire the population and transparency from the State.

What students in Britain should realize from the “Chilean model” is that it serves as an alert, signalling what might happen if nothing is done to block the introduction of economic rationalism in education; social discontent, crippling lives, exclusion from education and deterrence from furthering higher education studies. Large social mobilizations are needed, and with the potential of students it will serve to speed up the change, radicalise it and question the values, norms dictated by the hegemonic ideology of economic rationalism that blinds alternatives.

To read a full length version of this article, see our blog! www.network23.org/TheSpectre

Against the Death Dealers

A short report from an activist at the anti-DSEi anti-arms trade demo on September 13th. For the whole report, see our blog!

The 13th September 2011 was designated by many groups as a day of action against the arms fair, including lobbying your MP. I decided to go and see ‘my’ MP as well- I found it an odd experience of meeting someone who seemed unconcerned and passionless about the whole issue, though she is a Tory!

“protesters gathered at BAE HQ for a mass ‘die in’ ”

So having got out of Parliament I met up with one of the groups of protesters who were off to protest outside the HQ of General Atomics who make Reaper drones which have killed many civilians in Afghanistan. After this the next call was BAE HQ where protesters had gathered for a mass ‘die in’. As an act of symbolism it seemed to me to be very effective, the whole road outside the HQ covered with the

‘dead’ with complete silence for 10 minutes. Then we were off again (keep up!) to the National Gallery where they were holding some sort of soiree for those involved with the arms fair. We were there just in time to crowd round the two entrances and give anyone going in to the soiree a lot of abuse! On the day protesters generally let the government and arms industry know that flogging death and repression is not OK with everyone and that some of us find this particular expression of capitalism’s pursuit of profit even more appalling than their normal exploitative practices. Protest is often about symbolism and contesting norms, communicating to those in power that we haven’t accepted their corrupt obscene version of the world. Its also about alerting the wider public to what’s going on & about giving expression to your own convictions, stopping yourself becoming passive and assimilated. It was an important day for all those reasons and was another opportunity to give expression to the belief that another, non destructive, world is possible, and to reassert that there are still people who have vision and ideals that challenge the capitalist version of the world we all have to live in at present.



Meet The Locals...

If you fancy getting involved in campaigning for a better world, here are a few groups in and around Colchester you can get in touch with.



Transition Town Wivenhoe

Transition Town Wivenhoe is part of the UK Transition Towns Network of communities finding local responses to climate change and global peak oil. We want to work creatively with residents, schools and colleges, groups, businesses and local government to (re)build resilience in our community as fossil fuels become expensive and because of the need to reduce carbon emissions.

Currently active projects include:

Food: There is an active food group supporting growing, preserving and preparing food, and have recently been pressing local fruit for juicing, and harvesting from the Station Community Garden down at Wivenhoe Train Station.

Cycling: The revolutionary bike powered cinema turns up all over the village and university at various times throughout the year showing full-length films. Soon to be launched is a bike trailer loan scheme for moving bulky items around the vilage.

Energy: There is a team providing free loans of energy monitors and offering simple advice and tips to help the community to become more energy efficient.

Visit our website: www.transitionwivenhoe.org.uk to find out more about how to get involved or drop us an email at hello@transitionwivenhoe.org.uk



Colchester Against The Cuts

A broad coalition bringing together trades unions, campaigns and community organisations to resist public sector cuts that attack students, workers, the poor and the vulnerable while billions are handed over to bankers, arm dealers and CEOs.

Currently organising a march to save Abbots Activity Centre from closure (Wednesday 19th October, see back page for details) and holding a regular info stall in Town Centre on Saturdays.

Sign up to the news letter (catc-subscribe@lists.riseup.net) dates of meetings and campaign updates, or search Colchester Against the Cuts on Facebook.



Red n' Black Drinks Club

A monthly chance to meet up and discuss anti-authoritarian radical politics, libertarian and anarchist world points and meet people with a similar world view in a relaxed (slightly boozy) atmosphere.

Each month we pick a topic to discuss in advance (either a current event we reckon there's an alternative view to talk about or a particular view/theory) then get wildly off topic as the drinks start flowing.

We meet on the last Sunday of every month at 6pm in the Hole in The Wall Pub (google map it if you don't know where that is!). For more info, email RednBlack@gmx.co.uk



Palestine Solidarity Group

The University of Essex Palestine Solidarity Group is a group of students working to raise awareness about the struggle of the Palestinian people. This struggle for justice and rights has been going on since the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948, on what was then still Palestine. Since 1967, Israel has illegally occupied the West Bank and has turned the Gaza Strip into the world’s largest open air prison by placing an illegal and inhumane blockade on it’s 1.7 million residents in 2007. Israel systematically and indiscriminately violates the human rights of the Palestinian people, creating an Apartheid system. We aim to raise awareness about the situation through a number of both on- and off campus events such as presentations, film screenings, talks and fundraisers. We are open to anyone who is interested and we meet every Thursday at 6 PM on campus in the Law Common Room. For more information about our upcoming events please join us on Facebook at Uni of Essex Palestine Solidarity Group.



Colchester Food Not Bombs

Food Not Bombs is an international movement made up of autonomous groups in towns and cities worldwide. Our aim is to show that no one needs to go hungry in a world where we waste so much good food and that if governments spent what they do on weapons and war on feeding the hungry, no one would ever starve.

We do this by gathering food that would otherwise be wasted and turning it into vegetarian meals that serve for free in public. At these feedings, we also hand out literature on a variety of subjects to do with social change and campaign for a non-violent world.

Right now, Colchester Food Not Bombs is looking for volunteers willing to help source, collect, prepare and serve food as well as a kitchen space to use. If you'd like to help us get this project running, email colchestercoop@gmail.com



Students for a Free Tibet

The SFT Essex group is part of the international SFT movement of young people and activists around the world. Through education, grassroots organizing, and non-violent direct action, we campaign for Tibetans’ fundamental right to political freedom.

Past events have included fundraising, petitions for political prisoners, documentary film screenings, presentations with external speakers, attending demonstrations and much more. Our meetings will be held fortnightly and anyone is welcome to join. Please write to Sonam at schode@essex.ac.uk if you would like to get involved or just want some more information on future events. We also have a facebook group which you can find under "Students for a Free Tibet UK - University of Essex". Most of our upcoming events will be posted on our group page. Hope to see you soon at one of our events!