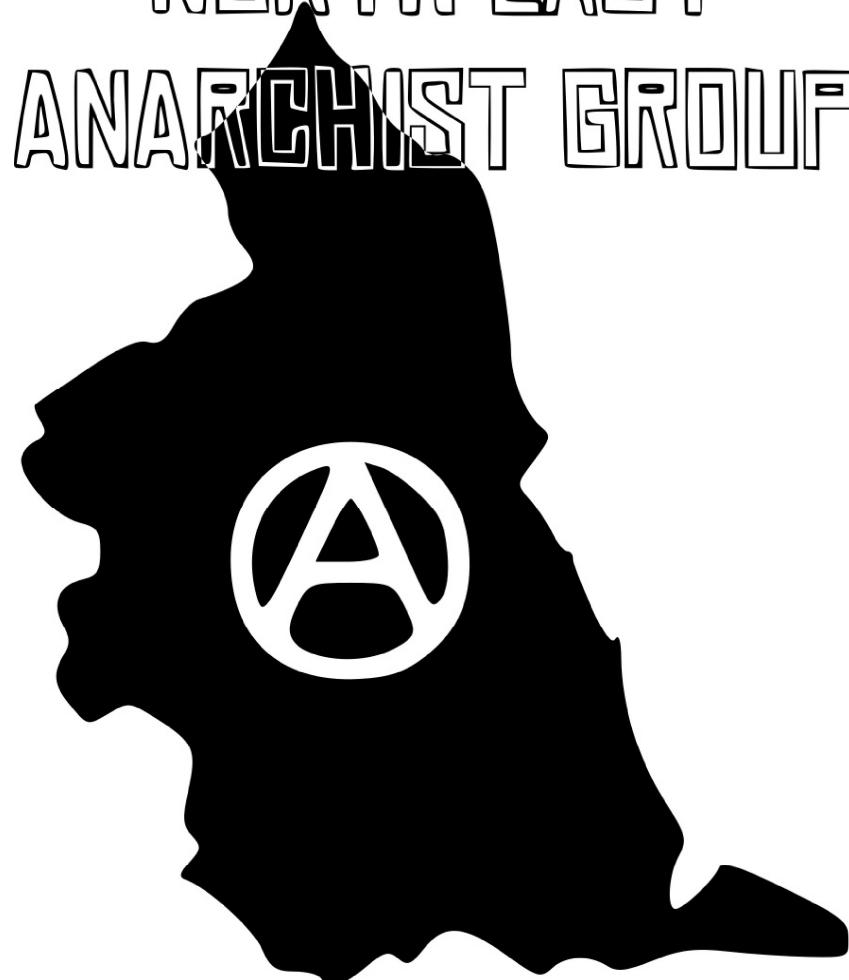




"We have often heard the abuse that the ideal of anarchist communism is an unrealizable fancy. Everyone clings to the superstitious belief that autonomy cannot be achieved without the support of a central government. In particular, some socialists ... sneer at the "dream" of anarchism. Yet I have found that it is not a dream, but something aspects of which have been realized in the autonomy of the villages inherited from our ancestors. In some remote districts where there is no so-called "culture," I have discovered a simple mutual aid ... and a social life based on mutual agreement. It is completely different from "administration" under central government, being a mutual aid organization generated by necessity and continued in parallel with the official administration since before the time when there was an "administrative organ." "

- Ito Noe

NORTH EAST ANARCHIST GROUP



- Little Writings #3 -

Brief statement on fascist riots

We are expecting numerous disruptions today to normal life in the region. Disruption to normality is essential for moving towards and creating a better world, but we cannot and will not stand by when this disruption's locus is racist, Islamophobic and fascistic.

One thing that the last 6 days has shown is our region's resilience, at the local level, against fascist agitators who wish to hurt our neighbours. In Sunderland, Stockton, Middlesbrough, Newcastle, Darlington, communities have turned out, particularly the Muslim community, to protect themselves and combat the racist violence directly affecting them. We implore people to stand with them, listen to and respect the people who are directly affected by the current violence. Be led by their needs. Be open, honest and strong.

The violence we are seeing on the street is a direct manifestation of the British government's border policy; it is the State's violence come home. Labour's anti-immigrant rhetoric, that won them the general election with a paltry vote share, is directly responsible. As a group we have stood with communities and other organisations against migrant detention, against fascist rallies before, working towards a world free from racial, sexual and class violence, and we will continue to do so, but do not let yourself be led by one group, one organisation. Listen to those affected, work with the conditions as they come, work with your neighbours and look after yourselves. We will try to provide the best and most reliable updates as we can over the next week.

Solidarity with everyone affected. Let's work together to smash fascism in the North East.

Fix Your Hearts or Die [by Capybara]

I'm a cisgender woman who's a very happy and active member of the North East Anarchist Group. Trans-exclusionary radical feminists don't really know what to do with women like me, because I fall into squarely into their core demographic. I'm not quite young enough for them to dismiss me as a silly naïve girl who's been somehow fooled into supporting trans rights, and I'm not quite old enough for them to call out of touch. The best they've mustered so far is that I'm involved in activism to impress men. How little the terfs know me. I have never done anything to impress a man.

It was direct experience of misogyny that made me a feminist a couple of decades ago, and which in turn made me an activist. I wasn't being treated fairly, and neither were other people like me, and I wanted to change that. And over time, I realised that people didn't need to be like me for me to stick up for them. As any woman who's spent time in activism can tell you, however, being an activist does not make the misogyny stop. If anything, it's more potent when you experience it within activism, because you expect better. And yet many if not most of us have been subject to the full spectrum of leftist misogyny, from microaggressions up to and including assault.

All the people who have made me afraid have been cisgender men. Trans women are not, and never have been, a threat to me. I know what misogyny is, and I know who is doing it. I don't know how to resolve misogyny – maybe that's a question for another day – but the answer almost certainly does not lie in curbing the rights that cis men currently enjoy, just as it does not lie in attacking people or discriminating against them due to their gender identity. Every other women I know who's been involved in activism for any significant length of time has their own stories, their own battle scars. So many capable

friends of mine have been pushed out of activism because some man with an ego that eclipsed his capacity to listen didn't like them. We've been talked over, we've been patronised, we've been dismissed, we've been stonewalled, we've been bullied, and we've been hurt. Sometimes – all too often, in fact – by men we loved and trusted.

Why would we let trans people be treated the same way?

Gender critical ideology is poisoning the left because it attacks the very essence of solidarity. You do not have to have had the same experience as somebody else to show up and to stand up for them. Nobody looking at what trans and non-binary people are put through in this country could honestly say that they do not face constant discrimination, oppression and bigotry. If you are not sticking up for people facing oppression, you are not a leftist. Solidarity is the basic principle of being on the left.

Terfs take the struggle that we, as women on the left, have been through, and they are using it as a weapon to attack others. I am not having my pain used by hatemongers to create more pain and more suffering and to feed into this self-defeating, doomed gender critical ideology. Like patriarchy, it ultimately harms us all to some degree or another. The rigid idea that men have to be and act a certain way harms them too, and has a knock-on effect on their mental health. And like fascism, it is bound to lose.

More than anything, it's the relentless and bitter cruelty of trans-exclusionary 'radical feminism' that unfailingly transports me right back to the bullying me and my friends experienced at school. I remember exactly how that felt, and I don't want anyone to have to go through that. The terfs who sit on Twitter

This re-humanisation also serves an interesting dual function of individualisation. It firstly exploits the fact that there is a small ruling elite and an impossibly large, oppressed class. Empathy often comes easier with a known face, so they exploit this to get us to feel empathy towards them, and to struggle to feel empathy for the countless dead at their hands. A fact that may even encourage the ruling class towards inflicting greater destruction. It secondly creates a counter-narrative for reformers, the idea that the targets are these individual personifications of the system, trying to distract us with their own issues, when in reality the target is not JUST them, but also the systems that they personify and represent.

I am not saying this to argue that you should feel amazing when another person gets cancer or is assassinated. I am also not saying that you should fight back against empathy that comes naturally to you. I am saying this to remind you that these stories are generated to have political effects. There is no neutral reporting on the ruling class, it is done to serve their interests, and the interest here is the protection of oppressive systems and the continuation of their destruction of our planet and its people.

To conclude, I ask that the next time you see the individual woes of the ruling class being reported with more rigour and prominence than the deaths of millions to poverty or to genocide, that you rightly recognise the dehumanisation and distraction tactics that are being employed, but also recognise the more subtle attempts at weaponising your empathy for their re-humanisation. Remember that you are not a bad person for continuing to criticise our oppressors, and that you can, and should, focus your empathy on the real victims of our deeply sick and oppressive world – and use it as a catalyst to fight for them.

It is a deeply human thing to feel empathy for others, and I genuinely believe that the vast majority of people do wish to do good for others and to care for them, it is one of the many reasons why I have so much faith in a better world. However, when the ruling elites try and use this empathy for their own gain – we should not feel bad for resisting it. When tropes such as ‘cancer can affect anyone’, ‘dementia knows no class’ etc. are peddled – it is important to remember how these things affect someone who is working class and someone who is a monarch. Whilst it may be true in a very literal sense, it does not mean we should be willing to abandon all critique or cancel all actions against them out of respect. They want this, they want us to humanise with them, they want us to view them in the same way we view our own sick loved ones – and they want this, so we feel worse about fighting back.

This also occurs in the context of oppressors fighting back against the oppressed. When the ruling class terrorise, destroy, and pillage those who are under them for their own profit and gain, they initiate processes of dehumanisation to try and ensure we do not feel outrage at their slaughter. However, when similar attacks happen against them, whether it be decolonial, anti-capitalist, or a myriad of other struggles, they attempt to show this as being a horrendous attack on other human beings. They present themselves as humans too, with families, with friends, with lives, who do not deserve what has happened to them (by virtue of their own actions no less) to make us feel bad for having ever fought back. They maintain a society built on violence and misery, that they are more than happy to inflict on others, but when the same comes back onto them, they immediately seize it as an opportunity to re-humanise themselves, and to make them more palatable and ‘loved’ by those they exploit.

all day, mocking and sniping at trans people they’ll never meet, never have a conversation with, and never come close to understanding because they have no interest in trying, all for no gain whatsoever and at the cost of their own rapidly-eroding sense of compassion, will one day be consigned to the dustbin of history. For now, it’s too late in the day for cisgender women like me to stay silent on the issue of transphobia in this country, and I’m proud to be in a group like NEAG which fights back against this appalling bigotry.



The Revolutionary Potential of Minority Languages [by Capybarbara]

I'm old enough to remember when the BNP advocated for minority languages, in a roundabout and obviously racist way. One of their aims in their 2010 manifesto was to ensure the only languages permitted in local and national governmental documents and papers were English, Welsh, Cornish, Manx and [Scottish] Gaelic. How the BNP planned to factor in the Irish language, taking into account the ongoing occupation of the Six Counties, remains a mystery to me. But all this was jarring for the young left-wing language nerd to read about, especially since in England, there is so little discourse about minority languages, including those spoken in the countries neighbouring our own. There was a danger that the far-right would somehow fill this void of ignorance with their bigotry, as they so often do, and while the BNP thankfully failed in this case, some minority language communities themselves contain a minority- that is very right-wing.

The void of ignorance is real in England. It's not too uncommon to meet others who are well into adulthood and entirely unaware that the Celtic languages exist. Anecdotally, I knew of people who joined my Irish classes here in the expectation that they would be taught how to speak English with an Irish accent as opposed to their native Geordie. On learning that it's a real and very different language from English, they dropped out.

"But they all speak English anyway over there" is a very familiar refrain that many, if not all, native speakers of English who are learning another language have heard, no matter what language they're learning. There is something about some English- speaking monoglots that gives them an urgent need to immediately devalue and deride learners of other languages in a way that is seldom seen with other academic pursuits.

them as our equal and our friend, and not our enemy and oppressor. When this is done well enough (as it unfortunately often is), it can get to a point where they do not even have to defend themselves from criticism anymore, they will instead have an army of those who have been tricked into thinking they are worth defending to do it for them.

How do they go about this process in the context of death and illness? Various methods are employed. The first is, as already mentioned, an attempt at humanisation. The ruling elite, politicians, royals, CEO's, have in many ways shed their humanity and have instead taken on the cold soulless face of capital. They no longer really exist as individuals; they exist instead as personifications of oppressive systems. The individual politician becomes a representation of the state, the individual royal of the monarchy, the individual CEO of capitalism.

However, they are (much to their dislike) still human. They can suffer the same tragedies that the workers can face, albeit it on drastically different terms and with drastically more support. Murder, illness, natural disasters – even our oppressors struggle to escape them. So, when they are affected by them (and not wanting to let a good scandal go to waste), they weaponise our empathy towards themselves. As noted as well, this weaponisation does not just serve to help their own image as individuals, by virtue of them existing as personifications of the system itself, it also serves to humanise this representation. It is usually irrelevant which royal or whatever CEO suffers in this manner, what matters is that their weaponisation serves both their own image (and how they use it for the benefits of themselves and these systems) but also the system itself. Even if we want to claim that the individual is irrelevant in the system of oppression, this tactic serves to defend that system also.

the contrast of how the western media has presented victims in Ukraine compared to victims in Palestine, but hundreds of examples exist.

This dehumanisation is coupled with presenting alternative stories (usually of the woes of the ruling class, or of the usual distraction media by presenting other random stories) or downplaying the stories of capitalism's terror as a tactic of distraction. Often, the distraction is not even via the ruling class, other 'more deserving' peoples are instead put on a mantle, whereas the 'undeserving' victims are cast aside. However, multiple tactics of distraction exist, including using the ruling class themselves. So much more can be said on this, but I instead refer readers to the countless writers who have said it better and in far more detail than myself, especially regarding episodic and thematic framing.

However, something else is also happening, especially when the ruling class attempt to present themselves as the victims in times of crisis. It is not enough for the ruling class to employ tactics of dehumanisation and distraction. They also employ the opposite, but to themselves, a tactic of humanisation, a weaponisation of our empathy, to try and bridge the unbridgeable gap that exists between us and them. It is no longer enough for them to dehumanise their victims; they must re-humanise themselves.

The most obvious reason for them doing this is as a placation tactic. The ruling class thrives off those who it oppresses not being aware of them being oppressed. One of the ruling classes worst fears is us gaining class consciousness, or whatever term you wish to insert here. Therefore, not only do they sow discontent and arbitrary divides within our own ranks, but they also wish to bring us closer to them, so that we see

Applying that to minority languages, however, makes the situation even more dire. Speakers of Celtic languages, for example, are almost always fluent in English too, meaning that there is always the looming threat of reverting to English for the sake of convenience. It also makes it far rarer for people to learn minority languages out of necessity, and as such, is often seen as a purely academic pursuit- learning for the sake of enjoyment. Many working-class communities did not have that luxury, so learning a minority language is sometimes regarded, unfairly in my view, as a little elitist. Juxtaposed with that is the economic and social reality faced by many native speakers of minority languages. There are reasons a language becomes minoritised, these reasons often boil down to 'capitalism, the problem is capitalism', and these reasons affect many facets of the lives of these native speakers.

Imagine the language you are learning is practically unknown to many of your compatriots, even though it's still spoken, written and displayed extensively on bilingual signs in the country right next door. And then imagine that historically, your compatriots colonised that country, as they did with many others, and they still have a bit of it, and the decline of the language can be strongly attributed to that colonisation.

One assumption I come up against time and time again when I tell people that I'm learning Irish, is that I have Irish heritage and that this must be why I'm learning. I do have Irish heritage, like around 20% of the population in England, but the approval of my ancestors was neither motivation or help to me when it came to my multiple and still-failing attempts to understand the fifth declension of the genitive case. I am also engaged in many, many activities in my political and personal life on a regular basis that I am certain most of my ancestors would strongly disapprove of, and as such I have no desire to placate

them; it is a hopeless endeavour at this point. The references to my heritage are on some level an attempt to 'claim' me; the Irish-speaker thing cancelling out the English thing, so to speak. However, I'm white, and Irish speakers of colour, who hold Irish citizenship, were born in and have only ever lived in Ireland, often experience outright bigotry and exclusion, often from people who can barely string a sentence together in Irish themselves. I've witnessed them being told everything from well-meaning but highly misguided statements such as "If only actual Irish people could speak the language as well as you!" to straight-up abuse, calling into question their right to speak the language at all. If including me involves excluding those people, then I want no part in that inclusion.

My core belief in learning Irish is that either the language is for everybody, or it's for nobody. Nobody should have to take an Ancestry DNA test to feel justified in their decision to learn Irish. Being interested is enough to make you part of this vibrant and varied community.

The future of the language is the key focus here, and that future is determined by the speakers of that language here and now. When you decide to learn a minority language, you become part of the struggle for that language's future. Learning a minority language can be an act of resistance against the status quo, an acknowledgement that languages do not simply die out, but like our environment, are being killed off, by powerful people with names and addresses. We place a lot of emphasis, wrongly in my view, on perfection when learning languages. Growing up in a monoglot environment can make you afraid to make mistakes- the mistakes anyone has to embrace when learning another language. It can be confronting, as an adult, to suddenly realise that when under pressure to communicate only in the language you are learning, you now have the same

Weaponisation of empathy, Re-humanisation of the Elite [by Don]

I find it incredibly striking how contrasting the news can be at times. When, for example, an MP is assassinated, or a member of the royal family gets diagnosed with cancer, or some former notable politician dies after a prolonged battle with dementia – the news of these 'tragedies' flood news sites, social media, and any other means of communication available to those who control the narrative. This often takes precedent over deaths related to poverty, or to genocide (especially in regard to the current genocide being committed against the Palestinian people), or to countless wars, conflicts, and famines. That is if the latter are even reported at all, and they are never given anywhere near the same reverence as the former if they are.

The critical analysis we employ as anarchists, as anti-capitalists, as anti-statists, to this situation is nothing new or exciting for me to write about. However, for the sake of being as thorough as possible, the process is, in many ways, twofold:

It is a process of dehumanisation. It is a process of distraction. The numbers of dead due to capitalism's failings and imperialist wars are insurmountable. It is a number that we cannot calculate, and we cannot comprehend – and that is only the dead, it is not even including the millions who live in a practical state of death, as wage slaves with little to call a life. This makes it easy for those reporting on this to 'take the human cost' out of these figures, and to make us view these victims as not human or even real. This dehumanisation also occurs in often incredibly racist and colonial fashions, with those who do not conform to the western ideal of the white man being perceived as inherently inferior and undeserving of empathy when compared to those who do conform to the western ideal. This can be observed particularly in recent years in regard to

In October, we helped to organise an anti-terf demo in Morpeth to counter the known fascist-terf Posie Parker. Parker occasionally decides to appear in the North-East every now and then and is always humiliated by the concerted efforts of the local community, and this time was absolutely no exception, with many Morpeth locals joining us and expressing solidarity which we were thrilled to see. Furthermore, we also organised a skillshare in October at the Star and Shadow Cinema in Newcastle.

November saw us throw support behind the 2nd march to Rafael (organised by People Against Rafael, Newcastle PSC, and various other local groups), with similar turnouts and expressions of solidarity as before. December saw us providing arrestee support when several comrades got arrested and brutalised after a protest outside of the Rafael arms factory.

More generally over the entire year, we hosted a monthly prisoner writing workshop all across the North-East, and we also got a fair few articles onto our website which you can check out here! There is also a wealth of stuff that occurs behind the scenes that we do to help support local campaigns, activists, and those fighting for a better world from our local community (and beyond!).

From all of us at NEAG, we hope your end to 2024 was as good as it could have been considering the exploited and burning world we find ourselves living in. We hope to see you in 2025 as the struggle continues for a freer and more just world.

In memory of all those who we lost in 2024 in the struggle for freedom, justice, and a life worth living.

Anarchy Now, Anarchy Forever

vocabulary range as you did as a 5 year old. Unfortunately, as an adult, it's rarely socially acceptable to express that frustration in the form of a tearful tantrum, and as a result many people revert to the politer but no more helpful option of shyness.

The road to fluency is a long one, but it's not a race, and you may as well enjoy the journey. It is incredibly rewarding to be part of something greater than yourself, and it's an experience that many of us, as leftists, can already relate to. And practically speaking, it can be highly useful to communicate in a minority language on a demo as it dramatically lowers the risk that you'll be understood by cops!



NEAG 2024 Highlights: A Year of Solidarity

Considering the prevalence of social media in getting information out into the local area and beyond, whether it be to show what we have been up to as a group, to share posts and actions in solidarity, or to advertise our own actions and events, we often neglect other means of archiving our activities.

Considering anarchist and radical groups are often shunned by the mainstream media, and considering the often DIY nature of our activities, it made me particularly concerned to think that if we ever lost out Instagram account, a lot of the history of what we got up to as a group would be lost. Therefore, I was inspired to make this short write-up of our activities in 2024, roughly month by month with a few comments at the end about the more regular stuff we get up to.

Let's look back at 2024 for NEAG (in a very brief summary/the highlights that is, even I have forgotten half the stuff we got up to, think of this as the main thing we did each month).

January started, as it often does for us as a group, with a trip to the Derry Radical Bookfair to see our Irish comrades, to participate in their bookfair activities, and to march alongside them in the Bloody Sunday Commemorative March.

September came around with us attending quite a few gigs organised by friend of the group Conviction Records, where we would run informational stalls with zines and info on anarchism and local actions and campaigns to get involved with. The local hardcore-punk scene is becoming better every passing month thanks to Conviction Records and many other local labels, venues, and bands putting in the work to organise stuff. We hosted a gig in late 2023 and it could not have been done without this local support. We will also take this opportunity to shout out Kill Your Landlord records who did a great fundraiser for Palestine in 2024 which we also had a stall at, and also the Lubberfiend, a local DIY music venue that has always been very kind to the group.





August saw the fascist menace rear its ugly head into the mainstream once again in the North-East and beyond. Newcastle, Sunderland, Durham, Darlington, Hartlepool, and Middlesbrough (among other places locally) all saw fascist riots or threats of fascist riots. We did what we could; we became a source of sharing as much information as we could find on local fascist movements, alongside organising and bolstering local anti-fascist actions. We maintained a radical anti-fascist position, and refused to compromise with the police, or with pacifist elements. Unfortunately, a demo we helped organise in Newcastle was successfully co-opted by the SWP, which is often their style. It goes without saying fuck the SWP (<https://linktr.ee/fuckswp>), but despite that, we showed we could mobilise ourselves to growing fascist threats and bolster our local communities to resist their hatred.

In February, we spend a lot of time protesting and taking part in actions outside of the Israeli-owned Rafael Arms Factory in Newcastle. The factory-of-death in question is unfortunately still standing, and we hope to continue, alongside other groups and individuals in fighting to shut it down for good.

In March, we hosted a talk on Squatting in the North-East. This talk came from us helping to organise an anarchist queer squat party fundraiser after 2023's Ewan Brown Newcastle Anarchist Bookfair. Considering the squat party both showed that squatting in that way was possible in the North-East, and the fact it raised a lot of money and brought such an amazing community of people together, we wanted to share our knowledge about squatting and get more people involved. The day got a good turnout and a lot of people more clued-up on what we did in 2023, what worked, and how to replicate it in the future.

April saw us support the 1st 'March to Rafael' (the very same Israeli death factory mentioned in Feb). This march saw a massive turnout of people marching against the presence of this factory in our local community, and it was a sight to behold so many people marching through the streets of Newcastle in support of Palestine, and it was great that as a group we could support it and throw our organisational weight behind the preparations.

By the time May came around, both the Newcastle and Durham University Palestine Solidarity Encampments had begun. We provided solidarity and support in a multitude of ways, including; attending events and actions, providing food and other supplies, hosting talks (such as one on prisoner writing), helping to set up community libraries and gardens at the camps, and trying to give as much general support as possible.

Both of these camps have helped to sustain two active Palestine solidarity groups on both campuses in question, and we continue to support them when they need it. Both these camps brought a lot of new people into the local scene and the local anarchist scene especially, which was amazing to see.

June, as usual, saw us attending the Ewan Brown Newcastle Anarchist Bookfair, held in memory of our dearly missed comrade Ewan Brown. We had a stall and also hosted a well-attended talk on prisoner writing, which included both a how-to guide and also a discussion on why we should write to our comrades on the inside. The bookfair is always a beautiful day and it was lovely to meet so many new people and to catch up with old friends.



July, also as usual, saw us attend the Durham Miner's Gala. This year our usual anarchist march joined the Palestine march. It was a lovely display of solidarity to see such a march at a massive event like the gala. Unfortunately, the weather was quite bad, and we did receive verbal abuse for our support of Palestine, which we condemn in the strongest possible terms, and also stress the fact that the organisers of the gala had expressed their support for Palestine, demonstrating that those that hurled abuse at the bloc we're not representative of the gala as a whole. The gala is always a strange affair for us, with quite a lot of the more radical aspects of the gala being slowly diluted in favour of speeches from politicians and mainstream unions, and the day being seen more as a social event than a celebration of local radical political tradition. Despite this, the day was a success and brought a lot of friends old and new together to march and to enjoy each other's company after, and to show our solidarity with Palestine.