

# **Information for Social Change Number 27 Summer 2008**

## **Special Issue on Radical Bookshops**

### **International Bookstore het Fort van Sjakoo – Specialised in Radical and Libertarian Ideas from the First World to the Fifth and beyond.**

**Rutger van Ree**

#### **Sjakoo**

Het Fort van Sjakoo (Sjakoo's Fortress) is a non-commercial and collectively run bookstore with a focus on critical and insurgent literature. It's namesake is the legendary hideout of Jacob Frederik Muller or "Sjakoo" (1690 – 1718) on the Elandsgracht. Sjakoo, an Amsterdam based thief who has over the centuries been made up to be quite a Robin Hood. Though reality may have been less high spirited, we like to keep the myth alive. Stealing from the rich to give to the poor is great, but stealing from the rich to keep it yourself...well, that's just fine too.

#### **History**

The bookstore was founded in 1977 at its current address in the Jodenbreestraat. It had been squatted two years earlier on the trajectory of a designated highway through the city centre. Though gentrifying has kept its ugly pace, the highway never got there, and not just the Fort but large parts of the area around it are still intact because of the campaign against it. The store was legalized in 1988.

In 2002 our rent was increased by an incredible 900%. It took ten months for enough funds to be raised, but with massive community support from numerous groups and individuals, and without having to involve a bank: the place was bought by the collective in 2003. The purchase of the space has left us with some debt, but also with the uplifting realization that when the Fort was in need, but many people were willing to step in to help out. Part of the proceeds goes into repaying them. We work only with volunteers, and any further profits will go back into the store or to other groups involved in extra parliamentary activities.

## **Books to ignite the Fire**

Besides non-fiction literature in several languages, we host a wide variety of magazines; some fiction; music ranging from punk to hip hop and from experimental electro to Ethiopian folk music; clothing, pins and patches; coffee from Chiapas, and even some arty tiles to place upon your wall. Many volunteers here will tend towards anarchism as a political belief, but we do not confine ourselves to that category. You'll find shelves with themes such as 'Situationism', 'Gender', 'Armed Struggle' and 'Animal Rights'. You will not find texts that propagate parliamentary 'solutions', capitalism, sexism or racism to name but a few. Though disagreement is vital and no 'Truth' deserves a capital, we want to keep an eye not just on what we *do* like, but also on what we don't. From pirates to Punk Rock, and from RARA to Dada, we try to bring you information on and inspiration for resistance against repression in its many forms. Because the current economic and political situation is unacceptable; because apathy is useless and resistance is not; because we could have more fun, and because rocks alone will not get us there.

If there's anything special you're looking for, then please let us know and we may try to get it. We are interested in new and second hand books, and any other material that fits in to our collection. So if you have anything you see fits, you can come by and try to push it on us.

So come hither, all ye punks and journalists, angry kids and elderly, riotgrrlz and neighbourhood folks, and anybody just stumbling in by chance. From love letters to revolutionary rhetoric, we want to infuriate and to arouse, and help you think of the best and prepare for the worst.

**Rutger van Ree**

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