

happy New Year 2016
from the
SKELETON ARMY



dancing on
General Booth's
grave

... remembering
New Years Eve
1881...



...when the Skeleton Army
assaulted a Salvation Army
parade outside the Blind
Begger pub, in Whitechapel,
peltting them with rotten
fruit and mud....

- Sick of religious fundamentalism leading to murder, rape and war?
- Feel rage at god-botherers preying on the poor and vulnerable?
- Infuriated by the vast wealth milked from millions by churches of all denominations?
- Think the world would be better off without superstition of all kinds...?

*...then let's revive the
Skeleton Army!*

In the 1880s the growing influence and offensive puritanism of the Christian sect the Salvation Army provoked the birth of the Skeleton Army – locally organized bands of rowdies who disrupted Salvationist crusades, abused and humiliated the preachers and parades, and physically attacked them...

As austerity bites, and poverty increases for many; as religious wars multiply, disillusionment and uncertainty, fear and superstition are on the rise... Religious bigots both powerful and powerless try to push back against the freedoms won by hundreds of years of struggle against church, mosque and temple...

But religion by its very nature belongs in the middle ages. Organised faith continues to play a huge role in violence against women, the support of war and of hierarchies and power relations that keep us poor and divided, in the worldwide assault on people's ability to determine their own sexuality and gender...

It's time to bring back the Skeleton Army...

Not just to harass the modern religious parasites like the United Church of the Kingdom of God... places of worship of whatever religion, to fight religious control over the vulnerable, to support rebels resisting religious control from within.

For a future free from fear, bigotry and hate... from Syria to Tottenham.

*Salvation Army founder General
William Booth's grave in Abney Park
Cemetery, Stoke Newington*





*A Salvation Army march to lecture
drinkers at the nearby Shakespeare
Pub ended in them taking a beating
from the Skeleton Army, in 1881...*

In the 1880s the Salvation Army were regularly attacked when they marched to preach, harass and attempt to convert drinkers in working class areas. Their mission was openly to draw working class people away from the disorderly popular culture that revolved around drinking, singing, smoking, and riotous entertainment and resistance to the police and other arms of the state... towards godliness, respect for authority and sobriety... Like most religious sects of the 19th century, the Salvationists held that the poverty and squalor afflicting the lower classes was largely their own fault, for giving in to drink and gambling and other vices... (An attitude shared by many of the upper and middle class do-gooders, as well as large sections of the more respectable working class ... including elements of the chartist and socialist movements...)

... as if class divisions, property, the power of the rich and the hierarchies imposed on us all had nothing to do with it...

The original Skeleton Army was organised at Weston-super-Mare, towards the end of 1881. The same year, a Sally Army march to Stoke Newington led to them being attacked outside the Shakespeare pub. According to the Daily Telegraph:

"Yesterday morning... the bands issued forth in the afternoon... the largest marched to the Shakespeare... Here the division of about 20 persons, male and female, began to sing but before the end of the first verse a crowd of roughs had gathered round and began a counter chant. At the third verse someone issued forth from the tavern with a can of beer in his hand, and making use of foul expression, offered it to the Salvationists. This was a signal for a general riot, and in a few moments the members of the Army were attacked, knocked down, and shamefully used. Acting under the orders of their captain, they and gave no blow in return but avoiding their brutal assailants as best they could, covered the retreat of the women. There were over five hundred persons present, but not a single hand was raised in defence of the band... One young girl yesterday was seriously injured, two of the men were much hurt, and nearly every member of the band had been robbed of some article of property. All of this took place within a stone's throw of two large police stations."



***"a genuine rabble of roughs
pure and unadulterated..."***



*"Amongst the skeleton rabble there is
a large percentage of the most
consummate loafers and unmitigated
blackguards London can produce..."*

The 'Bethnal Green Eastern Post' described the Skeleton Army as "a genuine rabble of "roughs" pure and unadulterated... These vagabonds style themselves the 'Skeleton Army'... The 'skeletons' have their collectors and their collecting sheets and one of them was thrust into my hands... the collector told me that the object of the skeleton army was to put down the Salvationists by following them about everywhere, by beating a drum and burlesquing their songs, to render the conduct of their processions and services impossible...

Amongst the skeleton rabble there is a large percentage of the most consummate loafers and unmitigated blackguards London can produce..."

We'll drink to that!

The skeleton armies usually carried flags bearing a skull and crossbones; sometimes with additions such as two coffins and mottoes, often mocking the Sally Army ones: so "blood and thunder" was a pisstake of the christians' 'Blood and Fire'... One yellow banner with three B's—"beef beer and 'bacca'", was a satire on the Salvationists' slogan 'Soup, Soap and Salvation'... Others decorated theirs with monkeys, a devil, and

rats. The Skeletoneers also developed uniforms ribbing the Salvationist ones.

Some of the local Skeleton bands produced "gazettes" - ribald, obscene, blasphemous and slanderous news-sheets. Favourite ammunition for showering the preachers and marchers included flour, red and yellow ochre, rotten eggs, stones, brickbats...

The organisation of skeleton armies in London and the publicity this received inspired the growth of other similar groups throughout the country. Serious fighting and conflicts with the police eventually resulted in drastic repression being introduced to deal with the rowdies in the



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capital, bringing organised trouble there to an end.

The Skeleton Army however, thrived in other parts of the country until 1892. Some of the worst trouble associated with them broke out in other towns, most notably in Worthing in 1884, where several huge riots erupted as local opponents on the godbotherers attempted to prevent them from marching through the town... Troops had to be sent in, and the Riot Act read, after a pro-Sally Army landlord shot into a Skeleton crowd. Injuries and deaths resulted...



http://www.hadesign.co.uk/worthing_history/history_pages/html/salvation_army_riots.html

GODBOTHERS:

- Let's harass them in the streets
- Let's take over their buildings (all church titles to land derive from grants from medieval kings... by theft and murder, they took the land... what brilliant projects we could do with all those spaces)
- Let's disrupt their ceremonies
- Let's ridicule their authority
- Let's remove their children from them (poisoning the mind of someone, when very young, when they can't answer back, with nasty vicious shite... as bad a crime as religion ever came up with...)
- Let's deny them the fruits of scientific learning
- Let's expropriate their property
- Let's invert their symbols and subvert their language

MOST OF ALL

- let's live free lives uncontrollable by their lies!

The Skeleton Army... supported by the
Cokaygne Party

what do you do in
times of austerity?

*Lie around and
do fuck all!*



Let's Build Cokaygne!

<http://alphabetthreat.co.uk/pasttense/poormansheaven.html>